

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.

SOUTH SUDAN / Ecumenical pilgrimage could boost a fragile peace

World's youngest nation prepares for Pope's visit

FREDRICK NZWILI

The Ecumenical pilgrimage of peace to South Sudan led by Pope Francis and other Christian leaders' is crucial for the country, according to a catholic priest familiar with the arrangements. He also spoke of the Church unity that had been apparent in the preparations.

Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and Iain Greenshields, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will visit South Sudan from 3 to 5 February.

The visit is expected to boost a fragile peace in the world's youngest nation, which has been riven by ethnic violence since it gained independence in 2011. It is hoped that the visit will encourage the country's leading politicians to choose peace instead of violence or war.

Fr John Gbemboyo, co-ordinator of the Sudan Catholic bishops' conference, said the "spiritual" visit led by the Church leaders will help unite Christians in prayer for South Sudan.

"It is also a spiritual moment to reinforce

our will, desire and determination for peace, even among our families and our people. We take the visit as very important for peace," said Fr Gbemboyo. "the Church is united under the Sudan Council of Churches."

Last year, the government renovated churches and prepared roads for the visit, according to the priest. Arrangements are also being made to ensure the city can cope with the influx of visitors.

Fr Gbemboyo said the churches had renewed their committees and were visiting and evaluating the sites of pilgrimage. "They are working with one heart," he said.

But as Juba prepares to receive the Christian leaders, humanitarian officials say inter-ethnic violence in areas including the Upper Nile and Unity states and Jonglei remains a concern.

By December, the violence had killed an unspecified number of people and had displaced 9,000. The fight over grazing land, water, cultivation land and other resources triggers persistent violence, according to aid agencies.

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

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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

Acting Principal: Mark Pinkerton: 9439 7824

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

RECONCILIATION

available upon request
please call the Parish Office 9435 4742

Collections: 15 & 22 January 2023

	OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	\$342.00	\$1,072.10
Presbytery	\$918.50	\$1,018.20

Stewardship Offering

Month	OLHC	SFX	Total
November	\$6,056.61	\$8,746.00	\$14,802.61
December	\$6,257.77	\$11,796.00	\$18,053.77

Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

Saturday 4 February 2023

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 5

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

Tuesday 7

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

Wednesday 8

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

Thursday 9

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 10

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 11

12:00pm Baptisms: Siena, Violet, Olivia, Archie Montmorency

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 12

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

Tuesday 14

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

Wednesday 15

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 16

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 17

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 18

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 19

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

Tuesday 21

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

Wednesday 22

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

Thursday 23

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 24

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 25

12:00pm Baptism: Orlando

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

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Support Eltham Parish by giving with CDFpay

Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can safely 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:

Mariano Dalla Riva, Eileen Frawley, Verna Maloney, Antonina Salvatore, Richard Zann, Eileen Zann, Eva Zann

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Arturo Bacani, Tony Belfiore, Rita Bevanda, Kim Brisbane, Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Alana Foulds Bob Fraser, Melanie Lam, Lita Lee, Frances McDonald, Cindy Morrissey, Andrew Pighin, Aquatha Spina, Melina Tenaglia

Eltham

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Chris Mullens

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.



Congratulations to all who celebrated their sacraments during January:

Sunday 1 January

Our Lady Help of Christians, 12:00pm
Manaia Anand Vaze

Baptism

Sunday 8 January

Our Lady Help of Christians, 12:00pm
Millie Laura Piva

Baptism

Saturday 21 January

St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm
Milana Joy Forte

Baptism

Saturday 28 January

St Francis Xavier, 11:00am
Eloise Nicola Tesch

Baptism

St Francis Xavier, 1:00pm

Benjamin Marc Scotta & Catherine Rezk Marriage



BRING YOUR APPETITES!

VOLUNTEERS AND FRIENDS WELCOME BACK

BBQ

6PM 8.2.23
METZNER HALL
RSVP BY 3.2.23
TO 9430 1677 OR
TRAVIS.MORONEY@SVHA.ORG.AU

"They may give the praise to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16

Join us for a 4 week FREE ZOOM Bible study
With daily reflections

EXODUS

DESERT WALK

PROMISED LAND

HOLY SPIRIT

A Journey To Freedom

For those who seek liberation ...
... to be freed from "Egypt"
then purified in the "Desert"
and invited into the "Promised Land"

Thursdays 8.00-9.30pm; 23 Feb., 2, 9 & 23 March

Book before 22 Feb at:
<https://www.trybooking.com/CFNKM>

In order to receive the course booklet by email

A FREE course from The Way Prayer Group, Greensborough North.
For further information contact: Emilia,
Phone: 0418 120 902 or E-mail: emilia.sacchetta@bigpond.com

Over lunch a few weeks ago, Australia’s combative cardinal appeared cheerful and more determined than ever to reverse the course of reform on which Pope Francis has set the Church / **By Frank Brennan**

The boxer’s son

George Pell was an old-style churchman with strong opinions. He and I had our differences. He was no admirer of contemporary Jesuits, and I am one. I got to know him best when I attended his trials on charges of child sexual abuse, which I had realised at once were preposterous. I grew to admire his good humour and humility in the face of what was nothing more than an appalling police sting operation protracted by grossly erroneous judicial reasoning by Victoria’s two most senior judges. His prison journals revealed a Christian able to find grace in the middle of adversity and injustice.

Even in death, George Pell has continued to excite interest and controversy. I was in Boston during the 2005 conclave. Many Americans asked me if Pell might be elected. My standard answer was, “The Church is not yet ready for an Australian pope.” Pell played a significant role in the 2005 and 2013 conclaves. Despite being over 80 and unable to vote, he hoped to have a decisive influence on determining the outcome of the next one. At lunch in Rome a few weeks ago, he assured me that the next conclave was not far off. Knowing he was due for a hip replacement, he had told friends that he would not return to Australia for surgery (he died after a cardiac arrest following the operation). He didn’t want to risk being on the other side of the world post-op and pre-conclave. Pope Francis is still with us. It’s Pope Emeritus Benedict and Cardinal George Pell who are deceased.

In his posthumous article for *The Spectator*, Pell writes: “Diocesan bishops are the successors of the Apostles, the chief teacher in each diocese and the focus of local unity for their people and of universal unity around the Pope, the successor of Peter. Since the time



PHOTO: ALAMY/ABACA PRESS, ERIC VANDEVILLE

of St Irenaeus of Lyon, the bishop is also the guarantor of continuing fidelity to Christ’s teaching, the apostolic tradition. They are governors and sometimes judges, as well as teachers and sacramental celebrants, and are not just wall flowers or rubber stamps.”

This observation about the role of bishops holds the key to his life and ministry. It explains his pugilistic approach, his focus on truth and tradition. He saw his role and solemn duty as a bishop to be an enforcer, especially against what he described as “the Protestant liberals in the Catholic Church”. He thought many Jesuits - me included - were among them. He was dismayed in later years to see a new spring in our step in response to the Francis papacy.

George Pell was born in the provincial city of Ballarat, Victoria, on 8 June 1941. His father, also George, had been a publican and boxer, and was not religious; his mother, Margaret, was a Catholic of Irish extraction. George was an all-rounder, competent at sport and the academy. He excelled in the seminary and was sent to Rome, where he was ordained in St Peter’s

Basilica in 1966. He was then sent to Campion Hall, Oxford, where his doctoral thesis was “The exercise of authority in early Christianity from about 170 to 270” - the time of St Irenaeus of Lyon.

In the introduction he wrote: “As orthodox and heretical teachers began to develop a Christian theology during the second century, the teaching role of the clergy (bishops and presbyters) was brought under severe pressure. The bishops led the fight for orthodoxy, characterised their opponents as intellectuals, and channelled popular feeling for their position by appealing to the simple, traditional, oneness of faith against the speculations and extravagances of their opponents.”

He detailed, and did not lament, the waning influence of the laity by the third century: “The mass of the laity never dominated the life of the Church, but individual charismatics, be they teachers, prophets or confessors, played important parts at times. We have mentioned the eclipse of lay teachers. Similarly, the appeals of the confessors to reconcile the lapsed are brought under episcopal control. The rejection of prophecy, following on the Montanist crisis, closed another avenue of lay expression. That their influence diminished the further we move into the third century is shown in the part they played in the election of clerics, and in conciliar gatherings. They were still quasi-official witnesses, but their role came to be more and more dominated by the provincial bishops.”

He returned to Australia in 1971, confident that any bishop worth his salt would keep the laity in their place. Little did he know that his later career was to be plagued by the curse of child sexual abuse in the Church and by financial scandals in the Vatican - the sins

not of laity, but of clergy. At a very early age, he became a diocesan consultor to the Bishop of Ballarat, Ronald Mulkearns. In 1985 he was appointed rector of the seminary in Melbourne, and in 1987 became an auxiliary bishop to the Archbishop of Melbourne, Sir Frank Little. Mulkearns and Little oversaw dioceses with a disproportionate number of child sex offenders in the ranks of clergy and teaching brothers; both were old-style bishops who kept the bad news to themselves.

When he became Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, Pell set up the “Melbourne Response”, an attempt to deal with a backlog of cases of child sexual abuse. The other dioceses in Australia were finalising details of their joint protocol “Towards Healing”. Pell chose to go it alone and, as ever, went to the top end of town and employed the best lawyers to assist. His protocol was designed in co-operation with Victoria Police and the Victorian solicitor-general. Whatever defects in the protocol were to be found later, none had been declared by police or government at the time. Similar defects were later found in “Towards Healing”.

The Australian Royal commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, established in 2012 and reporting five years later, had a strong focus on the Catholic Church. The chief commissioner, Justice Peter McClellan, and the assisting counsel had Pell in their sights. In their Ballarat case study, they said it was “inconceivable” that diocesan consultors, including Pell, did not know by July 1977 of the abuse committed by the paedophile priest Gerald Ridsdale “given the usual practice and the general knowledge in the community”. But they went on to accept the evidence of two other consultors that they did not know about the abuse until many years later.

This shoddy and selective dealing with the evidence was repeated in the Melbourne case study, which looked at Pell’s treatment of an offending parish priest when he was auxiliary bishop; once again, the commission identified no evidence that Pell know anything. Having

received a detailed analysis of the royal commission’s findings from a panel of lawyers, Pope Francis allowed the publication of photos of a private audience at which he welcomed Pell back to Rome.

Enough has been written about the police sting and the miscarriage of justice Pell suffered when in 2017 he was charged with child sex offences alleged to have occurred in the sacristy of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Melbourne, after an 11am Sunday Mass. The police had instituted a three-year “Operation Tethering” that they said “was set up to investigate possible unreported crimes committed by Cardinal George Pell”. It turned up nothing.

The police did not even interview any altar servers, concelebrants or money collectors who would have been in the sacristy routinely immediately after the Sunday Mass. Not even the two state judges wanting to uphold the convictions could postulate a theory, let alone point to any evidence as to how Pell and two choristers could be alone in the sacristy immediately after Mass. According to his final account to the jury, the complainant would have reached the sacristy a couple of minutes after the altar servers arrived and some minutes before Pell could possibly have arrived.

On 7 April 2020, in a unanimous judgment, Australia’s highest court, the High Court, with all seven judges sitting, unanimously upheld Pell’s appeal and quashed his convictions.

When we had lunch in Rome a month ago Pell was in good spirits, fearing nothing, and more than happy to give vent to his views, even to those like me who have a different appreciation of the attempts by Pope Francis to make the church more synodal. I left him knowing that we would always hold very different theological perspectives but in no doubt about Pell’s fearless, joyful proclamation of truth and tradition as he saw it.

We have all now been told that Pell was the author of the memo released last year under the pseudonym “Demos” and circulated to various cardinals, describing the present pontificate as “a disaster” and “a catastrophe”, and outlining

the priorities for the next pope: “restore normality, restore doctrinal clarity in faith and morals, restore a proper respect for the law and ensure that the first criterion for the nomination of bishops is acceptance of the apostolic tradition”. Shortly before he died Pell had apparently decided to allow *The Spectator* to publish the article that appeared under his own name this week in which he condemns the forthcoming synod on synodality as a “toxic nightmare”.

If a cardinal had published such excoriating views of the Pope and a pending synod process during the time of John Paul II or Benedict, Pell would have been the first to call for his dismissal from office and from all future curial activities. But for Pell, anything goes in the defence of what he was convinced was truth and tradition. I recall Pell’s supporting Benedict’s dismissal of the very pastoral Australian bishop William Morris in 2011. Pell gave this rationale: “The diocese was divided quite badly and the bishop hasn’t demonstrated that he’s a team player.” By the time of his death, Pell was no longer a team player; he was taking a leading role in the faction opposed to the Pope’s reforms.

Pell was doing all he could to uphold the role of bishop as he had enunciated it in his doctoral thesis 50 years ago. For Pell, unity with the pope was contingent on a shared understanding of truth and tradition.

Emboldened by the High Court’s vindication and by the exposure of the shortcomings and prejudices of the police, the director of public prosecution and the two most senior judges in Victoria, Cardinal George Pell was determined to maintain the role of the bishops as defenders of unchanging church teaching and to quash the pretensions of the synodal process. He never shrank from a fight. He thrived on conflict and it cost him dearly.

Frank Brennan is a Jesuit priest, Rector of Newman College at the University of Melbourne, and an adjunct professor at the Thomas More Law School at the Australian Catholic University. He attended the Pell trials and appeals at the request of the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference.

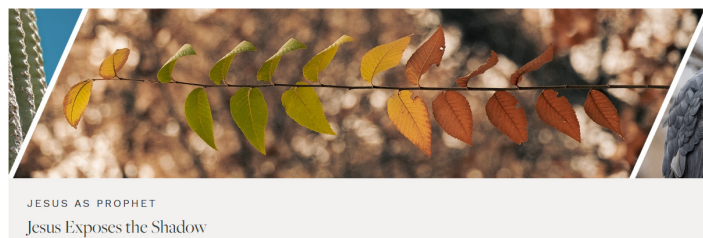
Roster for THIS WEEKEND: 4/5 February 2023

Capuana, Marisa	W6:00
Donnellan, Denice	E10:00
Dunell, Linda	E10:00
Haines, Geoff	C10:00
Hall, Vali	ASE
Hannon, Genni	ASRC
Hannon, Kevin	ASRC
Iliffe, Yvonne	E10:00
Jones, Marion	W6:00
McKinley, Michael	W8:30
Ramsdale, John	W8:30
Reardon, Kathy	E10:00
Reardon, Kathy	H10:00
Reardon, Peter	E10:00
Reardon, Peter	H10:00
Ryan Family	PRSE
Taylor, Trish	R10:00
Williams, Anne	PRYR
Williams, Peter	PRYR

Roster for NEXT WEEKEND: 11/12 February 2023

Beckford, Peter	PRYR
Croft, Mike	H10:00
Croft, Pat	H10:00
Edwards, Elisabeth	E10:00
Kenny, Michael	W6:00
Kulkens, Mark	W6:00
Leahy Family	PRSE
Leahy, Michelle	R10:00
Northrop, Greg	E10:00
Said, Marie	ASRC
Said, Mike	ASRC
Scully, Greg	E10:00
Scully, Helen	E10:00
Smith, Neil	E10:00
Sullivan, Frances	W8:30
Taylor, Trish	C10:00
Wood, Marie	W8:30
	ASE

ASE = Altar Society @ Eltham; C = Commentator; E = Euch. Minister;
H = Hospitality; PRSE = Pilgrim Rosary Statue @ Eltham;
W = Minister of the Word; R = Reader



Richard Rohr understands Jesus in a long line of Jewish prophets who revealed inconvenient truths to their people. Jesus exposes the shadow, confronts the ego, and calls the people to be transformed.

The shadow is that part of the self that we don't want to see, we don't want others to see, and of which we're always afraid. Our tendency is to try to hide it or deny it, even and most especially from ourselves. Jesus, quoting the prophet Isaiah, describes it as "listening but not understanding, seeing but not perceiving" (Matthew 13:14-15).

Archaic religion and most of the history of religion has seen the shadow as the problem. Such religion is about getting rid of the shadow. This is the classic example of dealing with the symptom instead of the cause. We cannot really get rid of the shadow. We can only expose its game - which is, in great part, to get rid of its effects.

Jesus and the prophets deal with the cause, which is the ego. Our problem is not our shadow self as much as our over-defended ego, which always sees and hates its own faults in other people, and thus avoids its own conversion.

Jesus' phrase for the denied shadow is "the plank in your own eye," which you invariably see as the "splinter in your neighbour's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5). Jesus' advice is absolutely perfect: "Take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your neighbour's eye." He does not deny that we should deal with evil, but we had better do our own inner housecleaning first - in a most radical way, which he will later even hyperbolically describe as plucking out our eye (Matthew 18:9). If we do not see our own "plank", it is inevitable that we will hate it elsewhere.

The genius of Jesus is that he wastes no time on repressing or denying the shadow. In that, he is a classic prophet, one of those who does not merely expose the denied shadow of Israel, but instead attacks the real problem, which is the ego and arrogance of Israel and people misusing power. Once we expose the shadow for what it is, its game is over. Its effectiveness entirely depends on disguise (see 2 Corinthians 11:14) and not seeing the plank in our own eye. Once we see our own plank, the "speck" in our neighbour's eye becomes inconsequential.

Jesus is not too interested in moral purity because he knows that any preoccupation with repressing the shadow does not lead us into personal transformation, empathy, compassion, or patience, but invariably into denial or disguise, repression or hypocrisy. Isn't that rather evident? Immature religion creates a high degree of *cognitively rigid* people or very hateful and attacking people - and often both. It is almost the public image of Christianity today, yet God's goal is exactly the opposite.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/jesus-exposes-the-shadow-2023-01-24/>

"SAVE ALI" CAMPAIGN - Afghanistan

Almost 15 months ago our parish, and a community of like-minded refugee advocates, managed to free two young Hazara women trapped in Kabul at the time of the Taliban uprising. These women are the wives of two Hazara men who came to live with Miranda and Marlis when they were 15 and 16 year old asylum seekers.

Within Afghanistan, Hazaras have been systematically discriminated against by Pashtuns and others for vast numbers of years. They are said to be descendants of Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol empire. Living primarily in the rugged highlands in the country's centre, the Hazaras are one of Afghanistan's largest ethnic minorities, accounting for up to 20 percent of Afghanistan's 30 million inhabitants. The Taliban has a long history of torture, brutality and murder of the Hazaras.

In 2005 life in Afghanistan was gaining some political, social and economic equality and stability. Elections were being held and there was great hope for Afghans from all tribal sectors. The United Nations and other peace-keeping forces were involved as advisors, and many Hazara worked for the UN as Civic Education and Outreach Officers.

At the time the Taliban took over the country in 2021, the United Nations abandoned these workers, taking no responsibility for protecting them against the predictable Taliban wrath. Some countries assisted Hazara to escape before the borders and airports were closed, but the vast majority of these UN "staff" were left behind.

Currently we are assisting the AQILI family. The father, Ali, worked for the UN and for the past 3 years has been on the run and in hiding in Afghanistan. His 3 brothers came to Australia 21 years ago and are all Australian citizens. Ali's wife, daughter and 5 sons have been threatened, brutalised and targeted by the Taliban. In 2022 one son and the father managed to cross the border to seek asylum in Pakistan, but Pakistan is riddled with Taliban fighters. Pakistan is the training ground of the Taliban. However, in order to be considered either an asylum seeker or refugee, an individual must be residing outside their country of origin.



Through the **Ali Campaign** we have managed to get all 8 family members into Pakistan, not without grave danger. We have negotiated with UNHCR to have all family members recognised as asylum seekers, which gives them the right to remain in Pakistan until it is decided how to secure visas. Given Australia's refugee policies, an unenviable task.

There is SO MUCH MORE to this story, but we will never give up. If you would like to follow this journey, or know more, please contact Miranda on thomasinemiranda52@gmail.com.

In the meantime, we ask you to pray, not only for the AQILI family, but for all seekers of asylum who are lost in limbo, terrified and struggling to survive

**Miranda Armstrong
& Marlis Dopheide**

In a homily on Mark 1:21–28, Father Richard describes the tension between priestly and prophetic tasks - both of which are necessary for healthy religion

There are two great strains of spiritual teachers in Judaism, and I think, if the truth is told, in all religions. There's the priestly strain that holds the system together by repeating the tradition. The one we're less familiar with is the prophetic strain, because that one hasn't been quite as accepted. Prophets are critical of the very system that the priests maintain.

If we have both, we have a certain kind of wholeness or integrity. If we just have priests, we keep repeating the party line and everything is about loyalty, conformity, and following the rules - and that looks like religion. But if we have the priest *and* the prophet, we have a system constantly refining itself and correcting itself *from within*. Those two strains very seldom come together. We see it in Moses, who both gathers Israel, and yet is the most critical of his own people. We see it again in Jesus, who loves his people and his Jewish religion, but is lethally critical of hypocrisy and illusion and deceit (see Matthew 23 and Luke 11:45–12:3). We're living in a most amazing time because we have it in Pope Francis right now. We very seldom have a pope who is also a prophet: one who holds the tradition together, respects and conserves the tradition, but at the same time is often quite critical of the bishops and the priests (as he well should be).

Richard points out that Jesus' first action as a prophet involved driving out evil from a religious establishment:

Jesus enters the synagogue and of course he recognizes the evil ones, and they recognize him (Mark 1:24). They're exposed. This is the first exorcism, or casting out of a demon, and it's in a most amazing place. It's not in the marketplace, it's not in the prostitutes, it's not in the tax collectors. The devil is in the synagogue itself! This is no small symbol.

The only way evil can succeed is to disguise itself as good. And one of the best disguises for evil is religion. Just pretend to love God, go to church every Sunday, recite the creed, and say all the right things. Someone can be racist, be against the poor, hate immigrants, and be totally concerned about making money and being a materialist, but still go to church each Sunday and be "justified" in the eyes of religion.

Those are the things that prophets point out, so prophets aren't nearly as popular as priests. Priests keep repeating the party line, so there's no reason to fight them. But prophets do both: they put together the best of the conservative with the best of the liberal, to use contemporary language, *and* they also say what's phony about the tradition. That's what fully spiritually mature people can do.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/we-need-priests-and-prophets-2023-01-26/>



JESUS AS PROPHET
We Need Priests and Prophets

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven'.

Reflection:

The conveniences of modern life are a mixed blessing for hearers of God's word. For all their value in making life easy, they weaken the capacity of biblical images to strike us with their original power. That's the case with today's images, salt and light. Refrigeration diverts attention from the critical role of salt in the ancient world, not just as a preservative but also as a valuable commodity. And the artificial lighting we have at our fingertips dulls our appreciation of the candles and torches of past ages.

For all that, salt and light can still fire our imaginations. Salt, judiciously used, adds zest to food. It's easy but sobering to reflect on whether our discipleship has zest or whether it's bland and insipid. It's equally simple and challenging to wonder how well our lives radiate the light of the gospel. The prophet Isaiah has already told us what will light up the world - the works of justice and mercy. In the end these gospel images are meant to encourage, not discourage, us. They serve their purpose when they stir us to lively service.

Jesus' advice to put our light on display brings his counter-advice to mind. On Ash Wednesday he tells us to keep our prayer, almsgiving and fasting secret. Both commands in fact have the same purpose: "to give the praise to your Father in heaven". The NRSV renders the text inclusively.

Break Open the Word 2023



Prayers of the Faithful for 5 February 2023 - Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leader: Lord, as we bring these prayers before you, show us how to be salt-worthy and how to give light.

For our Church: that we may be a light to our world and that our words and actions may be instruments of healing and help, to transform our society.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our parish community: that we may be salt and light, awaking our community from complacency, as we add our voices to those critical issues facing our community and society today.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who reach out to the poor and the disadvantaged: that they may see the face of Christ in those whom they serve and never grow weary in offering love and compassion.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For a greater care for our common home: that we may grow in understanding and respect for the earth. May we truly see our earth as God's gift to us and work to preserve it for future generations.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our First Nations Sisters and Brothers: help us to meet one another with wonder and anticipation. Help us to love as you love, without expectation. Reveal to us your way of reconciliation and guide us into right relationships.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who are sick and those who are listed in our bullet: may they experience the healing touch of Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have died recently. We also remember *Mariano Dalla Riva, Eileen Frawley, Verna Maloney, Chris Mullens, Antonina Salvatore, and Richard, Eileen & Eva Zann* whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God of life, hear our prayers and help us to take your light everywhere darkness exists. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen