

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

September 14, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Faith Formation: Last Sunday at the 8:30 a.m. Mass, the Faith Formation students, families, and catechists started their religious school year followed by their classes in Cantwell Hall. I welcomed and congratulated them on the task ahead this year. Thank you all for the great spirit of collaboration. It's wonderful for us to be able to participate at the Sunday Mass each week before attending the classes. That the families and catechists are all in agreement with this new development is most heartening. It's the mission of every parish to catechize and evangelize, especially the children and young people. Thanks to all for making the accommodation and reserving the front pews for Faith Formation families at 8:30 a.m. Sunday Masses.

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross: September 14: This Sunday we observe the Feast of the Cross. The popular hymn captures the spirit: "O Cross, erected above the world, cross of our Savior King." Tradition holds that in the fourth century, Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, looking for the holy places of Jesus' life, found three crosses during an excavation in Jerusalem and the cross of Jesus was identified by its miraculous powers. The cross immediately became an object of veneration. Tradition also has long held that the Holy Sepulcher Church in Jerusalem is built over the place of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. I have had the privilege and honor of celebrating Mass inside the tomb of Jesus and venerating the very place where the cross of Jesus stood. The cross, though a shameful means of death, became the holiest symbol of life, redemption, and reconciliation because of Jesus' death on the cross. We look upon Jesus on the cross and derive meaning and purpose for our own suffering: through the cross to the resurrection; through suffering to glory. This is the Christian way. It is the way of Christ our Lord.

Word of God: Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross: In the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we pray over how the instrument of suffering became the sign of salvation. In the first reading, we hear of the prophet's call to lift up God's word and live it faithfully, even in the midst of trials. Similarly, in the Gospel, Jesus tells Nicodemus: *"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."* The readings remind us that God's plan often unfolds in ways that appear paradoxical. What seems like weakness — the cross — becomes strength; what seems like defeat — death — becomes life. The cross is a sign of God's love, a love willing to endure suffering for the sake of humanity. In our own lives, we carry crosses in the form of challenges, disappointments, and sacrifices. When united with Christ, these crosses are not burdens alone — they become means of growth, compassion, and holiness. Today, we not only venerate the cross but also embrace it in our lives, trusting that through every trial, God's glory and love are revealed.

Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows September 15: This feast day falls on the day after the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Jesus and his mother Mary were profoundly with suffering. The Blessed Virgin Mary is closely aligned with the life of Christ. Mary's suffering is intimately connected with the suffering of Christ. Mary suffered because her only son Jesus suffered. Mary understands our suffering and shows us the redemptive meaning in suffering. The seven sorrows of Mary are: 1. The prophecy of Simeon. 2. The flight into Egypt. 3. The loss of Jesus for three days. 4. The carrying of the cross. 5. The crucifixion of Jesus. 6. Jesus is taken down from the cross. 7. The burial of Jesus.

Pope Leo XIV Inaugurates Borgo Laudato Si: On September 5, the Holy Father inaugurated Borgo Laudato Si at Castel Gaddolfo, the Papal Summer Residence. This is an expansive ecological and educational center, spanning about 135 acres, combining gardens, villas, archaeological sites, and farmland. It serves as a model for living out the teachings of Pope Francis' 2015 environmental encyclical *Laudato Si*. The Pope greeted workers, collaborators, students, benefactors, and their families, a gesture emphasizing the Village's community-oriented mission. The Pope traveled around the estate in an electric golf cart, underlining the Village's commitment to sustainable and eco-friendly practices. In the Liturgy of the Word and Rite of Blessing, the Holy Father said: "The care of creation...represents a true vocation for every human being....we are creatures among creatures, not creators." The renowned tenor Andrea Bocelli and his son Matteo performed a song at this event. The project reflects a holistic vision of faith, sustainability, education, love of creation, stewardship, and social justice. The vision of Pope Francis lives on!

A Widsom Story to Ponder: The Pebble in the Shoe: A traveler complained of the long, tiring road. Another noticed he walked unevenly. Inside his shoe was a small pebble. Sometimes, it is not the great distance but the small, unaddressed burdens that make the journey hardest.

Quotable Quotes: 1. "I do not pray for success. I ask for faithfulness." - *Mother Teresa*. 2. "The wise person doesn't give the right answers, but poses the right questions." - *Claude Levi-Strauss*. 3. "What happens is not as important as how you react to what happens." - *Ellen Glasgow*. 4. "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." - *Lao Tzu*. 5. *A Ute Indian Prayer:* "Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."

Humor: 1. A Higher Power: The Sunday School teacher began the week's lesson with a recap of the previous week's topic by saying, "We have been learning about how powerful the kings and queens were in Biblical times. But there is a higher power. Who can tell me what it is?" Six-year-old Peter blurted out, "I know, Aces." 2. Babysitter: A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied, "They couldn't get a babysitter."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota