



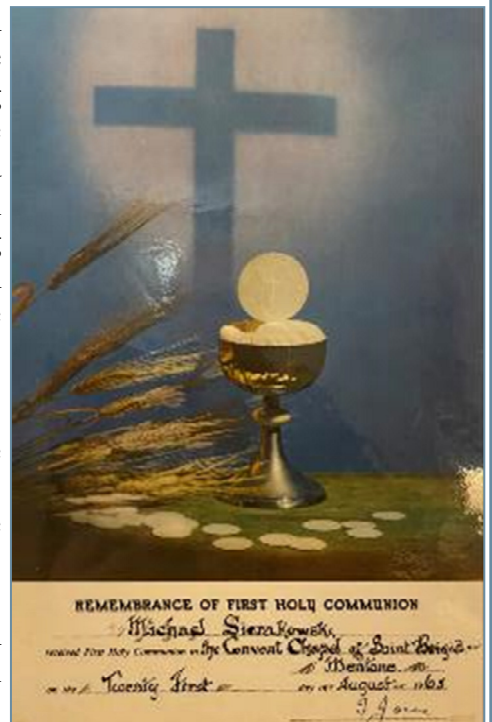
We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nation.

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Our Lady Help of Christians and St. Francis Xavier, LOCKDOWN number 4 is well into its second week - and this experience is deeply unsettling for everyone! Please, please be gentle and careful with yourself and those you love, your neighbours and friends too - these days are certainly sad and frustrating! Children and school families are finding that these days are hard to manage and cope with - Teachers and Administration Staff are working hard to help.

Our thoughts and prayers to all struggling with this COVID LOCKDOWN in Melbourne.

Terry and I have had our first Vaccination (second injection due in late July) a few weeks ago, before our present days and the experience for us was both positive and quick. Not like the long queues now. Naturally, we totally support the call for everyone who can receive these vaccines to do so - to help themselves and our society combat this Coronavirus. I have had enough conversations with many in our parishes to know of a strong reticence to be vaccinated - mainly due to other personal health considerations. Certainly do what you can to stay safe! Otherwise get Vaccinated.

The Feast of Corpus Christi - the Body and Blood of Christ, starts our First Eucharist Program, and like the Confirmations that we were able to celebrate with year 7 students and their families during the Easter Season - this Eucharist experience will be available to students in year 5 and their families for the next 5 months, concluding before the sacred month of November. Naturally in a CovidSafe way, we hope to invite 4 students to each of our Sunday Masses during these months and thus celebrate with them the highlight of our Catholic experience at Monty & Eltham.



- Hopefully our Weekend Masses will be back - see you then! (Next Week)
- Michael Said on behalf of SVDP next weekend will have a big article!
- This Bulletin - the Archbishop offers us his Pentecost Message
- The Pope gets set to listen to World Wide Church Reform
- The Feast Day of St. Kizito - 3 June - a parish linked to Eltham
- Terry remembers his First Eucharist - good memory for an old man!

Naturally, thank you for your love and support and prayers during these LOCKDOWN weeks - we are around and keeping busy doing a few little exciting things for the local Catholic Communities at Eltham & Monty - more on them later... keep Warm as we start winter! *Michael*

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

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Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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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: Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

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Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Acting Principal: Therese Stewart: 9439 7824

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Rose de Silva, Russell Rodrigo, John Stanhope

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Estelle Levy

Eltham

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Violetta, Denice Donnellan, Geoff Haines, Lidia Marazzato, Tom Nolan, Christine Scott, Ibysek Wojciechowski, Sylvek Zyleviczcz

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.

RECONCILIATION

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 2178

Collections: 6 June 2021 — LOCKDOWN — no Masses

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
OLHC		
SFX		



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>

FOR WE CANNOT KEEP FROM SPEAKING about what we have SEEN & HEARD

ACTS 4:20

Next week Catholic Mission will invite you to partner with Sister Chalaad and the Good Shepherd Sisters in Thailand as they reach out to vulnerable mothers, like Churai*, and their babies, who would have nowhere to turn when they need support, love and kindness the most.

Next week you will have the opportunity to respond to what you have seen and heard, and the Home, as well as other vital mission programs supporting children and communities in need around the world.

Please come with an open and generous heart.

*Name and images altered to protect identity



Free call: 1800 257 296
catholicmission.org.au/thailand



BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST 2021

A few weeks ago Fr Michael was talking with the parents of the children who will celebrate their First Eucharist this year. Today very appropriately on this Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ launches our First Eucharist Sundays for the next few months of our Liturgical year.

Unfortunately Covid 19 restrictions have meant that the children who were to come this week-end for First Eucharist will have to wait for another Sunday. And so as Parishes of Eltham and Montmorency we prepare to welcome all the children who will celebrate such a significant time in their faith journey this year.

Anyway back to Fr Michael's presentation. After he had welcomed everybody he turned to me and asked, "Terry do you remember your First Eucharist." I said "yes" and then told the story as best I remember it. I was 6 years old. It was 13th November, the feast of St Stanislaus Kostka, patron saint of my school back then, Kostka Hall. There were other children too, perhaps twenty or thirty and it was early morning, somewhere around 7.30am. Back in those days we were required to fast before Eucharist and that meant having nothing to eat from 12 midnight, the night before. We children then had a Communion Breakfast together to celebrate the occasion.

Many of you reading this homily will have memories of your own First Eucharist. You were probably young children and did you know what it all meant? Why were we all taught that this was a significant time in our own faith life?

I'm sure I was way too young to give an answer that would delight the theologians of today. But I am also sure that I had some awareness of the sacredness of this time. I am sure in some way that I sensed the Eucharist connected me to the Jesus story and called on me to live his way, whatever that meant to a six year old. Only time and learning through my family and teachers would open up this story to me.

What do you think First Eucharist meant to you and how do you think your children would answer this question today?

Let's think back to the very First Eucharist told in Mark's Gospel, called the Last Supper, where Jesus took some bread and gave it to the disciples saying: "Take it, this is my body". Then he took a cup of wine and when he had returned thanks, he gave it to them and said: "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant which is to be poured out for many."

What do we imagine the disciples were thinking as they shared that bread and wine? They probably had no idea of what it all meant. The very next day Jesus would be crucified and their whole world turned upside down.

Whatever the Last Supper meant for those disciples, they knew that something profound was happening. They could sense the tension and crisis emerging in Jesus' life and eating the bread and drinking the cup with him was an act of solidarity with him and with each other. And this was to be the pattern after Jesus' death and resurrection, to gather with each other as disciples of Jesus and celebrate his presence with them as they continued to live his way. That's what is handed on to us all these years later.

In some way we and the children for First Eucharist this year are like those first disciples, unknowing what the future holds for us, but willing to join in this act of solidarity with Jesus and committed to living his way as best we can. We may not be able to give a learned explanation of the meaning of Eucharist, but we know what it means in the depths of our heart. We know it is about the gift of Jesus Christ in our lives, and about bonding together as the disciples of Jesus today to live his way in love.

We wish all the children for First Eucharist this year, every blessing and we prepare to welcome them to the table of Eucharist.

Terry

Prayers of the Faithful for 6 June 2021 The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Celebrant: Gathered around the table of the Lord, let us bring our needs before the God of all:

We pray that under the leadership of Pope Francis that the Church can prepare for a post-COVID world and be a beacon of hope especially for the poor and vulnerable.

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

We pray for leaders in every field of endeavor especially health care: that they work in these stressful and difficult times for the welfare of all. We pray also for their health and well-being.

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

We pray for all volunteers who support those in need. This weekend we think especially of the St Vincent de Paul Society members who work in the local area. Their efforts are only possible because of the generosity of parishioners and the Parish schools communities.

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

We pray for the people of Victoria experiencing another lock-down. We pray especially for those experiencing loneliness, social, economic and anxiety difficulties and hope that they receive the support from the community that they need. We pray that a positive spirit can be maintained.

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

We think of the students of Victoria whose schooling has been disrupted again. We pray especially for their teachers and those assisting with their home schooling programs.

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

May the Lord shine a light of encouragement on our sister parish St Kizito to bring good harvests, blessings and love in continuing fellowship in Christ.

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

We pray that those people suffering in mind, body and spirit will experience the healing touch of Christ

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

We pray for those who have died recently, and we remember *Rose de Silva, Russell Rodrigo & John Stanhope* whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ.

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

Celebrant: God most holy, you invite us to celebrate the paschal banquet. Hear our prayers that our lives may proclaim your new covenant of love, one with Christ around your table. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

Take THE Way OF THE Gospel

RE-IMAGINING OUR LOCAL CHURCH AS MISSION COMMUNITIES

A Pastoral Letter from Archbishop Peter A Comensoli
Pentecost 2021

AT PENTECOST, the Spirit of the Risen Lord came among the household of disciples gathered in prayer, filling them with Gospel power, and sending them out on mission as the Church of Jesus Christ. On that day, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples new eyes and ears, and a fresh heart to form the family of the Church, and to proclaim the Kingdom of God to all nations.

On this great feast of Pentecost, I warmly welcome you home! After many long months we are finally opening our doors more fully, and it is time we return to gather as God's people – to worship together, to pray together and to prepare our lives to go out in mission together. And I write to you today – God's family of the Archdiocese of Melbourne – to invite you into a new conversation about our common mission for the years ahead.

To begin this conversation, I called two meetings over the past month – one with all the clergy of the Archdiocese and the other with lay representatives from each of our 209 parishes. These initial meetings had one purpose in mind: to open up the question as to how our local Church in Melbourne might best be organised into the future, such that:

- The mission of the Gospel is at the heart of our life, worship and outreach;
- Local faith communities are arranged to allow for them to flourish;
- Our faith communities be effectively resourced – spiritually, ministerially and materially.

When I was appointed to Melbourne nearly three years ago, I saw a great need for us to find new and life-giving ground in which to plant the seeds of the Gospel. For decades, the clergy and faithful of Melbourne have been exploring ways to bring about a re-framing of the local Church to become more vital for God's people. The challenges, wounds and disruptions of recent years, coupled with the life-changing reality of the COVID pandemic, have opened my own eyes, ears and heart to recognise that our present way of doing things needs to be re-imagined in the face of the changing circumstances in which we live.

But what might this look like?

In discerning this question, I have drawn insight from the first Archbishop of Melbourne, James Goold. When he came to Victoria in 1848, he did not set about arranging the Archdiocese into parishes, but instead established Missions into various localities. Each Mission comprised a family of local faith communities, gathered around a shared life of faith, worship and outreach. These Missions would then grow within them more local communities as the need arose.

Each Mission comprised a family
of local faith communities,
gathered around a shared life
of faith, worship and outreach.

When the day of Pentecost had come, the [disciples] were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Acts 2:1-3

It is a renewal of this vision for today that I want to explore with you over the coming months and years, so that we might walk together towards a more energised purpose for our local Church in the light of Pentecost. This will be a journey that will take time and effort, and we will need to take it together.

Our local Church, in all its vast spread, is wonderfully rich and varied in its many realities – be they parishes, language communities, or faith movements. But it is also true that our accompaniment and nurturing of these realities could, and should, be more life-giving. It falls to us to take on this task as Christ's disciples today.

Let me describe this task ahead by way of asking three questions:

- Where might be the local Missions of our Archdiocese today?
- Which parishes might organically fit together to form a family of communities?
- How might we better resource these Missions – spiritually, ministerially and materially?

Why should we be doing this? The Way of the Gospel – the path of missionary discipleship – has always been adapted by every generation to fit the local circumstances. How this is arranged has varied according to time and place. Now is our time; here is our place. As Pope Francis has been reminding us, we must be open to change if renewal is to be possible, and sometimes new structures are required for apostolic spirit to gain momentum.

Our parishes will remain at the heart of the gathering of God's people locally, but we need to adapt the way we resource our local communities, including the placement of clergy, catechists and other lay leaders, to form Missions that comprise a family of faith communities.

My letter to you today is simply an introduction to this task. This is the beginning of a way of thinking and acting that will involve us all – bishops, clergy and laity. It will be a journey of listening and learning, and walking together. Bring it to prayer; begin to talk with one another; open your hearts to where the Lord is calling us; reach out to your neighbours in faith.



More information will be made available soon, so the steps of discernment and consultation are readily available for everyone. I would like to note though that this is a period of growing and learning, not of haste. It is not about change overnight, it is not about parish closures or amalgamations, but a reframing of our thinking, and a resourcing of where our current need is, not where it was, in order to bring renewed life.

As the disciples gathered on that first Pentecost, might we now start this journey in prayer – together. Let us open ourselves to Christ Jesus with a new depth of trust and conviction in his guiding hand, so that we may discern our journey with compassionate and humble hearts and come to know the Spirit moving within and amongst us, and so be transformed.

**Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful,
and enkindle in us the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created,
and you shall renew the face of the earth.**

Holy Mary, Mother of Church, pray for us.

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

ROSTERS:	
<i>week ending 13 June</i>	
Montmorency	
Emslie, Maureen	W6:00
Kenny, Michael	W6:00
McKinley, Michael	W8:30
Ramsdale, John	W8:30
Sullivan, Michael	CLNR
Watson, Denis	CLNR
Williams, Anne	PRYR
Williams, Peter	PRYR
Eltham	
Iiffe, Yvonne	Eucharistic Minister
Reardon, Kathy	Altar Society
Reardon, Kathy	Eucharist Minister
Rigg Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Scully, Helen	Altar Society
Scully, Greg	Commentator
Taylor, Trish	Reader

Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

Saturday 5

11:00am Baptisms - **CANCELLED** Eltham

6:00pm Mass - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

Sunday 6

8:30am Mass - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

10:00am Mass - **CANCELLED** Eltham

12:00pm Baptisms - **CANCELLED** Eltham

Monday 7

9:30am Days for Girls - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

Tuesday 8

9:30am Mass - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

Wednesday 9

6:30am Meditation - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

9:30am Mass - **CANCELLED** Eltham

Thursday 10

9:30am Mass - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

10:30am ASRC - **CANCELLED** Montmorency

Friday 11

9:30am Mass (160 people) Eltham

11:30am Holy Trinity Feast Day School Mass Holy Trinity

Saturday 12

6:00pm Mass (160 people) & First Eucharist Montmorency

Sunday 13

8:30am Mass (160 people) & First Eucharist Montmorency

10:00am Mass (160 people) Eltham

12:00pm Baptisms: Lillian, Oliver, Archie Eltham

Monday 14 Public Holiday - Queen's Birthday

Tuesday 15

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Eltham

Wednesday 16

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Mass (160 people) Eltham

11:00am Small Church Community Montmorency

Thursday 17

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

FEATURES / Church reform

In what is potentially the boldest move since the second Vatican Council, Pope Francis has announced a two-year-long, Church-wide process of consultation and discernment / **By Christopher Lamb**

Synodality takes flight

The news came just before the celebration of Pentecost. In what seemed to some a similar unleashing of the Spirit, Pope Francis approved a dramatic shakeup to the next synod of bishops. For the first time, ordinary Catholics from across the world will be formally included at every stage of the process.

Rather than just a three-week, one-off gathering of bishops in Rome in October 2022, the synod will begin later this year at the local level, with every diocese in the universal Church embarking on a structured discernment as the People of God, and will conclude two years later. This marks a watershed in the Pope's search for a more synodal Church, in which people, priests and bishops "walk together" in mission, echoing the disciples walking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

This is easier to talk about than to put into practice. The latest changes mark the boldest reform move in the post-pandemic phase of Francis' papacy. If they come off, they will embed into the structures and habits of the Church a process of renewal that will outlive his pontificate.

Crucially, these reforms are not only Francis' ideas. "The Pope is hitting the re-set button," Professor Myriam Wijlens, a Dutch theologian and canon lawyer teaching at the University of Erfurt in Germany, tells me. "When we reset our computer nothing is added but it is set to work optimally. Francis is not adding anything new. He is more deeply implementing the Second Vatican Council."

It had already been announced that the theme of the next synod would be "For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission". What is the nature of the Church and how should it witness to the Gospel in the third millennium? The pandemic has upended traditional pastoral models, and digital and technological upheavals have created opportunities for the Church to be more agile and creative. To meet the challenge, the synod process will be "carried out through listening to all of the baptised". What the synod is looking for is the *sensus fidei*. The Pope speaks of the Church as an "inverted pyramid", with "the top located beneath the base".

political-ecclesial battle between competing visions of the Church. Embarking on a longer and deeper process of listening and consultation seeks to mitigate against this.

It also makes strategic sense. Last year, Sister Nathalie Becquart, the first female under-secretary of the Synod of Bishops' office, suggested to me that only those bishops who had embarked on synodal processes in their dioceses be invited to Rome for the next synod. The recent announcement aims to address the problem that the practice of synodality is foreign to many bishops.

I have reported on every synod during the Francis pontificate: the 2014 and 2015 synods on the family, the 2018 synod on young people and the 2019 synod on the Amazon. Most of those taking part described them as forums for free discussion and genuine discernment. But I have seen how synods come under pressure from two sides: those who oppose the synod process because they see it as a Trojan horse for change, and those who hope a synod will be the vehicle for pushing through changes they think the Church must make.

Disagreements cannot be avoided. Synodality offers a way of discussing contentious issues openly without a breach in communion. Cardinal Mario Grech, leader of the synod office, says while some argued in the past that Church unity was maintained by "strengthening the authority of pastors", today maintaining communion "requires circularity, reciprocity, journeying together". This is a subtle rebuttal to those in Rome who warn about a German "schism".

During his Pentecost homily, the Pope spoke about the "harmony of diversity" and the unity that is willed by the Holy Spirit. He warned that it is "the enemy" who wants "diversity to become opposition and so he makes them become ideologies". Francis often stresses that a synod is not a parliament where those in the majority can impose their ideas. Instead, true reform comes through consensus, which is not the same as allowing a small minority to veto any change: it is more like what Cardinal Newman meant when he spoke of a *conspiratio*, a single movement of bishops and faithful. Pope Francis is seeking is a reconfigured relationship between the faithful and the bishops, rooted in the belief that the Holy Spirit works through all the People of God. Vatican II, Professor Wijlens points out, "could bear fruit" because theology was developed at the local level, which then benefited the universal. She says the synod is using a similar dynamic.

Just as happened at the Vatican Council, some argue that synodality won't achieve anything. "Nothing to see here, please move on." Others talk fearfully of synods exacerbating divisions. Wijlens draws a comparison with the disciples who locked the doors when they met together after Jesus' death. Despite their fears, the women went to the tomb and the risen Jesus appeared to them. "Fear is not a good adviser," she says. "We need to have the courage to open the doors within ourselves and trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us."



Professor Myriam Wijlens with Pope Francis

The Pope will formally open the synod on 9-10 October in the Vatican, and a week later each diocese will do the same with a celebration of the Eucharist in an "opening session". Previous synods in the Francis pontificate have sought to consult the faithful - often through questionnaires - but never before has the local church been a constitutive part of the synod. Every diocese must establish a contact person or team and hold a "pre-synodal meeting" at the end of their discernment; their findings will then be sent to bishops' conferences, who must conduct their own reflections. The "diocesan phase" from October 2021 to April 2022 will form the basis for a "continental phase" from September 2022 to March 2023, and the process will conclude with a "universal church phase" in Rome in October 2023.

The biggest difficulty facing Francis will come from a mixture of resistance, inertia, fear and uncertainty. For decades, bishops have been expected to take their instructions from Rome. Most are careful to avoid anything that might incur a ticking-off from "head office". Now the local church is being told to find its own voice. It is a culture change that not every bishop is likely to be comfortable with.

Some of their hesitancy comes from the fear that synods provoke tensions, disagreements and difficulties. They can be messy. "Autocracy was always quicker and cleaner," Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Bishops' Conference, told me in March. When it openly discusses power, sexuality and the role of women, Germany's synodal pathway is accused of fuelling "schism". The concern in Rome is that the synod planned for October next year would have been a

Gospel - Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to Jesus, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and say to the owner of the house which he enters, "The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there.' The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them. 'Take it,' he said 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.'

After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives.



Reflection

Today's gospel passage incorporates the preparation for Jesus' final Passover meal with his disciples (noting that John has a different chronology) and the supper narrative. It omits the intervening verses treating of Jesus' impending betrayal. Apart from the reading of Mark's entire passion narrative on Palm Sunday in Year B, we only ever hear his account of the Last Supper on this feast day once every three years.

No two accounts of the Last Supper and the institution of the eucharist are the same, but those of Mark and Matthew are usually linked together, as are Luke and Paul (1 Corinthians). Both Mark and Matthew use the phrase "blood of the covenant", echoing Moses' words to the people in Exodus 24, whereas Luke and Paul write of the "new covenant in my blood".

Today's ensemble of readings focuses our attention on the symbolism of blood. The blood sprinkled by Moses on the altar and the people seals the covenant between God and Israel. The blood of Christ, offered in perfect sacrifice, achieves redemption and establishes a new and eternal covenant. We become the people of that covenant when we drink from the cup of Christ. We are fortunate that in recent decades the practice of partaking of both the body and the blood of Christ has become more widespread. However it has not yet become the norm that it should be everyone's right and duty at every Mass.

Break Open the Word 2021

St Kizito Feast Day - 3 June

Background: The feast day has been celebrated in Eltham from the time the Malawi Support Group was first formed late in 1996 following circulation of a request from the Cathedral to provide support to a parish in Africa.

St Kizito parish remains our sister parish even though our fundraising has been discontinued and the charity closed. Nevertheless it is proposed we continue to recognise the feast day celebration each year in conjunction with a prayer for our sister parish.

History: St Kizito was [canonized](#) on 18 October 1964 by [Pope Paul VI](#) in [Rome](#). His [feast day](#) is on June 3rd. He is considered as the patron saint of children and primary schools. At 14 years of age St Kizito was the youngest of a group of 45 Christians – 22 Catholics and 23 Anglicans – who were tortured and killed over a period stretching from 1885 to 1887 for their faith. Christians were persecuted by the Kabala or ruler who was, during this period, Mwanga, ruler of the people of Buganda. Buganda is now known as the country of Uganda.

Priests belonging to the Missionaries in Africa, commonly referred to as the White Fathers (due to their white habits), arrived in Uganda in 1879. They were met with little resistance at first. The White Fathers shared their Christian faith among the people of Buganda. Their teaching and preaching were tolerated without incident. That changed when the Kabaka, Mutesa, died and was succeeded by his son, Mwanga. Mwanga viewed Christianity as a threat to his power.

The Christian views on morality – especially the teaching that paedophilia was a sin – did not help endear them to Mwanga, who was a paedophile and routinely solicited sexual favours from his young pages. His chief page, Joseph Mukasa was a Catholic who did his best to protect his young charges. He even had the courage and conviction to confront Mwanga and insist he give up his sinful ways. Mwanga's response was to have him beheaded.

Joseph Mukasa was succeeded as chief page by Charles Lwanga who also was a Catholic and who also was vigorous in his protection of the young pages. Mwanga became increasingly enraged as the pages, St. Kizito among them, continually refused and rebuffed Mwanga's sexual advances. Mwanga eventually had the pages brought before him giving them a choice to renounce their Christian faith and live – or choose to keep their faith and die. Many of the pages including Charles Lwanga and Kizito chose their faith. There were fifteen in the group who were bound and made to walk two days to Namugongo where they would be killed. One of the Christians, Matthias Kalemba, was martyred enroute. Upon reaching Namugongo, Charles Lwanga was the first to be burned at the stake. The following is a moving excerpt taken from the Catholic News agency:

The executioners slowly burnt his feet until only the charred remained. Still alive, they promised him that they would let him go if he renounced his faith. He refused saying, "You are burning me, but it is as if you are pouring water over my body." He then continued to pray silently as they set him on fire. The other pages were burned alive together. As they were being executed, their faith remained strong until the end, praying and singing hymns.

The death of these martyrs had quite the opposite effect the Kabaka intended. Many witnessing the horrific deaths of these amazing young men who gave their young lives so willingly for their faith, asked to be baptized.

