

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

January 26, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Jubilee Year 2025: Theme: Pilgrims of Hope: Jubilee 2025 opened Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m., with the rite of the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican immediately before Pope Francis celebrated midnight Mass. Holy Doors were also opened at Rome's three other major basilicas: St. John Lateran on Dec. 29, St. Mary Major on Jan. 1, and St. Paul's Outside the Walls on Jan. 5. A Holy Door was also opened Dec. 26 at Rebibbia Prison, a Roman prison Pope Francis has visited twice before to celebrate Mass and wash inmates' feet on Holy Thursday.

The doors represent the passage to salvation Jesus opened to humanity. In 1423, Pope Martin V opened the Holy Door in the Basilica of St. John Lateran – the Diocese of Rome's cathedral – for the first time for a jubilee. For the Holy Year of 1500, Pope Alexander VI opened Holy Doors at Rome's four main basilicas. At the end of a holy year, the Holy Doors are formally closed and then bricked over by masons. (America Magazine).

The Jubilee Year will offer the faithful opportunities to participate in various jubilee events at the Vatican and in their own dioceses. For pilgrims who cannot travel to Rome, bishops around the world are expected to designate their cathedrals or a popular Catholic shrine as special places of prayer for Holy Year pilgrims, offering opportunities for reconciliation, indulgences, and other events intended to strengthen and revive faith. (USCCB)

Word of God, Third Sunday in Ordinary Time: In the Gospel Jesus reads in the Nazareth synagogue a passage from Isaiah. It is a towering statement of prophecy that is to be fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus says that "this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." The Spirit of God anoints Jesus to proclaim the good news to the poor and to bring liberty to those in bondage, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. Jesus' mission is being fulfilled in our lives today. To us who are poor (those who depend on God for everything in life), Jesus brings the glad tidings. We will be blessed, graced, upheld, empowered, and healed. Our areas of blindness to truth, peace, love, and justice, Jesus will heal and give us a new sight, a new vision. To us who are oppressed by various forces and situations, to us who are in bondage of various powers, addictions, and attachments, Jesus brings freedom and joy. He wants us to be free with the inner freedom that the children of God deserve. He wants us to be able to see clearly and deeply into life. Unless we enjoy these blessings, we cannot help others on their journey. Jesus' mission is being fulfilled in our lives and families, in the Church and the world.

Tuesday, January 28, Feast of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Doctor of the Church: "To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible," said Thomas Aquinas. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) was a Dominican friar, theologian, and philosopher, regarded as one of the greatest minds in Western thought. He synthesized Christian theology with

Aristotelian philosophy, emphasizing the harmony between faith and reason. His masterpiece, *Summa Theologica*, is a systematic exploration of theology, addressing topics like the nature of God, ethics, and salvation. Aquinas formulated the Five Ways, logical arguments for God's existence, based on observation and natural law. A proponent of Scholasticism, he profoundly influenced Catholic doctrine and Western philosophy. Canonized in 1323, he was later declared a Doctor of the Church, earning the title "Angelic Doctor." Aquinas' thought continues to shape theological and philosophical discussions, and his integration of reason and faith remains central to Catholic education.

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal 2025 Launch, February 16-17 Weekend: I'm looking forward to your continued support as in previous years. My letter to the whole parish with the details will be sent in the next three weeks or so.

Friday, January 31, Feast of St. John Bosco: Canonized in 1934, Don Bosco is a patron saint of youth, educators, and vocational training. He is also known as the "Apostle of Youth." St. John Bosco (1815-1888), popularly known as Don Bosco, was an Italian Catholic priest, educator, and founder of the Salesians of Don Bosco. Born in a poor family in Castelnuovo d'Asti, he dedicated his life to the education and spiritual growth of disadvantaged youth. Inspired by his deep faith and vivid dreams about his mission, Bosco pioneered the "Preventive System" of education, emphasizing reason, religion, and kindness. He created oratories as safe spaces where young people could learn, play, and grow morally. In 1859, he founded the Salesians, a religious order focused on youth education, and later co-founded the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians with St. Mary Mazzarello for young women. His legacy endures in schools and charitable works worldwide, embodying his motto: "Give me souls, take away the rest." He is first canonized saint in whose honor a national holiday was declared in Italy. He is patron saint of editors. The Salesians today number over 15,270 members.

Parish Lenten Retreat: Saturday, March 22, 2025: Please put it on your calendar.

A Story to Ponder: Husband: "I'm going to work hard, and some day we are going to be rich." Wife: "We are rich already, dear, for we have each other. Some day we may have money."

Quotable Quote: "Don't believe everything you think."

Humor: 1. Mrs. Smartt was fumbling in her purse for her offering when a large television remote fell out and clattered into the aisle. The curious usher bent over to retrieve it for her and whispered, "Do you always carry your TV remote to church?" "No," she replied, "but my husband refused to come with me this morning, and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally." 2. During a Sunday service, the pastor asked the congregation for their intentions. There were the usual requests to pray for sick people and the acknowledgments for those who helped when a parishioner died. The somber mood was broken when the last intention was heard. A woman stood up and said, "My granddaughter turned 16 this week and received her driver's license. Let us pray for us all."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota