



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.

6th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 2021 - Terry

One of the most painful consequences of the Covid 19 restrictions for many people has been the loss of touch. We've been told, no kissing, hugging, handshakes. I think especially of elderly people in nursing homes where the gift of touch is such a blessing.

So many times I have been asked to anoint with the oil of the sick, elderly people who are very unwell, perhaps even dying. When I come to anoint their hands with the sign of the cross, very often the sick person will hold onto my hand and not let it go. The sense of touch is such a comfort and blessing.

Isn't it interesting how Jesus in the Gospel healed many people with the gift of touch? In todays Gospel, Jesus touched a sick person: a leper who pleaded on his knees saying to Jesus: "If you want to you can cure me."

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the leper and the leprosy left the man. He was healed.

Leprosy was a terrible disease, basically the flesh rotting on a person's body. It was highly contagious. Lepers were forced to live apart from everyone. In today's language to socially distance, so that the disease would not be transmitted. They were forced to ring a bell and cry out 'unclean, unclean' should they be anywhere in the vicinity of people. That a leper should even approach Jesus was highly illegal. What a miserable existence for any leper.

Jesus healed the man and asked him to go, show himself to the priest and make the offering for his healing as prescribed by Moses as evidence of his recovery. What is this all about?

It sounds like Jesus is intent on following the Jewish purity code, that legislated only the priests are allowed to declare a leper clean/healed. And it probably happened very rarely that a person was healed from leprosy, it was such an insidious disease.

In fact it's a very different reason why Jesus asked the man to do this. The priests would have asked about the healing and they would not have accepted Jesus authority to declare the leper clean.

So it's a confrontation with the system, a system that ultimately kept people like this man marginalised. Lepers were meant to be out of sight, out of mind and Jesus challenged the system. And notice what happened to Jesus. He was forced to live in places outside where nobody lived. He in fact had become the leper.

It's not hard to relate this with our own world. Lepers are not just people who have caught a terrible disease like Covid 19. Lepers are everywhere, all around us, in the faces of marginalised people. The homeless, people who are addicted to drugs, or alcohol or gambling, those who are in prison and when released are trying to find a home and a job, people who live with a severe mental illness, asylum seekers forced to live in detention camps, those who we now call First Australians and have never been really understood, just to name a few of todays lepers.

(continued on page 5)

Ash Wednesday Mass Times - 17 February 2021 9:30am Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham 7:30pm St Francis Xavier, Montmorency

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

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

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



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION



<u>Parish Priests</u>

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

Pastoral Worker & Gina Ang:

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

The need is acute!

Low-income communities are not asking us for money or gifts. They reject degrading dependence. They want you to share your skills to help develop self-reliance and sustainable solutions to poverty. The call is to all trades and professions to assist build the ability of their people and the capacity of their organisations. To properly prepare for a 2022 placement you do need to enquire now.

Find out more:

Ross House, Mezzanine-Sue Healy Room 247 Flinders Lane, MELBOURNE

Saturday 20 February @ 10:00am

palms.org.au





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

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

Valerie Heath, mother of Tracy Heath, Julie Dennis, sister of Carol Sheehan, Maurice Dennis, uncle of Carol Sheehan For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Denis Hollyoak

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Eltham

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time: Elisabeth & Frank Bruitzman, Denis Hollyoak For those in need of healing, remembering especially: Violetta, Christine Scott, Ibyszek Wojciechovski, Sylvek Zylevicz

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



Baptisms

This weekend we welcome to our Montmorency Parish Community on Sunday at 12 noon:



Harriet Kate Allender daughter of David & Emily

Maeve Sylvie Taranto daughter of Marc & Marguerite



Isobella Belinda Walker San Martin

daughter of Jerome & Rachel

Rachel Kate Walker

We pray for Harriet, Maeve, Isobella & Rachel, their parents & Godparents.

May God keep them always in His love.

RECONCILIATION

available upon request please call the Parish Office 9435 2178

Collections last weekend: 7 Feb 2021			
Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery	
Eltham	\$710.00	\$923.75	
Montmorency	\$571.00	\$534.25	

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



Please help our parish continue our important pastoral activities You can give an offering online today with CDFpay.

Find our parish by visiting: https://bit.ly/CDFpayEltham or https://bit.ly/CDFpayMontmorency

FEATURES / The right to life

The Catholic Church, assertive champion of the unborn, never short of powerful words in defence of their right to life, retreats into mumbling hesitancy on the subject of their right to life with God after death / By Mary McAleese

Flawed defenders of the unborn

The Catholic Church is known worldwide as a staunch defender of the right to life of the unborn. Its leaders regularly lock horns with governments and pro-choice advocates, challenging the liberalisation of abortion laws and condemning Catholic politicians who fail to defend church teaching. Even people whose knowledge of the Catholic Church is negligible are aware of its views on abortion. They dominate contemporary Church-State discourse, even making their way into a strident warning from the US bishops to the new Catholic President of the United States Joe Biden on the day of his inauguration.

Bishops are never more comfortable than when they are preaching to the world from the moral high ground of a Church which believes itself to have been missioned by God. The Church's mission is the salvation of souls and salvation is fundamentally about life after death - yet the Church's concern for the right to earthly life of the unborn is not matched by a similar concern for the right to salvation and eternal life of those little souls who die unbaptised before or at birth. These are not rare or exceptional cases. There are tens of millions of them every year. They die by clinical abortion, spontaneous miscarriage, stillbirth or from fatal conditions which cause them to die in utero or soon after birth.

On his way back to Rome from the World Youth Day in Panama in January 2019, Pope Francis was giving his usual in-flight press conference, during which as we know he can sometimes be less than careful with his words. There had been some robust discussion about abortion

at the World Youth Day gatherings. Journalist Lena Klimkeit asked the Holy Father to comment on the suffering of women and his message of mercy in the context of abortion. "The message of mercy is for everyone, even for the developing human person," he tells her. "The problem is in accompanying a woman who has come to the realisation she has had an abortion ... you have to give comfort there, not punish anything ... And many times, when they cry and have this anguish, I counsel them: 'Your

child is in Heaven."

The Pope's answer is kindly and consoling. It is also completely out of kilter with church teaching. In the matter of the status of an aborted or miscarried foetus which is not born live, church teaching is at best vague - teaching and law regarding salvation refers repeatedly to being "born". What is clear is that the Church regards the unborn child as a human being from the moment of conception: "Any discrimination based on the various stages of life is no more justified than any other discrimination ... From the time that the ovum is fertilised, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother, it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth" (Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, "Declaration on Procured Abortion", 1974, n. 12).

What expectation of eternal life does that child or any unbaptised child have when its earthly existence is extinguished? Let's look at the answer the Church offers:

1. "The salvation of souls ... must always be the supreme law in the Church" (1983 Code of Canon Law, canon 1752).

2. "The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation." The Church does not know of any means other than baptism that assures entry

into eternal beatitude (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1257).

3. The Church recognises the concept of baptism by desire where an unbaptised person dies for the sake of the faith or a catechumen dies before baptism or a person ignorant of the Gospel would have

desired it had they known of its necessity (CCC, 1258-1260). However, baptism by desire is not available to "children who have died without Baptism ... the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God" (CCC, 1261).

4. Baptism wipes away all prior sin, and even though the unborn child and the born infant are incapable of sin, the Church teaches that, thanks to the sin of Adam, everyone is born "with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin" (CCC, 1250). A person who dies in a state of original sin "receives his eternal

retribution ... at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgement that refers his life ... to everlasting damnation" (CCC, 1022). In other words, they go to hell. Since this seemed glaringly harsh in the case of blameless babies and caused untold additional grief to bereaved parents, some theologians hypothesised that there was a place or state called Limbo for such little souls, which was neither Heaven nor hell. But Limbo was never incorporated into church teaching. In 1980, the CDF issued Pastoralis action, which said that "for children who die without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to God's mercy...". In 2007, again prompted by pastoral concerns, in The Hope of Salvation for Infants Who Die Without Being Baptised, the International Theological Commission concluded that there are "serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptised infants who die will be saved and brought into eternal happiness" but it warned, "These are reasons for prayerful hope, rather than grounds for sure knowledge".

This is where church teaching stands today: hesitant, unsure, pathetic. This great assertive champion of the unborn, never short of powerful words in defence of their right to life, retreats into mumbling hesitancy on the subject of their right to life with God after death.

It needs to do better, much better. The huge effort expended in external advocacy on behalf of the right to life of the unborn has no internal Church equivalent on behalf of the right to salvation of the innocent unbaptised dead child. That in itself is remarkable in an institution which believes it was created by God for the sole purpose of bringing the good news of salvation. Pope Francis says in Evangelii Gaudium, "The Church is sent by Jesus Christ as the sacrament of salvation ... the Father desires the of salvation every Man woman" (112, 181). Tellingly, he left out the unborn. In fact, the salvific fate of millions and millions of these little human beings who die unbaptised is every day ignored by the Church. It begs the question why the Father's desire for the salvation of every child is not enough to guarantee it with the conviction and confidence that allows a Pope to comfort a woman distressed after an abortion with words his own Church cannot and will not say: "Your child is in Heaven".

Mary McAleese (inset) was born in Belfast in 1951. She served as president of Ireland between 1997 and 2011. She was awarded a doctorate in canon law in 2018 at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Her latest book, Here's the Story: A Memoir is published by Penguin Ireland.



Our Parishes Commitment to Child Safety

Our two Parishes have a strong commitment to Child Safety. We collectively affirm this commitment each year. Once again this year our commitment statement is held in both church foyers.

The following is an excerpt from the 2021 Parish Commitment Statement:

"St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham parishes hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children as a fundamental responsibility of the Church. This commitment is drawn from, and inherent to, the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the dignity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel."

"This commitment extends to clergy, employees and volunteers within the parishes of *St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham*, regardless of their role or level of responsibility to act to safeguard children and young people from abuse.

We are committed to upholding the safety and dignity of each child and young person and ensuring that they are able to grow and develop in a caring and supportive environment in our Church.

The Catholic Church has a mission-driven moral and legal responsibility to create nurturing environments where children are respected, where their voices are heard, and where they are safe and feel safe. We acknowledge that preventing child abuse requires proactive approaches across policies, procedures and practices consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards."

"The parishes of St Francis Xavier Montmorency and Our Lady Help of Christians Eltham set clear behavioural expectations with an overarching commitment to the protection of children and young people from all forms of abuse. All child safety concerns and allegations will be treated very seriously, and reported in line with our moral and legal obligations articulated in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy."

"We are committed to zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse and discrimination, and will always act to safeguard children and young people and report suspected abuse promptly to the appropriate authorities."

Peter Williams, Child Safeguarding Officer.



Lent and Easter Pamphlets 2021

You may have noticed that the supermarkets have been preparing for Easter some 54 day ago from Boxing Day with Hot Cross buns and Easter Eggs on the shelves. Our parish faith community 40 days of preparation for the greatest feast of our faith – Easter will start this week with Ash Wednesday. This week the Montmorency conference of St Vincent de Paul (SVDP) highlight a selection of small booklets which may be of interest to parishioners and their families to help in their preparation for Easter. Here are just a few of the new titles:

- These 40 Days Understanding the Symbols and Practices of Lent
- Lent and Me
- 10 Creative Things kids can do for LENT
- Fasting A positive Approach
- Family Meal Prayers for Lent

Please note the booklets are now located on the wall next to the front door. Please feel free to browse these and other related booklets together with the many other topics of interest. We hope you enjoy the selection.

A gold coin donation in either of the St Vincent de Paul boxes at the front or side entrance to the church will help defray costs.

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer with St Vincent de Paul through our conference, perhaps at our Vinnies shop in Briar Hill, or in some other administrative capacity? If so please contact Mike on 0417 221 245 or the Parish Office.

St Vincent de Paul Society



A Time to Listen - A Time to Chat - A Time to Pray



Dear Parishioners & Friends of St Francis Xavier, Montmorency & Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham

These are sensitive days, as we continue to adjust to a CovidSafe way of life, knowing that serious changes to our daily routine might occur at any time! (What to do?)

It is my intention to still open up the 'Season of Lent' to some opportunities for our Catholic Communities to come together to 'Listen & Chat & Pray' regarding any anxieties, concerns and hopes for our present & future as two vibrant local communities. These gatherings are important occasions to participate and hear from parishioners and thus continue to walk together in Faith and Love - as our future is not yet clear, given these terrible Covid19 era in which we live.

With this in mind and given our weekend timetable of Masses & Baptisms, I am going to suggest that Sundays at 1pm be our start time at SFX and OLHC.

Starting on the:

- First Sunday of Lent (February 21st.) in the SFX Parish Hall 1pm
- Second Sunday of Lent (February 28th.) in the Gathering Area, OLHC Church 1pm

These gatherings are important occasions to "Listen and Chat & Pray".

Should we need more opportunities to consider our future and seek answers then:

- Third Sunday of Lent (March 7th.) in the SFX parish Hall 1pm
- Fourth Sunday of Lent (March 14th.) in the Gathering Area, OLHC Church 1pm

Beyond these important opportunities to gather in a CovidSafe way - a time to pray and symbolise these meetings could be realised as we move into Holy Week:

- Fifth Sunday of Lent (March 21st.) at the SFX parish Hall 1pm
- Palm Sunday (March 28th.) at the Foyer OLHC Church 1pm

So, an opportunity is now being offered to the Catholic Communities of Montmorency & Eltham to get together - some 3 times during Lent, to Listen, to Chat and to Pray in response to these Covid days and our future possibilities as we move forward.

If you are available, please consider these dates and times - warmest thanks,

Michael



(continued from page 1)

And very often the system marginalises them, forces them to live apart. Not everyone, for there are beautiful stories of the care given to people with Covid 19.

How do we respond with compassion to people who are amongst todays' marginalised? Jesus certainly did not turn away from anyone. Sometimes it will be with the gift of touch as we embrace someone and offer a gift of healing. Sometimes it will be our standing with marginalised people in their search for a better life. It must never be the voice of judgment if we live the Jesus way.

Interpreting today's Gospel could suggest we don't follow the rules of social distancing. Does it mean this? I can't see this as what Jesus is asking of us. Perhaps it's more about feeling the pain in the lepers of today's world, in people who are marginalised and the Gospel is about offering our compassion as best we can

Terry

Rosters:	Week ending 21 February		
Montmorency			
McAleer, Peter & Denise	ASRC		
Eltham			
Reardon, Kathy	Altar Society		
Rigg Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue		
Scully, Helen	Altar Society		

	-	-		
Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events				
Saturday 13th				
	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
Sunday				
_	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
	Baptism: Rachel, Isobella, Maeve & H			
_	-	Montmorency		
Tuesday				
	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
	Funeral: Aileen Spriggs	Montmorency		
	day 17th - Ash Wednesday			
	Meditation	Montmorency		
	Ash Wednesday Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
7:30pm	Ash Wednesday Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
Thursda	ıy 18th			
9:30am	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
10:30am	ASRC food collection & delivery	Montmorency		
11:00am	Funeral: Valerie Heath	Montmorency		
Friday 1	9th	J		
•	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
Saturda				
	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
	21st - First Sunday of Lent			
	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
	Baptism: William, Audrey & Parker	Montmorency		
_	Listen & Chat & Pray	Montmorency		
Tuesday	-	Montinorency		
_	Mass (160 people)	Montmononau		
		Montmorency		
	day 24th	M t		
-	Meditation	Montmorency		
	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
Thursda	-			
	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
	ASRC food collection & delivery	Montmorency		
Friday 2				
	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
Saturda	- :			
-	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
	28th - Second Sunday of Lent			
_	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
10:00am	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
12:00pm	Baptism: Florence, Joshua, Romeo &	Neve		
		Montmorency		
_	Listen & Chat & Pray	Eltham		
Monday	1st March			
9:30am	Days for Girls	Montmorency		
Tuesday	2nd			
9:30am	Mass (160 people)	Montmorency		
Wednes		· ·		
	Meditation	Montmorency		
	Mass (160 people)	Eltham		
Thursda				
	Mass (160 poople)	Montmononau		

Our Lady Help of Christians Readers' Roster

We are drawing up the roster for Commentators and Readers for OLHC. We would like all those who have read in the past, or who would like to become a new volunteer, to fill out the form available in the Gathering Area after Mass.

Please print your name and contact number and whether you wish to be either a commentator or a reader. Please also indicate if you are willing to do both.

Please note that, in order to be a volunteer in the parish, you must hold a current Working with Children Check or a VIT registration, as explained in last week's bulletin. Details of how to apply for a WWC Check were also in that bulletin. Any queries regarding this process can be directed to Peter Williams at the Parish House, 9435 2178.

Kathleen Nolan (0432 391 105)

BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!

Okay, I've fin together and sp the library of 60 in 12 new ones.

Okay, I've finally got my act together and spent 3+ hours culling the library of 60 books and putting in 12 new ones.

Pope Francis' new book: Let Us

Dream, is the book for February and is found on the top shelf [get to know your leader]. I've updated the catalogue too.

As we approach Lent I've placed a few booklets on the top shelves of the smaller of the book cases that may enrich your journey. I've included a book to help negotiate Mark's Gospel, as Fr Michael says we'd do well to read it.

If you've still got books to return please do so.

Furthermore, The Prayer Shawl ladies have a 'bookshare-shelf' under the children's display of books on the other wall. I noticed several great books to borrow there, including Janine Shepherd's *Dare to Fly* [a lesson in resilience] and *The People Smuggler* [described as the Oscar Schindler of Asia] and the book that won the Premier's award last year:

Written on his phone while detained on Manus, Behrouz Boochani's *No Friend But the Mountains*. He has a home now in New Zealand thanks to Jacinda Ardern.

Montmorency

Montmorency



9:30am Mass (160 people)

10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery

FEEL SAFE AND BE SAFE AT OUR CHURCH



YOU HAVE RIGHTS

You have the right to feel safe and be safe from harm.

YOU ARE VALUED & RESPECTED

You have the right not to be hurt, spoken to rudely or made to feel uncomfortable.

WE WILL PROTECT

We will protect children and young people.

WE WILL LISTEN & BELIEVE

We will listen to children and young people and believe them.

WE WILL RESPOND

We will respond to matters of safety and harm.

IF YOU DON'T FEEL SAFE, PLEASE CONTACT:



A family member or a trusted person you feel safe talking to.



Police 000



Kids Helpline 1800 551 800

AND THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

Phone: 9926-5621 Email: psu@cam.org.au



Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to' he said 'you can cure me'. Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your recovery.' The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would come to him.



Reflection

Much of the first chapter of Mark's gospel is found also in Luke; the story of the cure of the leper is found also in Matthew. The affliction suffered by lepers in Jesus' day was three-fold. In the first place there was the disease itself; secondly the social isolation; and thirdly the religious stigma of being unclean. Jesus is mindful of the leper's whole predicament. The phrase "feeling sorry for him" does no justice to the depth of feeling, perhaps even of anger, that the original Greek implies. Having cured his physical ailment, Jesus directs the man to go without delay to the priest in order to be restored to his place in the community.

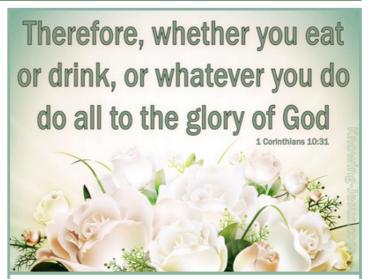
Jesus' command of silence may have been purely a practical directive, but it links in with other texts in Mark where Jesus imposes a ban on publicity about himself - in this case to no effect. The logic behind this prohibition seems to be Jesus' desire not to be misunderstood and misrepresented simply as a wonderworker. Mark's intent is to show Jesus to be a figure of contradiction - a crucified Messiah. Perhaps the comment that Jesus "could no longer go openly into any town" is already a hint of the fate that will befall him in the end, to be crucified outside the city. Certainly for the time being Jesus exchanges places with the leper, having "to stay outside in places where nobody lived".

Break Open the Word 2021



Six-Day Lenten Journal Retreat at Home 21-27 March 2021

Kardia is offering you an invitation to join us in forming a community of prayer during a six-day Lenten Journal Retreat while you are at home. While the focus of the retreat is Lent, the modes of prayer include personal journal writing if that is your desire. See More/Book Now. www.kardia.com.au



"Brothers and sisters, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God." I Cor 10:31

Do a quick check of your priorities. Where does God rank in that list? If He's not first, you have some work to do. Putting God first in everything helps us from putting other "gods" (like our pride, ego, money and possessions) before God. Before making a decision, ask yourself, "Am I doing this for the glory of God or for the glory of me?"



A good marriage doesn't happen by accident - it happens by Intention. Successful couples have made a conscious decision to Prioritise their relationship. The Diocese of Rockhampton in partnership with SmartLoving is hosting a six-week Online Marriage Seminar for married couples wanting a lasting, passionate relationship.

Start Date: Monday Evening-15 Feruary; Course Cost: \$25