

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

July 27, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

The Word of God: 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Today's Gospel (Luke 11:1-13) invites us into the heart of prayer. When the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, he gives them the Lord's Prayer—simple, direct, and filled with trust. Jesus reminds us that God is not distant or indifferent but a loving Father who listens. Like the friend at midnight, persistence in prayer shows not nagging, but faith. Our prayers may not always be answered in the way we expect, but God always gives what is truly good. "How much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" This is the greatest gift—God Himself. Let us deepen our trust, pray with boldness, and open our hearts to the Spirit's presence in our daily lives.

Quotes on Prayer: 1. "Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul." — *Mahatma Gandhi*. 2. "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." — *Martin Luther*. 3. "Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." — *St. Augustine*. 4. "God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer." — *St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa)*. 5. "The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays." — *Søren Kierkegaard*.

Stories on Prayer: 1. A Child's Prayer: A little girl knelt and said, "A-B-C-D-E..." Her mother asked, "What are you doing?" She replied, "I don't know the right words, so I'm giving God the letters. He can put them in the right order." Lesson: God hears the heart more than the words. Simple, honest, humble prayer is vital. 2. The Rabbi and the Farmer: A farmer told the rabbi, "I stopped praying. Nothing changed." The rabbi asked, "Do you still plow and plant even when the sky is dry?" "Yes," said the farmer. "Because I believe the rain will come." The rabbi smiled, "Then keep praying. Prayer is the seed. Trust the rain will come." Lesson: Prayer is an act of faith, not instant results. 3. The Empty Hands: A poor man went to the temple but had nothing to offer. Embarrassed, he simply stood and said, "Lord, I bring you my empty hands." A wise priest later told him, "Those may be the finest gift. Now God can fill them." Lesson: We don't need perfection or possessions to pray---just openness and humility.

July 31, Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits: He offered spiritual insights that have shaped Christian thought for centuries. His most enduring contribution is the **Spiritual Exercises**, a structured guide to discernment, prayer, and self-awareness. At its core is the idea that God can be found "**in all things**", urging believers to seek the divine not only in prayer but in everyday life. Ignatius emphasized "**discernment of spirits**", teaching that we must attentively observe our inner movements—consolation (peace, joy) and desolation (confusion, despair)—to understand God's will. His method helps individuals align decisions with their deepest, God-given desires. He also stressed "**indifference**"—not apathy, but freedom from unhealthy attachments—so one can choose what best serves God. The motto "**Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam**" (For the Greater Glory of God) reflects his drive to act with purpose and selflessness. Ignatius believed that love is shown more in **deeds than in words**, urging a faith expressed in action. His insights promote **deep self-reflection, humility, and trust in God's guidance**, encouraging believers to live intentionally, in service to others and to God. His legacy continues to inspire a spirituality that is both contemplative and mission-driven.

St. Ignatius' Prayer for Generosity: Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that I do your most holy will. Amen.

St. Ignatius' Suscipe (Receive) Prayer: "Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will - all that I have and call my own. You have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours, do with it as you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me."

Mission Cooperation Second Collection: On May 25, we took up the second collection for "Apostolic Life Community of Priests" working in Africa. Once a year, the Archdiocese assigns a missionary group for our support. The second collection amounted to \$836. I supplemented it by adding \$1,164 from the parish resources. The total amount of \$2000 was forwarded to the Archdiocese, who would in turn send it to the missionaries in Africa. Thank you for your generosity. Let's keep the Church's missionary activities close to our hearts and in our prayers.

A Wisdom Story: The Monk and the Scorpion: A monk saw a scorpion drowning in a river. He reached out to save it, but the scorpion stung him. Still, the monk tried again – and again, he was stung. A passerby said, "Why keep trying? It's in the scorpion's nature to sting." The monk replied, "And it is my nature to help. Why should I let his nature change mine?" Moral: Stay true to your values, even when others act against them.

Humor: 1. Off to work: A guy shows up late for work. The boss yells, 'You should've been here at 8.30!' He replies. 'Why? What happened at 8.30?'. 2. A genie and an idiot: Three guys stranded on a desert island find a magic lantern containing a genie, who grants them each one wish. The first guy wishes he was off the island and back home. The second guy wishes the same. The third guy says: 'I'm lonely. I wish my friends were back here.'

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota