

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

February 8, 2026



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Word of God: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A:** On this Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, the readings remind us that faith is never meant to be hidden or passive. In the Gospel, Jesus declares, "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world." These words are not compliments but a clear mission for every disciple. Salt is effective only when it is used. It preserves, gives flavor, and resists decay. In the same way, Christian faith must shape the world around us. When faith becomes merely private, routine, or comfortable, it loses its power. Jesus' warning is loving, not harsh, because he knows how easily disciples can blend in and forget why they were chosen. Light, too, exists to shine. A lamp hidden under a basket serves no purpose. Jesus calls us to lives that make God's goodness visible, not for our own praise, but so that others may "give glory to your Father in heaven."

The prophet Isaiah makes this concrete: true worship is expressed through justice, generosity, and care for the poor. When such mercy is lived, light breaks forth like the dawn. St. Paul reminds us that this mission depends not on our strength or eloquence, but on God's power. Our light shines because Christ lives within us. Nourished by the Eucharist, may we leave ready to be salt and light in our daily lives.

**Tuesday, February 10, Feast of St. Scholastica:** St. Scholastica, sister of St. Benedict and founder of the Benedictine nuns, lived in sixth-century Italy. Known for her deep prayer life and devotion to God, she exemplified holiness in the quiet strength of community and contemplation. May her example inspire us to seek God earnestly and nurture faith-filled lives rooted in love and devotion.

**Wednesday, February 11, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes:** On the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, we recall Mary's 1858 apparitions to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France. A humble fourteen-year-old, Bernadette encountered Mary eighteen times at Massabielle, where she identified herself as the Immaculate Conception. Lourdes soon became a place of pilgrimage, healing, and grace. The feast invites us to prayer, penance, humility, and trust, and to seek Mary's intercession for healing, conversion, and renewed faith in our daily lives.

**Saturday, February 14: Happy Valentine's Day:** Let God's amazing and awesome love shine brightly in our love for one another. "Love is just love, it can never be explained." "I have fallen in love many times, always with you." "A hundred hearts would be too few to carry all my love for you." "You don't need someone to complete you, you only need someone to accept you completely." "Sometimes it is not about being together...it's about being there for each other." "There is only 1 thing 2 do. 3 words 4 you: I love you." "Anyone can catch your eye, but it takes someone special to catch your heart." "If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be hundred minus one day, so I never have to live without you." "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return." "My love for you is deeper than the oceans and higher than the mountains."

**AAA 2026 Launch on March 1:** The amount to raise for 2026 is \$34,588. You'll receive my letter. Please give what you can in support of the Archdiocesan ministries. Please consider donating 1.5% of the total amount, which is \$500.

**Lenten Retreat:** On Saturday, February 28, 2026. Theme: The Second Vatican Council. Please put it on your calendar. Do join us at the 8:30 a.m. Mass that day and for the sessions in Cantwell Hall followed by lunch. It would indeed be helpful for us to come together and get to know each other and reflect on certain spiritual themes as preparation for the season of Lent.

**Ash Wednesday:** Ash Wednesday is on February 18. Masses will be at 8:30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. We could start the anticipation of this holy, penitential season by thinking about our plans for prayer and penance. We could actually think about the three aspects of our existence: Body, Mind, and Spirit. What is it that the Lord is calling us to be? What are the things we could do to nourish and protect the health of our body, mind, and spirit?

**A Story to Ponder: The Great Flooding:** A man sat on his roof during a flood, praying for help. A boat came by, but he said, "No, God will save me." A second boat came, and he said the same. A helicopter arrived, and he still refused. Eventually, he drowned and asked God in heaven, "Why didn't You save me?" God looked at him and said, "I sent you two boats and a helicopter! What more were you looking for?"

**Valentine's Day Humor:** 1. Q. Did Adam and Eve ever have a date? A. No, they had an apple! 2. Did you hear about the bed bugs who fell in love? They're getting married in the spring! 3. How did the telephone propose to its girlfriend? He gave her a ring. 4. You are like dandruff because I just cannot get you out of my head no matter how hard I try. 5. "What did the stamp say to the envelope on Valentine's Day?" "I'm stuck on you!" 6. "I thought I won the argument with my wife as to how to arrange the dining room furniture. But when I got home the tables were turned." 7. I once fell in love with someone who only knew 4 vowels. They didn't know I existed." 8. What did the calculator say to the pencil?" "You can count on me." 9. "What did the light bulb say to the other light bulb?" "You light my world up." 10. "How can you get arrested on Valentine's Day?" "For stealing someone's heart."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota