

# From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

June 14, 2026



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

**Word of God:** The 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) highlights God's initiating love and our response. In the First Reading, God reminds Israel at Mount Sinai how he bore them up on "eagle's wings" and chose them as a "treasured possession." This wasn't because of anything they had done; it was pure grace. Saint Paul echoes this profound truth in the Second Reading from Romans, taking it a step further: Christ died for us "while we were still helpless" and still sinners. God doesn't wait for us to be perfect to love us; his mercy comes first.

This foundation of unmerited grace is what drives the Gospel. Seeing the crowds "troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd," Jesus is moved with deep compassion. His solution to their suffering is to share his mission. He calls the twelve apostles and sends them out with a strict mandate: "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give." When we look at all three readings together, the message for our lives is clear. We are the modern-day "laborers" sent into a world that is still hurting, lonely, and searching for a shepherd. We don't bring healing out of our own perfection, but out of the sheer gratitude for what God has done for us. Having been loved, saved, and treasured by God without costing us a thing, our calling this week is to go out and love others just as freely.

**My Birthday and Retirement Countdown:** I turned 70 on June 11. I have 16 more days to retire from active ministry in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and from my beloved faith family and friends of St. Elizabeth Parish. Some of my siblings have traveled to be with me during these emotional days in my life. I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude for all the blessings God has given me through the people of God in various parishes I have served and the friends who have brought me joy and affirmation. As a result, there is joy in my heart. But, paradoxically, I also feel a deep sadness at the parting that is coming up in the next two weeks. But our friendship will continue, our faith will shine brightly, and our love for each other will endure.

**Retirement Reception Last Sunday:** On June 7, after the Corpus Christi Mass and procession, there was a farewell reception for me in Cantwell Hall to which the whole parish was invited. Thank you to all who attended. Thank you, also to the dedicated volunteers, who put the event together. The Morning Worshippers, those who spoke, Sr. Olga who MC'd the event, those who prepared the food, those who sang---to all of you, my deepest gratitude. Maraming salamat po!

**Retirement Quotes:** "Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else." – Fred Rogers. "Don't simply retire from something; have something to retire to." – Harry Emerson Fosdick. "Retirement is not the end of the road, but a sharp turn where the landscape changes and new vistas of intellectual and spiritual freedom open before us." – Unknown.

**Welcome to Father Vito Perrone:** The incoming pastor from July 1 is Father Vito Perrone, COSJ. I have already introduced him to the parish staff and Finance Council in a recent meeting. We welcome him along with his community of priests who will be shepherding our parish---and wish them God's choicest blessings.

**Pope Leo's Apostolic Visit to Spain:** Last week, June 6 through 12, Pope Leo XIV made a historic, weeklong apostolic journey to Spain – the first papal visit to the country in 15 years. Energizing a rapidly changing Catholic landscape, the trip was structured around three distinct, high-impact chapters. In **Madrid**, the Pontiff engaged directly with a polarized political landscape, addressing the Spanish parliament to advocate for human rights, meeting with King Felipe VI, and holding talks with Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. He also held a private meeting with clergy abuse survivors. Moving to **Barcelona**, Pope Leo celebrated the centenary of architect Antoni Gaudí by celebrating Mass inside the iconic Sagrada Família and inaugurating its historic central spire, the Tower of Jesus Christ. Finally, in a historic first for any pontiff, he traveled to the **Canary Islands**, visiting frontline migrant facilities to champion the dignity of refugees and fulfill an unfinished pastoral dream of his predecessor, Pope Francis. The role of the Pope is to be a global moral compass. He transcends political divides to serve as the conscience keeper of the world. By championing the marginalized, listening to the suffering, and confronting systemic injustice, his presence in Spain, as everywhere else, reminded humanity of its highest ideals, unwavering compassion, universal dignity, and the pursuit of peace.

**Wisdom Stories:** 1. The Butterfly: A man tried to help a butterfly emerge from its cocoon by cutting it open. The butterfly survived but never flew. Wisdom: Some struggles are necessary for growth. 2. The Clock: A clock worried that it had to tick millions of times in its lifetime. An old clock said, "Just tick once at a time." Wisdom: Great journeys are completed one step at a time. 3. The Muddy Water: A disciple complained that life was confusing. The master pointed to a bucket of muddy water and said, "Leave it alone." After some time, the mud settled and the water became clear. Wisdom: Clarity often comes through patience, not force.

**Retirement Humor:** 1. The New Schedule: "The trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off. Every day is Saturday, which means you can never even look forward to the weekend!" 2. A Matter of Perspective: "Retirement is wonderful. It's that magical time of life when you can finally do whatever you want – right after your spouse gives you the daily to-do list." 3. The Permanent Commute: "My favorite part of retirement is the morning commute. It's a rigorous, five-second walk from the bed to the coffee maker – and I haven't hit a traffic jam yet." 4. The Great Executive: "When you retire, you don't stop working; you just change supervisors. You go from a corporate boss who monitors your hours to a spouse who monitors your posture." 5. The Professional Consultant: "Retirement means you can finally offer your expert advice and vast wisdom to anyone who asks... and then cheerfully walk away before having to do any of the actual work."

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota