From the Pastor's Desktop
A Message from Father Charles Puthota
September 24, 2023

Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Deanery Meeting at St. Elizabeth: A Deanery Meeting was held last Tuesday September 19 in our Cantwell Hall. As you may know, a Deanery is made up of several neighborhood parishes. Our Deanery called Alemany Deanery consists of parishes of St. Elizabeth, Corpus Christi, Epiphany, Visitacion, St. Paul of the Shipwreck, St. Emydius, Our Lady of Lourdes, All Hallows, and St. Michael Korean Catholic Church. Pastors, some parishioners, and staff from these parishes were present as well as some from the departments of the Archdiocesan Chancery. Information from various parishes was shared and the meeting ended with a delicious meal. I'd like to thank our own sacristans and Fred Spence for setting up the Hall for this event.

Catechetical Sunday Last Week: Congratulations to Laurrie Digneo (Coordinator), Richard John, Fran Oropeza, Maria Oropeza, Cypriano Peneyra , Mike Walsh , and Patti Spiteri (Pastoral Coordinator)! Last Sunday, celebrating Catechetical Sunday, we had the opportunity to encourage and thank them for their excellent work in sharing faith and being witnesses to the gospel values. I had the honor of commissioning them for another year of catechetical work. Let's keep our Faith Formation program in our prayers. If there is any who would like to volunteer as a catechist, please let us know. If you'd like to enroll your child or grandchild in this program, we'd love to have them.

Word of God: God's Ways are Different from Ours: The Gospel reading this 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time presents Jesus' powerful and subversive parable about the Kingdom of God. The landowner hires laborers at various times of the day for work in his vineyard but pays them all the same wages, starting from the last ones to arrive to the first ones. The early laborers feel cheated, but their agreed-upon wages are justly paid to them. They are upset because the last ones are paid the same as them. More work, more pay, is their logic. That would be the logic in the workplace. But in the Kingdom of God, in the system of God's values, things are quite different. It's not the amount of work, but the spirit in which all work is done. It's not the length of our life but the quality of love and service rendered to God and others. God's ways are radically different from ours, which is highlighted in the first reading from Isaiah: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts."

The gospel parable needs to be read in the religious and social context of Jesus' ministry. The Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious and political authorities, believed that they were the chosen ones of God and so they automatically merited the rewards from God. They thought they didn't have to respond to God's grace in a continuous and consistent way. They didn't care about the Kingdom of God that Jesus came to inaugurate. Whereas the socially and politically oppressed people, the so-called sinners and tax collectors, who came into the vineyard late, were looked down upon by the elites and shunned as unworthy of respect and God's blessings. To those elites whose ways are far from God's ways and thoughts, there's a wake-up call that God's grace is unmerited. It belongs to those who are humble and simple, the poor and those crushed by society, the sinners and lowly. If we would like to belong to God's Kingdom, if we would be the disciples of Jesus, then we must open our lives entirely to God's ways and surrender to his love. Regardless of who came early or who came late, God has a warm welcome to everyone, as he looks into our hearts and evaluates our life on the basis of love and service. Jesus' beatitudes would an authentic measure of our discipleship. Therefore, let's "seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near."

Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul (1580-1660), **Wednesday September 27, 2023:** St. Vincent founded the Congregation of the Mission (the Vincentians), established confraternities of charity for physical and spiritual help of the poor and sick, founded along with St. Louise de Marillac another Religious Order called the Daughters of Charity. He is the patron saint of all charitable societies. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which does admirable charitable work in many parishes and dioceses, was founded by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

Feast of St. Lorenzo Ruiz, Thursday September 28:
Protomartyr of the Philippines. Happy Feast to the Filipino Community of St. Elizabeth.

Feast of Archangels Michael, Gabrial, and Raphael, Friday September 29: St. Michael appears in Daniel's vision and in the Book of Revelation. St. Gabriel appears in Daniel's visions and in the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Raphael appears in the Book of Tobit. The Archangels carry out God's mission and communicate his message to the human beings. They wage battles on behalf of God and against the powers of evil. It's amazing that in a secularized world, angels are still spoken of positively in popular culture and media and are believed in.
Feast of St. Jerome, **Saturday September 30:** Famous for translating the Bible into Latin (Vulgate) from Greek and Hebrew. He said: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." We would do well as Catholics to pay more attention to reading and meditating on the sacred Scriptures. Why not just start with one Gospel and complete reading it prayerfully?

Humor: 1. Some things are best left as they are: An enthusiastic young man who had just graduated as a plumber was taken to see the Niagara Falls. He studied it for a minute, then said. "I think I can fix this." 2. A teacher was giving a lecture on modern inventions. "Can any of you mention something of importance that did not exist fifty years ago?" she asked. One bright lad in the front row raised his hand eagerly and said. "Me!"

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota