

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

October 13, 2024



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Word of God, 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B: The gospel portrays a haunting story of a man who wants to follow Jesus more closely but is unable to because of his possessions. Then Jesus goes on to give his reflections on how our wealth can prevent us from being the persons God calls us to be. "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle rather than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." When we choose to rely on our possessions, we might come to have a false sense of security about life; that we could somehow be happy because of things we accumulate; that we do not have to bother with putting our trust in and dependence on God. Jesus gives many teachings about how to approach wealth. Wealth is a servant, a slave, not our master. We need to use everything, as St. Ignatius of Loyola would say, in so far as they help us to fulfill the purpose God has for each one of us. If things prevent us from being truly happy and internally free, then they are hindrances. Life is full of choices; the ones that may be helpful for one may not be meant for someone else. We have to honestly before God choose those that will bring peace and happiness to our minds and hearts.

October, a Month Dedicated to the BVM: Some images of Mary for me are very striking and have been spiritually nourishing and comforting. One is the way Mary intervenes and helps the wedding family at Cana. She could have stayed on the sidelines when the party ran out of wine, but she gets engaged. She can't bear to see the family come to embarrassment. She approaches Jesus that he should do something, but he hesitates saying his hour has not yet come. But Mary persists and tell the workers "to do whatever he tells you to do." Jesus turns water into wine as the first "sign" of his manifestation to the world. Mary's role here to me is amazing and absolutely refreshing. She helps those in need. She is always looking out for us and reaches out to us. She constantly approaches her son entreating him on our behalf. Praying the Rosary is one of the ways we could emotionally keep in touch with the Blessed Mother.

Tuesday, October 15: Feast of St. Teresa of Avila. St. Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) was a Spanish mystic, Carmelite nun, and reformer of her religious Order. Known for her profound spiritual writings, she authored "The Interior Castle" and "The Way of Perfection," which explored deep prayer, union with God, and the soul's journey toward spiritual perfection. Teresa co-founded the Discalced Carmelites, emphasizing poverty, simplicity, and contemplative prayer. She experienced mystical visions and is recognized for her deep devotion to Christ. In 1970, she became the first woman to be named a Doctor of the Church, honoring her theological contributions.

The Prayer of St. Teresa of Avila: Nada te turbe, nada te espante, todo se pasa; Dios no se muda. La paciencia todo lo alcanza; Quien a Dios tiene, nada le falta; Solo Dios basta. Translation: Let nothing disturb you, nothing surprise you, all things pass; God does not change. Patience wins everything; whoever holds onto God lacks nothing; God alone is enough.

Friday, October 18: Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist **St. Luke the Evangelist** is traditionally recognized as the author of the *Gospel of Luke* and the *Acts of the Apostles* in the New Testament. He is one of the four Evangelists and is often symbolized by an ox or calf, reflecting the themes of sacrifice in his Gospel. Here are key aspects of St. Luke's life and legacy: **1. Background and Profession:** St. Luke is believed to have been a Greek physician from Antioch, a major city in ancient Syria (now Turkey). This background explains the attention to detail and healing themes found in his writings. As a physician, his writing style in the Gospel of Luke is known for its clarity and precision, especially when describing medical conditions and miracles of healing. **2. Role as a Historian and Writer:** Luke's *Gospel* is notable for its emphasis on the universality of Jesus' message, highlighting Christ's compassion for Gentiles, women, the poor, and marginalized people. The *Acts of the Apostles*, also attributed to him, provides a detailed history of the early Christian church, including the spread of Christianity through the Roman Empire and the missionary journeys of St. Paul. **3. Association with St. Paul:** St. Luke was a close companion of St. Paul, accompanying him on many of his missionary journeys. Paul refers to Luke as "the beloved physician" in *Colossians 4:14* and mentions him as being present during his final imprisonment in *2 Timothy 4:11*. Luke's writings in *Acts* are considered valuable for understanding the early Christian community and Paul's work. **4. Unique Themes in Luke's Gospel:** Infancy Narratives: The Gospel of Luke contains detailed accounts of the birth and early life of Jesus, including the Annunciation, Visitation, and the nativity story. Parables: Some of the most famous parables, such as the *Good Samaritan* and the *Prodigal Son*, are found only in Luke's Gospel. Focus on Prayer and the Holy Spirit: Luke emphasizes prayer and the workings of the Holy Spirit throughout both his Gospel and *Acts*. **5. Patronage:** St. Luke is the patron saint of physicians, surgeons, artists, and butchers, given his background as a healer and his detailed, compassionate portrayal of human suffering and healing in his writings.

Humor of St. Teresa of Avila: St. Teresa of Ávila, alongside her deep spirituality, had a great sense of humor, which shines through in some amusing stories: **1. Teresa and the Donkey:** Once, while traveling in poor weather, her cart overturned, leaving her in the mud. Frustrated, she prayed, "Lord, if this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few!" It shows her candid relationship with God. **2. Playful Teasing:** Teresa loved to laugh. When she was once served a lavish meal at a convent, she joked, "There is a time for penance and a time for partridge," reminding her fellow nuns that balance is important. **3. A Little Mischief:** Teresa would at times pretend to be drowsy during long sermons. She had a playful streak, blending deep spirituality with lightheartedness. **4.** At the beginning of her autobiography, she says, "Having virtuous and God-fearing parents would have been enough for me to be good if I were not so wicked." **5.** She didn't have time for false piety. She once said, "From silly devotions and sour-faced saints, good Lord, deliver us." **6.** She wrote: "A sad nun is a bad nun...I am more afraid of one unhappy sister than a crowd of evil spirits...What would happen if we hid what little sense of humor we had? Let each of us humbly use this to cheer others."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota