

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

October 22, 2023



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

This Sunday October 22, 2023 is World Mission Sunday: Pope Francis, in his message for World Mission Sunday 2023, reflects on the theme "Hearts on fire, feet on the move," based on the story of the disciples who encounter Jesus on their way to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35): "Those two disciples were confused and dismayed, but their encounter with Christ in the word and in the breaking of the bread sparked in them the enthusiastic desire to set out again towards Jerusalem and proclaim that the Lord had truly risen....So let us set out once more, illumined by our encounter with the risen Lord and prompted by his Spirit. Let us set out again with burning hearts, with our eyes open and our feet in motion. Let us set out to make other hearts burn with the word of God, to open the eyes of others to Jesus in the Eucharist, and to invite everyone to walk together on the path of peace and salvation that God, in Christ, has bestowed upon all humanity."

On this day, we pray and reflect on the mission of the Church and our own personal call to mission. Let's respond to the call to be "missionary disciples" for our times and in our circumstances and neighborhoods. This Mission Sunday, we are also invited to support the Pontifical Mission Societies, which foster missionary cooperation on both the spiritual and material levels for the areas of our world most in need of the Good News of God's love.

October, a Month Dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary: Angelus: V/. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, **R/.** And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen. **V/.** Behold the handmaid of the Lord, **R/.** Be it done unto me according to your Word. Hail Mary... **V/.** And the Word was made flesh, **R/.** And dwelt among us. Hail Mary... **V/.** Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, **R/.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts: that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Word of God: 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time: The Gospel event this Sunday raises the question: what belongs to God? The simple answer is: Everything. So what would it entail? In the words of the famous poet and playwright T.S. Eliot: “costing not less than everything.” This is what is expected of us in our dedication and commitment to God. Jesus’ words “repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” have the profound meaning that, while we have to fulfill the necessary and legitimate civic duties and responsibilities, our ultimate fulfillment as human beings would come from the fact that we need to “repay to God what belongs to God.” God has given us everything and everything we need to return to God in faith and gratitude. We surrender to his love because we owe everything to God. Everything belongs to God; even Caesar belongs to God. Caesar had better repay everything to God! There is a prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola from his classic “Spiritual Exercises” that captures the essence of the Gospel this Sunday. It’s the “suscipe” prayer: “Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To you, O Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, for this is sufficient for me.”

Synod on Synodality: This synod (the first session) is taking place now in Rome and will conclude on October 29. The second session will take place in 2024. Let’s keep this process of dialogue and deliberation in our prayers. The Church is in the modern world and an integral part of the modern world and as such is called upon to address “the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties” of the world. While we look at our own inner structures and workings as a Church, the more urgent need is how to relate the Church to the world and the world in turn to the Church. While we might be doing the “inward looking,” we are at the same time impelled by the Spirit of Christ to be “outward looking.” The Church’s identity and mission is to be the light to the world, to be a community of love and service, to be a shining example of what the Kingdom of God looks like in the world.

A Couple of Stories to Think About: 1. Said a world-famous violinist about his success in playing Beethoven’s Violin Concerto: “I have splendid music, a splendid violin and a splendid bow. All I need to do is bring them together and get out of the way.” 2. “What is that door doing under your arm?” “It’s the front door of my house. I lost the key, and am taking it to have a fresh key made.” “Make sure you don’t lose the door now, or you won’t be able to enter your house.” “Well, I left a window open just to be on the safe side.”

Quotable Poetry Quotes: “I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)” – E.E. Cummings. “We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.” – T.S. Eliot.

Church Humor: 1. “Did you hear Robinson snoring in church this morning?” It was simply awful.” “Yes, I did---he woke me up.” 2. “When I look at the congregation,” the minister told the audience, “I ask myself, ‘where are the poor?’ But then, when I look at the collection, I say to myself, ‘where are the rich?’” 3. A pastor got up one Sunday and announced to the congregation: “I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it’s still out there in your pockets.”

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota