

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

September 28, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Word of God: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C:** In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the powerful parable of the rich man and Lazarus. It's a story of contrasts – luxury and poverty, comfort and suffering, blindness and awareness. The rich man lives in extravagance, feasting daily while ignoring the beggar Lazarus, who lies at his gate, covered in sores and longing for scraps. The tragedy is not the man's wealth, but his indifference. He sees Lazarus every day and does nothing. His sin is not what he did – but what he failed to do. His heart is closed, his life insulated by comfort, and he misses the presence of God in the suffering at his doorstep.

After death, the roles are reversed. Lazarus is comforted in heaven, while the rich man suffers. Too late, he sees clearly and pleads for his brothers to be warned. But Abraham tells him, "They have Moses and the prophets." In other words, they already have God's Word – the call to justice, mercy, and compassion. If they do not listen now, no miracle will change them. This parable is a wake-up call. We are invited to examine our hearts and ask: Who lies at our gate today? Are we so absorbed in our own comfort that we fail to see those in need? Salvation is not about what we believe in theory but how we live in practice. May this Gospel shake us from complacency. Let us open our eyes, our hearts, and our hands – to recognize Christ in the poor and act with compassion.

**From the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: . How are non-Catholic Christians to be considered?** In the churches and ecclesial communities which are separated from full communion with the Catholic Church, many elements of sanctification and truth can be found. All of these blessings come from Christ and lead to Catholic unity. Members of these churches and communities are incorporated into Christ by Baptism and we so we recognize them as brothers. **How does one commit oneself to work for the unity of Christians?** The desire to restore the unity of all Christians is a gift from Christ and a call of the Spirit. This desire involves the entire Church and it is pursued by conversion of heart, prayer, fraternal knowledge of each other and theological dialogue.

**October 4: Feast of St. Francis of Assisi:** The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, celebrated on October 4, honors one of the most radiant lights of Christianity. Born in 1181, Francis renounced wealth and embraced a life of radical poverty, humility, and joyous love for all creation. He became a living icon of the Gospel, bearing the stigmata of Christ and calling all to deeper conversion through simplicity and peace. Founder of the Franciscan Order, he inspired a spiritual renewal rooted not in power but in the divine beauty of self-emptying love. His Canticle of the Creatures reveals a heart enraptured by the Creator, seeing divine presence in brother sun, sister moon, and all living beings. Canonized in 1228, St. Francis remains a timeless herald of reconciliation, ecological care, and evangelical joy. On this feast, the Church lifts her voice in gratitude for a saint who mirrored Christ so fully and embraced the cross with holy gladness.

**Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:** “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

**Famous Sayings of St. Francis of Assisi:** 1. Preach always; use words when necessary. 2. Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society. 3. While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart. 4. All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle. 5. The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will hear today.

**Blessing of Animals Next Sunday, October 5, immediately following the 10:30 a.m. Mass:** It is a cherished tradition held on or near October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and creation. You may bring your pets to be blessed, expressing gratitude for God’s creatures and acknowledging the bond between humans and animals. This blessing celebrates the goodness of creation and invites all to respect and care for animals as part of God’s divine plan.

**A Story to Ponder: The Stonecutter:** A stonecutter envied the powerful—merchant, king, sun, cloud, wind, mountain. Each time, he became what he desired, only to discover limits. At last, as mountain, he felt invincible—until a stonecutter chipped away at him. Realizing contentment is true strength, he wished again to be himself.

**Quotable Quotes:** “Keep your face towards the sunshine and shadows will fall behind you.” —Walt Whitman. “The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson.

**Humor:** 1. Two deacons were having a social drink at a bar when they saw their preacher go by. One of them became very upset. “I surely hope he didn’t see us.” “What difference does it make?” his friend replied. “God knows we’re in here.” “I know,” said the first deacon, “but God won’t tell my wife.” 2. The priest met Jane O and asked what she was concealing under her cape. She said it was holy water. The priest reached for the bottle, uncorked it and sniffed. “Why, Jane,” he exclaimed, “this isn’t holy water; this is gin.” Whereupon Jane crossed herself and said, “Glory be to God, another miracle.”

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota

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