

# From the Pastor's Desktop

## A Message from Father Charles Puthota

October 1, 2023



### Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Faith Formation Parents Meeting:** Last Saturday September 23, after the 8:30 a.m. Mass, I spoke to the parents, teachers, and students of our Faith Formation program. I'm grateful and joyful for their presence and for enrolling their children in our program. We keep proclaiming the good news and inspiring them to be engaged in the life of the parish. I'm expecting the students to attend the Saturday Mass at 8:30 a.m. in our church and then continue their classes downstairs. Mass and class will be a combined program every Saturday for these students. I thank the parents and teachers for this cooperation and collaboration.

**Maui Fire Victims Special Collection:** On the weekend of September 16 and 17, our parish took up a special second collection for the Maui wildfire victims. Thank you for generously donating \$1,188, which has been mailed to Catholic Charities Hawaii with my personal note, assuring them of our parish's continued prayers for the victims.

**Synod starting this month in Rome:** This October 4 through 29, the first session of the Synod on Synodality is meeting in Rome. Let's keep the Synod in our prayers. The theme is: Communion, Participation, Mission.

**Month devoted to Rosary:** Traditionally, the month of October is devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary. October 7 is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. As we pray the Rosary, the mysteries we meditate on are those intimately connected with the life of Jesus, Mary, and our own pilgrimage of life. We are not outsiders but insiders and participants in these divine mysteries. Maybe, we could think about praying the Rosary every day of October. At St. Elizabeth Church, there are gorgeous stained-glass windows depicting the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries of the Rosary. As we look up on them, let's lift up our hearts and minds to God, who through those divine mysteries has brought about new and everlasting life and purpose and meaning for our everyday existence.

**Sunday October 1: Feast of St. Therese of Child Jesus:** Traditionally the feast of this amazing and awesome saint, only 24 years old when she died, is celebrated on October 1, but this year, since it falls on a Sunday, it is not celebrated liturgically. However, we could keep some of the insights of this saint in the forefront of our lives. I had the privilege of visiting this saint's shrine at Lisieux in Northern France some years ago and felt touched by her spirit. Again, I'll be visiting her shrine again early November this year. We could reflect on these three perspectives. 1. Little Flower: Therese called herself "the Little Flower" because she did not think she was worthy to be a great flower like a rose or lily. She was content not to be a great saint. It was enough for her to be little flower by the mountainside, still able to get a loving glance from God. 2. Little Way: She felt she was not called to do earth-shaking things for God. It was enough for her to do the ordinary, everyday things with much love: ordinary things to be done with extraordinary love and energy. This is called the Little Way. 3. Your Name is written in Heaven. As a little girl, when she was

carried by her father in the evenings, she would say, "Daddy, my name is written in heaven." Our names are all written in heaven too. How shall we love and serve God and others because our names are written in heaven?

**Monday October 2, Feast of the Guardian Angels:** The secular culture surprisingly seems to hold the angels in high esteem. The mystery of angels seems to enthrall people, even those who do not seem to have a firm belief in God. This might be a starting point for them: that the angels are God's agents and messengers, they operate at God's bidding, with a mission to promote, protect, and proclaim. The angels---the Archangels and Guardian Angels---are created by God to promote God's ways, to protect people from harm, and to proclaim God's message to people. God has sent us each one of us a guardian angel to be close to us, to whisper his message of presence and love, to keep us from straying into danger. Here are a couple of prayers to our guardian angels: 1. "O angel of God, my holy guardian, given to me from heaven, enlighten me this day, and save me from all evil. Instruct me in doing good deeds, and set me on the path of salvation. Amen." 2. "Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen."

**Wednesday, October 4, Feast of St. Francis of Assisi:** If only people embraced the values of Jesus as St. Francis did, Christianity would be completely transformed. He is the patron saint of our own beautiful city of San Francisco. His life is characterized by his love for poverty and simplicity, his reverence for creation, his spirit of joy and gratitude, his desire to be like Jesus, his service to the poor, his love for the Church, his desire to bring about peace and reconciliation---these are a few blessings we could practice. Here's his famous prayer: *Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

**Think About It:** "Life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale." –Hans Christian Andersen.

**Humor:** A mother superior, while travelling on a plane, was offered a cigarette by a fellow passenger. The witty nun, as affable as ever, said, "No thanks. One habit is enough for me."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota