

Fr. Charles Puthota's Blog

November 29, 2020

From the Pastor's Desktop



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Advent: This Sunday we begin the season of waiting for the Lord. With the mournful yet hopeful song of “O come, o come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel” we plead with the Son of God to visit us and free us from all sorts of bondages and patterns of sin and alienation. We join all those whose deepest longings were for the coming of Jesus the Messiah into their lives.

This season of Advent is something like the time before the wedding. The couples have to prepare for the wedding by sitting down and talking about all kinds of things connected with their marriage and have heart-to-heart conversations. They also need to make all sorts of spiritual, liturgical, social preparations for the day of the wedding. How will the wedding ceremony be? Who will do what? Where will the reception be and what food will be served and who will make the speeches? What songs to dance to? Where will the newly-weds go for their honeymoon? Etc, etc, etc. The Advent season is exactly like these various preparations we need to make in order for the Christmas day and the whole Christmas season to become a source of pure joy and blessing.

We cannot put Christmas already in Advent any more that we can put the wedding day into the phase of preparation for the wedding. Therefore, let's put on the spirit of Advent, which is readiness, vigilance, awareness, waiting, expectation, longing, penance, rearranging our lives, listening to God more deeply, reassessing our relationships, making room for love. When we do all these, then when the Christmas season dawns, it would truly be like the overflowing joy of a wedding, when Jesus will be united with the Church and the whole creation in an ecstasy of intimacy and union. Are we ready to do what we need to do at Advent in order for us to get ready to do what we need to do at Christmas?

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA): Please give whatever you can toward the goal of \$48,719. You have donated so far \$31,031.00. We still need \$17,388.00. Please give as early as it's possible for you. If at all possible, please belong to “1% or More Circle” by donating \$500. When the time comes, after we have made the goal, when all the dust settles from the pandemic, I'll invite the 1% Circle folks to a dinner. As you know well, the purpose of AAA is to support the ministry and mission of the Archdiocese.

Covid Numbers Update: As of November 23, the number of Covid cases in the United States are 12,417,009 (almost 12.5 million). The deaths are 257,657. In California, the number of cases are 1,130,311. This is per 100,000 people 2,855 cases. The number of deaths in CA are 18,777, which is 47 deaths per 100,000 people. In CA, on November 23 alone, in one day, there were more than 19,000 new Covid cases. In the Bay Area, there are 140,962 cases and 1,929 deaths. Let's keep all those affected by the pandemic in our prayers.

Keeping Fingers Crossed about Covid Restrictions: As I write this note on November 24 morning, SF City Government has NOT downgraded our status to purple (most restricted) tier. If it does, it's likely that we will not be allowed to have indoor Masses. Let's hope for the best. If we are not allowed indoor Mass in the Church, we shall go back to the school parking lot for our outdoor Mass as before. In the event of no indoor Masses, this Thanksgiving Day, we shall have the outdoor Mass at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot. Again, in the event of only outdoor Masses, we shall have only one Sunday Mass at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot. Please check the website or call the parish office for the latest news, in the event of no indoor Masses. We will also post the latest news about Masses on the Church and Rectory doors.

A Story to Ponder: The Eyes to See: A writer arrived at the monastery to write a book about the Master. “People say you are a genius. Are you?” he asked. “You might say so,” said the Master with a smile. “And what makes one a genius?” asked the intrepid reporter. “The ability to see,” said the Master. The writer was betwixt and between. Scratching his hair with one hand and rubbing his tummy with the other, he muttered, “To see what?” The Master quietly replied, “The butterfly in a caterpillar, the eagle in an egg, the saint in a selfish person, life in death, unity in separation, the divine in the human and the human in the divine.”

Advent Quote: “Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary to us. Advent’s intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church’s year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart’s memory so that it can discern the star of hope....It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope.” --- Pope Benedict XVI.

Wishing you a holy and fruitful season of Advent leading up to the mystery of the birth of Christ our Lord,

Your Friend & Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota