

# 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

We all have to learn how to deal with criticism or even rejection in our lives. Between us we would probably write a book of encyclopaedic proportions if we wrote about experiences where we feel judged, misunderstood or unfairly criticised. And so often the criticism or rejection has come from people we thought knew us better. And no doubt we have done the same to others.

Even as children we have to learn these hard lessons of life. Think of the so called school friendships where one day your best friend doesn't want to know you the very next day. Ask teenage girls to talk about the 'in-groups' and the bullying at school when they are excluded from the group.

Very often the people we think know us best are the very people who don't know us at all. How many families are caught in tensions because of some misunderstanding and it can be over something that was said years ago and it has never been forgiven? Sometimes these misunderstandings become pretty much irreconcilable because there's no way there can be a conversation of genuine listening.

Why is it that so many families become split and divided? Sometimes it can be over a 'will' where there is an unequal share of the estate divided between the children after the death of a parent.

Sometimes it can be a jealousy. I think of people who find themselves forced to choose between members of the family. Right now I'm thinking of a 'step family', where the husband has a new wife and she doesn't get on with his daughter. It has become a choice between the wife and the daughter and the daughter is no longer welcome.

With these thoughts in mind we open up the Gospel today where Jesus went to his home town Nazareth and began teaching in the synagogue. Most of the people there were astonished at his wisdom and the miracles he worked among them. And yet for all of this they did not accept him. He had grown up among them, recognised as the carpenter's son and they thought they knew him. They had put him in a box with a lid on it and there was no way they were open to his message, even though it was he who spoke wisdom and offered such compassion for them.

They probably didn't like what he said, for it would have been very challenging to the religious system. He would have spoken up for the poor and marginalised. They probably thought he was some upstart who seemed to work miracles, but it couldn't be, because he was the carpenter's son, and they judged him as a fraud.

How did Jesus respond? He saw the writing on the wall and he spoke those words, "a prophet is only despised in his own country, among his own relations and in his own house." So he moved on never to return again to Nazareth. The people of Nazareth, his home town were simply not prepared to give him a chance. And there was no point hanging around when he didn't stand a chance.

We can well ask, 'where do we stand with all this? It would be fair to say that sometimes we deserve criticism for we have failed in some way. But it's those times when we really believe we have done our best and we have been judged, even rejected. Or we have stood up for someone or some social issue and we have been dismissed. And even though we wish to reconcile, there can come a time, when like Jesus in the Gospel today we simply have to walk away and go elsewhere. There will be some of us right now dealing with this kind of situation and let's hold you close as you find your way.

*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](http://pol.org.au/eltham) or [pol.org.au/montmorency](http://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](mailto:terry.kean@cam.org.au)

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

[michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au](mailto:michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au)

Barry Caldwell

### Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

**9435 4742**

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

[montmorency@cam.org.au](mailto:montmorency@cam.org.au)

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

[eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au)

Peter Williams:

Child Safety Officer

[SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au](mailto:SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au)

Website:

[www.pol.org.au/montmorency](http://www.pol.org.au/montmorency)

[www.pol.org.au/eltham](http://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](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au)

### Schools

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

[principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au)

[www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au)

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

[principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au)

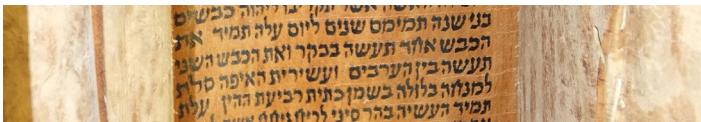
[www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au)

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Acting Principal: Therese Stewart: 9439 7824

[school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au](mailto:school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au)

[www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au](http://www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au)



### Collections: 27 June 2021

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
OLHC	\$275.00	\$489.60
SFX	\$1,401.10	\$703.35

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>

### Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Leon Nolan*

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:

*Mario Bevanda, Leon Nolan*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Violetta, Denice Donnellan, Geoff Haines, Lidia Marazzato, Tom Nolan, Les Robertson, Christine Scott, Ibszyek Wojciechowski, Sylvek Zyleviczc*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

9435 4742 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au).

### RECONCILIATION

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 4742



**Congratulations to all who celebrate their sacraments this weekend:**

### Saturday 3 July

*Our Lady Help of Christians, 11am*

Isabelle Blumfield

Baptism

Owen Notley

Baptism

*St Francis Xavier, 6pm*

Makayla Fisher

First Eucharist

Madeline Hamilton

First Eucharist

Crystal Hawken

First Eucharist

Aneesha Kent

First Eucharist

### Sunday 4 July

*St Francis Xavier, 8:30am*

Fabien Habboush

First Eucharist

Jayda Hawkins

First Eucharist

Stella Hawkins

First Eucharist

Emma O'Loughlin

First Eucharist

Isabel Rodriguez

First Eucharist

*Our Lady Help of Christians, 10am*

Summer Murphy

First Eucharist

*Our Lady Help of Christians, 12 noon*

Jordan Burfoot

Baptism

Eilish Crowl

Baptism

Isabel Davis

Baptism

## Roster for WEEKEND 10/11 July

<i>Montmorency</i>	
Dean, Mary	PRYR
Kenny, Michael	W6:00
McKinley, Michael	W8:30
McKinna, Jane	W6:00
O'Connor, Pat	CLNR
Ramsdale, John	W8:30
Said, Mike & Marie	ASRC
<i>Eltham</i>	
Furtado, Denzil	Reader
Haines, Geoff	Commentator
Haines, Jan-Marie	Eucharistic Minister
Reardon, Kathy	Altar Society
Scully, Greg	Eucharistic Minister
Scully, Helen	Altar Society
Stewart Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue

## Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

### Saturday 3

11:00am Baptism: Owen & Isabelle Eltham  
 6:00pm Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist Montmorency

### Sunday 4

8:30am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist Montmorency  
 10:00am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist Eltham  
 12:00pm Baptisms: Jordan, Isabel & Eilish Eltham

### Tuesday 6

9:30am Mass (120 people) Montmorency  
 10:00am Craft Group Montmorency

### Wednesday 7

6:30am Meditation Montmorency  
 9:30am Mass (120 people) Eltham  
 11:00am Small Church Community Montmorency

### Thursday 8

9:30am Mass (120 people) Montmorency  
 10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery Montmorency

### Friday 9

9:30am Mass (120 people) Eltham

### Saturday 10

6:00pm Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist Montmorency

### Sunday 11

8:30am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist Montmorency  
 10:00am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist Eltham  
 12:00pm Baptisms: Luca, Madison, Summer & Beau Montmorency

### Monday 12

9:30am Days for Girls Montmorency

### Tuesday 13

9:30am Mass (120 people) Montmorency

### Wednesday 14

6:30am Meditation Montmorency  
 9:30am Mass (120 people) Eltham

### Thursday 15

9:30am Mass (120 people) Montmorency  
 10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery Montmorency  
 10:30am Mass at Garden Views Garden Views

### Friday 16

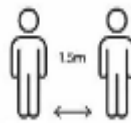
9:30am Mass (120 people) Eltham

# CovidSafety

## during Mass:



- Face masks are to be worn indoors (during Mass) unless you have personal health directives;



- Please maintain **social distancing of 1 person per 2 square metres** (families not included) at all times;



- Please **record your presence** via: QR Code on your phone, this is essential for Record Keeping and if necessary, tracing and numbers;



- Please use **Hand Sanitiser** provided or other personal appropriate cleaning agent.

## Please note:

*current* Covid Regulations allow for **only 160 people** in the Churches of St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady Help of Christians.

Born 1,500 years ago and celebrated on both sides of the Irish Sea, St Columba was as adept at making connections across political and tribal boundaries as he was at exploring the boundary between Heaven and earth / **by Bruce Clark**

# A saint for all kingdoms

**Whether you call** him Columba or (as Irish people do) Columcille, he is having a cracking anniversary year, despite Covid or maybe even because of it.

Without the pandemic, it is fair to say that more fanfare would have surrounded the anniversary of the birth in Donegal of the great apostle of Scotland. There would have been more cathedral services, exuberant pilgrimages in large vessels and speeches by the earthly great and good. Ireland's President Michael D. Higgins would have competed with Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon and perhaps even the UK's premier Boris Johnson to find the right bon mot to connect the Gaelic seafarer with today's post-Brexit dilemmas over the future of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The glorious complexity of Columba's life is a gift to speech-writers. David Cameron contrived an ingenious link, exactly a decade ago when he addressed the Northern Ireland Assembly on 9 June, the saint's feast. Columba, the prime minister said, "specially symbolizes the historic inks and deep bonds between Britain and Ireland". He added: "Born a prince of Donegal, exiled in Iona, and honoured today in the central lobby of the Palace of Westminster, his monks provided not just an Irish national treasure, the Book of Kells, but also a British national treasure, the Lindisfarne Gospels."

All that is accurate enough. This year, instead of orations and ceremonies, more spontaneous, even miraculous, things have happened. As already reported in *The Tablet*, Iona Abbey - a successor of sorts to the powerful fraternity which Columba created on the island - managed against the odds to raise the £300,000 needed to prepare for its reopening. The anniversary helped. But the epicenter of the saint's big birthday year has been his home territory of Donegal, where (more than in Scotland) a sense of his benign presence has survived in popular culture.

There is not one single Donegal tradition of remembering Columcille; there are at least half a dozen. From the far north to the extreme south-west of that county, there are local claims to a unique connection with the holy man, and they coexist in playful competition. So the soil for saintly celebrations is fertile. Seed it with modest grants from the Irish-language agency Foras na Gaeilge, which works in friendly cooperation with its Scots-Gaelic counterpart; and add a bit more help from the regional authorities of Donegal and the adjacent bits of Northern Ireland, which increasingly work in lockstep.

The result has been an exuberant outpouring of locally organized religious services and open-air concerts; at least one "walking festival"; a renewal of small but well targeted archaeological projects; and a plethora of short and longer films. The finest is an hour-long offering that showcases the county's globally admired musicians as well as many Donegal people - old and young, clerical and lay - telling their stories about the saint with a nice hint of mischief in the eyes. *Colmcille: Dúchas agus Oidhreacht* (Legacy and Heritage) is in Irish, but is efficiently subtitled.

As the film shows, there are two especially powerful local traditions. One surrounds the numinous valley of Glencolumcille, where the saint's feast has always been marked by a rigorous three-hour *turas* or prayerful walk between standing stones and other sites of Christian and pre-Christian origin. Then in Gartan, the saint's childhood home near Letterkenny, there is a rock where his mother Eithne is said to have borne him. This is in every sense a holy place: countless departing emigrants have lain on that rock in the belief that it would help them bear the pain of exile.

And in the far north of the county, near Malin Head, there is a cherished Columban tradition. Portcille, a tiny bay in Inishowen, competes with Derry to be the place where the saint embarked on his voyage to Scotland.

And indeed, recent archaeological work on two monastic sites near Malin point to common features with the Iona monastery - and a foundation date in the age of Columcille.

**What all** the Donegal tales of Columcille share is a vision of the holy man not simply as a disinterested ascetic, but rather as a man with a healthy, attractive cunning. According to the Columba scholar Brian Lacey, and adopted Donegal man, people in the county warm to the story that the saint's original, pre-baptismal name was *crimthann*, the fox.

Are they right to call him crafty? Among his many gifts, he was an adept player in the dynastic politics of Ireland and Scotland. His wise counsel solved the succession problems of the kings of Scottish Dál Riata; he later returned briefly to his Irish homeland to broker an ingenious settlement between the Antrim segment of the Dál Riata kingdom and his own kin who predominated elsewhere in the north of Ireland. He had, some might say, the sort of skills that might be a boon to anyone trying to shore up the Good Friday Agreement in the Brexit age.

Whatever else it is, Columba's life is a tale of interconnection between the various parts of Britain and Ireland: not the domination of one island or region by another, but a more dynamic process of mutual interaction. In particular he stands for a to-and-fro link between Ireland and Scotland, one that vastly predates the London-decreed settlement of Ulster by Scots and English in the seventeenth century.

As David Cameron hinted, people in England also have good reason to revere Columba. The saint had a profound, post-humous effect on the religious renaissance that stirred in northern England a century and a half after his death. The obvious Celtic influences in the artwork of the Lindisfarne Gospels are only one of many tangible connections between Columba's community on Iona and



the spiritual awakening of Christian Northumbria. In the course of several visits, the great Donegal-born scholar Adomnán - Abbot of Iona and biographer of Columba - gave the Northumbrians the benefit of his remarkable learning, including his detailed knowledge of Jerusalem. Those seeds bore spectacular fruit.

What the life of Columba does *not* provide is a case for the sharper separation of any constituent part of these islands from any other part. True, there were many boundaries in the saint's time - both the political and tribal kind, and physical ones like choppy seas, thick forests and high mountains. But he was exceptionally adept at overcoming those boundaries, as a skilled seafarer and an artful diplomat. A millennium and a half before the Irish Sea border became a toxic political issue, he understood both the hazards of the stretch of the water dividing his native Ireland from the larger island to its east, and also the benefits of navigating that sea road successfully.

More fundamental, but outside the realm of political rhetoric, the stories of his life suggest an exceptionally keen awareness of the boundary between Heaven and earth, both its hardness and its occasional permeability.

**Bruce Clark** writes for *The Economist* on history, culture and ideas.



## MIND YOURSELF / A dispatch from the happiness frontline

### We can't go anywhere without wind in our sails

My report this month from the happiness frontline is ... bumpy. One minute we are joyfully putting up the bunting in readiness for Freedom Day. The next we are sadly packing it away, a crumpled, multicoloured heap banished to the attic.

To continue the fairground analogy, it feels like we are on a relentless Ferris wheel of emotions. Now up! Now down! Now free! Now locked down!

How can any of us remain calm and steady as we ride this emotional roller coaster? Well, I think I have the answer - and it means swapping the fairground for a boat. Let me explain.

While we cannot stop having feelings, we can learn ways to better manage and accept them. It's a process psychologists call "emotional regulation". This helps us experience our emotional reactions with compassion and kindness. As the clinical psychologist Dr Carla Croft points out, experiencing ups and downs from time to time - so long as no one

emotion takes over too often - is actually part of functioning well.

Dr Croft suggested to me the metaphor of a sailing boat. Bring to mind the image of a small canvas boat. Think of the different features it needs to cruise along: its sails, how large they are, the amount of wind needed, and how tightly or loosely they are attached to the mast. Remind yourself that a boat stays upright thanks to a complicated formula, which involves equal and opposite forces keeping the craft steady and moving through the water.

Apply this image to your own life. We sometimes imagine that our lives should ideally be - almost literally - plain sailing. That to be happy and balanced, we should be free from tension fear, anger and sadness; and able to steer clear of challenging life events like the



Covid pandemic. But imagine you are like a sailboat: it will help you see that a mixed picture is more realistic. Imagine what would happen if conditions were too easy on our sailboat. Imagine the boat leaning to one side and tipping over; imagine being marooned because there was no wind. Some tension is needed if the boat is to travel safely. Now imagine if that tension becomes too much: then its grip needs to be loosened. Joy and ease need to be reintroduced for the boat to go on its way.

I have been trying to learn this lesson first-hand in my own life over the past few months; to accept the uncertainties of Covid; to make the most of an extended lockdown; to remember that post-pandemic may even feel a little sweeter because reopening has been delayed a little longer. It's bumpy. My mood swings around. But I have found comfort in my boating metaphor.

**Rachel Kelly** is a mental health advocate and adviser to Compassion Matters, a charity that supports schools, teachers and young people to explore compassion.

**'Reframing Retirement'**, Saturday 24 July 2021, 10am -3pm. Does our sense of vocation or calling end with Retirement? Does the final 'third' of life signal a decline, or an opportunity to encounter an unexplored terrain of life...and of oneself? And what can our faith journey become at this time of transition? Whether voluntary or involuntary, Retirement can be a wake-up call, summoning us to reframe our vision and our purpose. This reflection day is led by Simon Jenkinson, qualified clinical psychologist and spiritual director. Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation, Rear 41 Stanhope St, Malvern VIC. Cost \$60 (morning tea provided, BYO lunch). Book and pay via website [www.heartoflife.melbourne](http://www.heartoflife.melbourne), email [info@heartoflife.melbourne](mailto:info@heartoflife.melbourne) or tel 9890 1101.



# Heal Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday 4 July 2021

Visit [www.natsicc.org.au](http://www.natsicc.org.au) to access a variety of resources



**Catholic Theological College**  
*Ethical Issues and Human Ageing*  
Online unit via zoom on 6 Saturdays  
from 31 July

Lecturer:

Rev. Dr Laurence McNamara CM

**Audit, Undergraduate and  
Postgraduate Options available**

Enquiries: 03 9412 333 or  
[registrar@ctc.edu.au](mailto:registrar@ctc.edu.au)

CATHOLIC  
THEOLOGICAL  
COLLEGE



UNIVERSITY  
OF DIVINITY

## Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre

362 Albert Street, East Melbourne

The Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre is open for pilgrims, parishioners, and community groups on Monday to Friday from 9 am – 5 pm. Come and have a Cuppa with Mary and:

- View a dedicated Museum to Mary and the SOSJ's with emphasis on Victoria.
- Walk the Mary MacKillop Heritage trail (Virtual tour if preferred), which includes Mary's place of birth (Please register).
- Sit in a very spiritual and sacred space, the chapel, where Mary walked, lived and prayed.
- Purchase gifts from a wide range of gifts that includes books, cards, and souvenirs, including products from the Peruvian Women's Project.

Parish groups are invited to have a special Cuppa with Mary MacKillop on Wed and Fridays from 2 – 3.30 pm (other times by negotiation).

### Special Offers' to acknowledge Saint Mary's forthcoming Feast day on 8 August

(offer applicable during the period Mon 21 June – Tues 31 August)

Go into the draw to win a free nights accommodation with a purchase from the Museum gift shop - Any person that purchases from the Museum gift shop (communion & confirmation gifts, devotional items, Vatican Library collection, rosary beads, holding crosses, candles, cards, statues, crucifixes, paintings, books and Peruvian handmade items) will go into a draw for a free nights accommodation for two at the Mary MacKillop Heritage Centre. Click here for the gift shop and to order contact Kate on (03) 9926 9300 or email [admin.mmhc@sosj.org.au](mailto:admin.mmhc@sosj.org.au) (The draw will take place on Wed 1 September).


Book accommodation at the Heritage and save off normal rates – Fully self-contained one-bedroom apartments sleeps 2 (\$120) and two-bedroom apartments sleeps 4 (\$170). Off street parking is included and a light breakfast can be added for \$8.00 per person. Book and pay for your special event or Grand Final accommodation now at these rates.

We are seeking people interested in volunteering - If you have a love of gardening or maintenance and can do two hours per week, we would love to hear from you.

For Parishes requiring special group bookings, please contact us on 9926 9300







## An Evolving Faith Includes Doubt

Theme: [An Evolving Faith](#)

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Brian McLaren

*In my mind, one of the markers of an evolving faith is an ability to integrate doubt - to hold the tension between what we've been taught and what we've come to know as true. When grounded in an experience of Love, doubt does not represent a step backwards, but is a necessary condition for any movement forward. CAC teacher Brian McLaren speaks of his personal journey with doubt as the essential ingredient in the evolution of his faith from "orthodoxy" or right belief to "orthopraxy" or right way of life.*

Before doubt, I thought that faith was a matter of correct beliefs. My religious teachers taught me so: that if I didn't hold the right beliefs, or at least say that I held them, I would be excommunicated from my community, and perhaps, after death, from God's presence. They taught me this not to be cruel but because they themselves had been taught the same thing, and they were working hard, sometimes desperately, to be faithful to the rules as they understood them. I tried to do the same, and I would still be doing so today if not for doubt.

Doubt chipped away at those beliefs, one agonizing blow at a time, revealing that what actually mattered wasn't the point of beliefs but the clear window of faith, faith as a life orientation, faith as a framework of values and spirituality, faith as a commitment to live into a deep vision of what life can be, faith as a way of life, faith expressing itself in love.

For all those years, when I said, "I believe," I thought I understood what I was doing. But more was going on, so much more...

Looking back, I now see that underneath arguments about what I believed to be true *factually*, something deeper and truer was happening *actually*.

For example, whether or not the creation story happened *fractually* as described in Genesis, I was committing myself to live in the world as if it *actually* were a precious, beautiful, meaningful creation, and as if I were too...

What mattered most was not that I *believed* the stories in a factual sense, but that I *believed in* the meaning they carried so I could act upon that meaning and embody it in my life, to let that meaning breathe in me, animate me, fill me... Whether I considered the stories factually accurate was never the point; what actually mattered all along was whether I lived a life pregnant with the meaning those stories contained. To my surprise, when I was given permission to doubt the factuality of my beliefs, I discovered their actual life-giving purpose...

Doubt need not be the death of faith. It can be, instead, the birth of a new kind of faith, a faith beyond beliefs, a faith that expresses itself in love, a deepening and expanding faith that can save your life and save the world.

### **Reference:**

Brian D. McLaren, *Faith after Doubt: Why Your Beliefs Stopped Working and What to Do about It* (St. Martins: 2021), 206, 207, 212.

## Gospel - Mark 6:1-6

Jesus went to his home town and his disciples accompanied him. With the coming of the Sabbath he began teaching in the synagogue and most of them were astonished when they heard him. They said, 'Where did the man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted him, and these miracles that are worked through him? This is the carpenter, surely, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joset and Jude and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here with us?' And they would not accept him. And Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is only despised in his own country among his own relations and in his own house'; and he could work no miracle there, though he cured a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.



## Prayers of the Faithful for 4 July 2021 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Celebrant:** Sisters and brothers, "Heal Country" is the theme of today's celebration and NAIDOC week.

May the Catholic Church in Australia be attentive to her 130,000 Indigenous members and embrace them with pastoral care, promote their leadership in the Church, and honour their rich heritage, culture and spirituality. *Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

May all Aboriginal and Torres Strait citizens be treated with respect, their vulnerable youth receive encouragement, and the wisdom of their elders be listened to.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

May this year's theme – Heal Country – be embraced by all in this continent, so that we can learn from the rich connection and knowledge of Country of our Indigenous Australians, and work towards a more sustainable planet, our common home.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

May we in our daily lives bring God's love to all we meet. May our compassion strengthen us to fight against anything that diminishes the dignity of another person.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the Church that it be a house of compassion, mercy and love, and that its processes be open, transparent and just, so that those who are not yet believers might come to see in it the goodness of God.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For an end to the Covid pandemic: that God will slow the spread of the virus throughout the world, speed the vaccines to those who need them, and give strength to all who care for the sick.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all enduring great hardship: because of religious persecution, war, terrorism, drought, famine, bushfires and floods: that God will give them strength, renew their spirits and help them find the resources that they need.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For greater stewardship: that God will guide us in caring for God's creation and preserving its resources for future generations.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all the sick and especially those mentioned in our newsletter: that God's healing love may touch them and restore them to fullness of life.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

May the over three million people who have died in this pandemic, too often alone and in fear, find in God the source of eternal peace and joy. We also remember Mario Bevanda and Leon Nolan whose anniversaries are at this time.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Celebrant:** Our eyes are fixed on you, O Lord, as we plead for your mercy, that with a prophet's heart each of us will witness to your salvation. Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen