

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

July 20, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Summer Reveries:** I hope you're finding some time this summer to rest and recharge – maybe through travel, a captivating book, an artful film, the company of a dear friend, or the discovery of something new that brings you joy. I've found that stepping outside of routine, even in small ways, can refresh both the mind and heart. So if someone invites you on a little adventure, no matter how modest, say yes! I hope your summer is unfolding beautifully, even if there are the occasional cold or windy days – after all, the seasons of the heart don't always follow the weather outside.

**San Francisco Quotes:** “East is East, and West is San Francisco.” – O. Henry “I never dreamed I'd like any city as well as London. San Francisco is exciting, moody, exhilarating. I even love the muted fogs.” –Julie Christie. “I left my heart in San Francisco.” – Tony Bennet. “San Francisco is perhaps the most European of all American cities” – Cecil Beaton. “If you're alive, you can't be bored in San Francisco. If you're not alive, San Francisco will bring you to life.” – William Saroyan “San Francisco is a golden handcuff with the key thrown away.” – John Steinbeck.

**The Word of God: 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time:** Theme: The Harmony of Contemplation and Action. In today's Gospel (Luke 10:38–42), we meet two sisters, Martha and Mary. One is busy serving, the other is sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus. Martha represents action – hospitality, service, care. Mary represents contemplation – attentiveness, presence, listening. Jesus does not condemn Martha's work, but gently reminds her that “only one thing is necessary,” and Mary has chosen it. This story is not about choosing one over the other, but learning the right balance. Action without contemplation becomes anxious and restless. Contemplation without action becomes passive and self-contained. The Christian life calls us to hold both together – prayer that inspires service, and service rooted in prayer. Martha teaches us to serve Christ in others. Mary teaches us to listen to Christ in stillness. We are called to be both: contemplatives in action. In a world that values doing over being, Jesus reminds us that our best work begins by sitting at His feet.

**What is Catholicism?:** Here's a very insightful summary by Richard McBrien, a well-known theologian and professor. “1. Catholicism is a Christian tradition, a way of life, and a community. 2. The word Catholic, derived from the Greek, means "universal." Its opposite is sectarian rather than Protestant. 3. Many non-Catholic Christians insist on the use of the adjective Roman to describe the Church that is in union with Rome, because they also regard themselves as Catholic. But there are Eastern-rite churches that are in union with Rome, and yet are not of the Roman, or Latin, rite. Therefore, the adjective Roman would pertain only to a portion of the Church that is in union with Rome, albeit the largest portion by far. 4. Catholicism is, first of all, a way of being human, then a way of being religious, and then a way of being Christian. Catholicism can only be understood within this wider context. 5. Catholicism is characterized by three principles: sacramentality, mediation, and

communion. The special configuration of these three principles within Catholicism constitutes its distinctiveness. It is a tradition that sees God in all things (sacramentality), using the human, the material, and the finite (mediation), to bring about the unity of humankind (communion). 6. Other distinctively Catholic principles include its emphasis on tradition, its regard for reason, its analogical imagination, and its universality, including a both/and rather than an either/or approach to Christian faith and practice.”

**Tuesday, July 22, Feast of St. Mary Magdalene:** The Feast of St. Mary Magdalene honors the first witness of Christ’s resurrection. Once a sinner, she became a devoted follower of Jesus. The Church recognizes her as the “Apostle to the Apostles,” symbolizing redemption, faith, and love. Her life inspires deep repentance and discipleship.

**Friday, July 25, Feast of St. James, Apostle:** The Feast honors St. James the Greater, one of Jesus’ first apostles and brother of John. A witness to key events in Christ’s ministry, he was the first apostle martyred. Revered in Spain, his shrine in Santiago de Compostella is a major pilgrimage destination.

**Faith Formation Program:** “Go to all the nations and proclaim the good news” is Jesus’ command. In Faith Formation we proclaim the good news to the children and through them to their families. Please do register as early as possible for 2025-26 school year. We also need new Faith Formation teachers. Contact Laurrie Digneo, our coordinator of Faith Formation. We would very much like to grow the numbers of our students. Please help by persuading your families to become part of our Faith Formation program. We are eager to prepare them for the First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation, and help inspire and orient them toward a life of faith and service according to the mind and heart of Christ.

**Wisdom Story: The Empty Boat:** A man rows his boat in the fog. Suddenly, another boat crashes into him. He yells, full of rage – until he sees the boat is empty. There is no one to blame. Then he realizes: When we think someone is “there” to hurt us, we feel anger. But when there’s no one to blame, we simply adjust and move on. Wisdom: Most of our suffering comes from our reactions, not events themselves.

**Pun Fun:** 1. Talk is cheap? Have you ever talked to a lawyer? 2. Why did the gym close down? It just didn’t work out! 3. How do poets say hello? Hey, haven’t we metaphor? 4. Why is it annoying to eat next to basketball players? They dribble all the time. 5. What breed of dog can jump higher than buildings? Any dog, because buildings can’t jump. 6. How many times can you subtract 10 from 100? Once. The next time you would be subtracting 10 from 90. 7. Why aren’t koalas actual bears? They don’t meet the koalafications.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota