

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

November 3, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

All Saints: November 1: We began this emotion-laden month of November with the solemnity of All Saints (All Hallows), which was a holy day of obligation, with Masses at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Having observed the cultural celebration of the Eve of Hallows as Halloween, here we celebrated the holy feast of all saints, canonized and not canonized, known and unknown. Originally the feast began when there were so many martyrs that there was a felt-need to honor them. It then became a way of honoring all saints, all holy men and women, who have reached the beatific vision of God and are now safe in the very heart of God, even if they are not officially declared as saints by the Church. I would like to think that some or many of our own family members have been privileged to become saints and have attained the life of perfection in heaven; that they have joined Mary, our blessed mother, the angels, and saints; that they are beholding the face of God for eternity with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. What a blessed state! What a glorious life of fulfillment! This feast invites us to thank God for all the marvelous deeds God in Jesus has done in the lives of all these saints. We feel a deep sense of gratitude and joy. This feast also reminds us that we are all destined to be saints; that we are all called to holiness. "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," is the challenge. Be holy. Do holy. It is not easy, though. We are pulled and pushed by external and internal forces, drives, and allurements. We are tempted and dazzled by all sorts of things in the world. To seek holiness amidst bewildering things and choices is not at all easy. Jesus walks with us and gives us his Spirit to lead and guide us so that we may keep running the race, knowing that in all our endeavors, struggles, and failures, we are graced and strengthened on this pilgrimage of life.

All Souls: November 2: We commemorated all those who have been called to God. We think especially of those in our own families who have gone before us. We hold their memory sacred. We loved them in life, we continue to love them in death. In death, life is changed, not ended. Love is stronger than death. We bring our love, faith, and prayers to support them on their journey of purification and attainment of perfection with God. It has always been a tradition in the Catholic faith to visit graves on this day and in the whole month of November dedicated to the dear departed. So let's make time for that. As we stand at their graves, perhaps with tears and a deep sense of grief, let us know that God will wipe away all tears and grant them eternal peace and fulfillment. It is also a grace-filled occasion for us "in this valley of tears" to think of life and death. Awareness of death can make life more precious and beautiful. Against the background of death, life takes on great urgency and acute significance. Because of death, we have to live better lives. Because of death, we have to become the persons God wants us to be in this life. Because of death, we need to become more authentic disciples and apostles of Jesus. Because of death, love becomes not only necessary but also urgent. *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace! Amen. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.*

Elections: The Bishops of the United States have guidelines for Catholics, especially in the election cycles, through a well-balanced document titled “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.” If you would like to read it in detail, just google it. The Bishops encourage us to apply Catholic social teaching to major issues we face in our nation and the world. They list these major issues as: 1. Human Life. 2. Promoting Peace. 3. Marriage & Family Life. 4. Religious Freedom. 5. Health Care. 6. Migration. 7. Catholic Education. 8. Promoting Justice and Countering Violence. 9. Combatting Unjust Discrimination. 10. Care for our Common Home. 11. Communications, Media, and Culture. 12. Global Solidarity. We need to look at all these major issues in totality and search and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit before we elect our leaders. May our nation have the leaders we deserve, the leaders who are according to the mind and heart of Christ, humble and honest, selfless and serene, generous and gentle, always willing to give of themselves in service for the common good. Let us keep our nation in our prayers.

Monday, December 9: Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy Day of Obligation, Masses at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Pope Francis’ Latest Encyclical: Pope Francis has just released his fourth encyclical called “Dilexit Nos” (He Loved Us) on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His three other encyclicals are “Lumen Fidei,” “Laudato Si,” and “Fretelli Tutti.” The Holy Father calls the Church and the world through the latest one to the heart of Christ, the seat of God’s immense love. More about this encyclical in this column in the coming bulletins.

Synod on Synodality: The second and final session of the Synod on Synodality came to a close last week. It took place from October 2 through October 27, 2024. The theme of the whole synod spread over three years was: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.”

Gustavo Gutierrez, RIP: One of my favorite theologians, the Peruvian Dominican Father Gustavo Gutierrez passed away last week. I regularly meditate on his scripture reflections for Sunday readings. He has a powerful and inspiring way of looking at the scriptures from the perspective of God as liberator and in favor of justice, peace, dignity, and the human rights, which are God’s universal blessings for everyone. May Father Gutierrez rest in peace!

Humor: The pastor confronted his tipsy church member: “Joe, whiskey is your worst enemy.” “But didn’t you tell us last Sunday to love our enemies?” Joe replied. “Sure,” the pastor answered, “but I didn’t say anything about swallowing them.”

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota