

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

September 17, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Catechetical Sunday, September 17, 2023: The theme of this year's catechetical Sunday is: "Come to me all who labor and are burdened" (Mt. 11:28). It's an occasion to recognize and thank our catechists in Faith Formation program for the faith they hand on to children and for being witnesses to the gospel. I would like to thank our catechists on your behalf for their faith and commitment to the important mission of teaching and witnessing. The names of our catechists are: Laurrie Digneo (Coordinator), Richard John, Fran Oropeza, Maria Oropeza, Cypriano Peneyra, Mike Walsh, Ron Chang and Patti Spiteri (Pastoral Coordinator). Thank you! This Catechetical Sunday at the 10:30a.m. Mass, we shall be commissioning the Catechists for another year of catechetical work in our parish's Faith Formation program. Catechetical work is vital to the life of the parish and the church at large. As you may know, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is presented in four parts: 1. The Profession of Faith (the Creed), 2. The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (the Sacraments), 3. Life in Christ (Christian morality), 4. Christian Prayer. Our children and young people need to be urgently introduced to the content and practice of faith. May the catechists of our parish be filled with the Spirit of Christ and wisely lead their students toward the mysteries of faith. This year, as you may know, I have asked the students to join the 8:30 a.m. Mass each Saturday as part of their class, and the parents are most welcome to join them as well.

Word of God: This 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, forgiveness is the theme. Because God is loving and forgiving, we ought to be the same to one another. "The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in kindness." We are to reflect these divine qualities to one another. God's forgiveness is gratefully and joyfully received in our individual lives and passed on to others generously.

The Synod on Synodality 2021-2024: The Synod on Synodality, initiated by Pope Francis in October 2021, is a three-year, worldwide undertaking during which Catholics were asked to submit feedback to their local dioceses on the question, "What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our 'journeying together'?" Every diocese in the world has participated. A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, "journeys together" as the people of God. The Synod on Synodality seeks to answer: How is this "journeying together" happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our "journeying together"? It indicates a way of listening to one another to understand how God might be speaking to all of us. It means a way of living out our faith that calls for speaking and listening to one another and the Holy Spirit in order to find a path forward in addressing the issues facing the Church in our day as we work to carry out our mission of making known the Good News of salvation in Jesus. The three interrelated dimensions of the theme are **Communion, Participation, and Mission**. "Without the spirit of prayer, there is no synodality," the Pope recently said. "There is one thing that we have to keep---the synodal atmosphere." The synod should not be like a television talk show where everything is discussed, the Pope explained, but a "dialogue between the baptized." The First Session of the Synod will meet in Rome next month from October 4 to 29, 2023. The Second Session will take place in October 2024. Let's keep the Synod in our hearts and prayers.

Filipino Gala: The 11th Annual Filipino Gala at the Cathedral takes place on Sunday, October 15, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Those interested, please see the details on the last page of this bulletin.

Thursday, September 21, Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist: The calling of St. Matthew is a famous painting by Caravaggio, depicting the moment at which Jesus calls him to follow him. This painting, now in Contarelli Chapel in Rome, is dear to Pope Francis. The beam of light leads the viewer's eye from the figure of Christ to St. Matthew. Jesus's hand points to Matthew in a manner of God's hand pointing to Adam in Michelangelo's famous fresco "Creation of Adam" in the Sistine chapel. God in Jesus is re-creating Matthew. Matthew in the painting points to himself, in a kind of disbelief, to ask as if it was truly him that Jesus was calling. This painting is worth meditating on by checking it out online. Jesus calls Matthew, a tax-collector. Matthew leaves everything and follows Jesus. He also later writes the Gospel, the life of Christ, from his perspective and for the Jewish audience, emphasizing that Jesus is truly the Messiah and fulfills the promises of the law and the prophets of the past. Two things we could take away from this Feast: 1. That we are called by Jesus to be apostles in our own time. We are "missionary disciples" of today to proclaim the good news to our families, friends, and neighborhoods. 2. We could go to the Gospel of Matthew and other books in the Bible to read prayerfully (Lectio Divina) and meditate on what God is speaking to us for our circumstances.

A Story to Ponder: An elephant broke loose from the herd and charged across a little wooden structure that stretched across a ravine. The worn-out bridge shivered and groaned, barely able to support the elephant's weight. Once it had gone safely to the other side, a flea that had lodged itself in the elephant's ear exclaimed in mighty satisfaction, "Boy, did we shake that bridge!"

Catholic Humor: 1. A six-year old was overheard reciting the Lord's Prayer at a church service: "And forgive us our trash passes, as we forgive those who passed trash against us." 2. A boy walked up to the pastor after Mass and handed him a dollar. The priest told him he should give it to the poor. "That's why I gave it to you. My dad says you're the poorest preacher we ever had." 3. Each year, a veteran Faith Formation teacher sends this note to all parents: "If you promise not to believe everything your child says happens at class, I'll promise not to believe everything he or she says happens at home." 4. A priest was asked by a politician, "Name one thing the government can do to help the church." The priest replied, "Quit making \$1 bills."

Your Friend and Pastor,
Father Charles Puthota