

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

August 10, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Friday, August 15: Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: A holy day of obligation: Masses at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.** In the Catholic imagination, Mary, our Blessed Mother, radiates grace and majesty as the woman who bore the Savior and embraced God's will with unwavering faith. Full of grace, she listened deeply to God's word, pondered it in her heart, and stood faithfully at the Cross. No one has been closer to Jesus – his mother, disciple, and companion in suffering. Because of her unique role in salvation history, she was preserved from sin and bodily decay. At the end of her earthly life, she did not experience death as we do, but was assumed body and soul into heaven, crowned Queen of Angels and Saints. She is our spiritual mother, ever gentle and loving, always leading us to her Son. As we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, we rejoice in her glory and our privilege to call her our own. As Wordsworth wrote, she remains "our tainted nature's solitary boast."

**From the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*:** Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church: **In what sense is the Blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of the Church?** The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church in the order of grace because she gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Head of the body which is the Church. When he was dying on the cross Jesus gave his mother to his disciple with the words, "Behold your mother" (John 19:27). **How does the Virgin Mary help the Church?** After the Ascension of her Son, the Virgin Mary aided the beginnings of the Church with her prayers. Even after her Assumption into heaven, she continues to intercede for her children, to be a model of faith and charity for all, and to exercise over them a salutary influence deriving from the superabundant merits of Christ. The faithful see in Mary an image and an anticipation of the resurrection that awaits them and they invoke her as advocate, helper, benefactress and mediatrix.

**Jubilee of Youth in Rome:** The Jubilee of Youth in Rome, Italy, took place from July 28 to August 3, 2025, at Tor Vergata on the outskirts of the city. Over one million young pilgrims aged roughly 18–35 (and many younger) from about 146 countries gathered during the week-long event – part of the broader Holy Year "Pilgrims of Hope." The Jubilee included a variety of spiritual and cultural activities: witnessing to faith through pilgrimages to the Holy Doors, catechesis, reconciliation services at landmarks such as the Circus Maximus, and communal faith experiences across Rome. The main events unfolded at Tor Vergata, where on August 2, Pope Leo XIV led a powerful evening prayer vigil with Eucharistic Adoration, testimonies, music, and a youth Q&A session. On the morning of August 3, he celebrated the closing Mass, encouraging young attendees to spread hope, justice, and peace in their communities. Despite challenging heat and logistical hurdles, the atmosphere was described as globally unifying and spiritually transformative – echoing the scale and fervor of World Youth Day in Rome in 2000.

**Word of God: 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C:** Today’s Gospel speaks directly to our hearts: “Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for it is your Father’s is pleased to give you the kingdom.” God delights in giving us not just blessings, but His very Kingdom. But Jesus quickly follows with a call to readiness: “Gird your loins and light your lamps.” This balance of promise and responsibility lies at the heart of Christian discipleship. We are called to trust in God’s providence while also being vigilant and faithful. The parable of the servants waiting for their master shows that faith is not passive – it is active, lived out in daily choices, service, and integrity. Jesus isn’t asking for fear-driven vigilance but love-driven faithfulness. He’s urging us to live each day as if it matters eternally – because it does. When he says, “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much,” he is speaking to us. We’ve received abundant gifts of faith, sacraments, Scripture, community, and grace. The question is: what are we doing with them? Are we building God’s Kingdom through acts of love, justice, and mercy? Are we ready to meet the Lord not just at the end of life, but in the faces of those we encounter every day?

**Thursday, August 14: Feast of Saint Maxmillian Kolbe, Priest and Martyr:** Some years ago, during a pilgrimage to Poland, I had the unforgettable experience of visiting places connected with St. Maximilian Kolbe, one of the most heroic saints of our time. At Auschwitz, I stood in the very cell where he died – first by starvation, then by lethal injection – after offering his life for a fellow prisoner, Franciszek Gajowniczek. A candle beside his photo there honors his sacrifice. I also visited the Franciscan monastery in Niepokalanów, near Warsaw, where he lived and which now houses a museum dedicated to him. Educated in Rome, St. Maximilian earned a doctorate, founded a major Catholic printing press, and published widely read magazines and leaflets in Poland. His missionary work even took him to Japan, where he established new Franciscan foundations. His life of service and love, culminating in his martyrdom, reflects the words of Christ: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).

**Humor:** 1. **The Smartest Man in the World:** A plane is crashing – onboard: a boy, a priest, a scientist, and the world’s smartest man. Only three parachutes. The smartest man grabs one and jumps. The scientist says, “Well, he was the smartest...” The priest says, “Let the boy take the last one.” The boy replies, “No worries – he took my backpack.” 2. **The Doctor’s Advice:** A man goes to the doctor and says, “Doc, I broke my arm in two places.” The doctor replies, “Well then, stay out of those places.” 3. **The Monk’s Vow:** A man joins a silent monastery. After one year, he’s allowed two words. He says, “Bed hard.” Year two: “Food cold.” Year three: “I quit.” The abbot replies, “Figures. You’ve done nothing but complain since you got here.”

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota