

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

November 12, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Remembering the Dear Departed Souls in November: Prayers for the Departed Souls: Into your hands, O Lord, we humbly entrust our brothers and sisters. In this life you embraced them with your tender love; deliver them now from every evil and bid them eternal rest. The old order has passed away: welcome them into paradise, where there will be no sorrow, no weeping or pain, but fullness of peace and joy with your Son and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen. Prayer at Graveside: Lord Jesus Christ, by your own three days in the tomb, you hallowed the graves of all who believe in you and so made the grave a sign of hope that promises resurrection even as it claims our mortal bodies. Grant that our brother/sister may sleep here in peace until you awaken him/her to glory, for you are the resurrection and the life. Then he/she will see you face to face and in your light will see light and know the splendor of God, for you live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Emily Dickinson's Poem on Death and Immortality: Because I could not stop for Death - He kindly stopped for me - The Carriage held but just Ourselves - And Immortality.
We slowly drove - He knew no haste And I had put away My labor and my leisure too, For His Civility -
We passed the School, where Children strove At Recess - in the Ring - We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain - We passed the Setting Sun -
Or rather - He passed Us - The Dews drew quivering and Chill - For only Gossamer, my Gown - My Tippet - only Tulle -
We paused before a House that seemed A Swelling of the Ground - The Roof was scarcely visible - The Cornice - in the Ground -
Since then - 'tis Centuries - and yet Feels shorter than the Day I first surmised the Horses' Heads Were toward Eternity -

Congratulations to Sr. Marguerite Bartling!: She is celebrating 50 years of her Religious Life as a Good Shepherd Sister! We welcome her family, her Provincial Superior, other sisters of her communities, coworkers and collaborators to her Thanksgiving Mass and Reception at St. Elizabeth Parish on November 11. Sr. Marguerite entered the Order in Los Angeles in 1970. She served in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Memphis. For five years she was in-charge of promoting vocations to her Religious Order. She has worked with women and children who were survivors of domestic violence in Chicago for 10 years and now with women who seek long-term recovery from drug and alcohol addiction at Gracenter in San Francisco for nearly 20 years. Internationally, she served as secretary to English-speaking Councilor at the Good Shepherd Generalate in Rome, Italy, for 3 years. May the good Lord bless Sr. Marguerite and her ministry always! Ad multos annos!

Word of God: The Parable of the Ten Virgins: This 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Gospel reading presents the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. As we come closer to the beginning of Advent, we hear more persistently the message of the Lord's coming and our being ready and prepared for that mystery. We need to be ready, of course, at the end of our lives, but already now it's important as we live our daily, ordinary lives, engaged in our endeavors and preoccupations. Said Albert Camus, the French philosopher: "I'll tell you a secret, my friend. Do not wait for the last judgment; it takes place every day." Being ready, being prepared, being vigilant, as a way of responding to life is necessary. We need the lamps, which might stand for our lives and the oil might represent our faith and inner resources. If our lives have to shine, we need those resources, which have to be nourished and nurtured over a long time. One doesn't become wise or truthful or virtuous overnight. Those resources cannot be borrowed from others. Either we have them or we don't. Each one has to work out one's salvation, find one's relationship with God and others, find one's happiness and peace. Each one has to put two and two together! One has to live one's life. One has to face one's death. No one can take his or her place. Others might be able to support us but will not replace what we need to do in our response to God's grace. The closed door in the parable might indicate that we do not have forever to find our way. We do not have infinite time to begin to love God and others. We have to act now! Can't delay! Can't procrastinate! As Shakespeare says in Julius Caesar: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; and we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures."

A Story to Ponder: 1. A young composer once came to consult Mozart on how to develop his talent. "I would advise you to start with simple things." Mozart said. "Songs, for example." "But you were composing symphonies when you were a child!" the man protested. "True enough. But then I didn't have to go to anyone for advice on how to develop my talent."

Religious Humor: The Lord is My Shepherd: A Faith Formation teacher decided to have her 2nd grade class memorize Psalm 23, one of the most quoted passages in the Bible. She gave the children a month to learn the chapter. One little boy was excited about the task, but he just couldn't memorize the Psalm. Although he practiced and practiced, he could hardly get past the first line. The day came for the children to recite Psalm 23 before the congregation. The little boy was nervous. When his turn came, he stepped up to the microphone and proudly said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know!"

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota