

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.



Fr Terry says Thank You

If this picture of our dear Fr Terry in a Tiger's jumper is any indication, there will be plenty of laughs. Come along to one of the events planned for Fr Terry to say thank you for his 15 wonderful years among us. For some of us who missed out on a good-bye to Fr Terry due to Covid restrictions, here is another opportunity, otherwise just come and say hi. Just now we all need an occasion to celebrate with each other so don't miss out on the fun.



Saturday Evening: dinner provided, BYO glass & beverage of your choice!
Coffee & tea provided.

Sunday Lunch: finger food and drinks, all supplied. All too good to miss!

If you have not already booked & would like to attend, hop in & get your ticket now. If you have any trouble booking, don't hesitate to give one of us a call & we will be happy to help: Noel (0421 016 105), Patsy (0429 439 675) or Vinka (0418 345 954)

Saturday 21 May 7pm - 10pm, SFX Parish Hall
www.trybooking.com/BZBIR

Sunday 22 May 12:30pm - 3pm at the Monty-Eltham RSL
www.trybooking.com/BZBJF

May - The month of Mary, Mother of God

During the Marian month of May, you're invited to join the Rosary on Wednesday evenings, at 7:30pm, at Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham.



Please come along and join us.

For further information,
please contact Parish Office: 9435 4742.

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

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

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



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priest

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au

Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

9435 4742

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

montmorency@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

eltham@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: Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

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

Principal: Patrick Green: 9439 7824

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au



RECONCILIATION

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 4742

Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

Saturday 7

12:00pm Baptism - Aurora, Billie, Maverick, Evelyn

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations

Montmorency

Sunday 8

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

Tuesday 10

9:30am Mass & SFX Prep Class

Montmorency

Wednesday 11

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

7:30pm Rosary

Eltham

Thursday 12

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 13

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 14

12:00pm Baptism - Remi

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations

Montmorency

Sunday 15

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass & Confirmations

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Aria, Annika, Billy, Cecilia

Eltham

Tuesday 17

9:30am Mass & SFX Year 4 Class

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

Wednesday 18

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

7:30pm Rosary

Eltham

Thursday 19

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 20

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 21

12:00pm Baptism - Iris, Audrey, Jax, Aurelia

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations

Montmorency

7:00pm Terry's Farewell

Montmorency

Sunday 22

8:30am Mass & Confirmations

Montmorency

10:00am Mass & Confirmations

Eltham

12:00pm Baptisms: Harley, Lilly, Jack, Evie

Eltham

Tuesday 24

9:30am Mass & SFX Year 2 Class

Montmorency

Wednesday 25

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

**Support
Montmorency Parish
by giving with CDFpay**

Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can quickly and securely give to your parish.



**Support
Eltham Parish
by giving with CDFpay**

Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can quickly and securely give to your parish.



Collections: 1 May 2022

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
OLHC	\$898.35	\$879.20
SFX	\$1,604.00	\$1164.05



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

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

Thai Vu

(father/in-law of Hun & Jon Brasier)

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Warren Beaton, Betty Frape, Rita Fraser,
Gabriele Larosa, John Swindon*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Mona, Rita Bevanda, Kim Brisbane, Alana Foulds,
Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Kate Lagerewskij,
Melanie Lam, Jade McAlear, Frances McDonald,
Andrew Pighin, Aguatha Spina*

Eltham

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Violetta, Elisabeth Edwards, Fiona Rogers,
Rosemary Scully, Ian Sturman, Sarah Thompson*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish Office
9435 4742 or eltham@cam.org.au.



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

Saturday 7 May

St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm

Evelyn Baldetti

Billie Course

Maverick Gilmore

Aurora Witham

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

St Francis Xavier, 6:00pm

Sofia Cifone

Jack Grzinic

Ava Logan

Charlotte Phillips

Isaac Phillips

Zac Webster

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation



The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22: [*Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*](#), affirms that "we human beings need a change of heart, mind, & behaviour". It exhorts us all to care for creation & the most vulnerable people in our worldwide human family.

In the [media release](#) which accompanied the launch of the statement, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference recognised its unprecedented decision to work towards a more sustainable Church through their commitment to a seven-year journey towards the seven *Laudato Si'* Goals.

In a [video](#) released with the statement, seven bishops from across Australia spoke about the immediate need to care for all of creation as God's gift to us, especially because of the damaging effects of climate change on our land, waterways, air, plants, animals & people. "Right through the centuries, God has called on humanity to act in times of great peril" says Archbishop Mark Coleridge in the video's opening scene.

The Statement was launched online on 5th August in the lead up to Social Justice Sunday on 29 August 2021. "We are facing an ecological crisis and Pope Francis wants the whole Church globally to act with a greater sense of urgency," said Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service.

Aunty Sherry Balcombe, Manager of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Melbourne began the presentation with an Acknowledgement of Country. She emphasised that for indigenous peoples, a relationship with the land is at the centre of our lives and as caretakers of the land "their law was to sustain and nurture all that has been created".

The Statement draws from Scripture, from the theological tradition, from Catholic Social Teaching, and from the wisdom of the world, including the insights of the First Nations. The Statement reflects on creation in and through the Trinity; the sacramentality of all created things; the wonder and beauty available to the contemplative eye; and the need for conversion and change of life.

In the Statement, the Bishops invite the whole Catholic community to join them in taking up Pope Francis' invitation to a seven-year journey towards total ecological sustainability, guided by seven *Laudato Si'* Goals. This can begin by signing up to the [Laudato Si' Action Platform](#), an initiative of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The Statement especially encourages Catholic families, communities, parishes, dioceses and organisations to: listen to First Nations peoples as the first teachers of how to care for the land; reflect on the theological foundations offered in *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*; and plan their next steps towards the *Laudato Si'* Goals.

Part of the Bishops' commitment is reflected in their decision to rename the Office for Social Justice as the Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace. The resources for the statement including liturgy notes, prayer cards, an action card and a podcast version of the statement can be found on their [website www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au).

When great empires collapse, and when emperors lose touch with reality, trouble tends to follow. An eminent political historian is not shocked by current events in Ukraine / **by Dominic Lieven**

Sacred rulers

A **handful** of extraordinarily powerful individuals ruled much of the world for over five millennia. For the past six years I have been investigating supreme leadership in differing dynastic, political, religious and cultural contexts - though in many ways my new book, *In the Shadow of the Gods: The Emperor in World History*, sums up everything I have studied, taught and written about in a career of nearly 50 years. It is in part a collective biography, in part an anatomy of hereditary imperial monarchy as a type of political system and in part an essay on leadership. I study many of the most fascinating individuals, most dramatic events and most significant polities in history. Emperors mattered in ways that still resonate in today's world.

A crucial example is the close link between emperors and religion. Without Constantine, the marriage of Roman Empire and Christianity, which lies at the core of Western civilisation, might well not have happened. Without the third-century BCE Indian emperor Ashoka, Buddhism would probably have died out or remained a smallish sect in northern India instead of having a huge religious and cultural impact across most of Asia.

Among the recurring themes in the story of emperors and emperorship are legitimacy and succession, the role of religion in politics, managing ministers and bureaucracies and that most ancient of political dilemmas - the stresses and temptations of power. When planning my book, it helped to think of emperors from four angles: they were human beings,

leaders, hereditary monarchs and rulers of empire. Hereditary monarchy is the least salient when it comes to understanding the contemporary world. Few contemporary political leaders are hereditary monarchs. Nevertheless the history of hereditary monarchy provides many insights into crucial contemporary issues. It means dynasty - in other words, families in power - and makes biological reproduction the key to legitimate acquisition of power. Over the millennia, men have devised many crafty means to keep females out of bureaucracies, armies and judiciaries but no man has yet been crafty enough to stop women playing key roles in families and reproduction. The female power inherent in hereditary monarchy and royal courts enraged (among others) Scottish sixteenth-century Calvinists, Confucian officials and French Jacobins and was seen by all three as the source of corruption, sensuality and political failure.

At the heart of my investigation is the old debate about the role of the individual in history. A book on this scale has to be organised partly around concepts, generalisations and comparisons. But its core is biography and individuals are notoriously difficult to categorise. Human nature and above all the human mind are not unchanging. I make what might seem a bizarre comparison between the fourth-century Roman emperor Julian ("the Apostate") and the eighteenth-century Habsburg emperor, Joseph II. Both were intelligent and thoughtful men but their impatience and excitability



Emperor Constantine: crucial role

could sometimes verge on hysteria. Unlike most hereditary emperors, they came to the throne with radical plans for domestic reform. Julian wished to restore paganism and Joseph wished to implement fundamental changes rooted in Enlightenment concepts of utility, uniformity and progress. Both leaders' domestic reform programme was partly wrecked by aggressive foreign policies. In one sense, the two emperors are fruitful subjects for comparison. But a chasm divided the worlds of classical pagan gods and neo-Platonic metaphysics on the one hand, and the secular, rational and utilitarian Enlightenment on the other.

Human nature and life have some constants, among them the life cycle. Some of history's greatest dynasties and empires - India's Mughals and China's Tang dynasty for example - were wrecked by increasingly stubborn, exhausted and isolated emperors. Some emperors sought the elixir of eternal youth in the arms of young mistresses, with sometimes devastating consequences for political stability. Others, with their eyes on their place in Heaven or in history, lost their sense of balance, perspective and realism. Older veteran councillors, uncles and mothers to whom a monarch might once have listened and even

deferred were long since dead. Even more than most leaders, loneliness and isolation are the monarch's lot. Nothing was more fatal for an emperor than to believe his own regime's propaganda that he was supremely wise and virtuous, all-powerful, and blessed by Heaven. It took great self-awareness, self-discipline and sense of responsibility for a monarch to avoid this trap after decades on the throne. Dynasties that lasted stressed these qualities above all others in the education of princes.

Unlike contemporary autocratic strongmen, most hereditary monarchies in history were rooted in powerful religious and ethical principles. Even ageing royal autocrats might remain constrained by these principles. Whether ageing emperors like modern strong-men faced looming succession crises depended greatly on whether law and convention defined who was the legitimate heir. Among hereditary monarchies, Latin Europe's strict and generally recognised system of male primogeniture was exceptional. It risked putting incompetents on the throne but it avoided the devastating succession struggles that weakened and frequently destroyed non-European empires.

Hereditary imperial monarchy flourished in a world in which authority was believed to come from Heaven, antiquity was deeply respected and hierarchy was taken for granted. Democracy was generally perceived to be the road to anarchy. In the ancient world, only Greek thinkers sometimes celebrated democracy, and even Aristotle believed that this was only viable in a city-state. Two millennia of subsequent history seemed to prove that even if city-states could sustain democracy against internal enemies, they could not defend themselves against the far greater resources of external imperial predators. It took the combined impact of the Industrial Revolution and the

French Revolution to create a world in which hereditary imperial monarchy was no longer legitimate or even viable.

Sacredness had always been a core element in monarchical legitimacy. In an increasingly secular and individualist culture, it lost its hold on the public imagination. The modern state was simply too huge and complex to be run for decades by a human chosen by hereditary chance. Though sacred hereditary monarchy is mostly a thing of the past, empire is not. To speak of empire in today's world almost inevitably sparks visions and debates about the European transoceanic empires. The contemporary arguments about slavery and the campaigns to ensure that "Black Lives Matter" reinforce this bias. It is important to remember that other traditions of empire existed and remain very important. Though I discuss the modern Western empires at some length, the great land empires of Eurasia play a bigger role in my telling of the story. Their histories and legacy remain of crucial importance in today's world. The present war in Ukraine is largely rooted in a Russian nostalgia for empire and in the territorial and geo-political conflicts that usually erupt when great empires - of which the Soviet Union was a modern variant - collapse. The 50 pages I devote to Russia provide hints about the historical origins and context of the present catastrophe.

Among the regions of the world, only China has three chapters in my book. This reflects the depth and significance of the Chinese imperial tradition both historically and for today's world. Like the Western transoceanic empires, the Chinese empire was vast in size, ethnically diverse and powerful. Empire has both common elements and many variations. There is a common Chinese imperial tradition rooted in ancient Confucian and Legalist thought, as well as in the evolving institutions and practices of successive

dynasties. However, even a cursory knowledge of Chinese history spots the difference between native Han dynasties (above all Song and Ming) and conquest dynasties whose origins lay among the warrior-nomads beyond China's northern borders (above all Mongol/Yuan and Qing/Manchu). Size was one key difference. At their apogees, the Ming ruled over 3.1 million square kilometres, the Qing over 14.7 million. It matters enormously that the present People's Republic is the heir of the Qing, not the Ming. I seek to explain how and why empire endured in China and why the non-Han dynasties were able to generate greater military and expansionist power. But the huge role of personality, leadership and chance in this story should not be forgotten.

Frequently in the last three months we hear disbelief that the awful events in Ukraine could be happening in twenty-first century Europe. As in the period before the First World War, generations of peace and prosperity have bred illusions. The history of imperial geopolitics is a useful antidote. We failed peacefully to integrate Christian, European, capitalist and semi-liberal Germany into the pre-1914 world order largely dominated by anglophones. Today's far more culturally and historically alien China is a much greater challenge. Simultaneously, we will be facing the immense challenge of climate change, which is going to put governments and peoples under enormous though initially unequal pressure across the globe. The next 50 years will probably be more like the first half of the twentieth century than anything experienced by any but the oldest living Europeans.

Dominic Lieven is a fellow of the British Academy and an honorary fellow and emeritus fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. His *Russia Against Napoleon* won the Wolfson Prize and the Prix Napoleon. In the *Shadow of the Gods: The Emperor in World History* is published this week by Allen Lane.

The St Vincent de Paul Society wishes our Mothers a Happy Day

We would like to wish all mothers, grandmothers and motherly women who care for others, a very happy Mother's day. We hope that you can all catch up with loved ones today or in the very near future. We also offer our prayers for these special women who are unwell or no longer with us.

The Montmorency conference of SVDP have some booklets that may be of interest to parishioners and could assist in celebrating the Gift of Motherhood. Pamphlets are in the front foyer near the entrance doors. Some of the pamphlets include:

- Prayers of a Catholic Mother
- Prayers for Expectant Mothers – Blessing the Child Within
- Celebrate Mothers – Prayers and Reflections on Motherhood
- Prayers for a New Mother
- Celebrate Grandparents – Reflections honour of Grandparents

We hope you enjoy the selection. Please feel free to browse all the pamphlets. A gold coin donation in the poor boxes located at the front and side entrances will help defray costs.

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

The Montmorency conference is continuing their work during this time. If you need assistance call 1800 305 330 Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm.



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works



Prayer Shawl Ministry at
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham
All welcome

Roster for WEEKEND 14/15 May 2022

Capuana, Marisa	W6:00
Donnellan, Denise	Eucharistic Minister
Emslie, Maureen	W6:00
Furtado, Lorraine	Commentator
Goss, Marian	Eucharistic Minister
McKinley, Michael	W8:30
Nolan, Kathleen & Mike	Hospitality OLHC
Ramsdale, John	W8:30
Reardon, Kathy	Altar Society
Rigg Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Said, Mike & Marie	ASRC
Scully, Greg	Reader
Scully, Helen	Altar Society
Williams, Anne & Peter	PRYR

You're Invited to Celebrate with Us In Recognition of Volunteers Contribution to St Vincent's Eltham!

For Afternoon Tea and Refreshments

2pm Wednesday 18th May 2022

Metzner Hall,
St Vincent's Care Services
43 Diamond St, ELTHAM

Please bring a friend who may be interested in joining our community

RSVP TO: Lifestyle Team 94301640, 0436 861 747
travis.moroney@svha.org.au
sue.sammartino@svha.org.au by 13th May

Sincere & heart-felt thank you to our wonderful family of OLHC, Eltham & SFX, Montmorency for your care and concern and condolences at the passing of our mum/in-law/grandma.

Your warmth and love has been greatly appreciated.

Much love,

Duncan & Natalie,
Kate & Steve, and families



Neighbourhood House
Week at Living & Learning
Nillumbik 9-15 May 2022
Share, Learn, Connect



livinglearningnillumbik.vic.gov.au
9433 3744 | info.livinglearning@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

LIVING & LEARNING
NILLUMBIK

Nillumbik
The Green Wedge Shire

Come and join or new **Games and Cuppa** drop in session on Thursday afternoons! All welcome between 1pm to 3pm. Drop in for a chat and a game of cards or Scrabble or sit and read a magazine and enjoy some afternoon tea. There's no cost.

Where: Living & Learning Nillumbik - Diamond Creek

Address: 119 Cowin Street, Diamond Creek

If you register, it will help with catering: 9433 3744



Plenary Council Update – a critical appreciation of the PC Process

Rowan Ireland

In 2018 the Australian bishops called on all Catholics to come together to “discern what God is asking of us in Australia at this time”. This was the start of a process leading to two Assemblies of a Plenary Council which would map future directions for the Church in Australia. Though the bishops would have the final say on Church laws that might arise from the PC, there were to be extensive consultations, including with laity, at all stages of a long PC process.

An official outline of the stages of the PC process as it unfolded from 2018 to the present is available at <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au>. This update does not present full details of the process. It brings to attention developments in the process since the end of COVID shutdowns, and it focuses on the consultations with the whole People of God that have been integral to the PC process. In addition, this update includes commentary on whether the processes of consultation and discernment have been truly open and inclusive.

Many of us were involved and enthused by the first round of consultations in 2018, though there were skeptics who had seen, over the years, several rounds of renewal consultations come to nothing. This time, there seemed to be grounds for hope, and some 222,000 people, from all sections of the Church contributed submissions. The 6 Thematic Reports based on the submissions drew out the main changes sought by the People of God, but also revealed a high degree of diversity. There were 159 recommendations in the six Reports which many of us hoped would help those responsible for drawing up the agenda for the First Assembly to prioritize a small number of substantive issues which the Members of the Assembly could manage to deliberate on.

Sadly, that prioritization never eventuated and instead a number of broad, vague, and overlapping themes was produced by the PC organizers. Then came COVID, disrupting the consultation processes and necessitating the postponement of the First Assembly until October 2021.

Parallel to the official PC process from 2018, there have been consultation and discernment processes led by laity which have attempted to prioritize concerns and to draw up manageable agendas for the Assemblies. The groups involved also adopted a watchdog role, monitoring the official PC process and its products for transparency and inclusiveness. In Melbourne, inter parish meetings were held and parish statements called for. An analysis of 26 parish statements was made in 2020 and published on the web as The Plenary Council 2020: Joint Parish Statement.

This Statement and attendant discussions identified priority matters for the First Assembly of the PC. These included: address the sexual abuse crisis; encourage an open and inclusive Church; recognize the role of women in the Church to the point of calling on Rome to approve new liturgical and governance roles for women; implement new governance changes, etc... Few of these priority items made it to the agenda for the First Assembly.

Since the First Assembly, it has become more and more apparent in 2022 that the official PC process has become less open and transparent – less synodal, to use Pope Francis’ language. Feedback to the whole Church about results and reflections on the First Assembly has been confined to Assembly members, and the production of an Agenda for the impossibly short final Second Assembly in July seems to have passed to a small group of opaque membership.

That is how the watchdog groups see it, at any rate. The watchdog groups leading the parallel PC process now include Sense of the Faithful, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, and South Australian Catholics for an Evolving Church.

As these groups see it, sections of the Church which never wanted a PC or wanted only minimal change are now firmly in control of the PC process leading up to the Second Assembly. The result has been a series of official reports and proposals which seem designed to maintain and tighten procedure and discipline, and only in existing ecclesial structures. An official report on the First Assembly entitled *Towards the Second Assembly* was not made public but fell into the hands of the watchdog groups. They are preparing a joint rejoinder. Here is a quote from their draft joint statement with reference to *Towards*...

It contains no analysis of trends in the wider world which the Church exists to serve, nor of the Church’s mission to serve that world. It develops few specific proposals for consideration at the next assembly, nor any clear set of priorities. While important matters are discussed, many key priorities are given short shrift.

What can these watchdog groups - and individual Catholics in the pews who think there is urgent need for radical Church reform in Australia - do to rescue something from the PC process?

Yours truly hopes to return next week with some answers. He has signed up to participate in a national zoom meeting to finalize a collective (includes groups mentioned above) statement to be sent to the Plenary Council Steering Committee.

Gospel: John 10:27-30

Jesus said: 'The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from me. The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone, and no one can steal from the Father. The Father and I are one.'



Reflection:

The gospel for today has been taken from the episode that follows Jesus' exposition of the shepherd theme in the tenth chapter of John. It took place, John tells us, in winter when the feast of the Dedication of the Temple was being celebrated and in the portico of Solomon. Needled by hostile authorities, Jesus responds uncompromisingly and is nearly stoned as a result. None of this is contained in the passage to be read.

The text is brief and not without controversy. At first he recapitulates earlier themes, then makes two striking claims. The first is a little ambiguous as can be seen from different translations: "The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone" (JB) and "What my Father has given me is greater than all else" (NRSV). In his farewell discourse Jesus will simply say "the Father is greater than I" (14:28).

How this relates to Jesus' second claim is unclear. It is short, simple and emphatic: "I and the Father are one." This immediately elicits a furious reaction from the religious authorities who accuse him of blasphemy and prepare to stone him but he eludes them. For later Christian leaders, Jesus' words became a springboard for Trinitarian theological debate.

For all its brevity this reading provides much to ponder, indeed to contemplate prayerfully. Two relationships of the utmost importance are set before us. One is that between Jesus and those who believe in him, under the metaphor of shepherd and sheep. The other is that between Son and Father. Later on Jesus brings these together when he tells his disciples that he and the Father "will come to them and make their home with them" (14:23).

Break Open the Word 2022



Prayers of the Faithful for 8 May 2022 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

Leader: We rejoice, O Lord, that we are your people and sheep of your flock. Trusting in the wonder of your goodness, we bring you our needs.

We pray for the Church, for parishes throughout the world, for communities that are too poor to afford a place of worship and gathering, and for those communities with grand churches but have lost the dedication to their faith.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Let us take the time on Good Shepherd Sunday to reflect on the energy and dedication of Paul and Barnabas in spreading God's word. We are the recipients of their constancy and fidelity.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for Pope Francis and all the bishops and priests of the church. May they be strengthened and enlightened to care for their flock as Jesus the Good Shepherd has shown them.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

On this World Day of Prayer for Vocations, we pray that today's generation of young people may be inspired to reach out and serve God's people.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

On this Mother's Day, we pray for mothers everywhere and in particular for those who must do their mothering along, unsupported by a husband or partner.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for health workers who in caring for others often risk their own health. May we be supportive of their work and show our appreciation.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick of our parish and those who care for them. We pray for those who have died recently, including *Thai Vu*, and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including *Warren Beaton, Betty Frape, Rita Fraser, Gabriele Larosa and John Swindon*.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray in particular for neighbouring nations at war, like Ukraine & Russia, may they reflect that their future lies in peace, not war.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: O God, our good shepherd, we fear no evil for you are at our side. Hear our prayers for those who seek your justice and healing through Christ our risen Lord.

All: **Amen**