

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

September 22, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Cantwell Hall Parking Area: This parking lot has been given a new asphalt pavement and we are still waiting for the new striping to be completed. Having secured this lot with a new fence and the new asphalt pavement, I'd like to pay attention to the needs of Cantwell Hall inside, such as floor, painting, windows, etc. I have hired a painting company to do the interior painting of Cantwell. The painting work has already started. Given the size of the work, it is going to take about a month to complete. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Word of God: Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time: In the Gospel this Sunday, Jesus continues with his prediction (which we saw in last Sunday's reading) about his suffering and death. He is the Christ, the Messiah, not in the worldly sense, but one who suffers and dies: "The Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise." To his disciples who were jockeying for power and prominence, Jesus expresses his values that run against those the world often cherishes: "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." As followers and disciples of Jesus, we are to rearrange our worldly desires of hungering for power, position, fame, wealth, prominence, authority, glamor, praise, etc. Yes, we can be the first and prominent, but that will be by becoming the last and servants of others. This is what Jesus himself practiced in his life. Are we ready to live by a different set of values from what we naturally are drawn to? Are we ready to march to a different drummer?

Last Sunday, Catechetical Sunday: The theme of Catechetical Sunday 2024 was "Lord, when did we see you hungry?" We honored the catechists by expressing gratitude and giving them certificates. I would like to thank our parish catechists. Thank you for your dedication and generosity. Catechetical Sunday is a timely opportunity to reflect on the role that each baptized person plays in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. Catechetical Sunday is an opportunity for all to rededicate ourselves to this mission as a community of faith.

Pope Francis' Completes Recent Apostolic Journeys: Francis visited Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singapore over a span of 12 days. The 87-year-old pope, who in recent years has suffered bouts of ill health, appeared in good form throughout the trip, maintaining a packed schedule and headlining more than 40 events.

Highlights of the journey included a trip to a township of some 12,000 people on the edge of the Papua New Guinean jungle, in which the pope brought hundreds of kilograms of items to help support the local population, including medicines, clothing and toys for children. The pope also celebrated a Mass in East Timor with a crowd of some 600,000 people, nearly half the country's population of 1.3 million, in one of the largest ever turnouts as a proportion of a country's population for a Mass during a papal visit. East Timor, 96% Catholic, was the only Catholic majority country of the pope's tour.

Francis' 12-day trip was the longest yet of his papacy, and among the longest in papal history. Upon landing in Rome, Francis will have clocked nearly 33,000 km (20,500 miles). The pope, who suffers from knee and back pain, used a wheelchair throughout the trip. He kept all his scheduled appointments. In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, Francis issued a joint declaration with the national grand imam calling for global climate action. In Singapore, he urged the government in one of the world's leading financial hubs to seek fair wages for the country's million-plus lower-paid foreign workers.

Francis has prioritized trips to places never visited by a pope, or where Catholics are a small minority. He was only the second pope to visit three of the four countries on his itinerary. In Papua New Guinea, Francis offered a small insight into how he thinks of the task of leading the 1.4-billion-member global Catholic Church, and visiting Catholics around the world. In a spontaneous comment to a group of young people, he made a usual request that they pray for him. And then, emphasizing his need for prayers, he added: "This job is not easy." (Reuters)

Blessing of Animals next Sunday: Immediately following the 10.30 a.m. Mass next Sunday, September 29, to mark the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi (October 4), I will be blessing the animals.

Monday, September 23: Feast of Pius Pietrelcina, aka Padre Pio (1887-1968): This Italian Capuchin Franciscan priest was canonized by Pope John Paul II on June 16, 2002. Over 300,000 people gathered for the canonization ceremony. He is known for his work with the poor and his piety and humility. During his Mass in 1918, Padre Pio had a vision of Jesus at the end of which he received the stigmata in his hands, feet, and side. People came to see him from all over the world. He heard confessions every day and blessed the sick. He spent 50 years at the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo. He would often say, "I only want to be a poor friar who prays." He had great devotion to prayer and the Eucharist.

Friday, September 27: Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul: This French saint renewed the clergy and defended the poor and the abandoned. He founded in 1625 the Congregation of the Missions (also called Vincentians) who today number some 3,165 members, who are mission preachers and seminary educators. With St. Louise de Marillac, he founded the Daughters of Charity. St. Vincent de Paul is the patron saint of charities, hospitals, and prisoners. He died in 1660. Later in 1833, the Society of Vincent de Paul, founded by Frederic Ozanam in Paris, took St. Vincent de Paul as its patron. This Catholic charity organization is now serving the poor in 153 countries around the world.

Humorous Truth: A Weekly Reminder: Without God, our week would be: Sincday, Mournday, Tearsday, Wasteday, Thirstday, Fightday, and Shatterday. Remember seven days without God makes one weak!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota