

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

July 13, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Summer Musings: Summer has come. In the Northern Hemisphere, it started on June 20 (the summer solstice) and will officially end on September 22 (the autumnal equinox). The winter and spring are over. We have had some pretty warm days, and we longed for chilly days. Sure enough, the chilly and windy days are back. We see the fog rolling over from the ocean and it's a welcome thing, a natural air-conditioning indeed! I sure like the long summer days. It's bright early and the light lasts late into the evening. The seasons are metaphors for our minds and hearts. What do we think? How do we feel? Nights come, and we think and feel all sorts of sad things, at times, but with the dawn we feel better. Things are not so bad as they had seemed in the night.

In summer, maybe we could do some new things. Maybe we could do something different from our routine lives. Perhaps go to the seaside and look at the majesty and might of the vast ocean crashing on the shore ceaselessly. Perhaps visit a museum. De Young, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), Legion of Honor, Asian Art Museum, CA Academy of Sciences, Exploratorium, Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD), and Contemporary Jewish Museum are among the museums worth visiting. If anyone would like me to accompany you to any of these museums, do let me know. I would love to contemplate art with you and enjoy the beauty in these creative masterpieces.

Maybe you could go to a park and look at the flowers and the little children running about. Golden Gate Park has so many soul-nourishing things to offer. The Japanese Tea Garden, Ghirardelli Square, Conservatory of Flowers, Ocean Beach, the Cliff House, etc. are worth visiting. Pier 39 is one of my favorites. Fisherman's Wharf draws so many from around the world, though its glory has somewhat dimmed post-Covid. We could play tourist in our own beautiful city. Close by, we have our own McLaren Park, which I haven't explored enough myself. Across the Golden Gate Bridge, Sausalito is picturesque and charming. If you want to venture out farther, the wine country is always alluring. When we do things different from our routine lives, our body and soul, our heart and imagination, are refreshed and renewed. Of course, gas prices these days are a big consideration. Coupled with high inflation, I suppose we all have to be careful and make good choices.

Word of God: 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time: The gospel reading is about the love God and love of neighbor. It is the summary of our lives as human beings and Christians. Who are we? We are created by God who is love. The reason for our creation is love. The purpose of our existence is love. The journey of our life is to be founded on love. The destination of our life is love. Loving God and loving others is what motivates everything that we do. All our examination of conscience addresses the question: "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus gives us the unforgettable parable of the Good Samaritan. Love of God has to be reflected in love of neighbor. They are two sides of the same coin. John in his first letter says: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother." (4:20,21). Jesus insightfully invites us that the love of God is dependent on the love of neighbor and that the love of neighbor will necessarily lead us to love of God. As we go about our daily lives, let's think about how we are doing in this area of love of God and others. This commandment of love should actually be applied to all things in our personal and public lives. In the choices we make as individuals, families, and nations, in politics and culture, in economics and public policy, in everything that we do, is love of God and love of others a consideration and guiding principle?

What is Catholicism? "Catholicism is a tradition that places great emphasis on tradition. It recognizes that the Bible itself is the product of tradition (or, more precisely, of many traditions). Before there were written texts the faith was handed on through proclamation, catechesis, worship, and personal example. For Catholicism, God speaks through means such as these, not only through words but through deeds as well. History in general and the history of the Church in particular are carriers of this divine revelation. Catholicism, therefore, not only reads its Sacred Scripture, but also its own corporate life and experience. As Pope John XXIII (d. 1963) once said, history itself is a teacher." (Richard McBrien in his influential book *Catholicism*)

A Wisdom Story to Ponder: The King's Ring: A king asked his wise men to create a ring that would make him calm in times of despair and humble in times of victory. They gave him a ring engraved with the words: "This too shall pass." **Wisdom:** All moments are temporary – good or bad. Cling to none.

Humor: 1. My boss was honest with me today. He pulled up to work with his sweet new car this morning and I complimented him on it. He replied, "Well, if you work hard, set goals, stay determined and put in long hours, I can get an even better one next year." 2. The wife and husband took a long, leisurely drive out to the country and pulled over to fill up their car's gas tank and tires... She was surprised to see that the station had a fee to fill the tires and asked him, "Why in the world do they charge for AIR?!" He responded, "Inflation."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota