

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

January 19, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**New Year 2025:** About three weeks into the New Year, we are still in the freshness of the newness of 2025, a new gift of time given to us by God to continue to work out our destiny. We are still luxuriating in the brightness and beauty of the New Year, soaked in the warm glow of Christmas. What is the meaning of the "New Year"? There is nothing out there that is new. Time flows continuously like a river. It's we who have divided time as days, weeks, months, and years. But seconds and minutes and hours keep ticking away inexorably. These divisions and calculations of time are of human making. Time in itself is nothing new. What is really new is what we bring to time. What are the new things we will bring into this chunk of time called the New Year 2025? If we do not bring a fresh outlook and a desire to start anew and a determination to change ourselves for the better, then there would really be no difference between the last day of 2024 and the first day of 2025. The New Year is a reminder that God is giving us more time to catch up with things deeply human and deeply divine. It is more time given for us to get it right. It is another opportunity for us to try again and rearrange our lives --- and to become the persons according to God's plan and purpose. May we be engaged in this sacred process of being and becoming the children of God and the disciples of Jesus in 2025.

**Word of God: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time:** There are some insights we could keep in our hearts and ponder over them as we meditate on the first "sign" of Jesus in John's Gospel: the turning of water into wine at the wedding at Cana. One, that Jesus is present in our social events, not just spiritual events. In the church and in our homes and out there on Main Street and Market Street, Jesus is present everywhere. The mystery of the Incarnation is that he inserts himself into the thick of our lives and that he has become one with us. He is "on the way" with us. Everything is steeped in sacredness because of his constant and continuous grace and presence. Two, when the party runs out of wine, he is ready to intervene and do something about it. Wine could represent the gift of joy, the sense of well-being, a sense of security. When we run out of joy and energy in life, Jesus is there to replenish our supplies, so that we may experience "joie de vivre." Three, this event foreshadows the Last Supper and the Eucharist, when Jesus will turn wine into his blood and feed us. Four, Mary his mother too is invited to the celebration. She is always ready to speak on behalf of us to her son. Five, Mary's instruction that we must do whatever Jesus tells us to do is a reminder always for us to follow Jesus and become authentic disciples and apostles. Six, John the evangelist calls it "the beginning of the signs," implying that there are more signs to come and in all these signs, there is revelation, epiphany, of Jesus so that we could come to believe in Jesus and receive not just life, but abundant life.

**Spirituality of the Ordinary Time in the Liturgical Year --- Focus on Jesus:** The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord celebrated on January 12 brings the Christmas season to a close. The liturgical “ordinary time” begins from January 13 through March 04. Then the season of Lent begins March 05 with Ash Wednesday. The Ordinary Time in the liturgical calendar is a kind of technical term to say that this time is outside the special seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Though called ordinary, it is still a time when we walk with Jesus and meditate on his teachings, healings, skirmishes with the powers of evil, and the proclamation of the Kingdom in word and deed. Let’s keep asking the basic questions: who is Jesus to me in my present stage of life? What does he say to me? What do I speak to him about? How does he enter my thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds? How does he relate to my joys and sorrows, my hopes and disappointments? Searching for answers to these fundamental Christological and existential questions would lead us to the discovery of meaning and purpose for our lives now and in the ultimate sense.

**Saturday, January 25---Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul:** You might want to check online two famous paintings by Caravaggio entitled “Conversion of St. Paul” and “Conversion on the Way to Damascus,” both of which deal with the theme of the feast day we celebrate on January 25. St. Paul’s conversion marked a momentous turn for the early Church which until then had been a small sect within the Jewish religion. Paul took the gospel to the non-Jewish people such as the Romans and Greeks. He became the apostle to the gentiles. That’s how Christianity spread quickly beyond the narrow geographical and religious confines. Thanks to St. Paul, our ancestors embraced the faith and that’s how we are all Christians today. St. Paul was an unlikely candidate for the mission, given the fact that he had been eager to wipe out the early Christians. A persecutor became the most ardent promoter. A sinner was called to grace and entrusted with the sacred task of making Christ known to the world. Personal conversion and our proclamation of the Gospel through faith and service are themes we could pray over on this Feast Day.

**Think About It:** “I wish more people were fluent in silence.”

**Humor:** 1. A Faith Formation teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied: Because they couldn’t get a baby sitter.” 2 Church Bulletin Bloopers: A. Weight Watchers will meet at 7 p.m. Please use large double door at the side entrance. B. Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

Wishing you the joys, hopes, and blessings of God in the New Year 2025!

Your Friend and Pastor,

Fr. Charles Puthota