

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

September 7, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Faith Formation Masses and Classes Resume:** On Sunday, September 07, the Faith Formation children will gather for the 8:30 a.m. Mass and then proceed to their class rooms in Cantwell Hall. Please do let the Faith Formation children and families occupy the front pews in the Church as they will regularly be attending the Sunday 8:30 a.m. Masses. I welcome the students, parents, and catechists to another year of faith and community. I thank the parents and teachers for their collaboration in this important mission of handing on the precious gift of faith to the next generation.

**Word of God: 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C:** Discipleship is the theme. Following Christ requires radical commitment. Jesus tells us that unless we “hate” father, mother, spouse, children, and even life itself, we cannot be His disciples. These words sound harsh, but Jesus is using strong language to emphasize that love for Him must come before every other attachment. True discipleship is not partial or half-hearted – it calls for surrender. The two parables Jesus gives – about building a tower and a king going to war – point to the need for careful discernment. Following Christ is not a casual choice but a lifelong journey that demands sacrifice, perseverance, and daily carrying of the cross. We must count the cost and be ready to let go of possessions, pride, and comfort in order to make space for God’s will. Wisdom, in the first reading, comes from God’s Spirit, teaching us how to live rightly. St. Paul reminds Philemon of the transforming power of faith and love, urging him to welcome Onesimus not as a slave but as a brother. To be disciples today is to choose Christ above all else, trust His grace, and let Him reorder our priorities so that His love guides every decision.

**9/11 Prayer for the Nation:** Loving and Eternal Father, today we gather to remember the tragedy of September 11, 2001. We entrust to Your mercy all who lost their lives in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. Welcome them into Your eternal light, and grant comfort to their families who still carry the pain of loss. We pray for first responders, heroes who gave their lives in service and sacrifice, and for survivors who continue to bear wounds seen and unseen. Heal our nation of division, fear, and violence. Pour forth Your Spirit of peace upon the world, that hatred may give way to reconciliation, and despair to hope. Teach us to be instruments of Your love, builders of justice, and witnesses of forgiveness. May the memory of this day move us closer to You, who are our refuge and strength, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**From the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Why is the Church called the temple of the Holy Spirit?** She is so called because the Holy Spirit resides in the body which is the Church, in her Head and in her members. He also builds up the Church in charity by the Word of God, the sacraments, the virtues, and *charisms*. “*What the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the members of Christ, that is, the body of Christ, which is the Church.*” (Saint Augustine) **What are charisms?** Charisms are special gifts of the Holy Spirit which are bestowed on individuals for the good of others, the needs of the world, and in particular for the building up of the Church. The discernment of charisms is the responsibility of the Magisterium.

**Monday, September 8: The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary:** The Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary honors the birth of Mary, chosen by God to be the Mother of His Son. Her nativity marks the dawn of salvation, as through her “yes” to God, Christ entered the world. The Church rejoices in Mary as a sign of hope, joy, and new beginnings. Born of Saints Joachim and Anne, she embodies God’s grace and loving plan. This feast invites us to imitate her humility, purity, and trust, preparing our hearts to welcome Christ more deeply and live faithfully as God’s beloved children.

**Tuesday, September 9: Feast of St. Peter Claver:** St. Peter Claver, the Jesuit missionary, called himself the “slave of the slaves forever.” Serving in Cartagena, Colombia, he tirelessly ministered to enslaved Africans arriving on ships, offering food, medicine, comfort, and the love of Christ. Baptizing thousands, he defended their dignity and humanity amid cruelty and exploitation. His life reflects radical charity and justice, reminding us to see Christ in the oppressed and to work for compassion and equality.

**Saturday, September 13: Feast of St. John Chrysostom:** We celebrate the “golden-mouthed” preacher and Archbishop of Constantinople. Renowned for his eloquent homilies, deep spirituality, and fearless defense of the poor, he modeled holiness, justice, and pastoral care. His life inspires Christians to combine faith, charity, and moral courage in daily life.

**Quotable Quote:** “I have been bent and broken, but - I hope - into a better shape.” - Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*.

**Humor:** 1. The Talking Dog: A man sees a sign: “Talking dog for sale.” Curious, he asks the owner for a demo. The dog says, “I’ve worked for the CIA, traveled the world, and saved lives.” Amazed, the man whispers, “Why sell him so cheap?” The owner shrugs, “Because he’s a liar! He never did any of that.” 2. The Genie’s Wish: A man rubs a lamp, and a genie appears. “You get one wish,” says the genie. The man asks for world peace. The genie sighs, “That’s impossible – pick something else.” The man says, “Okay, then make my mother-in-law like me.” The genie thinks, then replies, “Hmm... let’s go back to world peace.”

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota