

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.



Homily - Terry

The story is told of the holy old monk who was sweeping up the fallen leaves in the monastery garden. He was asked by a visitor to the monastery, what would he do if he knew he was about to die? The old monk replied, “I’d carry on sweeping.”

What a confronting question to ask the old monk and it’s not a question we ask of one another in our conversations. However, in this month of November when we are particularly mindful of people who have died, it’s a question we might ask of ourselves, ‘what would I do if I knew my life was soon to end?’

It would seem that the holy old monk lived very much at peace within himself. There was no need to do anything differently to what he was doing in the present moment. It was like he was living what the fourteenth century mystic, Meister Eckhart once said, “Wisdom consists in doing the next thing you have to do with your whole heart, and finding delight in doing it.”

In our own lives how well do we think we are living the present moment? Perhaps in these strange times of Covid-19 many of us have had the time to reflect on our lives and find an inner peace, despite the isolation and even loneliness of many days. I am sure others of us have struggled to find this inner peace and yet maybe we haven’t done too badly. Perhaps we have discovered a solitude that is a gift in our lives. Will we be different in the future?

There will be many of us who will say, our lives are not in balance and we have to make sure we address this before we can find inner peace. Perhaps there are relationship issues, or regrets that we must name and deal with before we can heal. Perhaps there are inconsistencies in our way of living and we must make a change before we can be at home within ourselves. Maybe our lifestyle is not matching what we believe in and time drifts on and we are still doing the same things.

We turn to the Gospel to see what word of wisdom we can find. It’s a strange Gospel about a very different sort of Wedding. We couldn’t imagine a Wedding where the bridegroom turned up to the reception at midnight and the bridesmaids waited for him and not the bride.

It’s another of those Gospels where the story is allegorical and not meant to be addressed literally. There are deeper hidden meanings.

If we take the oil in the story to mean, ‘a way of living’, we can see into something of the deeper, hidden meaning. We’re told five sensible bridesmaids had enough oil in their lamps and five foolish bridesmaids did not have enough oil. What’s this all about?

(Continued on page 3)



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



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

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@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

RECONCILIATION

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 2178

Collections last weekend: 25 October 2020

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
Eltham		
Montmorency		

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/CDFpayMontmorency>
Eltham - <https://bit.ly/CDFpayEltham>

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Julian Keogh, Betty Lord, Ian McCabe, Russell Mee, Maria Morabito

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Robert Baker, Justine Best, Fr Glen Bourke, 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, Angus Kossatz, Kate Lagerewskij, Erin McLindon, Hasti Momeni, Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland, Montagna Mustica, Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen, Mercy Ocon, Ron Pfeil, Susan Phelan, Andrew Pighin, Anthony Salvatore, Mary Salvatore, Sr Amor Samonte RGS (Philippines), 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;

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Robyn Atherton, Ray Bowman, Geoff Bunton, Andrew & Lucinda Collier, Albina Croce, Eileen Culbertson, Jon D'Cruz, Ruth Decker, Dennis Goddard, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Jack Issai, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Moira Lyons, Val McDonough, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Kath Wheelahan.

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House 9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.

November Remembrances...

Maria, Vladyslav & Janina Rygala;
Ryszard, Teresa & Zbigniew Cichacki; Janina Vrzeszcz;
Kyszard Klepacz; Anthony & Elizabeth Corera;
Denis Morganti; John & Flo Morganti; Martin Shelley;
Irene Shelley; Kevin Shelley; Margaret Dalton;
Carol O'Keeffe; Neil O'Keeffe



(Continued from page 2)

I came across some very interesting words from writer, Patricia Sanchez. She writes about the five sensible bridesmaids. She sees in the Gospel story the bridegroom as the Lord himself.

“Those with oil enough to light their lamps and welcome the Lord are not perfect, but they have been persistent in their efforts at goodness, at caring and tending the needs of others. They have not always shone as brightly as they might, but they have never given up or turned away from the challenge to lighten the load of God’s least ones. They have not always been outspoken against evil and injustice, but they have prayed to God to be able to find their voice. These are the wise and hopeful ones who call us to follow their lead in preparing for the God who comes.”

These are insightful words where Patricia Sanchez sees the oil in our lamps as being the way we live life. If we live true to the Gospel, not perfectly, but we do it well, we can find that inner peace that lives in the present moment. And maybe we would be like the holy old monk, who at the end of his life wouldn’t do anything different to what he was doing in the present moment.



By purchasing a
\$30 Christmas Ornament
you are supporting
Aboriginal Children
to reach their full educational potential.
Opening the Doors Foundation
www.openingthedoors.org.au/Christmas



Masses are back in a
Covid-safe way
please see
Calendar of Events
for dates, times &
locations.



Prison Fellowship Australia
WE GET THROUGH.

Sat 07 November 2020

Please pray for prison visits to be able to continue again soon, not just for our Prison Fellowship volunteers, but for prisoners families. I can only imagine the tears and the joy that will flood people’s hearts when they will be able to meet face to face again. Don’t forget to pray for our team who volunteer in the Barwon visits centre as they will be experiencing first hand how meaningful and emotional these visits will be.

This reminds me of how much our Heavenly Father loves us – He sent us his son – He dwelt among us – He ate with us (He eats with sinners) - He came in person. No wonder he said “I was in prison and you visited me”. How important is a VISIT!

Sun 08 November 2020

Please continue to pray for our Angel Tree program as we navigate the hurdles that 2020 has thrown at us. Your prayers, provision of gifts, wrapping and posting of gifts, is very much needed this year. We will provide you with an update on numbers next week and where our most urgent needs still remain. A big thank you to the individuals and churches who have already made a commitment to help.

Last year with Biscuit Bake we required 85,000 home baked biscuits and we received 100,000 thanks to the generosity of churches across Victoria. Let’s believe for the same outcome for Angel Tree 2020.

Dear Friends

I’m delighted to invite you to attend the book launch of *Serving Communities with Courage and Compassion*, an edited collection drawing from the keynotes, workshops and panel discussions presented at the national Catholic social services conference of the same name, held in Melbourne earlier this year. It will be launched by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Most Rev. Peter A Comensoli

Serving Communities with Courage and Compassion was edited by long-term contributors to the Catholic social services sector — Gabrielle McMullen, Patrice Scales and Denis Fitzgerald and includes contributions from more than 50 professionals from across Australia and New Zealand who are critically reflecting and exploring a broad range of ideas and issues pertaining to our collective work of building a just and compassionate society. Drawing from the key learnings, conversations and ideas from the conference, this book captures in one place many issues faced and actions needed to enhance our work in advocacy, positive social change, and care for the most vulnerable members of our communities. It is a valuable resource for anyone working in mission-inspired social service organisations, but there are also numerous lessons for parish and school communities, education and health-care settings.

Date: Wednesday 11th November 2020

Time: 2:00pm — 3:00pm AEST

Register by close of business, Mon 9th Nov [via Trybooking](https://www.trybooking.com)

All are welcome to come along for the launch – but registration [here](#) is essential, then the zoom link will be sent to you. We encourage you to share this invitation among your networks.

Launch attendees can enjoy a 10% discount on the book purchase. A discount code will be provided at the launch. It would make a fantastic Christmas present for staff, your board, or perhaps your cousin who has a particular interest in social services! Download flyer [here](#).

Enquiries, contact Lucia Brick — Lucia.Brick@css.org.au

Joshua Lourensz, Executive Director, Catholic Social Services Victoria

Sr Marie-Ange de Saint Chamas belonged to a monastic community of women that welcomed those with Down's. Her life and her recent death were a reminder that we find wholeness in reverence for the vulnerable and in relinquishing the illusion of self-sufficiency / **BY ERIK VARDEN**

Chosen for eternity

On 17 August this year I attended the funeral of a contemplative nun. She had lived a life of exemplary, contagious dedication in the Loire Valley, in a convent near the town of Le Blanc. The day was glorious, the sun bright and clear but without stinging fierceness, lending a sheen of splendour to the rolling landscape. It was one of those days that make you see how the Psalmist might plausibly affirm that a tree, a flower, a blade of grass can "shout for joy".

There was joy in the assembly, too. This is not to say that the sister was not missed or mourned. She was, for she had been profoundly loved. But I sensed the exultation peculiar (though not unique) to monastic funerals. It springs, I think, from corporate pride in a life well lived to the end; from wonder at the free gift, sealed as definitive by death, of an entire existence, reminding us that love cannot be merited or bought, only given and received; also from the sweet strength that spreads in a crowd ascertaining experientially, each for him or herself yet nonetheless together, that love is stronger than death, that our sense of death's absurdity does not spring from pathologies of denial, but stands for ultimate truth.

In these ways, the funeral was like many others. It was singular on account of the vocation of the nun we had gathered to bury. Sr Marie-Ange de Saint Chamas had been one of the first Little Sisters, Disciples of the Lamb, an institute founded in 1985 to enable women with Down's to embrace monastic life. When Marie-Ange was born in 1967, her parents soon discovered she was not like other children. They kept, her sister said in a tribute, "this treasure in their heart for some time, the time required to make of it an oblation, to own their perplexity and pain, the time, above all, we needed to learn to love and know her as she was. Little by little, they let us understand that she would be better equipped than we were to maintain the beauty of a child's heart and would outdo us in her ability to love."



Sr Marie-Ange de Saint Chamas loved to affirm: 'He has chosen me for all eternity'

The prediction of Marie-Ange's parents was realised. I never knew her alive, yet felt I encountered her that day, such was the wake of tenderness her life's passage had left. It drew me, a stranger, in, and carried me along; it carries me still. Many were those who spoke of her compassion and courage, her intuitive intelligence, her wisdom and sparkling sense of fun. Striking was the account of her vocation. Marie-Ange's community is no reservoir for misfits. It is a sanctuary for consecrated women who embrace their calling with lucid dignity.

When Marie-Ange heard of the fledgling foundation, she knew it was for her. It corresponded to a deep sense of purpose. She loved to affirm, "He has chosen me" - and would raise a finger to stress the gravity of what was to follow, before adding, "for eternity".

Current discourse on Down's in the public forum has assumed a weird character. The fact that children carrying the syndrome are no longer, or only exceptionally, born in certain countries is hailed as a triumph of science. What is more, this state of affairs is presented as a function of

compassion. Compassion? Implicit (if not pronounced) is the assumption that life with Down's is unworthy of a human being, that by sparing affected children the chance to see the light of day, one does them a favour. Such is the power of this rhetoric that anyone challenging it risks being dismissed as retrograde or as glorifying suffering, something widely thought, perversely, to be a Christian tendency.

In our political climate it is increasingly taken for granted that some lives are expendable, and probably best spent. This spring, when I happened to have time on my hands, I read a range of newspapers daily. It was intriguing and instructive to see how the Covid crisis was construed differently in different countries. There was consensus about the nomenclature of "crisis" but not about its terms. Whereas in some contexts, coinciding broadly with Europe's south, the crisis was defined as humanitarian, with radical measures taken to prevent loss of lives, other contexts, say, further to the north, posited the primary crisis as financial, canvassing for remedies to be applied accordingly. Both definitions could claim validity, but surely a qualitative distinction is called for? As far as I can see, it was rarely made.

And I wonder: is it likely we shall get anywhere in the much-vaunted construction of post-Covid society if we do not have shared criteria for evaluation at this level, if we fail to agree on what it means to envisage a world healed and whole? While the economic order is hyper-connected, we practise social distancing. This does not just concern queues at checkouts. It results, globally, in growing gaps between those who have prospects and those who have none. The latter experience a sense of abandonment that leads variously to grief, fear, and fury.

In such a world, we need people who assume, by office, nature or grace, pontifical ("bridge-building") ministries. Those who exercise such ministries effectively are more likely to be somehow weak than powerful. I

do not think it true that power necessarily corrupts, but it does isolate, for the simple reason that it tends to be tied to things that need to be protected. Those who reach out across barbed wire from one camp to another will be those who have nothing to lose, who are unconcerned even about losing face, prophets of our time who, like Hosea or Ezekiel of old, step into the breach not just by what they say but by what they embody.

At Marie-Ange's funeral, I was told about another nun of the community who had recently attended a medical appointment. In the waiting room was a woman in distress who had begun to kick and scream, unable to contain whatever anguish possessed her. All withdrew in dismay, with one exception. The nun with Down's stood up, approached the panicking patient, and told her, *Tu es belle, Madame!* ("Madam, how beautiful you are!"). She established instant peace, unselfconsciously enacting a parable of humanity resplendent in its applicability to all.

In a terrific TED talk from 2017, Jonathan Sacks said, "A nation is strong when it cares for the weak, it becomes rich when it cares for the poor, it becomes invulnerable when it cares about the vulnerable." This is

so not just because it is nice to be nice to the unprivileged. It is so because each of us is, in different ways, at different times, weak, vulnerable, poor. It is a lie to pretend otherwise. Further, it is not the absence of poverty, in whatever form, that repairs the human commonwealth: Christ proclaimed, in words that provoke and challenge, "The poor you will always have with you." Where, then, do we find wholeness? In reverence for others; in genuine encounters; in the collapse of illusions of self-sufficiency.

The former Chief Rabbi's words chime in with the credal statement of a man uniquely equipped to see where opposite trends might lead, the French geneticist Jerome Lijeune, who realised that his discovery that Down's is linked to a chromosome abnormality would make it possible to detect the syndrome during pregnancy: "The worth of a civilisation is measured by the respect it shows its weakest members." Perhaps not just its worth, but its durability.

At the funeral of Marie-Ange, her siblings told us she had, "like a cornerstone, a stone our parents did not reject, which solidified our family, directed the path of each one of us inimitably". The Christian story is

the story of a cornerstone we, builders of our lives, Church, and society, are free to place where it structurally belongs or to throw into a skip. In a Christian perspective, those mutually exclusive options add up to a hermeneutic by which history can, and must, be read and judged. It is time we applied it to ourselves here and now, asking ourselves without subterfuge what sort of world we are minded to construct, spelling out the stakes.

Have we the courage to do so, we shall find ourselves before a crossroads well known to the ancestors in the faith. It is evoked in the opening words of a precious first-century text, the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, often known, by its Greek name, as the *Didache*: "There are two Ways, one of Life and one of Death, and there is a great difference between the two Ways." they may run in parallel for a while, but sooner or later they diverge. Each wanderer must then choose where to go.

Erik Varden, the former Abbot of Mt St Bernard Abbey in Leicestershire, was installed as Bishop-Prelate of the Catholic Territorial Prelature of Trondheim in Norway on 1 October. He is the author of *The Shattering of Loneliness*.



DVCS Christmas Gift Appeal

Help us make Christmas a little brighter for children in need

DONATION POINTS

- DVCS: Shop 378a Level 3 Greensborough Plaza
- Donation chute: Level 1 (Opposite to Post Office) Greensborough Plaza
- Financial donations can be made on: dvsupport.org.au
Or using the QR Code below

We welcome :

- Gift Vouchers
- Unwrapped NEW toys
- Monetary donations

For children aged
0 to 16.




QR CODE





Our appeal to you:

Each year, we make our annual Ephpheta Appeal where donations go a long way to helping us improve our service to the community. We do not receive any government funding so your gift will be a lifeline that ensures JPC's Pastoral Care and Family Support Service can instantly reach even the most isolated Deaf people.

All donations will be gratefully received - donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

[Read about our appeal HERE.](#)

Our Mission is to empower deaf people to live life to the full.
"I have come so that you might have life - life in all its fullness"
(John 10:10-11)

Calendar of Events		
Saturday, 7 November		
12noon	Montmorency	Baptisms
1:00pm	Eltham	Baptisms
6:00pm	Montmorency	Mass (10 people)
Sunday, 8 November - Special Collection: Catholic Deaf		
8:30am	Montmorency	Mass (10 people) (live-streamed https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE)
10:00am	Eltham	Mass (10 people)
Monday, 9 November		
Tuesday, 10 November		
9:30am	Montmorency	Mass (10 people)
Wednesday, 11 November		
9:30am	Eltham	Mass (10 people)
Thursday, 12 November		
9:30am	Montmorency	Mass (10 people)
Friday, 13 November		
9:30am	Eltham	Mass (10 people)
Saturday, 14 November		
6:00pm	Montmorency	Mass (10 people)
Sunday, 15 November		
8:30am	Montmorency	Mass (10 people)
10:00am	Eltham	Mass (10 people) (live-streamed https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE)
Rosters - 14 & 15 November		
Montmorency		
Ramsdale, John	PRYR	
Eltham		
Hall, Vali	Altar Society	
Milwain, Gianna	Altar Society	
Ryan Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue	

Live-Stream Masses

Gratefully we now find ourselves in a much brighter place with positive COVID cases and deaths down to zero and the weather warming up! Our patience and longing to celebrate Eucharist together again, has finally arrived! We are delighted to have ten folk able to attend Masses on weekdays and on the weekend. Hopefully that number will gradually increase. This week at St Francis Xavier, we will live-stream Mass at 8:30am and next week at Our Lady Help of Christians at 10am. We will continue this pattern for the time being, assessing the situation as we go. Our hearts rejoice and give thanks for our current situation as we move forward with caution. We are one humanity, so we pray for our world, for the many who are experiencing deep pain right now, on many levels. Lord, hear our prayer.

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

Patsy & Team (0429 439 675)

You're invited to:

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY: OUR SHARED MORAL CHALLENGE

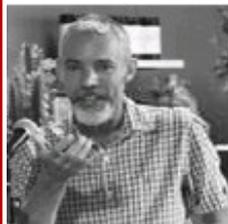


Thursday 26 November 7.30pm to 8.45pm

An online Zoom session sponsored by Mary Mother of the Church Parish Climate Action Group. The session will feature two speakers addressing the current climate and ecological emergency and how they have responded in their own lives to this crisis. There will be question and discussion time.

Register your attendance by emailing
ivanhoe@cam.org.au

Tell us the number attending. A zoom link will be emailed to you.



Mark Delaney is the author of 'Low Carbon and Loving It' (with his son, Tom) and is a Christian climate activist who has been featured in the media for his work, including ABC's Compass programme, 'For the Love of Creation', 5 April, 2020.

Alice Carwardine experienced her ecological conversion after reading Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si*. After giving up 40 things in Lent 2018, she now leads a zero-waste sustainable lifestyle. She runs workshops for Catholic parishes and schools to help them on their own ecological journey.



Prayers of the Faithful for 8 November 2020
Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Jane McKinna)

Celebrant: We are servants of a loving God and ask that these prayers of our community, and the silent prayers we hold in our hearts, be placed before the Lord.

We pray for our church and its leaders. May our prayers and commitment to a Christian faith bring us closer together as we continue to rebuild what Church means during this time of global pandemic.

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

We pray and give thanks for all those who have been true servants to others, those who have made sacrifices to manage the Covid health crisis. Those who have cared for others, those who have taken the time to reach out to someone living on their own, and those who have sacrificed their jobs. Significant sacrifices which have helped our community through this time.

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

We pray for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as we celebrate NAIDOC week. May our Christian beliefs recognize our traditional land owners and, embracing their care for our land Australia.

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

In the month of November we pray for the gift of the men in our lives. The father figures, loving husbands, brave sons, precious grandsons and all men who have enriched our life journey. During NOVember we pray especially that all men will reflect and care for their health, especially those illnesses which affect men such as prostate cancer and mental health challenges associated with the pressure of "being a man".

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

We pray for all leaders of all nations. May they show wisdom and courage; care for the people they lead and represent; and make decisions which reflect both our values and beliefs; respecting others and our natural lands.

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

We ask God to comfort and bless all those who are sick and in need of gentle healing. We pray for those whose illness cannot be fixed by time or medicine. May the gift of faith support those experience such challenges.

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

We pray for those who have gone to eternal rest with our loving God. May we feel strengthened by prayers of comfort and take comfort in the promise of eternal life with our risen Christ. We remember especially those whose anniversaries are at this time, including Julian Keogh, Betty Lord, Ian McCabe, Russell Mee & Maria Morabito.

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

Celebrant: Loving and gentle God, we ask that you hear our prayers and that you help us to live compassionate and Christian lives.

All: Amen.

Dear Brothers & Sisters in faith,
The World Day of Prayer will be held on Fri 5th Mar 2021.

Eltham-Montmorency Uniting Church has agreed to host the event. We will be in touch with further information.

Please let us know if you would be willing to be part of a group that organises the event.

Regards, Fiona Bruinsma

Chairperson of Elders
Eltham-Montmorency Uniting Church,
0417 164 503



Please email the office
if you would like a copy of the bulletin
emailed to you on Friday afternoon.

montmorency@cam.org.au

eltham@cam.org.au

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus told this parable to his disciples: 'The kingdom of heaven will be like this: Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five of them were sensible: the foolish ones did take their lamps, but they brought no oil, whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps. The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But at midnight there was a cry, "The bridegroom is here! Go out and meet him." At this, all those bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps, and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out." But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves." They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed. The other bridesmaids arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us." But he replied, "I tell you solemnly, I do not know you." So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.'



Reflection

In the last chapter of his gospel before the narrative of the passion, Matthew presents three parables. We hear each one in turn over these three last Sundays of the liturgical year, culminating in the parable of the sheep and the goats on the feast of Christ the King.

Today's story is the familiar one of the ten bridesmaids, five wise and five foolish. It's a good illustration of the danger of a contemporary inclination to psychologise or over-analyse the parables. Such an approach inevitably takes offence at what appears to be the smug and self-righteous behaviour of the five wise bridesmaids. How could they justify not sharing the oil they have prudently brought with them?

This misses the point. Generally it's not the detail of a parable that's important but the unexpected conclusion that confounds listeners' expectations. Here Jesus is clearly warning his followers to be constantly on the alert, ready for the moment of decision whenever it arises. This is precisely his own situation at this stage of the gospel. He is about to make the ultimate choice, to risk his life and mission for the sake of truth. The disciple must be as ready as the Master to do the same.

What is thought-provoking is that Jesus presents the choice in terms of a joyous and light-filled celebration—a wedding feast—not the threat of an unfair trial and execution.

Break Open the Word 2020

Baptisms

This weekend we welcome to our

Montmorency Parish Community on Saturday at 12 noon:

Madeleine Amelie Teofilo-Sciberras, daughter of Chris & Marie, &
Isaac Joel Teofilo, son of Mark & Peixian

Eltham Parish Community on Saturday at 1pm:

Oscar John & Mischa Kate Whitmore, children of Luke & Tarryn

We pray for *Madeleine, Isaac, Oscar & Mischa*, their parents & Godparents.
May God keep them always in His love.

