

Monty & Eltham

The Catholic Parishes of
St Francis Xavier & Our Lady Help of Christians



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nation.

Gina's Update

Last Tuesday, we had our first Zoom Prayer Shawl. When I suggested that we go on zoom, the reply I got from quite a few members, "Great idea but I don't think I can do that, I'm not good with computers" and guess what? They did it, we did it! We had about 11 of us, it was great, we came together, connected with one another in The Ministry of Love.



When I was preparing the prayers, I had "This little light of mine," ringing in my ears, so I decided to play the song in the background when I was lighting the candle to start our meeting. Our shawls have been the comfort and love to so many recipients, especially now when people are in Lockdown and lack human connection. So many shared with me how they hold on to our shawls, wrapped it around and feel the love, comfort and prayers that came with it... "it's like a light in a dark tunnel", someone said. All of us have this little light, a light to help us through our own darkness and so often, that same little light shines for others, too. We're gonna let it shine... "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine..." Let us shine for one another so we can get through this together... Let us thank God for our family and friends, our church, our communities, let us be that light for one another. The light that we often reflect on is that light from our baptism candle, lit from the Paschal Candle, through Christ we become the light of the world.

I would like to share this article below, written by an American writer, Holley Gerth that I recently read:

Candle in a Firework World

The sky stretches inky black above us as we wait for the first spark to light it with color. Whizz. Bang. Suddenly the evening is filled with red and blue and yellow. We ooh-and-aah as each firework explodes and sends ashes to the ground.

When it's over we walk back into the house – back to the ordinary of dishes, laundry and conversations about what we'll do tomorrow.

As I drift off to sleep a quote someone once shared with me drifts across my mind, "Be a candle not a firework." In other words, shine brightly for a lifetime not just a brief, spectacular time.

But how do we do this?

Here are three ways to perhaps make it happen...

* **Live with intention** - Fireworks are scattered. A million sparks in a thousand directions.

Candles burn with a single flame. We can be thoughtful about how we spend our time, affection and resources.

* **Stay steady** - We love fireworks because of the thrill and excitement. Candles aren't quite as glamorous but they last much longer. Sure, we can have "firework moments" and that's great. **In daily life, we can be quietly faithful to what God has called us to do.**

* **Go for substance, not show** – A firework is flashy and draws a crowd. But as a source of light and warmth, well, they don't quite do the trick. **We can stay true to our purpose, even when it seems no one notices.**

I'm all for fireworks and I'll be staring at the sky with wonder and delight along with everyone else every Fourth of July. *(probably 31st Dec, for us, here in Australia.) But there are 364 days in between. And on those days it will be candles that glow in my home.

Each time I light one and set it on a dinner table or in a window, I'll remember that sometimes being steady, faithful, and intentional can make us shine brighter than we will ever fully realize.

Who's a candle in your life? Tell them today!

This parish has a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people in our community.

For more information visit pol.org.au/eltham or pol.org.au/montmorency.

We support the recommendations of the Royal Commission into institutional abuse and pray for all the survivors.



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

terry.kean@cam.org.au

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au

Barry Caldwell

Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

9435 2178

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

montmorency@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

eltham@cam.org.au

Gina Ang:

Pastoral Worker & Caring Group Co-Ord—**Eltham**

gina.ang@cam.org.au

Peter Williams:

Child Safety Officer

SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au

Website:

www.pol.org.au/montmorency

www.pol.org.au/eltham

(pol stands for Parish OnLine)

Facebook:

St Francis Xavier Parish Montmorency

Monty & Eltham Newsletter & Facebook items:

eltham@cam.org.au

Schools

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: Mr Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Mr Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Mr Chris Ray: 9439 7824

school@olheltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olheltham.catholic.edu.au

RECONCILIATION

Saturday, 10:30am Monty ~ Terry

1/2 hr prior to any mass said by Michael

Collections last weekend: 16 August 2020

| Community | Thanksgiving | Presbytery |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Eltham | \$250.00 | \$55.00 |
| Montmorency | \$425.00 | \$410.00 |

Please note the above figures are monies banked & do not include visa/mastercard or direct debits. Thank you so much for your contributions.

CDFPay: (alternate thanksgiving options)

Montmorency - <https://bit.ly/MontyCDFPay>

Eltham - <https://bit.ly/ElthamCDFPay>



Let us pray for all those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith ...

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Lorna Aicher, Aileen Patricia Moriarty, Kevin Pritchard

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Robert Baker,

Justine Best, Ray Bowman, Kristina Brazaitis,

Desmond Deehan, Renee Eastwood, Debbie Edgley,

Julian Forrester, Gennie Hannon, Samuel Hauser (Kyabram),

Val Hayes, Colleen Hussin, Jim Hussin, Tina Inserra,

Adrian Jones, Glenn McKay, Erin McLindon, Hasti Momeni,

Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland, Montagna Mustica,

Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen, Mercy Oson, Ron Pfeil,

Susan Phelan, Andrew Pighin, Terry Said, Anthony Salvatore,

Mary Salvatore, Maria Schroeders, Jeanette Steward,

John Tobin, Bruno Treglia, Isaac Treglia, Aldo Viapiana,

Sheryn Zurzolo.

Eltham

For the recently deceased;

For those whose anniversaries are at this time;

Wayne Robinson

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Robyn Atherton, Francisco Azarcon, Hugh & Iris Azzopardi,

Baby Harriet Banks, Ray Bowman, Geoff Bunton,

Andrew & Lucinda Collier, Albina Croce, Jon D'Cruz,

Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Marlis Dopheide,

Maria George, Dennis Goddard,

Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Mary Irani, Diana Jackson,

Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin,

Simone Owen, Jo Porter, Barry Scully, Kath Wheelahan.

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.



Catholic Ladies' College

See yourself here.

Year 7 2022
Applications close
Friday 9th October 2020

Upcoming Virtual Tours

27 August 4:30pm

2 September 4:30pm

9 September 4:30pm

9 October 6am

Book your place online
www.clc.vic.edu.au



Prayers of the Faithful for 23 August 2020
Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
(John Ramsdale)

Celebrant: Brothers and sisters, let us bring our prayers before God, the source of all wisdom.

We pray for Pope Francis and all clergy, especially Fr Michael and Fr Terry. We give thanks for their dedication, guidance and support to us as a parish. Help us, in our turn, to support them in their ministry especially during these times.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the leaders and the people of Australia, that during these difficult times we can work together to promote a cohesive and supportive community: to emphasise the things that unite us rather than those which divide us.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people in this parish who work in medical or essential services, assisting people affected by the COVID-19 virus. We also pray for those whose kindness and thoughtfulness ensure that people living in isolation still feel part of our community.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all students, teachers, parents and carers involved in home schooling, ensuring that students make the most of their learning. We think especially of the VCE students as they approach their exams and the end of the school year without the usual support of their friends and the school environment.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Today we pray and give thanks for Fr Peter Matheson, former Montmorency parish priest who celebrated 50 years of Ordination on 22nd August. We ask God to bless him with good health and contentment in the autumn years of his life. May his ongoing journey be filled with light and love as he continues to listen to the heart, and follow wherever God now invites him.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all of those who are listed on the sick list in our bulletin and for all others who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. We pray that they will experience the healing touch of Christ.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have died recently; we also remember Lorna Aicher, Aileen Patricia Moriarty, Kevin Pritchard and Way Robinson whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: Loving God, your wisdom is beyond our understanding. Hear our prayers and help us to always praise you in the depths of our heart. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrating 50 Years!

We always remember the special times and people who have been a significant part of our journey. So it is with much love and appreciation, we here in St Francis Xavier Parish take this opportunity to celebrate with Father Peter Matheson.



*Fr. Peter Matheson celebrates
50 years of Ordination!
22nd August 2020*



An amazing milestone and occasion for celebration indeed. For over thirteen of those years Fr Peter was with us as our Parish Priest. He shared with us his deep sense of God's loving Presence among us, inviting us to respond to God's invitation to a deeper Faith and sense of belonging. He worked with us to build Community by sharing with us his gifts of wisdom, compassion, friendship, a strong sense of justice and a gentle discerning nature.

Fr Peter has been a wonderful and selfless gift of service to all those he has touched throughout his Priesthood. We thank God for this good man.

Due to the current COVID restrictions in place, celebrations may not be as grand as befit this wonderful achievement, but our happy memories, love and gratitude, and our warm wishes for his ongoing good health, are no less deeply felt for that. Good luck and every Blessing be with you Fr Peter.

For those of you who may wish to congratulate Fr Peter, his email address is: petemath@ozemail.com.au

Patsy Skipper

A TIME FOR RENEWAL

This has to be a time of *metanoia*, of moral and spiritual renewal. There can be no return to the world as it was before the appearance of the virulent coronavirus that caused the disease Covid-19, leaving virtually no corner of the inhabited world untouched. There may eventually be a vaccine; there may even be a cure. But

whether there is or not, civilisation has been tested and found wanting, and the pieces cannot be reassembled exactly as they were. Three-quarters of a million people have lost their lives directly from Covid-19; countless more will suffer and die from the economic depression that is bound to follow. There are profound lessons to be learnt, some of them still only half understood.

Yet this is the right time to take the measure of the challenge ahead and to prepare to rise to it. Prominent among the forces available to do so stand the Christian Churches, and the Catholic Church in particular. It has the largest membership of any single organisation on the planet and, though its credibility may have suffered a severe blow when its handling of the scandal of clerical abuse was exposed, it retains greater moral power than any single government. Its promise, in the stirring words of the Second Vatican Council's final decree *Gaudium et Spes*, that "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" may be imperfectly realised, but remains its lodestar.

The Church immerses itself fully in humanity's struggles against dangers both internal and external. Some, such as war, are man-made - for once the gendered noun is appropriate; some are the product of nature, such as Covid-19; and some are a combination of each, such as global warming, where industrial progress is destroying biodiversity and poisoning the planet's atmosphere to the point where life itself is threatened.

Christians gaze upon the broken and tortured figure of a man hung from a cross, and see divinity in him; every other broken and tortured body is thereby sanctified. In Christ's words, those whom the pagan world despises - the poor, the hungry, the naked, the unborn, the old, the sick, the migrant, the asylum seeker - are not human detritus, mere garbage fit for the rubbish heap, but belong to him and deserve the same reverence. "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Christ stood the worldly values of his time on their head. "The last will be first ..."; "He has pulled the mighty down from their thrones ..." And the Christian faith elevates these disturbing and disruptive words above all others, calling them the Word of God. There is nothing more powerful on Earth than this.

In the post-pandemic era the Church, acknowledging its sins and its failures, must refocus on its core message, the reason it exists: to show the world the face of Christ. The natural drift is in the opposite direction, towards the state described by Thomas Hobbes as a "war of all against all", where human life becomes "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". Never before has its central teaching been so threatened and so needed: every human

life, no matter how vulnerable or impaired, is sacred; every life is to be protected and celebrated. The Church must resist to the bitter end the "throwaway culture", the tendency to reduce life to the status of a disposable commodity.

The obligation under Church law to attend weekly Mass having been suspended, Catholics are presented with the question usually only faced by converts - what is the point of being Catholic? Why go to Mass? Why be part of this whole thing, which bears such obvious marks of sin and disgrace on its own body? And the question also presents itself in reverse: would anybody have heard of Christ and his Gospel had the Church not existed to proclaim the message? What kind of civilisation, if any, would have existed without its insistence on the preciousness of human life, on the equal rights and dignity of all?

This is a time for conversion, for reawakening. If the Church is to evangelise, it must first evangelise itself. Many Catholics have never before had to question their habit of Sunday Mass attendance. The Christ who calls them back home is not some remote mystic wrapped in archaic mysteries, even less an unforgiving moral policeman, but that Christ who declares the poor to be his brothers and sisters, and who threatens with vengeance from Heaven those who exploit them. He is that Son of God who ennobled humanity by becoming part of it, even sharing to the full its most gruesome injustices.

So those whom the epidemic has so far spared must set about making the best future they can for themselves and their descendants. The Church can help to define and shape what that future should look like: a community of persons all of equal worth, committed to each other's flourishing, bound together in *koinonia*. Karl Marx popularised the definition of social justice as "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Catholic Social Teaching shows the way; St John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have deepened and expanded its scope, but it is still the original Gospel. The Catholic ideas of solidarity, of equality of human worth and dignity, offer a charted course towards the renewal of faith in the common good, by which "all are responsible for all". This means preserving independence of judgement amid the clamour, not assuming that the grain is always wrong but being willing to go against it; not fearing unpopularity, being prepared to take risks and to challenge powerful interests wherever they obstruct the common good.

The foundations are laid. It is time to build on them. The Church needs outstanding leaders, locally and nationally as much as internationally. *The Tablet*, now in its 181st year, renews its commitment to serve the Church in its pursuit of truth and justice, even when, on occasion, its voice may be an unwelcome one.



Coping with isolation

It's week "I've lost count" of lockdown now, and with each day the desire for human interaction and connectedness grows stronger.

As an introvert, I was quite comfortable during the initial lockdown period. In fact, I was pleased that for once in my life it was acceptable to remain indoors for an entire week... Or more.

But never in my life has it been so long since I've seen my parents. My family. My friends.

Phone calls and video chats don't quite do it justice. The presence of another human being, and basic interactions like a hug or a warm smile, have such a profound impact* on our day-to-day life.

So in a time when face-to-face interaction is so limited, how can we cope?

STAY IN CONTACT AS BEST YOU CAN

During a discussion on isolation, my friend told me that connectedness is about the quality of our relationships, not about our proximity to another person. Proximity helps, of course, to reduce feelings of isolation. But proximity on its own cannot cure loneliness. I resonated with this thought, feeling grateful that I could engage in such meaningful conversation while at such a great distance apart.

Phone and video calls may not feel nearly as enriching as face-to-face interaction, but they are the closest form of "normal" interaction we have available to us right now. Just as we would schedule time to meet or talk with our loved ones, make time for phone and video calls to keep in touch.

Writing letters is another great way to communicate. Letters can help foster deeper or more meaningful conversations, as we take more time in thinking about what we want to say. Post isn't the only way of sending letters either - we can send photos of handwritten letters, or use our texting method of choice (including messaging apps) to have long-length letter-style conversations.



Photo by Noah Silliman on Unsplash.

REMEMBER, IT WON'T BE LIKE THIS FOREVER

There may be a new "Covid normal" in times to come, but no matter what that is, we will eventually be able to see our family and friends again. Life will go on, and we will adapt.

To have hope that things will get better is important too, no matter how bleak it may feel right now.

"Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." - Albus Dumbledore, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.

COPING WITH ILL LOVED ONES

Our hearts go out to those who have ill loved ones, as we know visiting is often restricted or sometimes completely off limits, and other forms of contact may be limited too.

This can be frustrating and stressful, but focusing on prayer, on hope, or on something that is meaningful for you both can help. Take feelings of fear or anger and use the energy for good – if your loved one is an avid gardener, consider starting a garden project. If knitting is their thing, try your hand at knitting. Or maybe DIY is more their style. This can help strengthen your connection with them in an abstract way, too.

KEEP BUSY AND MAINTAIN ROUTINE

Feelings of isolation can be exacerbated when we're bored. Because when we're bored, sitting alone and pondering the meaning of life, it is never more blatantly obvious that there is no one around us. Sing, dance, learn a new skill or just take more notice of the things around you.

In the early stages of lockdown I formed a new friendship with "Garry" – our resident (harmless) house spider. While he was an unexpected visitor, and despite the initial urge to "get him out of the house NOW", we let him stay. And each day we would follow his adventures, playing 'Where's Wally' to spot his new location on the wall. Such a small and seemingly meaningless interaction resulted in appreciation and acceptance of something I may not have given much thought to otherwise.

On a more sane note, maintaining a daily or weekly routine can help to create a sense of normality during such an abnormal time. Routine can also give us a sense of control in our lives, increasing feelings of calm and safety. Setting a regular wake up/sleep time is a good place to start!

Remember that no matter how lonely or isolated you feel, help is always available. Speaking to a counsellor can, in itself, reduce feelings of isolation and increase connectedness. But counsellors can provide coping strategies and other support too. [Learn more about our counselling here.](#)

Beyond Blue have some great resources for coping with isolation too – check them out [here](#).

From our CatholicCare family to yours, we hope that you are all keeping safe and well during these challenging times.

Liz Gellel | Communications Coordinator

Sources:

- [Research shows that hugs increase happiness, reduce stress levels, increase immunity, and improve mental wellbeing.](#)
- [Keeping loneliness at bay while staying at home.](#)

| Calendar of Events | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|
| Sunday, 23 August | | |
| 10:00am | Eltham | Mass - live-streamed (https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE) |
| Sunday, 30 August | | |
| 10:00am | Montmorency | Mass - live-streamed (https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE) |
| Rosters - 29 & 30 August | | |
| Montmorency | | |
| Williams, Anne | | PRYR |
| Williams, Peter | | PRYR |
| Eltham | | |
| Frediani, Gabriella | | Altar Society |
| Leahy Family | | Pilgrim Rosary Statue |

Live-Stream Masses

We will continue to offer live-stream Masses for the time being, probably through September. **Mass each week will be at 10:00am** alternating between OLHC and SFX Churches. We hope making this opportunity available to all in the Parish, helps you feel a sense of closeness and belonging as we turn our hearts and minds to God in prayer, at this time of, what seems endless, separation! We do not get it right always, but we do our best! We thank Fr Michael, Fr Terry and our Musicians for their continued care and sharing of gifts.

We leave the steps below in case you still require them to help stay connected:

1. Go to www.google.com, type: olhc sfx youtube (click search)
2. OLHC SFX YouTube will appear (click on it)
3. You will see the thumbnail of Masses already streamed
4. You will see somewhere on the screen 'subscribe' (red box) (click it)
5. Then click on any of the Masses or watch the live-streaming of Mass of the day

*The caterpillar,
interesting but not exactly lovely,
humped along among the parsley leaves
eating, always eating. Then
one night it was gone and in its place
a small green confinement hung by two silk threads
on a parsley stem. I think it took nothing with it
except faith, and patience. And then one morning
it expressed itself into the most beautiful being.*

Mary Oliver

Let us pray that at the end of this quiet, still time we grow as individuals and as a humanity into something more beautiful than we could have imagined! The Spirit blows where it will!

Patsy & Team (0429 439 675)

Are you a Spiritual Leader? – The Spiritual Leaders Program is a one-year, part-time program held on Friday mornings (and some Friday afternoons). It is suitable for people in outreach ministries, spiritual formation, and various positions of leadership such as priests and ministers, lay ecclesial ministers, community and spiritual leaders, chaplains, pastoral carers, and those in health and education. The program, which commences in Feb 2021, focuses on personal integration of the theory and practice of a contemplative, discerning approach to pastoral ministry. Previous participants have commented that this Program has been transformational in terms of their personal spirituality and their leadership skills. Fee-Help may be available. Apply to Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation. Brochure and application form at www.heartoflife.melbourne or tel 03 9890 1101.



Heart of Life

Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation

296 Glenferrie Road, Malvern, Victoria 3144, Australia

Tel 03 9890 1101 Email info@heartoflife.melbourne

Web www.heartoflife.melbourne

Heart of Life is sponsored by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart



This year we're doing things a bit differently, we will be conducting a presentation meeting with 'Zoom'.

First please click on the [register button](#) that you are attending or register via our website.

On the day to join the Zoom Meeting enter the Meeting ID and Passcode below at 7.40am the meeting commences at 7.45 am

Meeting ID: 899 3812 2298

Passcode: 8x5fs5

We look forward to seeing you at this years North Eastern Prayer Breakfast Zoom Meeting, we are delighted to have as our guest speaker MP Kevin Andrews.

“THROUGH PRAYER GOD WILL EMPOWER, UNITE AND POSITION PEOPLE TO FULFILL THEIR GOD GIVEN PURPOSE IN BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY”.

We would love to see you or anyone you think could play a part at the meeting;

Zoom Presentation Meeting

28 AUGUST 2020 | 7.45 AM to 8.25 AM

For more details or to register go to our website

www.nepb.org.au

Simon, Jan, Paul, James, John, Meralyn

Monty & Eltham : what Lockdown 2.0 looks like for us...



Dancing with the broom...



Prayer Shawl Zoom Gathering



During Covid I've decided to renew my Passport ... (This is it!) in hopeful expectation ... bad move!

Please send through your pictures of what Lockdown 2.0 looks like for you. By sending a picture you agree to it's use in the bulletin etc.

Homily - Terry

What comes to mind when we hear the word 'keys'? For myself, I think of keys as opening doors. Sure, sometimes keys close and lock doors, but seems to me we use them more often to open doors.

Right at this moment our doors are closed because of Covid-19. It looks like they will be closed for some time yet, even if the trend continues downwards in the numbers of people contracting the virus. So many of us long for the day when our doors can be open again and we can sit at table with people we love and call family or friend.

'Open doors'. It's an image we might find helpful as we look at today's Gospel.

Simon Peter had just said to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". Jesus responded and said to Simon Peter: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Much has been written in the interpretation of this passage of scripture which is seen as such a foundational text for the authority of the Catholic Church. Down through the ages the Pope in the Catholic Church has been seen as the leader who holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

In our time today Pope Francis is our leader and for so many of us, including myself, he is an inspiration in his humility, his wisdom, his compassion for the poor and marginalised, his care for the earth. He certainly opens up the kingdom of heaven.

And he is someone who has opened many doors in his leadership. He calls on the Church to engage in dialogue and he is open to processes like a Plenary Council to find the way for the Church of now and the future. He has given all us a share of the keys in opening the way of the kingdom of heaven. He cannot do it alone.

And yet for all of this, many of us Catholics believe that the Church of the past has closed too many doors. Sadly many people have found themselves locked out of a Church that has insisted on rules and laws. Just ask many Catholics who have divorced in marriage and cannot be married again in the Catholic Church. Just ask people of different sexual orientation whether they feel welcomed and included in the Catholic Church. Just ask many women whether they see themselves as belonging to a Church where their voice and leadership has closed doors to them. Just ask those people who have been abused by Catholic priests and/or religious men and women. And the list goes on and I leave it to you to add to this list.

Perhaps today's Gospel offers us a way of seeing the Church in a different way. How can Pope Francis and all of us find ways to open doors of hope and healing to people especially those people who are hurt and feel excluded? Yes there are times and places for the doors to be closed but let's remember we use keys to open doors more than close them. Perhaps the postponed Plenary Council will open the doors and offer our Church of Australia a way forward in the journey towards healing and hope.

And just an aside, has Covid-19 opened more doors for many of us? Covid-19 has certainly closed the doors of our homes but if we were to look at what is happening within us, are we finding keys to open up our compassion and love? Do we shed a tear when we see the love and care of so many people giving to others? Maybe we are some of the givers. Or we feel for the pain and hardship of those who have the virus or those who have lost their jobs because of the virus. Are we more appreciative of our families and homes? Are we learning to live with the silence in a peaceful and prayerful way?

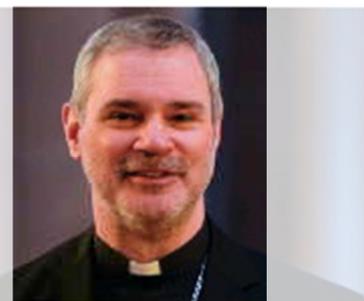
Back to the Gospel. Yes, Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Simon Peter as he gives them to Pope Francis today. We too have a part to play, in being a Church where the keys belong to us all. May we open more doors than close them.



People of compassion: A message from Archbishop Peter A Comensoli

"The word compassion has two parts to it: com and passion. Com, in its Latin, means *with* and passio means *suffer*. To have compassion is to suffer with, and to be able to reach out to those in need. I'm sure you have that sense of our circumstances at this moment." In his latest message to the faithful, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli stands before the icon of Our lady of Perpetual Help and asks us to reflect on what it means to be people of compassion during times of suffer.

Watch video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP8irm2Ppeo&feature=emb_logo



Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.



Reflection

The gospel text is identical to that for the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, except for the additional verse at the end.

The reading records Simon Peter's profession of faith in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God". In response Jesus affirms and commissions Peter: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church". As we'll hear next Sunday, in the passage that follows on directly from this exchange, the gospel writer Matthew counterbalances the image of foundation stone with that of stumbling block.

As it stands the passage that we hear is prone to a one-sided interpretation in support of Petrine authority in the Church. This will make much of the divine authority entrusted to Peter and/or to the Church: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Next Sunday's gospel and other stories shed a different light on Peter. They reveal him as a flawed leader. Only two Sundays ago we heard how his faith failed as he tried to walk to Jesus across the water.

But today the focus is on Peter's faith, his courage, his foundational role in the Church, and the assurance that the Church will never finally fail. Exactly what is meant by the power to bind and loose remains a matter for discussion within and across the Christian traditions. The gospel ends with one of Jesus' calls to silence lest his Messiahship be misunderstood.

Break Open the Word 2020

Dear friends,

The final result for the Project Compassion 2020 campaign are in, and I wish to thank everyone in Melbourne who has contributed to an amazing result, considering bushfires, lockdowns, and the well-known difficulties that our schools, parishes and other institutions have had to work under since March.



The people of Melbourne contributed **\$1.216 million** this year - a truly outstanding result which speaks to generosity, and the willingness of so many people to send their contributions directly to Caritas, and to the many priests and people in parishes, and school families and staffs, that made the extra effort to raise donations and send them in. We're very aware that many of our contributors are themselves dealing with the economic effects of lockdowns and restrictions, including unemployment and loss of business, which makes the contributions even more exceptional.

All of us in Caritas are deeply, deeply grateful for your dedication to this part of the Catholic church's work with those in need. This work is even more vital at a time when the whole world is in crisis.

To put this year's figure in context, it compares with the \$1.524 million donated in 2019, a very different time when many of us in Australia were in very different personal circumstances. Overall, Project Compassion throughout Australia this year raised \$7.9 million, as compared to \$10.9 million last year.

Finally, this is probably the last communication you'll have from me as Diocesan Director for Caritas Australia. This has been a privilege for me. In my three years in this ministry I've been deeply moved by the generosity of so many Melbourne people, and their passion for justice. Thank you.

My last day in the position will be 28 August, and my successor, Romina Martiniello, will come into the position on 31 August. I'm sure she will have the same experience of your generosity and cooperation that I did. Many of you who know Alicia Ocampo in our Melbourne office will, I'm sure, be glad to know that she is staying!

If you need to contact Caritas Australia I would suggest that, due to the difficulties created by the Stage 4 lockdown you do so through **Toll Free 1800 024 413** until you hear otherwise from Romina.

May the Lord bless and keep us all safe in time - and again thank you for your generosity to those that Caritas serves.

Deacon Jim Curtain