

# 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.



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).



## 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**

**Acting Principal:** Mark Pinkerton: 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: 29 Jan & 5 Feb 2023

	OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	\$187.00	\$1,233.00
Presbytery	\$933.00	\$872.80

#### 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
January			

## Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

### **Saturday 11**

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

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

### **Sunday 12**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

### **Monday 13**

11:00am Funeral : Carmel Keenan

Montmorency

### **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**

12:00pm Baptism: Miles, Solomon

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

### **Sunday 19**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Lorelei, Lily

Eltham

### **Tuesday 21**

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

### **Wednesday 22 - Ash Wednesday**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Ash Wednesday Mass

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

12:00pm SFX School Liturgy

Montmorency

7:00pm Ash Wednesday Mass

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

### **Sunday 26**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Josiphina

Eltham

### **Tuesday 28**

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

### **Wednesday 1 March**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

**Support  
Montmorency Parish  
by giving with CDFpay**

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




**Support  
Eltham Parish  
by giving with CDFpay**

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




## HELL ON EARTH - A Humanitarian Crisis Looms - Türkiye and Syria

The death toll across Türkiye and war-ravaged northern Syria has exceeded 20,000, making Monday's earthquake the deadliest in more than a decade.

It is Türkiye's deadliest earthquake since 1999, when a magnitude-7.6 earthquake hit Izmit, killing around 18,000 people.

One of the deadliest earthquakes in history happened off the coast of Indonesia on Boxing Day in 2004. The magnitude-9.1 earthquake and resulting tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean killed about 230,000 people.

The other deadliest earthquake in the past 25 years hit Haiti on January 12, 2010. About 220,000 people were reportedly killed in the magnitude-7 quake. It destroyed more than 300,000 buildings in Port-au-Prince and across the country's south-west.

Other deadly events include a magnitude-7.6 earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 that killed more than 80,000 people and a magnitude-7.9 quake that struck China in 2008, causing more than 87,500 fatalities.

A magnitude-9.0 quake off the north-east coast of Japan in 2011 triggered a tsunami which killed nearly 20,000 people.

Before Monday's earthquake, the deadliest in recent years was a magnitude-7.6 quake in Nepal in 2015 which killed 8,800 people.

Every earthquake response comes with its own set of challenges and issues.

This is evident as rescue teams in Türkiye and Syria battle severe weather conditions causing freezing temperatures and snow. The conditions will also be affecting those who were left homeless or without shelter.

Türkiye/Turkey: As of May 2022, the country's official English name is Türkiye. Preference that spelling wherever possible. It may be necessary to explain the change. In May 2022, Turkish foreign minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu requested the UN refer to his country using its Turkish-language name: Türkiye.

The UN agreed, and it wasn't long before DFAT and the US State Department followed suit.

**Michael**



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

### **Montmorency**

For the recently deceased:

*Joseph Borg, Carmel Grace Keenan*

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Marika Deylen, Eileen Hart, Denis Hollyoak, Grace Catherine Vincent*

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:

*Elisabeth Bruitzman, Frank Bruitzman, Denis Hollyoak*

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).



**Congratulations to all who celebrated their sacraments during January:**

**Saturday 11 February**

*St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm*  
Violet Foley Chipperfield  
Olivia Grace Mihocic  
Siena Anastasia Pozzobon  
Archie Foley Ying

Baptism  
Baptism  
Baptism  
Baptism

A **Charismatic Mass** including the Sacrament of Anointing will be celebrated on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February at St Thomas the Apostle Church, 251 Diamond Ck Rd, Nth Greensborough. The evening will commence at 7.30pm with Praise & Worship, followed by Mass and supper. All welcome. For further details, please contact Rose 0411 650 339 or Emilia 0418 120 902.



## Oceania bishops send prayers, condolences to Syria and Türkiye

The Catholic bishops of Oceania have sent a message of prayerful condolence and solidarity to Church and civic leaders in Türkiye and Syria as the countries suffer the effects of devastating earthquakes.



Collapsed buildings in Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye, on February 6 (OSVNews/Ihlas News Agency via Reuters)

Meeting for their quadrennial assembly of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania in Fiji, the bishops expressed deep sadness at the loss of life and the damage from which it will take years to recover.

“We know that God is close to those that suffer. We pray that your people sense the love and care of their brothers and sisters around the world, including from Oceania,” the bishops wrote.

The message was signed by the president of the Federation of Catholic Bishops conferences of Oceania, Suva Archbishop Peter Loy Chong, with the support of the presidents of the four episcopal conferences: Australia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands/Papua New Guinea and the Pacific.

Here is the text of the message:

*From the other end of the world, our hearts break at the death and destruction we are seeing on our television screens and in our newspapers.*

*We know that God is close to those that suffer. We pray that your people sense the love and care of their brothers and sisters around the world, including from Oceania.*

*One of the key themes of our Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania gathering this week is the connectedness of human suffering and the suffering of our world. We have seen in your countries how natural disasters can wreak such pain and anguish, with thousands of lives lost.*

*The Catholic Church has established appeals to raise funds to support the ongoing efforts for rescue and recovery, and we will encourage the faithful in our region to respond generously. The Church is also providing human resources on the ground to respond to immediate needs through our aid agencies.*

*Be assured of our ongoing prayers and our attention as your people recover from this tragedy.*

<https://cathnews.com/2023/02/10/oceania-bishops-send-prayers-condolences-to-syria-and-turkiye/>

If you have lost contact with relatives in Türkiye or Syria due to the current situation,

**Restoring Family Links** team

([www.redcross.org.au/migration/find-my-family-restoring-family-links/](http://www.redcross.org.au/migration/find-my-family-restoring-family-links/))

may be able to help.

Get in contact Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm (AEST) on 1800 875 199

or email: [tracing@redcross.org.au](mailto:tracing@redcross.org.au)

## Caritas responds to catastrophic earthquake in Türkiye and Syria

Caritas agencies are responding to a powerful and deadly earthquake in southeast Türkiye and Syria, where thousands of lives have been lost and the death toll increases by the hour.

It is expected that the death toll will increase up to eightfold in the coming days and weeks as more victims are found in the rubble.

Entire buildings have collapsed on both sides of the border, leaving thousands more injured, trapped or homeless in the bitter winter cold and freezing rain.

“This earthquake will have a long-term impact on people’s lives. People have lost their lives, their homes, and their livelihoods. The impact will last not for days or even months, but for years,” said Hombeline Duliere, the Syria crisis response manager for CAFOD (the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development in England and Wales).

In Türkiye’s south, poor internet connectivity and damaged roads have hindered efforts to assess the damage and respond in the worst-hit areas. The epicenter of the quake, Gaziantep, is also home to half a million Syrian refugees.

Syria is nearly at breaking point after 12 years of war, extreme poverty and a recent cholera outbreak. Vital infrastructure like hospitals, schools, utilities and water and sanitation systems have been damaged or reduced to rubble. The economy is in tatters, with more than 90 per cent of the population living in poverty.

“People already had limited access to water and food. Millions of people have been displaced inside Syria. Some of them have lost everything already - and they have few options left. We must do all we can to support,” said Sally Thomas, Caritas Australia’s humanitarian emergencies lead for the Middle East.

So far, all Caritas Türkiye staff have been reported as safe, however, Caritas Türkiye offices in Anatolia have collapsed and are now inaccessible.

Donations: [www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/turkey-and-syria-earthquake/](http://www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/turkey-and-syria-earthquake/)

<https://cathnews.com/2023/02/08/caritas-responds-to-catastrophic-earthquake-in-turkiye-and-syria/>

## Here's how to help victims of the earthquake.

Here's how to contribute to organisations that are aiding the rescue and recovery efforts in Türkiye and Syria.

The rescue and recovery efforts in Syria and Türkiye are underway after the most powerful earthquake to strike the region in almost a century killed thousands of people, left thousands more injured and flattened thousands of buildings and homes.

The magnitude 7.8 quake and its aftershocks have unleashed a humanitarian disaster of unfathomable proportions.

Governments around the world are pledging assistance, deploying search teams, medical squads and equipment, and offering aid, as families who have lost their homes endure near-freezing temperatures.

Here are some ways you can help.

### **Before you give, do your research.**

Before you make a donation, especially to a lesser-known organization, you should do some research to make sure it is reputable.

Sites like Charity Navigator (<https://www.charitynavigator.org/>) and Guidestar (<https://www.guidestar.org/>) grade nonprofits based on transparency and effectiveness.

**UNICEF:** The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund said it is in Syria and prioritizing water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition, and also focusing on help unaccompanied children locate their families. UNICEF is accepting donations: [www.unicef.org/emergencies/Syria-Turkiye-earthquake](https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/Syria-Turkiye-earthquake)

**Global Giving:** helps local nonprofit agencies, is collecting donations to help fund emergency medical workers' ability to provide food, shelter and medicine, among other necessities. As needs in Türkiye and Syria change, the organization will focus on long-term assistance : [www.globalgiving.org/projects/turkey-earthquake-relief-fund/](https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/turkey-earthquake-relief-fund/)

**Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies:** The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is requesting donations for its Disaster Response Emergency Fund so it can send "immediate cash assistance": [www.donation.ifrc.org](https://www.donation.ifrc.org)

**OXFAM:** an international organisation that fights poverty, said it is working with women's cooperatives in Türkiye to determine an appropriate immediate and long-term response plan: [www.oxfam.org.au](https://www.oxfam.org.au)

**CARE:** an organisation that works with impoverished communities, is accepting donations that will go toward food, shelter and hygiene kits, among other items: [www.care.org.au](https://www.care.org.au)

**Islamic Relief:** has launched an appeal to support their teams on the ground, who are providing food and shelter in Türkiye and medical assistance and supplies in Syria. Donate: [www.islamicrelief.org.au](https://www.islamicrelief.org.au)

**Doctors Without Borders / Medecins Sans Frontieres:** are supporting hospitals in north-west Syria and need your support: [www.msf.org.au](https://www.msf.org.au)

**Caritas Australia:** Assisting Caritas Syria and other Caritas agencies on the ground as they assess the scale of the damage and critical needs: [www.caritas.org.au](https://www.caritas.org.au)

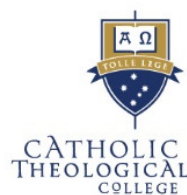
**Tourism:** over the next few years, the affected regions will be reeling from the earthquake's devastation and will need support getting back to life as normal. Visiting these regions will mean you'll be spending your cash in local communities and aiding the area's longer-term recovery.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/06/world/europe/helping-earthquake-victims-turkey-syria.html>

Roster for THIS WEEKEND: 11/12 February 2023	
Beckford, Peter	PRYR
Donnellan, Denise	E10:00
Edwards, Elisabeth	E10:00
Kenny, Michael	W6:00
Kulkens, Mark	W6:00
Leahy Family	PRSE
Leahy, Michelle	R10:00
Nolan, Kathleen	H10:00
Nolan, Mike	H10:00
Northrop, Greg	E10:00
Said, Marie	ASRC
Said, Mike	ASRC
Scully, Helen	E10:00
Smith, Neil	E10:00
Sullivan, Frances	W8:30
Taylor, Trish	C10:00
Wood, Marie	W8:30
	ASE
Roster for NEXT WEEKEND: 18/19 February 2023	
Boyd, Mary	PRYR
Castellanos, Rodrigo	E10:00
Cotter, Anne	W8:30
Davidson, John	W8:30
Donnellan, Denise	E10:00
Dunell, Linda	E10:00
Haines, Geoff	E10:00
Haines, Geoff	H10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	H10:00
Heyhoe, Margaret	C10:00
Maynes, Phil	W6:00
McAleer, Peter	ASRC
Reardon, Kathy	ASE
Reardon, Peter	E10:00
Rigg Family	PRSE
Rodriguez, Carlos	W6:00
Scully, Greg	R10:00
Scully, Helen	ASE
<b>ASE</b> = Altar Society @ Eltham; <b>C</b> = Commentator; <b>E</b> = Euch. Minister; <b>H</b> = Hospitality; <b>PRSE</b> = Pilgrim Rosary Statue @ Eltham; <b>W</b> = Minister of the Word; <b>R</b> = Reader	



**Pastoral Care Appeal 2023** This weekend is the Pastoral Care Appeal. Donations from our parish community will help the Chaplaincy programs to support the most vulnerable people in our community. Your support and generosity will ensure that Catholic Chaplains can continue to be the messengers of God's mercy, love and compassion. Parishioners are encouraged to offer prayers and financial support to help provide continued spiritual and emotional comfort to individuals and families in Victoria facing, illness, pain, loneliness, grief and death. You can donate using the envelopes available or online at [www.catholiccarevic.org.au](http://www.catholiccarevic.org.au) or call (03) 9287 5513.



Please join Catholic Theological College to celebrate 50 years of theological education at the

### **Sung Celebration of Evening Prayer**

Guest Speaker Dr Graeme Blackman AO  
*Chancellor of University of Divinity*

Date: Sunday 5th March 2023 at 3:30pm  
 Location: St Patrick's Cathedral, East Melbourne

Enquiries:  
[sarah.styring@ctc.edu.au](mailto:sarah.styring@ctc.edu.au)  
 or  
 Ph: 9412 3333

### **A message from Aid to the Church in Need Australia:**

ACN is the Pontifical Foundation dedicated to supporting the suffering and persecuted Church.

*Aid to the Church in Need* is still supporting the Catholic Church in Ukraine in its commitment to stay on the ground and keep serving its flock in the face of material and economic war. ACN is helping priests and religious, who are working across the country in parishes, with refugees, in orphanages and homes for the elderly. The main cities where we are sending immediate help are Kyiv, Zaporizhzhya, Odessa and the region of Donetsk. We are doing everything we can to assist our Ukrainian brothers and sisters to be strengthened in their faith so that they may continue to be a light in Ukraine. ACN needs your help to continue this mission.

To make an offering and learn more visit <https://aidtochurch.org/ukraine> or scan the QR code.

**A story from Kharkiv:** Some days ago, Bishop Pavlo Honcharuk of Kharkiv, Ukraine, visited the Catholic parish at Zolochiv, near the frontline. During the visit two parishioners asked to take a picture with him. A few days after, Bishop Honcharuk sent to CAN this picture: "This lady has left us. The day after my visit she was riding her bicycle to a grocery when all of a sudden, shelling started. The bomb exploded so close that she could be identified only by her phone", said Bishop Pavlo. "Pray for her, for her family. Pray for everyone here", asks the bishop.

To stay updated on the situation in Ukraine: <https://aidtochurch.org/news?category=ukraine-news>  
 Prayers for Ukraine: <https://aidtochurch.org/ukraine-prayers>





## **‘Putting child safety at the centre – Reflections on world best practice in the protection of children and vulnerable people in the Catholic Church.’**

Reflections by Peter and Anne Williams - Members of the Safeguarding team

On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 we attended this presentation by **Fr Hans Zollner SJ and Ms Liana Buchanan**.

Fr Hans Zollner is a German Jesuit priest, theologian and psychologist, Professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Director of its Institute of Anthropology. Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care and one of the leading experts on safeguarding and prevention of sexual abuse.

Liana Buchanan is Victoria’s Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People. She also sits as a part-time Commissioner of the Victorian Law Reform Commission.

The evening was well attended with 170 people in attendance. Attendees include representatives of Parish Safeguarding Teams, numerous priests, with Archbishop Peter A Comensoli and Vicar General Fr Joe Caddy hosting the forum.

Fr Zollner spoke passionately and candidly about the historical and ongoing failings of the Catholic Church, worldwide, in the protection and respect for our children, young people and adults. He reminded us that the worldwide Catholic Church is made up of 24 separate organisations, consisting of 5,300 Bishops and 2900 Dioceses. It is this structural anomaly that has resulted in a lack of robust structure, accountability and clear rules, which are the reasons why abuse and the cover-ups have been able to continue to occur. This then still has the potential to allow the existence of systemic barriers, within the church, to limit a more consistent approach in addressing abuse in all its forms.

A danger is that the church can just be “ticking off obligations”. That is, just doing what is legally required (Policies in place, etc) but not living safeguarding. We all need to be informed observers. Therefore, there is a long way to go.

One of many paradoxes of our church today is that we have both victims and perpetrators in the same church or parish. Those who work for safeguarding and those who play it down or deny the need for it.

It is pleasing to note all was not doom and gloom. Fr Zollner highlighted the wonderful work that has been done and continues to be done in addressing abuse. Particular mention was made of the achievements Australia has progressed in Safeguarding, particularly within the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Ms Liana Buchanan spoke briefly about the role of the Victorian Governments’ Commission for Children and Young People. She highlighted recent strengthening of the Commissions powers and the increase in penalties for non-compliance. The Commission has been given more enforcement tools to monitor and enforce the 11 Victorian Standards. She pointed out the Commission has been working closely with the Archdiocese of Melbourne for a number of years to assist in the Church’s response to abuse.

Due to the experiences of the Truth and Justice Commission and the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Victoria is the leader in Safeguarding in Australia.

In conclusion, safeguarding measures are working, with recent studies showing a dramatic decline in reports of abuse since 2018.

There are no bystanders in reducing abuse. Anything anyone can do will make a difference.



## **Prayers of the Faithful for 12 February 2023 - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Leader:** My sisters and brothers, with confident hope we now bring our needs to God.

For the Church: that the Church and its leaders will continue to call all people including those with power over us to choose good over evil, and peace over war.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our parish community: that we continue to be led by the Spirit as we work together in unity and harmony to build up the future parish.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the world: we pray for all those who suffer through war, famine and natural disasters, and especially those living in Türkiye and Syria as they work to recover and rebuild their lives after the destruction, injury and loss caused by the recent earthquakes. We give thanks and pray for those who have gone to their aid.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For faith communities throughout the world: that the wisdom of the Lord will help heal division between faith communities in the Holy Land and anywhere there is conflict between people of faith.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who are sick and whose names are in our bulletin. Let them be comforted by the healing touch of God.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have died recently, including *Joseph Borg and Carmel Grace Keenan*, and for *Elisabeth Bruitzman, Frank Bruitzman, Marika Deylen, Eileen Hart, Denis Hollyoak and Grace Catherine Vincent* whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest eternally in the love and light of the Lord.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** God of our ancestors, you sent your Son to teach and guide us. Grant us the strength and wisdom we need to live our lives in accordance with your commands. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen**

## Gospel: Matthew 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

'It has also been said: Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: you must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'



## Reflection:

On the feast of St Joseph in 2018, Pope Francis published an apostolic exhortation "On the Call to Holiness in Today's World". He may have surprised some by warning about modern-day gnosticism. Here's a passage that complements today's reading from Paul to the Corinthians.

"Thanks be to God, throughout the history of the Church it has always been clear that a person's perfection is measured not by the information or knowledge they possess, but by the depth of their charity. 'Gnostics' do not understand this, because they judge others based on their ability to understand the complexity of certain doctrines. They think of the intellect as separate from the flesh, and thus become incapable of touching Christ's suffering flesh in others, looked up as they are in an encyclopaedia of abstractions. In the end, by disembodiment the mystery, they prefer 'a God without Christ, a Christ without the Church, a Church without her people.'" (#37)

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