

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

May 17, 2026



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Ascension Sunday:** Jesus was sent by the Father to become human like us and to proclaim the Kingdom and to suffer and die in order to save the human race from sin, death, and evil. This redemptive mission accomplished, Jesus now goes back to the Father. He does not leave us orphans, though. He will send us the Holy Spirit, which we will celebrate next Sunday (Pentecost). He has also assured us that he will be with us always, even to the end of time. During Jesus' public ministry, he could not go to every place and every nation. Now he commissions us to go and share the good news with everyone in the world. We are the messengers. Not only are we messengers. We are witnesses. All of us who have experienced Jesus as our way, the truth, and the life, we are to go and witness to others. The witnessing will entail a burning conviction (a personal experience) of Jesus and a persuasive expression of that conviction to others. In our words and deeds, in our values and vision, we are to make Christ known to the world. This is the meaning of the feast of Ascension. This is all the more important because of the widespread secularization of the world. Jesus has passed on the baton to us. We have to carry it to others. The relay race is on. We are to do our part in taking Jesus Christ to our own family and friends, and beyond. As missionary disciples, we are called to the "New Evangelization," sharing Christ's message with those closest to us. The Ascension is not a signal to wait idly for Jesus' return, but a mandate to act. We must embody his love through mercy, justice, and service to the vulnerable. As Christ's hands and feet, we are tasked with continuing his mission until his Second Coming. Are you ready?

**Month of May, Dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary:** The Angelus Prayer: The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary..... Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word. Hail Mary..... And the Word was made Flesh: And dwelt among us. Hail Mary..... Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

**Faith Formation Year-End Mass and May Crowning this Sunday:** This Sunday 8:30 a.m. Mass brings the Faith Formation program to a close for this school year. We shall do the promotion of students to the next year. We shall also distribute certificates to seven First Communion and four Confirmation students. Congratulations to the students and my deep gratitude to the catechists! I am delighted that the Faith Formation students and families attending the Sunday 8:30 a.m. Mass has been a blessing to them and to the whole parish. Thank you, parents, for being actively involved in the faith journey of your children and for being part of the Eucharistic celebration week after week. Also, at the 8:30 a.m. Mass this Sunday, there will be May Crowning. May our Blessed Mother be always close to us and lead us to her Son Jesus.

**A Prayer:** Some years ago, I had printed a personal prayer of mine in a parish bulletin, which seemed to give solace and guidance to many. I was surprised it struck a chord among people. It was a prayer that became dear to my friends Nita Ricotta and Margaret Collins, who recently passed away in their late eighties. Here is the simple prayer: **“Jesus, come meet me where I’m at this juncture of my life. Speak to me to my present needs. Heal me as I carry the burdens of my illnesses. Save me from myself and my loneliness and sadness. Touch me with your grace. Make my humdrum life shine with your love.”**

**A Story to Ponder:** Sinner: “Remember not my sins, oh Lord!” Lord: “What sins? I forgot them long ago. You’ll have to prod my memory.” Love keeps no record of wrongs.

**Record Number of New Converts to Catholicism:** The Catholic Church is witnessing a remarkable rise in new converts in 2026, with U.S. dioceses reporting an average 38% increase in people entering the Church compared to 2025. Following the Easter Vigil, several dioceses announced record-breaking numbers. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles welcomed nearly 8,600 new members, a dramatic 139% increase, while Chicago reported over 1,000 catechumens and candidates, up 52%. The Diocese of Venice, Florida, received a record 1,072 new Catholics, and Richmond reached an all-time high of 900. Duluth, Minnesota, experienced the fastest growth, increasing 145%. Analysts note a strong rise among young adults, especially men in their twenties, who seek deeper community, faith, and traditional values in an increasingly digital culture. Universities are also seeing growth, with Notre Dame welcoming its largest group of converts in over 25 years. Similar trends are emerging globally, leading many to describe this movement as a genuine Catholic revival.

**Catholic Humor:** 1. The Shortcut: A man is drowning and shouts, "Help, Lord, save me!" A voice from the heavens replies, "I will save you, but first, give up your favorite sin." The man thinks for a second and shouts, "Is there anyone else up there I can talk to?" 2. The New Priest: A nervous new priest was delivering his first sermon. Afterward, he asked the Monsignor how he did. The Monsignor said, "Not bad, but next time, remember: there are ten Commandments, not twelve. And there are twelve Apostles, not ten." 3. How do you know if a Catholic is tech-savvy? They keep their "icons" on their desktop.

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota