

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

October 12, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Word of God: 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C: The theme of the Word of God this Sunday is of **saving faith** and the power of **gratitude**. In the Gospel, Jesus heals ten lepers, yet only one, a Samaritan outsider, returns to give thanks. All ten received a physical miracle, but the grateful Samaritan was granted a deeper grace: "Your faith has saved you." This shows that true healing extends beyond the physical; it is an encounter with God that transforms the heart. The First Reading provides an Old Testament parallel in Naaman, a Syrian foreigner. After being cured of leprosy, he, too, returned to express profound gratitude, recognizing that the God of Israel is the "only God in all the world." Both outsiders teach us that God's salvation is for all, and a heart moved to thanks is a heart open to true faith.

St. Paul, in the Second Reading, reminds us of the foundation of this faith: the unchained Word of God and the fidelity of Christ, who "remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself." Our faithfulness, particularly in moments of struggle, should be sustained by the hope of glory. When we return to God in gratitude, like the Samaritan, we acknowledge His faithfulness and receive the gift of salvation that leads to eternal glory. Let us, therefore, approach every day with a grateful heart.

World Mission Sunday (Next Sunday) on October 19, 2025: The theme: "**Missionaries of Hope Among all Peoples.**" This annual observance is a global call for Catholics to renew their commitment to the Church's universal mission through prayer and sacrifice. The theme, chosen by Pope Francis for the Jubilee Year of Hope, reminds every baptized person that they are called to be a messenger of Christ's hope in the world. The **collection** taken up on World Mission Sunday on October 19 is critical. It constitutes the Holy Father's **Universal Solidarity Fund**, which is distributed to over 1,100 mission dioceses across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. This money is essential for funding vital needs: building churches and chapels, supporting the training of priests, seminarians, and catechists, and providing healthcare, education, and pastoral programs in young or struggling mission territories. It is the primary means by which the global Church supports those on the frontiers of faith.

Feast of St. Teresa of Ávila, Wednesday, October 15: St. Teresa of Avila is one of the greatest mystics and reformers in the history of the Church. Born in 1515 in Ávila, Spain, Teresa entered the Carmelite Order and became a driving force for its renewal. With deep prayer and courage, she founded the Discalced Carmelites, emphasizing poverty, simplicity, and a life centered on contemplation. St. Teresa's writings, such as *The Interior Castle* and *The Way of Perfection*, remain treasures of Christian mysticism. She taught that prayer is "an intimate sharing between friends," a loving dialogue with the God who dwells within the soul. Despite opposition, illness, and misunderstanding, Teresa's joyful spirit and trust in God transformed her struggles into paths of holiness. Declared a **Doctor of the Church** in 1970, she reminds all Christians that holiness is attainable through love, perseverance, and

friendship with Christ. On her feast, we are invited to seek deeper prayer, to reform our hearts, and to find God in the ordinary duties of life. St. Teresa's own words inspire us still: *"Nada te turbe, nada te espante, Todo se pasa, Dios no se muda, La paciencia todo alcanza, Quien a Dios tiene, nada le falta, Solo Dios basta."* *"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things are passing away. God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices."*

Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, Saturday, October 18: St. Luke, one of the four Evangelists, is known as the author of the *Gospel according to Luke* and the *Acts of the Apostles*. A physician by profession and a companion of St. Paul, Luke was a Gentile convert who brought a universal perspective to the Gospel message. His writings emphasize God's mercy, compassion, and concern for the poor, the marginalized, and women. He portrays Jesus as the Savior of all people and highlights the joy of discipleship and the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke's Gospel contains beloved parables such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Rich Man and Lazarus. His literary style is elegant and deeply humane, reflecting a heart sensitive to human suffering and divine grace. Tradition holds that Luke was also an artist and painted the first icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Humor of St. Teresa of Ávila: 1. "No wonder You have so few friends!": One time, Teresa was traveling through Spain to visit one of her convents. Her cart broke down, she fell into the mud, and it began to rain heavily. She looked up to heaven and said, "Lord, if this is how you treat your friends, no wonder you have so few!" Her honesty and humor revealed her intimacy with God — she could complain and laugh with Him like an old friend. 2. "Lord, deliver us from sour-faced saints!" Teresa often said she preferred people with a sense of humor to those who were too grim about holiness. She once remarked, "A sad nun is a bad nun." For her, joy was a sign of true faith — she believed a saint should show the world that following God is not gloomy but delightful. 3. Her battle with levitation: During prayer, St. Teresa sometimes experienced levitation. She joked that she tried hard to hold on to the floor or grab the furniture so that the other sisters wouldn't notice. She said to God, half laughing, half pleading, "Lord, please don't do this to me in public — I have a reputation to keep!" 4. Teresa's kitchen theology: When a sister complained that she couldn't pray while doing chores, Teresa replied with her earthy wisdom: "God walks among the pots and pans." She knew holiness was not found only in ecstasy, but in peeling potatoes with love — and she could make you laugh while teaching it.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota

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