

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

December 17, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Advent: We are at the Third Sunday of Advent. The joyful and mournful song “O Come, O Come Emmanuel...” expressing the deep desire of expectation for the Lord is the theme of the season. Jesus is the reason for the season. This season of Advent is also a semi-penitential season as we wait for Christmas. Through prayer and penance, we shall wait for the joy of God becoming one with us. This is a time of our waiting for Jesus as we long for him to enter our lives again so we can start all over again. It is yet another chance for us to get it right. Shall we renew our hearts and minds for his presence and love? He came, he will come, but now he comes. This is also a hectic time of external preparations and commerce. In the midst of it all, we still have to keep our hearts fixed on Jesus, the holy baby to be born. The question we could ask is: Do we really feel deep down that we need Jesus in our lives? It is that deeply felt need for Jesus that will make this season of Advent meaningful and purposeful. If we think we can manage our lives without Jesus, all the preparations for Christmas would purely be a social and cultural observance and not a spiritual experience of Jesus. It would all be external---and nothing to do with the internal purification and renewal. It is Jesus who can truly bring peace and joy to us, our families, and the world torn by sadness and violence.

Christmas Mass Schedule: Christmas Eve (Sunday) December 24 Mass at 4:30 p.m. Christmas Day Monday December 25 Masses at 8:30 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. Please keep in mind that the day before Christmas is a Sunday. So, I'm looking forward to seeing you at Masses both that Sunday and the next day Monday, which is Christmas!

Simbang Gabi Christmas Novena Mass Schedule: December 16 through 24 at 8:30 a.m. except on Sundays Dec. 17 and December 24 which would be the 10.30 a.m. Mass. To plan, support, and sponsor, please contact Gloria Trinidad and her team of May Devera and Beth Pasco.

Word of God this Gaudete “Rejoice” Sunday: This Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, is called Gaudete (Rejoice!) Sunday. A pink candle on the Advent wreath represents this Sunday. At Mass, the priest may wear rose-colored vestments, with a hint that we are to wait joyfully for the birth of our Lord. As we draw closer to Christmas, the Church invites us to rejoice at the soon-awaited birth of the Savior of the world. In Isaiah we read about the “glad tidings to the poor” that the Lord will bring. The Lord’s servant also exults: “I rejoice in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul...” The responsorial psalm is the Magnificat, the song of Mary: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my savior.” The second reading from 1 Thessalonians is the exhortation of St. Paul: “Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” Are we ready to rejoice at the presence of Christ who is going to turn his abiding presence into a dynamic “coming” in our lives this holy season? We need to be filled with joy because Jesus is delighted with us and rejoices over us. Our most authentic joy this season can come from the personal experience of God in Jesus who rejoices over

us and from the way we can share this joy with family and friends and all those we are called to help and serve. Rejoice, the Lord is coming into our lives soon---and very soon!

Advent Parish Retreat: On Saturday December 9, I gave a parish Advent retreat in Cantwell Hall. 50 people attended. Some had come from other parishes. The topic was Spirituality. The retreat started with the 8:30 a.m. Mass in the Church followed by breakfast in Canwell Hall. I gave three sessions each lasting about 50 minutes. We sang hymns before and after each session. There was a great spirit of joy and friendship. People seemed to appreciate the reflections on the meaning of spirituality and its historical development through the 20 centuries. It's a topic everyone could relate to. I did not have the time to speak on the various practices of spirituality, which we shall probably take up for the Lenten Retreat in 2024. The retreat came to an end with a sumptuous chicken meal served by Chick N Coop catering. Everyone enjoyed the food and our time together. My deep sense of gratitude to those who worked so hard to make this retreat most enjoyable: Sharon Soares, Dave Gemignani, Phil McCarthy, Richard John, Luz Bansuelo, Tessie Vinluan, Belma Enriquez, May Devera, and Beth Pasco.

Over 50 Club Christmas Luncheon: Our parish's Over 50 Club hosted the Christmas luncheon at the Basque Cultural Center on Friday December 8. It was attended by about 55 people. There was an unmistakable spirit of Christmas in the air. It's always a blessing for us to get together, especially after surviving the sad times of Covid. Such social gatherings are an antidote to loneliness and sadness. The food was delicious and the company was wonderful. I'd like to thank our parish's Over 50 Club organizers Emma Magarrell, "Elsa Reginato, Florence Mangion, Helen Burchett, and their team for arranging this joyful luncheon. Also, my special thanks for organizing the weekly Thursday meetings and Bingo in Cantwell Hall throughout the year. If anyone else is interested in joining this club, please do contact the parish office.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: After the Feast Day Mass at 8:30 a.m. last Tuesday December 12, an enjoyable Mexican-style food was donated and served by Maria Concepcion, Virginia Sanchez, Maria Imelda Oropeza, Fran Oropeza, Theresa Sifuentes, and Richard and Maria Padua. **Many thanks to them for making this a memorable experience. Que Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe nos mantenga siempre en su amor!**

Humor: 1. I think I would like a job of cleaning mirrors. It's just something I could really see myself doing. 2. Why was the math book sad? Because it had too many problems. 3. My dog is a genius. I asked him what is two minus two. He said nothing. 4. I don't want to brag, I finished the puzzle in under a week and it said 2-4 years on the box. 5. I couldn't figure out why the baseball kept getting larger. Then it hit me. 6. The other day, my wife asked me to pass her lipstick, but I accidentally passed her a glue stick. She still isn't talking to me. 7. Three years ago my doctor told me I was going deaf. I haven't heard from him since. 8. Parallel lines have so much in common. It's a shame they'll never meet.

Wishing you an Advent season of great expectations,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota