

# 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.

## Advent Reflection / Addicted to hope

Despite all the shadows that loom over the world and over our own fears, the season of Advent is a reminder that our God-given orientation is to goodness and a better future / **by Hugh Gilbert**

Advent will be at its longest this year - a full four weeks, with Christmas Day falling on a Sunday. But, short or long, this powerful season, which is one of the gems of the Roman liturgy, always seems to arrive at the right time. It always seems apposite, needed - not merely personally but collectively, not merely among Christians, but in the world, not merely for beleaguered humans but for the whole creation.

It is a season with a broad horizon and replete with far-reaching relevances. It is at once political, in the full sense of the word, and mystical.

Advent should not be turned into an anticipated Christmas. It runs into Christmas, certainly, and finds its resolution in that feast, and then in the octave and season that follow, in the feasts of Mary, Mother of God, the Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord. But it is its own thing. It necessarily incorporates pain and a sense of lack, the whole of our insufficiency. It embraces a whole strand of human experience as we journey towards the birth of Christ.

In a late interview, the post-Christian Martin Heidegger memorably remarked: "Philosophy will be unable to effect any immediate change in the current state of the world. This is true not only of philosophy but of all purely human reflection and endeavour. Only a god can save us. The only possibility available to us is that ... we prepare a readiness for the appearance of a god."

In a more Christian register, the German Jesuit Alfred Delp wrote in 1944: "I see Advent this year with greater intensity and anticipation than ever before. Walking up and down in my cell, three paces this way and three paces that way, with my hands in irons and ahead of me an uncertain fate, I have a new and different understanding of God's promise of redemption and release."

Despite everything though, we remain addicted to hope. Our God-given orientation to good breaks through again and again like smiles after tears and greenness through cracks in concrete.

Advent - Lady Advent dressed in blue - takes our threatened, flickering, often misplaced hopes, and re-frames them, re-directs them. In Advent, the prophets of Israel fulfil their mission to the world more effectively than they ever could in their lifetimes.

Grace, according to St Thomas Aquinas, both purifies and elevates. Advent does this with our hope. It converts and enlarges us. It clears out our idols and throws open a horizon of cosmic, social and personal salvation. And finally, like Mary, delivers the surprise of the Child in whom all things hold together and God is with us.

**Hugh Gilbert** OSB is the Bishop of Aberdeen

*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

### OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



#### **Parish Priest**

**Michael Sierakowski - Moderator**

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

#### **Parish Office**

86 Mayona Road

9435 4742

Tue - 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

Principal: Patrick Green: 9439 7824

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

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

### RECONCILIATION

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 4742

### Collections: 6 & 13 November 2022

	OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	\$337.00	\$1,115.00
Presbytery	\$912.45	\$686.20

### Stewardship Offering

Month	OLHC	SFX	Total
August	\$6,835.24	\$9,642.00	\$16,477.24
September	\$6,357.04	\$10,827.00	\$17,184.04
October	\$5,833.35	\$10,554.50	\$16,387.85

## Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

### Saturday 26

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

### Sunday 27

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Phoebe, William, Juliet

Eltham

### Tuesday 29

9:30am Mass (SFX Yr 2 Class)

Montmorency

### Wednesday 30

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

### Thursday 1 December

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

2:00pm Mass

St Vincent's Care, Eltham

### Friday 2

9:30am Mass

Eltham

### Saturday 3

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

### Sunday 4

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Mikayla, Jack, Isabella & Neve

Montmorency

### Tuesday 6

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

### Wednesday 7

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

1:00pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

### Thursday 8

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

### Friday 9

9:30am Mass

Eltham

6:00pm SFX Graduation Ceremony

Montmorency

### Saturday 10: Collection - Melbourne Overseas Mission

12:00pm Baptism: Miles, Thomas

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

### Sunday 11: Collection - Melbourne Overseas Mission

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Elle

Eltham

### Tuesday 13

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

### Wednesday 14

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

6:00pm OLHC Grade 6 Graduation

Eltham

### Thursday 15

**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.




## Visit of Kadasig Cebu Staff

We are fortunate to have Emely Alcosoba, Marwen Ramos & Eusebio Patiga, three staff members from Kadasig Cebu come to Australia to be part of our parish and meet with sponsors & benefactors. They have had a busy time talking to Friendship Schools, along with meeting and making many friends.

If you would like to sponsor a child for an education, which is the priority program of Kadasig, please speak with them, and/or Glenys. The cost is \$280 per year, to make a difference for a child and their family.

**Glenys Gayfer** glenysgayfer71@gmail.com 0411 196 395



## KADASIG Christmas Hampers

Celebrate Christmas by making a difference to the lives of others! The Kadasig Christmas Hampers bring great joy to many families in Cebu, Philippines. Christmas Hampers guarantee a family has food over the Christmas and New Year time. We have put together a range of other options to really make a difference to those in great need, we hope you can find some that interest you. Gift Certificates are also available.

- **Christmas Hamper \$40** - provide food for a family for Christmas & New Year these are packed & distributed by our staff
- Sack of rice 25kg - \$30
- Sack of rice 50kg - \$60
- Livelihood products - \$20-\$100
- Medical care - \$25
- House construction - \$50
- Contribute to water tank - \$50

For more information or to purchase a Gift Certificate for a family/gift please contact:

Maree Kulkens: 0430 549 516 or [mareekulkens@yahoo.com.au](mailto:mareekulkens@yahoo.com.au); or

Juanita Troemml: 0409 514 565 or [jtroemml@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jtroemml@bigpond.net.au); or

Visit our website to learn more: [www.kadasigaid.com.au](http://www.kadasigaid.com.au)

### Bank payment details:

**Kadasig Aid & Development**

**BSB:** 083-276

**A/c No:** 172 040 420

**Ref:** [your name] Hamper/Livelihood etc

**Please make sure your name is on the reference.**

Other option from which we will provide a tax receipt is:

**ASIAC OS Aid**

**BSB:** 062 028

**A/c No:** 0090 5951

**Ref:** [your name] Hamper/Livelihood etc

**Please make sure your name is on the reference.**

## SVDP Montmorency Christmas Appeal 2022

We once again ask for your support for our annual Christmas Appeal which helps families in need who find Christmas a struggle, both emotionally and financially, within our local communities of Lower Plenty, Montmorency, Briar Hill, Eltham North and St Helena.

With inflation the highest it's been in years, interest rates rapidly rising, and both yet to peak this year, our theme for the Christmas Appeal is the *cost-of-living crisis*. As we know from previous economic crises, it is always the most vulnerable who are the most acutely affected. What makes this point in history different is that we are seeing the effects of inflation more pronounced, especially on the price of necessities like housing, food, and energy.

Christmas can be such a magical time, a time of joy and celebration for many of us. However, for quite a number in our local community, Christmas doesn't mean magic, it means hunger, hardship and stress. They face the prospect of a bleak Christmas struggling to pay bills and providing for the basics for their family, let alone coping with the extra costs associated with Christmas.

As Christmas should be a special time for everyone, we will be providing hampers to families and individuals, hoping to be able to lift their spirits and brighten their Christmas Day—Hampers will be tailored to suit the individual needs of each family. As is the custom of SVDP Montmorency, all monies raised by the Appeal are used exclusively within the local community and will go toward sharing the spirit of Christmas with those for whom daily life is a struggle. There are no administration costs associated with the preparation and distribution of the hampers.

The St Vincent de Paul Montmorency Conference sincerely wishes to thank everybody for their continued support of our work and wish all parishioners and their families every blessing and happiness for Christmas and a very happy and safe New Year.

### How to donate to the SVDP Christmas Appeal

**Envelopes:** SVDP envelopes are available at SFX in church pews or at the tables at the entrance doors or at the Presbytery/Church office. You are welcome to leave your donations and/or envelopes in the SVDP Donation boxes on the tables near the entrances to the church, at the Parish Office, give to a SVDP member or to Mike on 0417 221 245. Receipts can be issued by simply completing name and address on the envelope.

**On Line:** [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au) - in terms of directing funds back to the Montmorency or Eltham Conferences, we request that you state **Montmorency** or **Eltham** in the "Comments/Conference Name box" which is just after the postal address box.

**By Phone:** by calling 13 18 12 and again stating your donation is for the **Montmorency** or **Eltham** conference.

**Direct Credit:** BSB 063-000, Account 1060 7556 with a reference W22 and Montmorency 916. In this way monies will be credited to the Montmorency Conference account and stay within our community.

If you are donating online, by phone or direct credit could you please send an email to [msaid@netspace.net.au](mailto:msaid@netspace.net.au) with your full name and address, amount and date of deposit so that the conference can acknowledge your generosity and ensure these monies are allocated to the Montmorency or Eltham Conferences.

Assistance is always promptly available to the community by contacting 1800 305 330 between 10am and 3pm weekdays.

Collection of quality household goods/furniture can be arranged by calling 1800 621 349.

The loss of a partner for whom faith came as naturally as breathing has disturbed the settled agnosticism of a science writer / by **Sophie Olszowski**

# The death of certainty

**In March 2021** my lapsed, faith-filled Catholic husband died, after what one medic described as “the most awful litany”. Spanning eight months and two lockdowns, a surprising cancer diagnosis, steroid-induced psychosis and a stroke.

Before Simon became ill, we often spoke of his faith, a higher being, life after this. Natural concepts, running through his veins with kindness, fun and single malt. I tried hard to feel them, but never could.

And now, a question I used to ask myself returns with renewed force: how can I love, and have been loved by, someone for whom God was a straightforward truth? What did that mean for him, and was he right?

Yet, at that, decades of atheism bubble up inside me. Surely religion is a fairy story, and when have I needed a comforting tale more than now? Or cradle Catholics like Simon “speak” Catholic because it’s a language they grew up with? My childhood had scant religion and much discord, a combination leaving me taking little on trust. I work in medicine. Teasing my empirical view of the world, Simon would demand “show me the evidence” when I was being (probably annoyingly) literal. Did he spot folly in my certainty that only the tangle was real?

The toothbrush on the charger where Simon left it, the shirt slung by him over the back of the chair, the lawnmower flex he mended after mowing over it. These are brute facts of our daily life; his presence lying alongside the starkness of his gone-ness. Losing Simon’s physical form leaves me attached to life by the thinnest thread. And that’s OK. There are people I adore, but I yearn for the rich intimacy that filled our days. Do I also feel that the thread’s fragility matters little because this isn’t it? Do I believe (as Simon did) that we’ll meet again?

How I long for that. But surely we’re part of a cycle, of people, plants and animals, earth and carbon, microbes, decay and regrowth? Probably. Yet, since Simon died, I have some tentative understanding of what he believed. I can’t see him or touch him, but I know he’s here. And that’s

not about memory, legacy or honouring what was. It’s about feeling, with my whole being, what is. And it’s upended my certainty that what we can touch, demonstrate and prove is all there is.

The Franciscan friar Richard Rohr writes: “You and I came along a few years ago; we’re going to be gone in a few more years. The only honest response to such a mystery is humility.” Rohr decries “mouthy certitude”. I recognise it in people on both sides of the atheism-faith divide. An invitation to the memorial of a dear friend who died, unexpectedly, soon after Simon, declared that the ceremony would be conducted “by a humanist, of course!” That mouthy certitude carved out an oddly painful new hole in my grief.

Yet I’ve long worn atheism, or at least agnosticism, like a badge of honour. I’m with the rational thinkers, not the comfort seekers. I don’t relish being told I’ve sinned when trying my best; I can’t find the Body of Christ in a wafer, or see God in everything; and is he really a bean-counter, keeping my prayer tally?

But, for all this, I have a history of skirmishes with Catholicism. The kindness of Sister Julia, head of my primary school, and Sister Mary, her

older, shorter, rounder deputy, stays with me to this day. I remember nothing they said, but I will never forget how they made me feel. Then *Brideshead Revisited* captivated lost, teenage me. I still carry Julia Flyte’s complex relationship with her religion into my encounters with prayer: I say the words, think of her, incanting to bring about belief. And the chapel at Great Ormond Street Hospital, where I was working after my mother died: I retreated there often.

And I was married, before Simon, to a French Catholic. Perhaps the ceremony was more about other people’s wishes than mine, but though Simon and I jokingly referred to the time before we met as “the dark days”, it was a deeply important part of my life. How often people like me choose religion over secularism when the big moments come: married in churches, dispatched by priests.

**In our first decade together**, Simon and I went to Mass, until he became too troubled by the contradictions between his Church and his life. We would both have had to seek annulment of our first marriages to wed in church (what cruel process can leave children being told their parents’ marriage was never real?), though our priest blessed our union. We have beloved gay friends and family, yet the Church bears a scriptural inheritance that includes, as Tom Holland wrote in *The Tablet* in 2020, “hostility to same-sex relationships”. Catholic teaching on the fallibility and variety of human commitment seemed to tie itself in knots, leaving us both utterly cold.

I am drawn to teachers like Rohr, mistrusted by many traditional



Catholics probably for the very reasons I like him. He, in turn, frequently cites Meister Eckhart, and met Pope Francis the day I started writing this article. Theirs seems to be a Church with love, not judgement, at its heart. Perhaps I'm attracted to Catholics who rub up against the rules because I recognise there the struggles Simon had. They tell me not to over-analyse the Scriptures, and yes, I find love and light and right there, but also sickening pronouncements, or just passages that dash my hopes: "... for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

If, as Pope Francis says, the Church offers "salvation and love to all, even to the ends of the earth ..." it must welcome people with all their complications and doubts. Otherwise, it will lose those, like Simon, full of faith yet unable to square its teachings with his values and experience. The anguish of this, alongside his distress at the revelations of sexual abuse by priests, stopped him going to Mass and Communion.

But Simon's faith was solid to the core, and to the last. Planning his funeral to celebrate the diversely wonderful man that he was, with readings, music and poetry, we also wanted to honour his faith. During his final months Simon was looked after by a nurse from Dorset's Weldmar Hospice. Lu's clinical expertise was matched by extraordinary tenderness; she "held" us in a unique way I have felt since around people of deep faith. Utterly real, it humbles and astonishes me.

Simon was very diminished by the time we met Lu, yet insisted on wearing his pink linen shirt for her visits. His hospital bed, in our sitting room, was beneath the framed copy of his imposing family tree; they discovered their shared faith when he pointed out Andrzej Olszowski, Primate of Poland from 1674. Lu had been a lay Catholic chaplain; I had no idea such people existed, less still that the Catholic Church (in the words of the national synthesis document, "male-dominated, patriarchal and exclusive of women") encouraged women into such roles. She provided the Catholic thread his funeral needed.

The Zoom-broadcast, Covid-restricted, love-laden ceremony was beautiful and deeply moving. Attended by his oldest friend from their Oratory schooldays (another non-practising but deeply faithful

man), and guided by our local priest, Lu blessed Simon's coffin. After the service, she returned to it, rested her hand there for several moments. A heart-stirring act I only discovered months later, when I dared watch the recording; it makes me feel that Simon is, eternally, looked after.

The writing of Julian of Norwich helps me - someone who has no picture of what God is - to understand this sense created by people of faith, that we are, in the end, "safe". As Benedict XVI said: "[Julian] understood the central message for spiritual life: God is love and it is only if one opens oneself to this love, totally and with total trust, and lets it become one's sole guide in life, that all things are transfigured, true peace and true joy found and one is able to radiate it."

That I can sign up to. It stops me trying to find God in Scriptures I don't understand, traditions that seem odd or views I find disturbing. Though it's not just easy love, falling in love, but a call to love, and accept being loved, entirely. And that's hard, observing human cruelty, or simply lugging around one's own private pain.

As I look out on the rain falling on my garden, wet grey flagstones, sodden autumn leaves, it would be easy to give in to the feeling, flickering insistently at my mind, that all is lost. Until the tentacles of something just like love snake around me.

The love Simon and I share has grown into the strangest things, the oddest moments, the most surprising corners. And while I hesitate to say it is bigger than the love we had in his lifetime, I can see how that love was somehow smaller than what he left me with. A Yeats poem, read at our wedding, begins: "Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths, enwrought with golden and silver light..." Something about what we shared feels, now, like those tight, light-filled fibres, making me believe not that I survive despite having lost him, but that I survive because I still have him.

Yet for all the embroidered cloths and enduring love, there is too a depth of pain that sometimes erases every ounce of meaning. It's wearying to attempt to describe it, and while I wish it on no one, I sometimes long for those who think they understand my grief to taste a tiny distillate of it. If I ask why God allows such pain, a tsunami of familiar answers about the nature of suffering inevitably follows. And they trouble me; too clever, too neat. Can we really be part of a divine cameo that we can't see in full, but leaves us heading the right direction?

**Simon embraced** the belief that the story isn't over in our lifetime. To

me, this feels improbably. But it's a seaside Saturday in the beautiful town we so recently made our home. We should be planning a walk, a drink, maybe sailing with friends. Yet I'm alone in a room we decorated together, looking out at plants we chose together as they fade surrounded by Simons' absence, and presence, in equal, discordant harmony. Mystery is my daily bread. Does all this place me on a Catholic path or am I just a lost victim of magical thinking? The indefinable solace of Catholic friends, the total peace from sitting in church, alone. Does this add up to a hill of rosary beads, or is my soul equally salvaged by staring at the sea? Possibly. Can I dismiss all I have written here as grief flailing around for an anchor? Probably. Am I wiser if I do? I'm not sure. Perhaps, as the theologian Paul Knitter has written: "'God' must be an experience before 'God' can be a word."

Years ago, I interviewed an eminent doctor who had briefly trained to be a priest. I expected him to be dismissive of his youthful religious fervour. Yet he remained a strong believer, certain about "something" after death, about God, and that we have souls. I don't know what's true, and perhaps what I think, deep down, differs from what I hope. I have everything to learn about Catholicism. Again, Rohr is reassuring: "Ideas are not a problem - but a true inner experience is something else. It changes us, and human beings do not like to change ... we have made the Bible into a bunch of ideas - about which we can be right or wrong - rather than an invitation to a new set of eyes."

And there's a strange echo to that. Simon's last week was spent in the hospice, where we met a spiritual care volunteer who had lost her sight. Standing with me in the corridor a few days before he died, she said: "Watch him. You know he'll die. But when he does, your love won't die. Where could it possibly go?" A woman of deep Catholic faith, she has since told me that her heart feels, more than her eyes see.

Beloved atheist and agnostic family and friends, without whom I couldn't weather this storm, will spot in this only my thumping need to believe in something, the predictability of my quest. But I'm on a gentler tide. No certainty, no dogma, just a strong sense of "otherness". Catholicism may or may not tame or explain it, but I love a man of faith, that much is sure. I may never find God, but I'll always have Simon.

**Sophie Olszowski** is a medical and science writer.

Roster for THIS WEEKEND: 26/27 Nov 2022	
Armstrong, Miranda	C10:00
Bacani, Brian	W6:00
Capuana, Marisa	W6:00
Dopheide, Marlis	E10:00
Dunell, Linda	E10:00
French, Jossie	W8:30
Haines, Geoff	E10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	E10:00
Illiffe, Yvonne	E10:00
Love, Philip	W8:30
Nolan, Kathleen	H10:00
Nolan, Mike	H10:00
Ramsdale, John	PRYR
Ramsdale, John & Sue	ASRC
Reardon, Kathy	ASE
Scully, Helen	ASE
Stewart Family	PRSE
Taylor, Trish	R10:00
Roster for NEXT WEEKEND: 3/4 Dec 2022	
Capuana, Marisa	PRYR
Donnellan, Denice	E10:00
Dunell, Linda	ASE
Emslie, Maureen	W6:00
Goss, Marion	E10:00
Heyhoe, Margaret	C10:00
Jones, Marion	W6:00
Kotz, Sharron	E10:00
Leahy, Michelle	R10:00
McKinley, Michael	W8:30
Ramsdale, John	W8:30
Saltalamacchia, Carmel	ASE
Scully, Greg	E10:00
Scully, Helen	E10:00
Taylor, Colin	H10:00
Taylor, Trish	H10:00
Zavadil Family	PRSE

ASE = Altar Society @ Eltham; C10:00 = Commentator @ 10am Mass  
E10:00 = Euch. Minister @ 10am Mass; H10:00 = Hospitality 10am Mass  
PRSE = Pilgrim Rosary Statue @ Eltham;  
W8:30 = Minister of the Word @ 8:30am Mass;  
W6:00 = Minister of the Word @ 6pm Mass;  
R10:00 = Reader @ 10am Mass



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

**Sunday 27 November**

*Our Lady Help of Christians, 12:00pm*

Phoebe Jessica Dawson	Baptism
William Soi Lum Mun	Baptism
Juliet Peric	Baptism

**Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

**Reflection:**

Unlike the marked change of mood between the first and second readings, the transition to the gospel is seamless. Matthew's account of Jesus' warnings to his disciples is in tune with Paul's words to the Romans. If anything, the gospel takes the threat a step further. Jesus emphasizes the suddenness and unpredictability of the coming of the son of Man. In the first two examples, the people of Noah's day and common labourers busy at their task had no idea what was to happen.

The third example suggests some possibility of being prepared for the decisive event. Disciples could be like a household who is foresighted enough to lie in wait for the burglar's intrusion. Jesus' boldness in likening the Son of Man to a burglar is striking. As several of his parables show, Jesus is unafraid of invoking dubious characters as role models when he wants to make a point.

Themes of upheaval and coming judgement dominate the chapters of Matthew's gospel that precede the passion narrative. It is often unclear whether the coming crisis that Jesus refers to is the destruction of Jerusalem or the end-time itself. Here it's plainly the latter. There's a wealth of background to the figure of the Son of Man and the end-time in the prophets, notably Daniel 7:13-14.

On this very first day of Advent, elements of unbounded hope are counter-balanced by sober warnings. Any inclination we might have to sentimentalise the season is brought up short. It's time to choose the light..

**Break Open the Word 2022**

Shop Local this Christmas Season...



**Magenta Creative Jewellery** are offering

20-50% off all stock on display until Christmas Eve.

You can find them at Unit 3, 6 Pryor Street, Eltham Village;

@magentacreative on Instagram, ph:9431 6877; or visit [www.magentajewellery.com.au](http://www.magentajewellery.com.au)





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

**Montmorency**

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:  
*Ivan Buultjens, Joe Ciavola, John Crimmins, Robin Gauder, Joan & Bernie Harris, Christopher Kenny*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:  
*Tony Belfiore, Rita Bevanda, Kim Brisbane, Alana Foulds, Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Bob Fraser, Melanie Lam, Lita Lee, Frances McDonald, John McPartlin, Cindy Morrissey, Andrew Pighin, Aguatha Spina, Melina Tenaglia*

**Eltham**

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:  
*Violetta, Jade McAlear, Fiona Rogers, Rosemary Scully, Ian Sturman, James Sutton, Sarah Thompson*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish Office 9435 4742 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au).

**Christmas Boxes** will be in the church from Sunday until 11th December. A request is being made for *new gifts* for **children, adults** and for **teenagers** who often miss out at this time.

Thank you again for your continued generosity,  
Pat McCrohan



**850 Thank You – What a Record!**



The Montmorency Conference of SVDP have **sold out** of Christmas cards in just 3 weeks!

Whilst we have always had strong sales up to two weeks before Christmas, this year's sales have been in record time. We have never sold out of cards in just 3 weeks. Apologies to all parishioners who missed out this year but we promise that we will be back in 2023 with more cards and hopefully can satisfy all of the parish community.

We hope that the 850 cards that were sold bring joy and happiness to parishioners' families and friends this Christmas. Thanks again

**Prayers of the Faithful for 27 November 2022  
First Sunday of Advent**

**Leader:** While we wait for the coming of the Saviour, let us turn towards God our Father and pray for the Church and the world.

For the Church: we pray that all Christians will stay awake to the need to be faithful to Christ's teaching and to seek new ways to promote Jesus' message. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who live a contemplative life: that they will continue to pray day and night for the world, and that their example will invigorate the Church. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the children of our community: that we give thanks for the joy that they give to their parents and to the church. We pray also for the children of the world, who have been abandoned and mistreated. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our politicians: we pray for responsible politicians who will ensure that their legislation will be in favour of the poor and the neglected and will protect the unborn and the aged. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For carers, who watch day and night over the sick and the aged in hospitals and in nursing homes: that they will continue to find joy and energy and commitment in their service. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who suffer mental or physical illness: that they will receive the help they need and that they will be comforted by Jesus' presence in their lives. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who have died recently, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including *Ivan Buultjens, Joe Ciavola, John Crimmins, Robin Gauder, Joan & Bernie Harris & Christopher Kenny*: may they rest in the peace and love of Christ. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** God our Father, as we are waiting for the coming of your Son, we are confident that you will listen and respond to our prayers. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen**

**November Remembrances...**

Anderson & O'Connor Families; Andrzejewski Family;  
Baranowski Family; Baryla Family; Dominic & Maria Belfiore;  
Peter Carbone;  
Byszard, Teresa & Zbigniew Cichacki;  
Anthony & Elizabeth Corera;  
Margaret Dalton (Shelley);  
Neil Patrick Donahoo  
Richard Klepacz; Denis Morganti;  
Jack & Flo Morganti; Neil O'Keeffe;  
Maria, Vladyslav & Janina Rygala;  
John Shelley; Kevin Shelley;  
Martin & Irene Shelley;  
Snopkowski Family;  
Janina Wrzeszcz;



**OLHC Piety Stall:**



2023 Columban Calendars (\$10) now available after Mass on Sundays at OLHC Piety Shop Eltham. Christmas cards **are now available**, \$3 per pack.



## SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS ONLINE TRAINING & MEETING OF PARISH VOLUNTEERS

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM) has launched the Safeguarding Essentials online training module for all volunteers within the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne (CAM). The Safeguarding Essentials online training is a 20-minute training module that is compulsory and must be completed each year by all volunteers.

The purpose of this training is to provide our volunteers with:

- foundational knowledge that will help them to perform their roles, and
- a clear understanding of their duty of care and of expectations with regards to safeguarding children, young people and adults from all forms of abuse and harm.

To introduce this new Safeguarding Essentials online training to our parishes our Safeguarding Committee is suggesting there are two ways in which you can complete this training:

### 1. Attend one of two group training sessions.

Two group training sessions will be held at Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Eltham on:

**Thursday 8 Dec – 7:00 to 8:00 pm, and**

**Saturday 10 Dec – 10:00 am to 11:00 am.**

These training sessions will also be an opportunity to undertake refresher training for a number of roles within the parish.

e.g., Readers/Commentators, Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, etc.

Tea and coffee would be available.

Please bring a plate.

### 2. Complete the Training module Online

To access the online training go to:

<https://melbournecatholic.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-and-upcoming-events/safeguarding-training-modules>

To login, each volunteer will need their unique Working with Children Check ID and an email address.

To register, volunteers will need to select their parish from the dropdown menu as their *Primary Organisation of Service*.

Each registered user will receive a certificate via email, once the training has been successfully completed and an annual reminder to complete the course.

You will need to complete this training option by **19 Dec 2022**.



### We are Christ Coming...

Welcome to the sacred time of Advent yet again. The season invites us to an adult spirituality. Though we anticipate the coming of a babe, Advent is also about a trans-historic and Cosmic Christ. Advent holds the paradox of One coming - not yet fully here - and yet with us from the beginning of time as we know it.

Advent calls us to both follow the star the long way to God's manger and recognise that the journey is a short one, a simple turn toward neighbour, world, and self.

This is what Advent means: to be chosen and upheld by God, to be filled with God's delight and Spirit, to bring justice to the nations, to hold God's hand and be God's promise, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison, to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness (Isaiah 42:1-9).

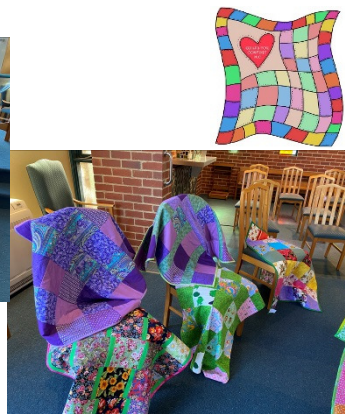
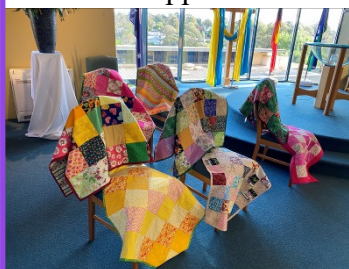
All we can do is beg for the full coming - of Christ in us. In Madeleine L'Engle's words:

*Come in your naked, newborn might.  
Come, with bolts of lightning hurled.  
Come in your flaming, burning power.  
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come;  
Come speak in joy untamed and wild.*

We are Christ coming - Christ coming now, this Advent, and again and again and again, beyond time's end.

Peace and every good, Richard ([www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org))

Last weekend, there was a display of quilts at SFX, donated by Val & Greg Hayes. A total of \$670 was raised through the sale of these quilts for **Kadasig** for the Philippines.



### Calling All Bakers

The St Francis Xavier Parents Association are calling for donations of all things yummy for our Cake Stall at the Christmas Market, to be held Sunday 4th December.

Be as creative as you like! It doesn't need to be a cake, maybe your specialty is cookies, cupcakes, banana bread, chocolate crackles, slices of Christmas puddings.

Please attach a list of ingredients to your contribution. Delivery of items can be made on the day of the fair between 8am and 9am.

If you have any questions please email [jane Fraser22@icloud.com](mailto:jane Fraser22@icloud.com) or phone 0428 184 896.

Thank you for your support.