

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

December 8, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Advent: Delving deeper into the meaning of the season of Advent, we realize that it is all about the coming of Jesus to us. The word "advent" itself means "coming" or "arrival." Remember the words of Jesus before his ascension into heaven: "I'll be with you always." Jesus is with us always. Only we do not see and recognize him. We do not hear and touch him. We can imagine him saying: "You have eyes, but you don't see; have ears, but don't hear." There are many things in life that could prevent us from being in touch with Jesus. Our preoccupations and anxieties may leave us with no time or space for Jesus in our lives. That is why the concept of "coming" is very helpful. It has the sense of dynamism built into it. It has the meaning that it is happening in our lives now, in our present situations and circumstances. As we get ready to celebrate the first coming of Jesus and look forward to his second coming, we cannot miss Jesus coming into our lives now, encountering us, calling us, challenging us, sending us, fulfilling us, and blessing us. As we go about our daily, ordinary lives, how can we prepare ourselves in our minds and hearts for his coming? Or as we face difficult situations such as disease, death in the family, failure, rejection, depression, panic, and all sorts of sad experiences, how could we let Jesus come into our lives today so that he could make a difference and lift us up with his grace and love?

Advent Quote: "Jesus stands at the door knocking (Rev. 3:20). In total reality, he comes in the form of the beggar, of the dissolute human child in ragged clothes, asking for help. He confronts you in every person that you meet. As long as there are people, Christ will walk the earth as your neighbor, as the one through whom God calls you, speaks to you, makes demands on you. That is the great seriousness and great blessedness of the Advent message. Christ is standing at the door; he lives in the form of a human being among us." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas*.

Monday, December 9, The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation, Masses at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.: Please do come join the Masses. The usual December 8 feast has been moved to December 9 because December 8 this year falls on a Sunday.

Word of God, Second Sunday of Advent, Year C: John the Baptist is the voice crying out in the desert. Echoing Isaiah, John's rallying cry is to prepare the way for the Lord. Crooked paths will be made straight; mountains and hills will be made low; valleys will be filled; rough ways will become smooth. Everyone will see the salvation of God. Such impossible things would become a reality for us in our present times, if we but let Jesus into our lives. Prophet Baruch too expresses similar sentiments of incredible blessings for Jerusalem, in the context of the Babylonian exile, and by extension, for us, by way of hope, justice, mercy, and peace. Do we desire for such blessings that could lead to happiness and fullness of life?

Thanksgiving Day 2024 Mass Collection: Thank you for generously donating \$1,833 at the Thanksgiving Day Mass. As promised, on your behalf I have promptly forwarded that amount with a personal note to “Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers,” a highly dedicated Catholic religious society that works effectively as missionaries, proclaiming the Gospel and uplifting the poor.

Notre Dame de Paris Reopening on December 8, 2024: Last week President Emmanuel Macron of France gave a much-publicized tour to a select group of people of the 12th century Cathedral that has just been renovated after it was engulfed in fire on April 15, 2019. He spoke eloquently about the meaning and metaphor of Notre Dame and how it has come to represent art, culture, and religion for not only one country but for the whole world and is a precious treasure for the human family. The cathedral is set to open to the worshippers and public this Sunday December 8, 2024, though some renovation will continue into the next few years. To me personally, having visited Notre Dame a few times, it is metaphoric of the highest ideals of the human spirit and of what we could do to renew and renovate life in the aftermath of awful crises and loss. May this cathedral continue to draw millions of people around the world and renew them in faith, truth, beauty, and goodness.

Simbang Gabi Masses: These Masses will be held December 16 through 24 at the regular 8:30 a.m. Masses. On Sunday Dec. 22, it will be at the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Coordinator of these Masses is Gloria Trinidad with her team members May Devera and Beth Pasco. If you’d like to sponsor or participate in any way, please do contact them. Let’s make our Simbang Gabi tradition a special way of preparing ourselves for Christmas.

Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: Thursday, December 12 is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patron Saint of the Americas. Please do join the morning Mass at 8:30 a.m. There will be a light Mexican-style breakfast after the Mass. Que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos mantenga siempre en su amor!

A Story Ponder: When the English playwright Oscar Wilde arrived at his club late at night after witnessing the first presentation of a play that had been a complete failure, someone asked, “How did your play go tonight, Oscar?” “Oh,” said Wilde, “the play was a great success. The audience was a failure.”

Humor: A family ran into their pastor at the mall, but their son couldn’t place him. It was only later that it hit him. “I know that man,” he said. “He goes to our church.”

Thinking of you, thanking God for you, and sending you prayerful wishes for an Advent season of God’s grace and our great expectations. Come, Lord Jesus!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota