

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

June 29, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul :** This feast falls on this Sunday , June 29. At St. Peter's Square, huge statues of these two giants of saints are looking over the millions of visiting pilgrims who come from around the world: Peter who was given the keys of the Kingdom and Paul the mission to be the apostle to the gentiles. Peter's mission as the first pope and shepherd and Paul's ministry in propagating the risen Christ outside the borders of the Jewish lands have become the models of the Church: to preserve the mission and the tradition of the Church and to push constantly the frontiers of missionary activity. Peter denied Jesus three times and the tiple profession of his love for Jesus was all that Jesus asked for. Paul persecuted Jesus and his followers but he was to be transformed into the greatest promoter of Jesus and his Church. Both the saints gave their lives for Christ in witness to the fullness of life we are all called to embrace.

**Spirituality of the Ordinary Time:** This time began the day after Pentecost and will last till November 30, 2025, when we begin the Advent Season. One of the things I'd recommend is that we take the Bible seriously in this Ordinary Time. Every day we could read a passage, especially from the Gospels, meditate on what God is trying to tell us and then respond to it. Pope Francis some years ago was speaking to some people who commute each day to their work. He urged them to keep a pocket Bible and read, if possible, while they travel to and from their work. He said if they could find a seat and have protected themselves from potential pickpockets, they could spend a few minutes reading prayerfully from the pocket Bible or the Gospels. We could also buy, if possible, something like St. Joseph Weekday and Sunday Missal (in three volumes) for our daily Masses. Or follow USCCB Readings right on our cell phones! These are big helps for us in paying attention to the Word of God. All in all, this Ordinary Time which spans over six months is nothing ordinary; it's extraordinary because God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit continues to love us fiercely, care for us tenderly, fill us totally, and lead us gently toward generosity, love, forgiveness, and service.

**For Your Families and Friends in Need of Sacraments:** For Baptisms, Confessions, Anointing of the Sick, Weddings, Funerals, Quinceañeras, Blessing of homes/vehicles, please contact the parish office or talk to me. I'm ready and happy to serve you by meeting your needs and situations in creative and flexible ways. Do not hesitate to ask for help. I'll try to make the process as easy and accessible as possible. As late Pope Francis reminded us again and again, the Church is a mother. She is always happy and ready and willing and proud to embrace her children with generosity and satisfy their longings and desires by nourishing them with the Word and Sacrament.

**An Act of Unexpected Kindness:** The other day, after doing a burial service at Holy Cross cemetery in Colma, I stopped at Garden Club Restaurant in South San Francisco, for soup and salad. Everyone is so friendly and welcoming there. After I finished my lunch, I was told by Gilberto Vasquez, who works in the kitchen, that he had paid for my food. I was very surprised by this unexpected act of kindness. He knew I was a priest and wanted to show his appreciation for me and my ministry. When I thanked him for such wonderful kindness, all he wanted from me was that I pray for him and his family. I came away from there touched by such a joyful act of kindness, goodness, and generosity.

**Feast of St. Junipero Serra:** This feast, celebrated on July 1st, honors the devoted missionary who brought the Gospel to the indigenous peoples of California in the 18th century. A Spanish Franciscan priest, Serra founded nine missions and worked tirelessly to evangelize and serve Native communities. Canonized by Pope Francis in 2015, he is seen as a model of missionary zeal, humility, and perseverance. While acknowledging historical complexities, the Church venerates Serra for his holiness, commitment to Christ, and his role in the spiritual and cultural foundations of the Catholic faith in the Americas.

**Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle:** The Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle is celebrated on July 3. Known as “Doubting Thomas,” he is remembered for initially questioning Jesus’ resurrection but later proclaiming, “My Lord and my God!” after encountering the risen Christ. This feast honors his deep faith and transformation, highlighting the importance of trust in Christ. Tradition holds that Thomas traveled to India to spread the Gospel, where he was eventually martyred. He is revered as the patron saint of architects, builders, and India. His feast invites believers to grow in faith, even through doubt, and to boldly proclaim the Gospel.

**Quotable Quote:** “The art of losing isn’t hard to master; so many things seem filled with the intent to be lost that their loss is no disaster.” ---Elizabeth Bishop in “One Art.”

**Humor:** The inmate was aware that all prison mail passes through censors. When he got a letter from his wife asking about the family garden---“Honey, when do I plant potatoes? ---he wrote back. “Do not, under any circumstances, dig up our old garden spot. That’s where I buried all my guns.” Within days his wife wrote back, “Six investigators came to the house. They dug up every square inch of the back yard.” By return mail she got his answer: “Now is the time to plant potatoes.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota