

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

August 24, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal (AAA) Gratitude Luncheon: This Thank-You luncheon will be held on Sunday October 26 in Cantwell Hall for the 1.4% and More Circle donors, which is \$500 and more. Thank you for your generous donation to AAA. Please RSVP as early as possible to my invitation letter to be sent in the next few days. This event highlights our close relationship with the Archdiocese and our call to support the ministries undertaken at the Archdiocesan level. It also provides us an opportunity for us as a parish to work on projects collaboratively and make a success of it.

Word of God: 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C: We are invited this Sunday to pray over themes of inclusion, discipline, and the urgency of conversion. Isaiah envisions a global gathering where people from every nation and tongue come to worship the Lord. God's mercy and plan extend beyond borders and traditions. It's a powerful image of a universal Church – diverse, vibrant, and open to all who seek God.

But the Gospel adds a sobering note. When someone asks Jesus, "Will only a few be saved?" He doesn't answer directly. Instead, He urges: "Strive to enter through the narrow gate." Salvation is not about numbers or status; it's about effort, humility, and relationship. The narrow gate represents a life of discipline, truth, and daily conversion. It's not enough to say we know Jesus – we must live His teachings. Many will be surprised, Jesus says, because they assumed proximity to him was enough. But the real question is: does our life reflect his love and justice?

Hebrews reminds us that discipline is a gift from a loving Father. It may be painful at first, but it yields the "peaceful fruit of righteousness." God disciplines us not to punish, but to shape us – to strengthen our spiritual muscles, to help us walk the straight path.

God invites everyone, but we must respond with effort and humility. Let us not delay or presume. The door is open – but narrow. Let us enter with hearts that love, hands that serve, and lives that reflect the Gospel.

From the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: The Church: **What is the origin and the fulfillment of the Church?** The Church finds her origin and fulfillment in the eternal plan of God. She was prepared for in the Old Covenant with the election of Israel, the sign of the future gathering of all the nations. Founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming death and Resurrection, the Church has been manifested as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. She will be perfected in the glory of heaven as the assembly of all the redeemed of the earth. **What is the mission of the Church?** The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus Christ among all peoples. The Church constitutes on earth the seed and beginning of this salvific Kingdom. In what way is the Church a *mystery*? The Church is a mystery in as much as in her visible reality there is present and active a divine spiritual reality which can only be seen with the eyes of faith. What does it mean to say that the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation? This means that she is the sign and instrument both of the reconciliation and communion of all of humanity with God and of the unity of the entire human race.

Feast of St. Monica, Wednesday, August 27: We honor the devoted mother of St. Augustine. Renowned for her unwavering faith, patience, and perseverance in prayer, Monica became a model of Christian motherhood. Through her tears and petitions for over 30 years, she helped lead Augustine from a life of restlessness to conversion and sainthood. She is patroness of mothers, wives, and those who pray for wayward loved ones. Her feast reminds us of the transforming power of faith-filled persistence.

Feast of St. Augustine, Thursday, August 28: The Feast of St. Augustine, celebrated on August 28, honors one of the greatest Doctors of the Church, bishop of Hippo, and brilliant theologian. Born in North Africa in 354, Augustine lived a restless youth before being converted through the prayers of his mother, St. Monica, and the guidance of St. Ambrose. His famous words, “Our hearts are made for Thee, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in Thee,” capture his lifelong search for truth and love. As bishop, he defended the faith against heresies, wrote profound works such as *Confessions* and *The City of God*, and laid the foundations of Western Christian thought. His feast calls us to ongoing conversion, deeper love for God, and trust in divine grace that transforms our restless hearts into peace. Our current Pope Leo XIV is an Augustinian and is shaped by Augustinian spirituality and ideals.

Feast of the Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist, Friday, August 29: The Feast of the Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist commemorates the prophet who courageously prepared the way for Christ. John fearlessly proclaimed truth and called people to repentance, even confronting King Herod for his unlawful marriage. His bold witness cost him his life when he was beheaded at Herod’s command. This feast reminds us of the cost of discipleship, the power of truth, and the call to bear faithful witness to Christ.

Humor on Marriage: 1. **Romantic Expectations:** A husband asked, “What’s the key to a happy marriage?” His wife replied, “Listening.” He nodded. “Ah, so that’s why I’ve been happy for so many years—I just never knew what to say.” 2. **Marriage and Memory:** A husband told his wife he could never forget her birthday. She smiled. “Good,” she said, “because I could never forgive you if you did.” Marriage, he thought, was a combination of love and fear of anniversaries. 3. **The Question Trap:** A husband asked his wife, “Do I look fat in this shirt?” She paused, then said, “You look... comfortable.” He realized that in marriage, honesty is optional; diplomacy is mandatory.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota