

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.

One full week till Christmas -

Dear Parishioners and Friends of SFX & OLHC,

As we all begin the final full week of Advent - time that we need to help in our preparations to celebrate the birth of Jesus 2022, I think that we definitely need time to be still and pray! School holidays have started and these next seven days will be important to help us all adjust to this most wonderful season.

The past week has been full of 'good news' and 'bad news' - happy & sad times too!

The violent and tragic events that led to 6 people losing their lives in Queensland, 2 young police officers, a neighbour & 3 family members, have shocked our nation. An awful & seemingly premeditated attack on Police women and men & neighbours on the eve of Christmas is truly shocking. Our thoughts & prayers to all involved in this terrible situation and especially to all current serving police men and women around Australia. Patrick Green, the recently appointed Primary School Principal of Our Lady Help of Christians in Eltham, has made an important decision to leave this leadership role with immediate effect, and this news has come as a bolt out of the blue, catching us all by surprise! Yet, not surprisingly the role and modern leadership requirements of any principal in Catholic education today comes with enormous pressure and responsibilities, thus, with my blessing - I can assure you that Patrick has made the right decision for his personal health and future options. A difficult decision was made by Patrick, but a good and courageous decision to make. Peace & Blessings for Patrick's future - and we extend our prayers to this school community.

And finally some good news. Last Tuesday I spent an hour with our Archbishop, Peter Comensoli, in his office near St. Patrick's Cathedral in East Melbourne. I was deeply grateful and impressed with his welcome and capacity to listen to the issues that I raised with him. It was a very pleasant time and opportunity to chat and share our vision for our parishes and the issues of the church in general. In this week's bulletin I have given you a copy of the letter that was the main context of my visitation and discussion.

But wait.....there's more,

It is my intention to have very simple Bulletins over the Christmas weekend and during the month of January, so as to give Kate a reasonable break and holiday time with her family, she deserves this from us all with our blessings! Kate will return to the office 'full time' on Wednesday, 1st February.

Please try to find some space for your spiritual well-being in this fourth week of Advent.

Michael



Christmas Mass Timetable

Christmas Eve (Sat 24 Dec)

6pm Holy Trinity Primary School

8pm OLHC Eltham Church

10pm SFX Montmorency Church

Christmas Day (Sun 25 Dec)

8:30am SFX Montmorency Church

10am OLHC Eltham Church



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

Tue - 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

Collections: 4 & 11 December 2022

	OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	\$427.00	\$1,124.00
Presbytery	\$664.65	\$693.45

Stewardship Offering

Month	OLHC	SFX	Total
September	\$6,357.04	\$10,491.00	\$16,848.04
October	\$6,404.35	\$11,334.50	\$17,738.85
November	\$6,056.61	\$9,156.00	\$15,212.61

Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

Saturday 17

12:00pm Baptism: Arley & August

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 18

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Zoe

Eltham

Tuesday 20

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

Wednesday 21

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

Thursday 22

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 23

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 24 - Christmas Eve

6:00pm Christmas Eve Outdoor Mass

Holy Trinity

8:00pm Christmas Eve Mass

Eltham

10:00pm Christmas Eve Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 25 - Christmas Day

8:30am Christmas Day Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Christmas Day Mass

Eltham

Tuesday 27

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

Wednesday 28

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

Thursday 29

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 30

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 31

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 1 January 2023

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Mania

Eltham

Tuesday 3

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

Wednesday 4

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 5

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

2:30pm Mass

Calvary Lower Plenty Garden Views

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.






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:
Bernie Farrell, Leo Fell, Bernie Harris

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

Eltham

For the recently deceased:
Connie Lynch
mother/in-law of Christine & Terry Johnson

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.

KADASIG Christmas Hampers

Gift Certificates are also available.

- **Christmas Hamper \$40** - provide food for a family for Christmas & New Year, packed & distributed by 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; or
Juanita Troemml: 0409 514 565 or jtroemml@bigpond.net.au; or
Visit our website to learn more:
www.kadasigaid.com.au



HOSPITALITY AT OLHC

We are looking for some more volunteers to join the gang who provide wonderful hospitality after 10am mass at Eltham every week!

We need a few more generous people to add to the roster in the New Year to spread the load. Perhaps you could get together with a friend or another family!

You don't have to have won MasterChef, it can be simple fare e.g. a few cakes (home-made or bought!) or biscuits or sandwiches, or whatever takes your fancy.

Our weekly hospitality is just a wonderful way to get together and chat after mass. It really adds to our sense of church community. And we have wonderful coffee as well, thanks to our baristas!

If you would like to participate in this group, please contact:
Kathleen on 0432 391 105.



Congratulations to all who celebrate their sacraments this weekend:

Saturday 10 December

St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm

August Dimitrov Enev

Baptism

Arley John Ravichandran

Baptism

Sunday 11 December

Our Lady Help of Christians, 12:00pm

Zoe Marie King

Baptism

SFX Parishioners and School Communities Christmas Magic Hampers

The Montmorency Conference of SVDP wish to thank all Parishioners and the school communities of St Francis Xavier, Holy Trinity and Catholic Ladies' College for helping us put just a little bit of magic into the lives of many local families this Christmas. Your generosity donating food and gifts has enabled us to make hampers tailored to the size and needs of each family. In addition, we have bought supermarket vouchers so families can purchase fresh food for their Christmas meal.

Please contact Mike if you have any queries concerning any aspect of your donations.

You can still donate in one of the following ways which will help us continue with our work in supporting families in the New Year especially with 2023 School expenses.

How to donate to the SVDP Christmas Appeal

Envelopes: SVDP envelopes are available at SFX in church pews or on 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, to an SVDP member or to Mike on 0417 221 245. Receipts can be issued by simply completing name & address on the envelope.

On Line: vinnies.org.au - to direct 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 063000 Account 106 07556 with reference W22 and Montmorency 916. In this way moneys will be credited to the Montmorency Conference account and stay within our community.

If you are donating online, by phone or direct credit please send an email to msaid@netspace.net.au with your full name, address, amount and date of deposit so that the conference can acknowledge your generosity and ensure these moneys 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

Advent Reflection / Praying without words

Amid the turmoil and confusion of the modern world, it is only if we have the courage to be quiet in God's presence that we will hear an echo of the Advent message: the Lord is near! / **by Teresa White**

In the words of an Advent song by Marty Haugen, "For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits; truly my hope is in you."

Advent calls for a certain contemplative "inactivity" in the midst of the hustle and bustle that so often precedes the celebration of Christmas: it invites us to rest and be thankful as we come before God in wordless prayer. It is in quiet moments, in the absence of noise and clamour, that we become aware of the mystery of God's presence among us.

When we enter this quiet zone, we can reflect on the coming of the Word of God, not just in history, but in the world of today. As we wait for that coming this Christmas, we will surely see that "the kindness and love of God" (Titus 3:4) are still being revealed: amid the sadness, turmoil and confusion that surround us on

every front, there is a light in the darkness. The gospels offer many mini-portraits of people who recognised the need for quiet if God's Word is to be heard: John the Baptist, living a hidden life in the desert; Simeon and Anna, who never left the Temple, spending their days in fasting and prayer; Nathanael, taking "time out" under a fig tree; the woman of Samaria, isolated by her immoral reputation, drawing water in her bucket at the well of Sychar. (In the Eastern Church, this woman has a name, Photina, which means "the enlightened one". Her whole life was transformed by her conversation with Jesus in that quiet place, where no one else was present.)



Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, is the one who sat silently at Jesus' feet, and he commended her for doing so. While Martha, worrying and fretting about many things, was "distracted with all the serving" (Luke 10:40), Mary simply listened to Jesus.

She was content to give him her full attention, even though there were many tasks she could have shared with her sister. Jesus said she had "chosen the better part".

But, above all, it is Mary, the mother of Jesus, who most fully embodies the Advent spirit of quiet listening. Little in the eyes of the world of her time, unknown, unimportant, she is "the faithful one, whose mind is steadfast" (Isaiah 26:3). Attuned to God's silence, her

inner gaze is fixed on God as she humbly waits for the Lord. Mary's faith, her openness to God, lead her to the prayer of acceptance of what God is asking of her.

Mary was one of those people the Jews called "the Quiet in the Land", the *Anavim*, who lived a life of unceasing prayer and serene watchfulness. They had no dramatic expectations of a Messiah who would come in power and glory; instead, in humility and faith, they waited quietly for the day when God would comfort his people. And they were among the few who recognised and welcomed God's Son when he came.

If, like Mary, we have the courage to be quiet in God's presence, we will hear an echo of the Advent message: the Lord is very near!

Sister Teresa White belongs to the Faithful Companions of Jesus. A former teacher, she spent many years in the ministry of spirituality at Katherine House, a retreat and conference centre run by her congregation in Salford.

War will not stop Christmas: Ukrainian archbishop

14 December 2022

The head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church says the war in Ukraine, which has raged for 10 months, will not stop the joy of Christmas. Source: Vatican News.

Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk spoke with reporters on a mission with the embassies of Poland and Ukraine to the Holy See.

"We have the custom of singing Christmas carols to our neighbours, especially those most in need, to share joy and good wishes. Now everyone is asking, Will there be Christmas joy, will we be allowed to sing or should be silent and weep?"

"I said yes, and yes, Christmas will be there. We have the right to celebrate Christmas joy that does not come from secular entertainment, but from Heaven because the Prince of Peace will be born."

These celebrations will reach all the way to the front. In fact, there will be someone singing for the soldiers engaged on the fighting line, Archbishop Shevchuk said.

"In Soviet times, Christmas carols were a form of protest against the atheistic communist regime. People sang to overcome anxieties and sadness. The carols are an expression of the Christian faith; they are a catechesis singing about the birth of Jesus. Many therefore are preparing to go and sing with our soldiers at the border. I know several students are organising."

The same celebration will take place in every air raid shelter and foster home: "We will celebrate Christmas in the cold and dark. This will make us experience 'on our skin' the story of the Holy Family, also in the cold and dark but with heavenly joy."

<https://cathnews.com/2022/12/14/war-will-not-stop-christmas-ukrainian-archbishop/>



Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk
(CNS/courtesy Ukrainian Catholic Church)

Celebrate Christmas ‘with Ukraine in your hearts’

15 December 2022

Pope Francis has invited people to spend less on their Christmas celebrations this year and donate the savings to help the people of Ukraine. Source: CNS.

As he has done at his general audiences since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, the Pope asked pilgrims and visitors yesterday to express their “closeness to the martyred Ukrainian people, persevering in fervent prayer for these brothers and sisters of ours who are suffering so much”. “Brothers and sisters, I tell you, they are suffering so very, very much in Ukraine,” the Pope said. “I want to draw your attention to Christmas, which is coming, and to the festivities,” he said. “It’s beautiful to celebrate Christmas and have parties, but let’s reduce the level of Christmas spending a bit; let’s have a simpler Christmas with more modest gifts.”



And, the Pope said, “let’s send what we save to the people of Ukraine, who are suffering so much”. People in the country are hungry and cold, he said.

“And many die because there are no doctors and nurses available,” the Pope said.

Celebrate Christmas “at peace with the Lord,” he said, and “with Ukraine in your hearts.”

<https://catholicnews.com/celebrate-christmas-with-ukraine-in-your-hearts-pope-says-urging-aid/>

Ukraine bishops declare ‘Year of Mercy’ for war-torn country

30 November 2022

Ukraine’s Roman and Greek Catholic Bishops have declared the next 12 months a “Year of Mercy” dedicated to showing solidarity with the poor and needy, specifically those most impacted by the ongoing war with Russia. Source: Crux.

Ukraine’s Roman Catholic bishops held their annual plenary assembly on November 25, which was preceded by a retreat and a joint meeting attended by both the Roman and Greek Catholic bishops.

The bishops announced that they have declared the 12-month period from November 27, 2022, until the Feast of Christ the King on November 26, 2023, as a “Year of Mercy”.

This time, the bishops said, ought “to make people sensitive to the needs of their neighbours, who are already experiencing difficulty during wintertime, and who will also increasingly feel the consequences and burden of war.”



Fr Bohdan Geleta (left) and Fr Ivan Levitsky
(CNS/Ukrainian Catholic Church)

The Russia-Ukraine war is now in its ninth month following Russia’s February 24 invasion. There have been thousands of casualties and millions have been displaced by the ongoing violence, both internally and those who have fled abroad and are living as refugees.

In their statement, Ukraine’s Roman Catholic bishops said they held a meeting with the Vatican’s envoy to Ukraine, Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, in which the humanitarian situation was discussed, as well as the Holy See’s intervention in the release of prisoners.

The Year of Mercy was called as two Greek Catholic priests were detained by Russian forces in Berdyansk in the Donetsk Exarchate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church for allegedly housing explosives with the intention to commit “guerrilla” activities against the Russian army.

In a statement, the Donetsk Exarchate said the allegations were both “false” and “slandorous,” as the priests - Fr Bohdan Geleta and Fr Ivan Levitsky had never ventured beyond the pastoral scope of the ministry with Aid to the Church in Need, and amounted to a strategy typical of Soviet-era propaganda to discredit clergy.

<https://cathnews.com/2022/11/30/ukraine-bishops-declare-year-of-mercy-for-war-torn-country/>

Roster for THIS WEEKEND: 17/18 Dec 2022	
Armstrong, Miranda	H10:00
Costanzo, Brenda	W8:30
Cotter, Anne	W8:30
Donnellan, Denice	E10:00
Dopheide, Marlis	H10:00
Frediani, Gabriella	ASE
Goss, Marion	E10:00
Haines, Geoff	C10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	E10:00
Iliffe, Yvonne	E10:00
Kotz, Sharron	E10:00
Leahy Family	PRSE
Maynes, Phil	W6:00
McEwen, Christopher	R10:00
Nolan, Kathleen	PRYR
Rodriguez, Carlos	W6:00
Said, Mike & Marie	ASRC
Roster for NEXT WEEKEND: 24/25 Dec 2022	
Armstrong, Miranda	C10:00am
Armstrong, Miranda	E8:00pm
Bacani, Brian	C10:00pm
Beckford, Peter	C8:00pm
Boyd, Mary	PRYR
Castellanos, Rodrigo	E10:00am
Donnellan, Denice	E8:00pm
Dopheide, Marlis	R8:00pm
Edwards, Elisabeth	E8:00pm
Foxley, David	R10:00am
French, Jossie	R10:00pm
Griffin, Chris	R10:00pm
Iliffe, Yvonne	E8:00pm
McKinley, Michael	C8:30am
Northrop, Greg	E8:00pm
Rankin, Maree	R8:30am
Reardon, Kathy	E10:00am
Reardon, Peter	E10:00am
Scully, Greg	E10:00am
Scully, Helen	E10:00am
Wood, Marie	R8:30am

ASE = Altar Society @ Eltham; C = Commentator; E = Euch. Minister;
H = Hospitality; PRSE = Pilgrim Rosary Statue @ Eltham;
W8:30 = Minister of the Word @ 8:30am Mass;
W6:00 = Minister of the Word @ 6pm Mass; R = Reader

Volunteers Needed for Christmas Masses

Please contact
Kathleen Nolan 0432 391 105; or
Patsy Skipper 0429 439 675
if you are able to help with any of the following:

- Reader/Commentator
- Eucharistic Minister
- Setup/Cleanup; etc



at any of our Christmas Masses:

Christmas Eve:

6pm Holy Trinity Primary School
8pm OLHC Eltham Church
10pm SFX Montmorency Church

Christmas Day:

8:30am SFX Montmorency Church
10am OLHC Eltham Church



We are here for you

If you would like Communion at home, or if you are unable to get to Mass and would like a lift, there is a small Pastoral Team who are here to assist you.

Maybe you are unwell or lonely and would appreciate a visit from someone from the Parish, please be in touch with us.

Contact Patsy: 0429 439 675 or
Kate at the Parish Office: 9435 4742.

If you would like to **join** this small team to assist with Pastoral care of those in need, you would be most welcome.

You may also like to consider helping out with Liturgy of the Word in the Church at 9.30am on Wednesday mornings at Eltham or Thursday mornings at Montmorency.

We would love to hear from you.



Calling for more volunteers to be Eucharistic Ministers!

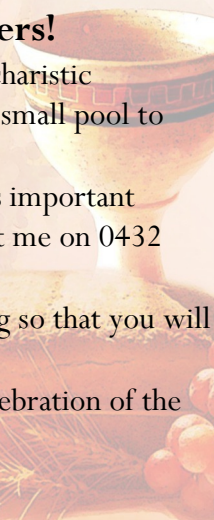
We need more people to serve as Eucharistic Ministers at OLHC as we only have a small pool to work with at the moment.

So, if you would like to be part of this important ministry to help us out, please contact me on 0432 391 105.

You will receive the necessary training so that you will feel comfortable in the role.

Please consider being a part of the celebration of the Eucharist in this special way.

Kathleen



Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel,

a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

Reflection:

Matthew's concern to establish Jesus' Davidic credentials is signaled in the very first verse of the gospel, when he names David ahead of Abraham before launching into the genealogy. This concern is a governing factor in Matthew's account of Jesus' birth. It is Joseph's lineage that makes Jesus a son of David in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophetic oracle. Matthew puts Joseph centre-stage in the human story of Jesus' birth.

He is careful to assert that Joseph's intention to release Mary from their betrothal sprang from motives of honour and respect, but this should not encourage modern readers to over-psychologise the episode. Matthew is telling the story theologically. The primary agent in the birth of Jesus is not Joseph but God, whether named as the Holy Spirit or as the angel of the Lord. That is why the one who is born is indeed "Emmanuel, God-with-us".

While Luke's infancy narrative has taken greater hold of the Christian imagination, Matthew's is still familiar. Those who bring fresh energy and lively faith to the proclamation of this text will succeed in engaging the assembly in the divine-human interplay of its characters.

Break Open the Word 2022



Prayers of the Faithful for 18 December 2022 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Leader: Let us turn with confidence to our Father and our God.

For the Church which bears witness to 'God with us' and brings the Holy Word to the world and for those who refuse to welcome the Good News. Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For expectant mothers that they will be surrounded by love and care, and for those who are alone, bravely facing trouble and strife, that they will find love and friendship to help them in their need

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

For organisations and associations that work to promote peace and harmony, and for those who search for the resolution to conflict. We remember especially Ukraine as the people continue to fight for their country.

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

For our Christian communities, those who are seeking peace and reconciliation in this time of division and closed mindedness.

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

For all the children of the world that they be protected from harm and exploitation and that they be allowed to enjoy the innocence of their childhood without extra burdens being imposed by adults.

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

For those who are sick, especially those listed in the bulletin, that they experience the healing power of God's love in their lives.

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

For those who have died recently, especially xxx, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, xxx. May they enjoy forever the vision and presence of God.

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

Leader: Loving Father, you who walk with us on our way in this world, hear and answer our prayers. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Monty & Eltham

The Catholic Parishes of
St Francis Xavier & Our Lady Help of Christians

Eltham & Montmorency Catholic Parishes
86 Mayona Road
Montmorency Vic 3094
1 December 2022

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne
St. Patrick's Centre,
PO Box 146,
East Melbourne VIC 8002

Dear Your Grace,

Just over 3 1/2 years ago, actually effective from 1 May 2019, you appointed me as Moderator of the two parishes St Francis Xavier, Montmorency & Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham.

Notwithstanding the three stressful years of a world pandemic, Covid-19, and your strong vision for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, 'The Way of the Gospel', these two parishes have been slowly and prayerfully navigating a new reality of ministry, with one priest for two parishes.

We have been in gentle discussions with our neighbouring parishes, namely Greensborough, Greensborough North and Diamond Creek, with regards to future developments and possible amalgamation or appropriate connections, but our clear vision and mission was to explore the full pastoral ministry and unity between OLHC Eltham and SFX Montmorency.

Since May 2019 to November 2022, these two parishes have explored and communicated, through several open meetings, regular team meetings, Zoom Meetings and full disclosure from our weekly Parish Bulletin, the Pastoral Plan for these two parishes to become one parish.

'Trinity Parish' - the Catholic Parish that incorporates the two vibrant communities of St Francis Xavier and Our Lady Help of Christians and its 3 primary schools.

Over these difficult years, we have enlisted the expertise of Mr Christopher Pearson, professional psychologist in group dynamics and a practicing Catholic, to help us navigate and call forth a wonderful community response to creative change! It was vitally important that all parishioners have an opportunity to invest into these important changes, consider the ramifications, have time to pray about these new realities and come on board with a positive outlook and future involvement.

Why Trinity Parish? Well it's obvious once you know:

Three Primary Schools:

- St. Francis Xavier Primary School - Montmorency
- Holy Trinity Primary School - Eltham North
- Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School - Eltham

We are not exploring new names to confuse or add to the already existing catholic community names within our Parishes.

Provided in the accompanying document is the data that shows due diligence with regards to this important process and prayerful consideration on this topic.

With this letter, I humbly request your prayerful reflection upon our parish discernment and that you formally announce a New Canonical Parish of 'Trinity Parish' on Easter Sunday, 9th April 2023. The New Parish of TRINITY incorporating the Catholic Communities of ELTHAM, Our Lady Help of Christians, and MONTMORENCY, St Francis Xavier, and the three Primary Schools - Our Lady Help of Christians, Holy Trinity & St Francis Xavier.

In anticipation of a great outcome,

Yours in Jesus Christ,

Michael Francis SIERAKOWSKI
Moderator



86 Mayona Road, Montmorency Vic 3094
montmorency@cam.org.au * (03) 9435 4742 * eltham@cam.org.au

