

Monty & Eltham

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

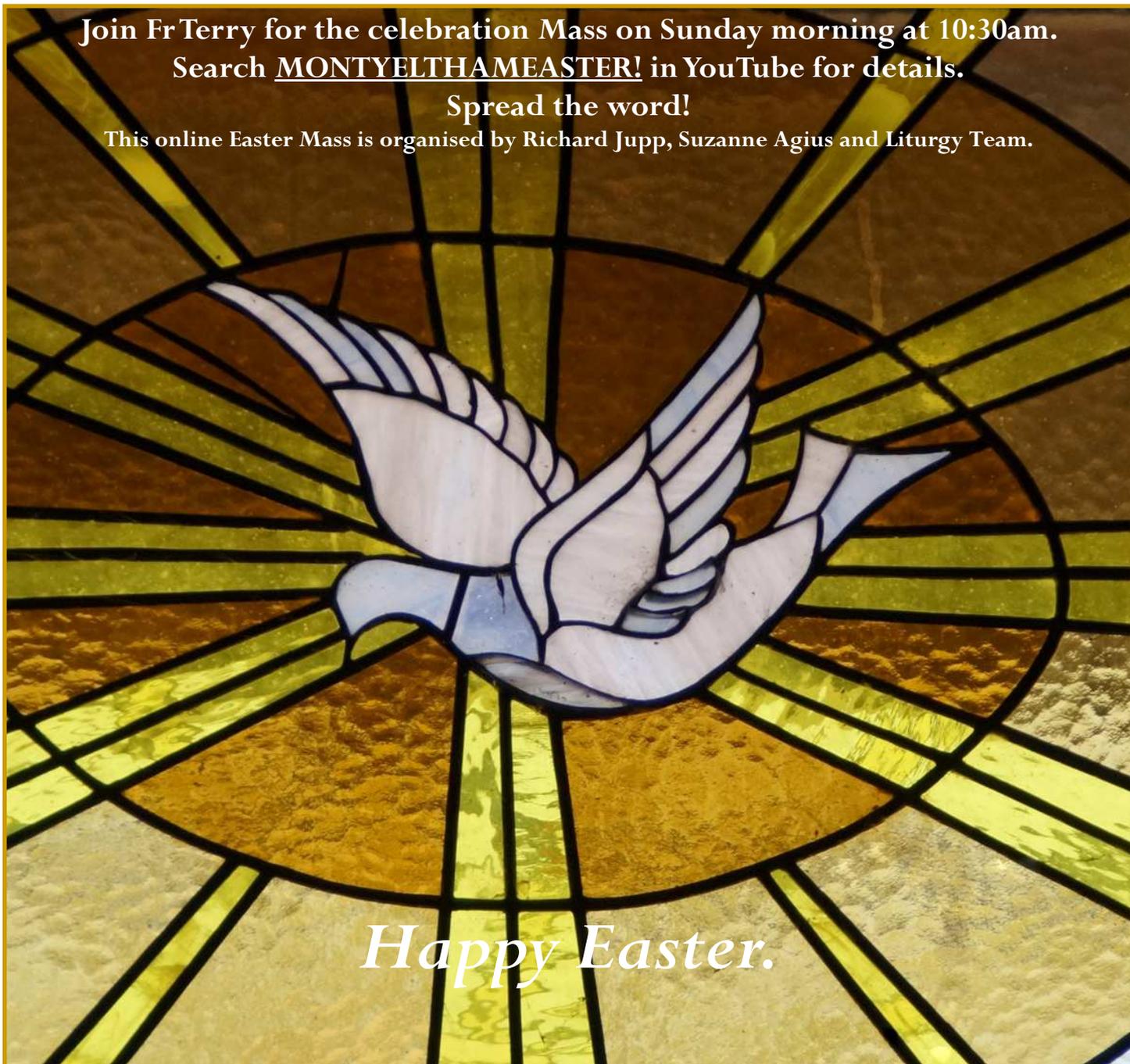


We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nation.

Join Fr Terry for the celebration Mass on Sunday morning at 10:30am.
Search MONTYELTHAMEASTER! in YouTube for details.

Spread the word!

This online Easter Mass is organised by Richard Jupp, Suzanne Agius and Liturgy Team.



Happy Easter.



This parish has a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people in our community. For more information visit www.sfxmonty.org

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



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

terry.kean@cam.org.au

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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Barry Caldwell

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9435 2178

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montmorency@cam.org.au

Gina Ang: Pastoral Worker & Caring Group Co-Ord

gina.ang@cam.org.au

Beth Krolkowski: Parish Manager & Pastoral Worker

montmorency@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler: Parish Secretary & Finance

eltham@cam.org.au

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montmorency.childsafety@cam.org.au

Website: www.sfxmonty.org

www.olhc.info

Facebook:

St Francis Xavier Parish Montmorency

Monty & Eltham Newsletter & Facebook items:

eltham@cam.org.au

Schools

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: Mr Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Mr Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Mr Chris Ray: 9439 7824

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www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au



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

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Don Edmond

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Justine Best, Kristina Brazaitis, Daniel Brewis, Desmond Deehan, Renee Eastwood, Debbie Edgley, Marilyn Fairbank, Julian Forrester, Gennie Hannon, Samuel Hauser (Kyabram), Colleen Hussin, Jim Hussin, Tina Inserra, Adrian Jones, Patsy Leed, Pat Longton, Erin McLindon, Hasti Momeni, Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland, Montagna Mustica, Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen, Mercy Oson, Ron Pfeil, Susan Phelan, Andrew Pighin, Terry Said, Anthony Salvatore, Mary Salvatore, Maria Schroeders, Jeanette Steward, John Tobin, Aldo Viapiana, Sheryn Zurzolo.

Eltham

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Harriet Banks, Jon D'Cruz, Ruth Decker, Fay Dobson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Jo Porter, Paul Rushbrook, Pam Watson.

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House
9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.

LIVE MASSES - STREAMING

St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne

melbournecatholic.org.au/mass

Sun 11am; Mon - Fri 1pm; Sat 8am



Pope Francis, The Vatican

<http://catholicv.org/shows/pope-francis-daily-mass>

Easter Vigil, Channel 2, 2:30pm Easter Sunday

Fr Kevin Dillon, St Simon the Apostle

youtube.com/channel/UCjLZo7MgGsrEDToBDzqxQ

John Petrus, Sacred Heart Mission

<https://www.shscparish.org.au/>

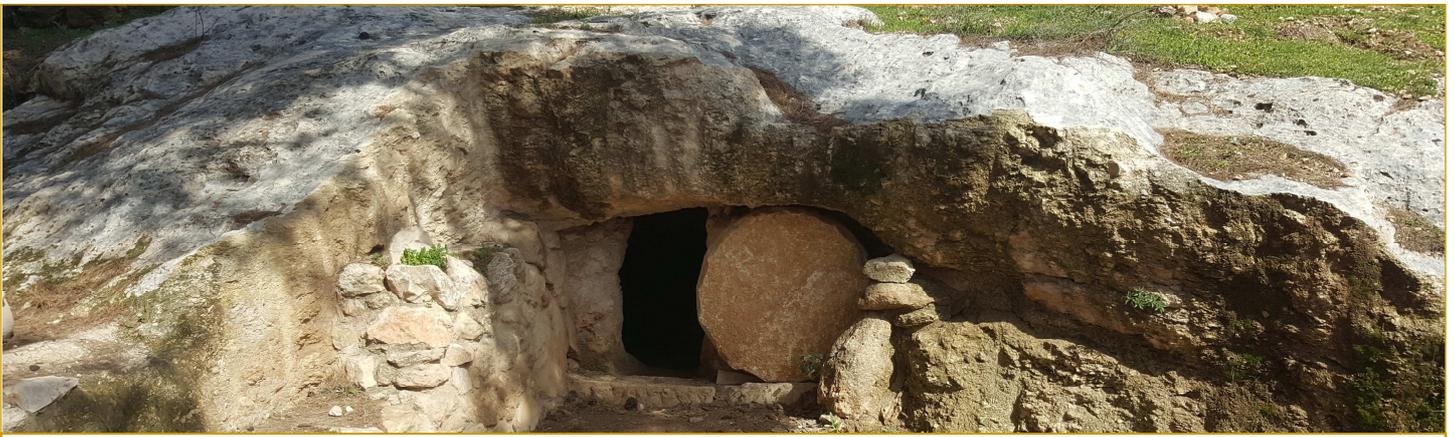
RECONCILIATION

Saturday, 10:30am Monty ~ Terry
1/2 hr prior to any mass said by Michael

Collections last weekend: 4 & 5 April 2020

| Community | Thanksgiving | Presbytery |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Eltham | | |
| Montmorency | \$150.00 | \$280.00 |

Please note the above figures are monies banked & do not include visa/mastercard or direct debits.
Thank you so much for your contributions.



An Easter Reflection

In the doom and gloom of these coronavirus days, even months, our hearts are heavy as we come to Easter Sunday this year. It's hard to feel much, if any, joy in the Easter Gospel Story of Jesus risen from the dead.

The coronavirus has made so many of us worried and anxious. Loss of income, even loss of jobs and how we will pay the bills, and for how long will we have to endure all these restrictions, are questions we face. Many of us worry about infection from the virus, not only for ourselves but for those we love.

Many of us find filling in time so difficult. Even shopping becomes an outing to relieve some of the boredom. And the shopping is different and it's expensive. Ironically, in the supermarket closest to me, Easter eggs are practically the only item on special!

For those of us who live alone, and I never thought I would say this, thank goodness for technology. Imagine what it would be like without mobile phones and computers.

For those who work in the health industry, you have our support and gratitude.

For students, these are unsettling times, as you face uncertainty about your education and your future. We, your families and teachers, so want to support you.

Yes, there are many questions and although there are some windows into a new way of seeing and living life more reflectively, prayerfully and compassionately, we carry much gloom and doom as we come to this Easter.

We think back on our Easter Gospel. Mary of Magdala, and the other Mary were instructed to go and tell the brothers (apostles) that they must leave for Galilee and that he would see them there.

Well, what happened? Yes they were to see the Risen Jesus, but were they filled with joy? Looking at all four Gospel narratives of the appearances of the Risen Jesus, it would seem the apostles and the disciples, were fearful.

In John's Gospel we are told the disciples stayed locked up in a room fearful of going out because they could die like Jesus.

How poignant for us staying in home isolation for fear of contracting the virus.

For the apostles and the disciples, coming to terms with the Resurrection of Jesus took time to unfold. They had to deal with their fears and uncertainties before they could eventually leave their locked doors and with the Spirit of God upon them give witness to the Risen Christ in the streets of life.

And it's true for us that we have to deal with our fears and uncertainties before we too feel and know the joy of Easter. We too, with the Spirit of God upon us, are to witness the Risen Christ as we leave our locked doors for the streets of life.

Let me conclude this Easter Reflection with some words from Fr Mauro-Giuse, Abbot General of the Cistercian Order, translated from French into English, speaking about the virus and the test it imposes on us, he says: *'Everything depends on the love with which we live it and it is above all what Christ comes to give us and awaken in us by his presence. Any test passes sooner or later, but if we live it with love, the wound that the test opens in our life will remain open, as on the resurrected body, as a source of ever-gushing compassion.'*

Easter Blessings to you all and may we all witness the Risen Christ with a deepening and ever-gushing compassion.

Terry



Our Lady Help of Christians, Easter Candle 2020

The theme of the Easter Candle is based on the natural calamity Australia has recently faced. Fires destroyed lives, homes, stock and nature. In spite of the devastation, nature, under the hand of God, emerges anew. There is re-birth and new life. This is compared with the crucifixion - the death and resurrection of Christ, as a new life for us both spiritually and physically. The cross is depicted as a burnt tree/log and emerging from the trunk are fresh shoots... new life, in other words, resurrection.



St Francis Xavier, Easter Candle 2020.

Christ was the lamb that 'went to the slaughter'... crucifixion, on our behalf. He rose from the dead victorious having defeated death. The cross is depicted as a staff used by shepherds and the lamb at the base of the cross is Christ. Having resurrected, leaving behind the shroud, as in the tomb which the other disciple first saw (*John 20:1-8*), that same shroud is shown laid across the cross indicating the resurrection.

Special thanks to *Ramos Furtado* for decorating our beautiful Easter Candles.



Easter

Water is a sign of life, the life of Christ begun at our baptism. Place a bowl of water on the table in front of you. Easter Sunday, the Day of the Lord's Resurrection, is an opportunity to renew our baptismal faith.

FAMILY PRAYER

Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

All: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Leader: Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,
exult, let Angel ministers of God exult,
let the trumpet of salvation
sound aloud our mighty King's triumph!
Be glad, let earth be glad, as glory floods her,
ablaze with light from her eternal King,
let all corners of the earth be glad,
knowing an end to gloom and darkness.
Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice,
arrayed with the lightning of his glory,
let this holy building shake with joy,
filled with the mighty voices of the peoples.

Reader: A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.
When we were baptised in Christ Jesus, we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Spend a few minutes in silence to think about the reading.
Perhaps parents could share the story of their children's baptism.

Leader: Let us renew the promises of our baptism.

All: WE RENOUNCE Satan, and all his works,
and all his empty promises.

WE BELIEVE in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

WE BELIEVE in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

WE BELIEVE in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Leader: And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins, keep us by his grace,
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
for eternal life.

All: Amen.

Sunday

Family members now take some of the Easter water and bless themselves with it.

Prayers of the Faithful (response: *Lord, hear our prayer*)

Leader:

Let us place our prayers before God our Father, rejoicing because Christ has triumphed over death and entered into glory.

For the Church and Pope Francis, that through his example of prayer, solitude and spiritual reflection, we can develop our own personal faith journey during this Easter time. *In your mercy.*

We pray for Fr Michael, Fr Terry & Fr Barry, and give thanks for all that they do and the gifts of service and spiritual guidance which they bring to our community. May we reflect during this Easter Season on the gift of priesthood and leadership which they continue to bring to both our church communities. *In your mercy.*

We pray for all those around the world affected by COVID-19 and the health workers, doctors and nurses caring for them. We pray too for all communities isolating and slowing the spread of this virus across our world. May our prayers reflect our commitment to extend the love of the risen Christ to others during this difficult time. *In your mercy.*

We pray for all members of our Church community separated and isolated this Easter Season. May our prayers for each other strengthen our faith and bring us closer together as we each walk the path of developing our own spiritual journey. *In your mercy.*

We pray for those who are preparing to become new members of the Church through RCIA and RCIC. May they receive a spiritual heart that is rich in faith and compassionate to others. As we welcome them into the church, we pray. *In your mercy.*

We pray for those who are homeless and those who live in poverty. May the image of Christ on the cross remind us that even today, many people in our community carry a cross of social disadvantage. May our prayers support those people to feel hopeful, connected and respected in their lives. *In your mercy.*

We pray for those assisted by Caritas, missionaries and those bringing the word of the resurrection of Christ to our world. May our prayers and financial support enable the word of Christ to bring hope and kindness to all in our world. *In your mercy.*

We pray for families facing pressures of job loss, drought, bush-fires and other significant life challenges which cause hardship. Let this be a time to bring the message of the risen Christ and his unending love to all who need support and friendship. *In your mercy.*

We pray for all those who are ill and listed in our bulletin. May they know that our prayers of health and healing are with them always. *In your mercy.*

We pray for those who have died recently, and for those whose anniversaries are at this time, including Don Edmond. We give thanks for the earthly lives of those who have gone before us, and we take comfort in the gift of eternal life which they now share with the risen Christ. *In your mercy.*

Almighty Father, your beloved son has risen from the dead, as he promised us. In peace and joy we present our prayers to you, through the same risen Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All:

Amen

Leader:

Let us pray the family prayer of all the baptised as Jesus taught us:

All:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Leader:

May God bless us and keep us safe.

All:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



AN EASTER OF A DIFFERENT KIND

We're a Eucharistic people, accustomed to the gathering around the table, marking all the seasons, rituals and observances of our faith. Strange that because of something unseen and intangible, we cannot come together in our usual way. This affliction has joined us as one humanity across the planet in a way that's unprecedented, but has also caused something new to occur which may not have happened otherwise. It has caused us to stop – to cease the busyness – to care about those around us more deeply – to consider a neighbour in a new way. What a blessing in disguise this time for us. Lent of a different kind.

I find myself at odds with an Easter during which, the beautiful music of the Triduum won't be prayed together with my faith community. Like Mary Magdalene, it's caused me to go looking – in faith, for something for which there aren't any words. It's something altogether different to blind hope, or denial. I've no doubt that Mary felt a surge of something calling her to be at the tomb of Jesus on that morning... knowing Jesus to be gone and yet feeling compelled to be near.

So too have I gone looking for a way to be near to the core message of Easter and like with a lot of things for me, that happens through music. During Lent, my mind automatically begins thinking of all the music we will pray and sing together during Triduum, those hallowed days so central to our faith. The other night, I presided over what might be called in muso terms, a 'jam sesh', though this title might give the impression of a raucous, bawdy singalong and that would not inaccurately describe what took place. Rather, my eighteen year old daughter sat with me, asking to play some of the songs of Triduum – songs that harkened to her childhood. Far be it from a mother to name what was going on as 'prayer', but each song played was done so carefully and in keeping with how it would be delivered during its right and proper place in the Triduum liturgies that an onlooker would think themselves sitting in the pews of Monty. 'Jam sesh'? Most definitely not.

My daughter went on to point out small things she remembered ever since she was knee-high, about how harmonies were woven, the critical timing of this or that piece, particular intros and riffs of songs, how body-language and facial expression were as much a language between musos as the music itself – one she longed to understand and observed fastidiously for years and later became a part of.

Her observation around the praying of a Taize chant (eg. *'Stay Here With Me'* at the conclusion of the Holy Thursday liturgy) amazed me - the melody sung in unison only a particular number of times, before the upper melodic line was heard to drop in (Teresa) and the lower harmony arriving (Mum, Richard), the melody remaining throughout (Elisha), all the while the warm anchor of the cello line remaining until the end (Claire), as too the light and melodious flute line (Colleen) until there was nothing left of instrumentation or voice except the sparest of notes from the piano and the quietest of humming of the melody, leaving the congregation free to remain in prayer or go quietly to their homes, part one of the Triduum duly concluded.

When we had sung and played through much of the music of Triduum (most certainly dwelling on my daughter's favourites – *'As I Have Done For You'*, *'Litany of Saints'* and *'When In Our Music God Is Glorified'* to name only a few), there was a sense of having accomplished something. Through music, we had tapped into deeper tenets of our faith and while she protests against religious belief, perhaps without understanding why, she has identified reasons behind why the symbols used during Triduum and indeed, the Easter Vigil are so powerful. The cross, the darkness, the light of the Pascal Candle, the colours; the gentle naming of our belief through the 'Exsultet', the sudden explosiveness of the Gospel Acclamation. The waters of Baptism, the Eucharistic bread and wine, it's all there. Deep inside our psyche, we don't have to look very far to understand why these primal symbols stir us so deeply.

We may not be able to celebrate together this Easter, but sit with a symbol for a time, consider its meaning for you. Like Mary Magdalene, you are sitting in hope and belief. I hold all of you in prayer as I continue to play the music we hold so dear and look forward to a time (like the early Christians who emerged from the cover of darkness and fear of prosecution into a time when they gathered as community) when we may come together again around the Eucharistic table and be nourished by the Body of Christ - our brothers and sisters in faith. Easter blessings to you all.

Suzanne Agius

Congratulations to St Francis Xavier's RCIC class.

Since August 2019, nine young members of the St Francis Xavier's community have been regularly meeting as part of the RCIC program. Seven boys and two girls diligently attended classes where they have reflected on Scripture passages, prayed together and learnt about the Sacraments. Sebastian, who is in Grade 3, is the youngest and the oldest members of the class are Matthew and Jack, who are both in Year 7 at Parade College. They were eagerly looking forward to this Saturday night's Easter Vigil celebration when they would have received their First Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation. It is with much disappointment that this celebration will be postponed to a later date this year when the social isolation rules of the COVID-19 pandemic have lifted and we have resumed meeting as a community again.

Marisa Capuana and I would like to congratulate the RCIC class of 2020 on the completion of their studies and preparation for their Sacraments. They have been a delightful group of students always willing to engage in activities and discussions. We look forward to celebrating with them when they receive their sacraments sometime in the future Well done to the RCIC class - Jude Barrow, Ben & Giacomo Chincarini, Sebastian Drljo, Matthew Kayrooz, Mya Lyons, Suchitha Miranda and Harry & Jack Mitchell.

Mary Dean



Congratulations to GSA students of Our Lady Help of Christians

Palm Sunday, the Holy Week through to Easter, it's the busiest time of the year. I have been part of the parish team preparing for the liturgies for the past 8 years, making sure we deliver the best we can, from gathering the palms on Palm Sunday, washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and the fire at the Vigil. I do feel exhausted towards the end of the night after the vigil but it was always a good feeling. The feeling of the risen Lord.

We often bring a plate to share and kids will have their Easter eggs... such fond memories of our Easter.

This year I was all excited as I have been preparing 5 children for baptism and 2 mothers for their sacraments. I wanted them too, to experience the Holy Week and then their baptism and sacraments at the vigil but our church is closed. Thank God for technology, we are now able to send them liturgies @Home, it will be different but it can also be very beautiful and meaningful to practice the liturgies at home, having children to participate, might help them to understand it better.

Please remember in your prayers the Benz family who would otherwise have had Teesha-Lee and Kala-Lea baptized, the Tomic family who would have had Mitchell Graham, Aidan Daniel and Jack Levi baptized and Cori Thomas & Amanda Ravello who would otherwise have been receiving their First Eucharist and Confirmation.

COVID-19 has changed the way we go about our lives. I spent the past week on the phone and the computer, sometimes both, thanks to my Samsung buds.

It's been a busy week, had a couple of deaths, some in the hospitals and of course supporting people who are feeling isolated, lonely, anxious, etc. I also managed to set up a chat group, so the Prayer Shawl Group could continue knitting, praying and of course chatting, distributed some shawls to letter boxes adhering to social distancing, keeping in touch with GSA sacrament families.

Initially I was overwhelmed and felt the need to be in church to have that quiet time, reflecting on the cross but our church is closed. Then, I remember, the building is closed but we are the church, we can reflect and pray in our homes and when Jesus knocks on our doors, we can let Him in.

I am looking forward to journey into the Holy Week @Home. We will do it together, not physically this year but spiritually.

Gina Ang



The start of the triduum - these holy days began Wednesday night for me.

At 6:37pm precisely, I was the only person on Mayona Road - in the relative dark, watching the fading orange glow from the Sun that had disappeared out of sight some 15 minutes earlier - my delight was to view this New Easter Moon, which didn't disappoint! (In America and Europe it is called a Pink Super Moon - after a flower!)

To my joy, this special moon began to rise in the far distant sky - over this Diamond Valley. A huge 'blood red orange' orb began its visual journey across the Australian sky, announcing the Easter Season for 2020.

I have always enjoyed watching Mother Nature display her beauty at Sun rises and sets and Moon too. Last Wednesday night, this New Moon was spectacular and for me heralds the Easter Season and our spiritual hope for the world.

The date for Easter is always a movable feast determined by the first full moon occurring on or the day after the March Equinox. This week for Christians is undoubtedly our Faith highlight for the year, but it's origin is Jewish. You may or may not know that the Jewish calendar is calculated based on lunar months, so to link Easter with Passover, the council of Nicaea (325AD) decided that Easter would be observed when Passover falls. Thus the famous religious traditions of 'Passover' and 'Easter' are always close together. Now that's beautiful - and decided many centuries ago!

Wednesday night around Victoria was a clear weather night - I just hope that you glimpsed this New Moon and found delight in its brightness, to bring light to our world.

Happy Easter 2020.

Michael



The celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus is a moment of release from confinement - this year more than ever, writes *Laurentia Johns*, a nun of Stanbrook Abbey.

“What is Life?” asked the Welsh-language poet, Waldo Williams, and the poem continues with the reply, “Finding a broad hall between narrow walls.”

The sense of having escaped after a confining ordeal strikes me every Easter - and perhaps the feeling of release will be even greater this year, when we will celebrate Christ’s victory over death in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, even though we are not yet out of the woods.

During Lent I had an experience of confinement which, while disconcerting at the time - though not without humour - I have come to see as a sort of parable. One morning I found myself, just before Mass, accidentally locked into the unoccupied shell of our still unfinished monastic guest house. While quite spacious, the area has neither heat nor light nor water, and is dusty and generally not a place to linger.

As Mass was imminent, the rest of the community were on the other side of the monastery, so my shouts and hammerings on the door went unheard. In vain, I tried all the windows, even though they were too narrow for an adult to pass through, and was just about to give up when something/someone nudged me to try the handle on the large glass patio door along the western side of the building. Mercifully, the handle turned and the broad glass wall slid back like the Red Sea. Stepping out on to the still, sere lawn was a *rea exodus* moment - and I even made it in time for Mass.

By his death and Resurrection Christ has opened for us a way out of every confining situation. As the Letter to the Hebrews says: “The blood of Jesus makes us free to enter boldly into the sanctuary by the new, living way which he opened for us through the curtain, the way of his flesh” (Hebrews 10:19).

This death, which is also an entrance into a new way of life, we enter by our baptism. The “new life” will, for most of us, be not much different from our previous life, at least on the surface. But we do step back into our lives with hearts renewed by grace flowing from Christ’s Easter gift and for which our grace-supported Lenten endeavours over these last few weeks, however seemingly small to us, have in some way prepared us.

From prison, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote to a friend in July 1944: “The Christian hope of resurrection is distinguished from mythological ideas by the fact that human beings are directed to their authentic life on earth... [The] have no final flight into eternity from the responsibilities and difficulties of this world, but must, like Christ, savour and fulfil this earthly life... Only in this way are they crucified and risen with Christ... [who] apprehends us in the midst of life not only at its edges.”

St Benedict promises that “as we progress in this way of life and in faith, our hearts will expand and we shall run on the path of God’s commandments with an inexpressible delight of love” (Rule, 48). All that we do or suffer for Christ expands the heart so that we may receive more, and more fully, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially in this graced season of Eastertide.

So, let’s keep running!

Holy Week at Home

Thanks to Liturgy Brisbane for this wonderful resource.



www.liturgybrisbane.net.au

(Adapted for Eltham & Montmorency Parishes.)



Easter Sunday
12th April 2020

Happy Easter from all at
Caritas Australia!

When we **Go Further Together** in love and compassion, the whole world thrives.

[Caritas Australia COVID-19 Resource Hub](https://www.caritas.org.au/welcome/)
| Caritas Australia

<https://www.caritas.org.au/welcome/caritas-australia-resource-hub>

ARE WE READY TO SAY: "YOUR WILL BE DONE"?
A REFLECTION FOR PALM SUNDAY
BY ABBOT PRIMATE GREGORY J. POLAN



How would you describe Jesus in Matthew's Passion account? How does he act in broad and significant ways? What title would you give him? There are numerous ways in which Jesus can be described in Matthew's Passion account; the one I would use is, "Jesus, the Master Teacher."

The account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane takes one back to a significant part of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus tells his disciples how to pray. In teaching his disciples how to pray, giving them the "Our Father," his words also tell them how to live their lives. "Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven" (Mt 6:10). Then, in the Garden of Gethsemane, we hear Jesus himself pray to the One he called "Abba": "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26:39). Jesus not only taught the disciples how to pray, he showed us and them how he himself prayed.

A good teacher puts into practice what he or she instructs; he instructed his disciples to pray, and now he practices what he teaches. On Palm Sunday we hear Jesus pray, "Your will be done." Here, he demonstrates a willingness to surrender to whatever threatening situation was to come. When we read through the Passion account in Matthew's Gospel, the act of surrender to the mysterious and unfolding will of God included betrayal by his disciples, rejection by the spiritual and civil leaders, mockery by soldiers, a shameful death by execution, seeing the terror and grief of his mother while dying, and a sense of abandonment by the One whose love he counted on and called "Abba."

Though it may not be a popular act in our own day and age, surrender or submission to the will of God can include things we would never have considered, even in our worst nightmares. These cruel events of the Passion were the culminating point of the mystery of the Incarnation — sharing our humanity in all its beauty and its brutality. Yet Jesus, as the Masterful Teacher he was, showed us how total his life was in accordance with his prayer.

We now all stand in a moment of significant distress. All of humanity has been awakened to a threatening life-and-death situation with the coronavirus. I would not want to suggest in any way that this virus has come upon us as the will of God for us. Yet, in the midst of what has befallen us, we are asked to submit to regulations and restrictions, which draw boundaries we would not have chosen for ourselves.

If, in the pain of submitting to these restrictions set up by the government, health professionals, and the Church, we can trust that God is leading us through this situation of crisis, we can also believe that this experience will lead us in the end, to an experience of Easter, of new life, of a better life. Jesus the Master Teacher shows us that the outer act of surrender and the inner attitude of confident submission walk hand-in-hand with our daily prayer, "Thy will be done." How ready are we to pray those words with conviction?

Abbot Primate Gregory J. Polan, OSB. A monk of Conception Abbey, Missouri, in the United States, and abbot there for 20 years, in 2016 he was elected Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation by all the Benedictine Abbots of the world in 2016. He is, therefore, also Abbot of the Primatial Abbey of Sant'Anselmo all'Aventino, in Rome, and Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical University of Sant'Anselmo.

Published on April 3, 2020



AN EASTER CALLING TO US BY NAME

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli

Archbishop of Melbourne



What a strange and unsettling storm we are living through! Our lives have become a see-saw between physical isolation and online overload. We come to this year's Easter festivities having been tested in unprecedented ways. What might we draw from that first Easter that can sustain and renew us? Let me offer you the name of Mary of Magdala.

The first to see the resurrected Jesus at Easter dawn was Mary. She was the first to see him; the first to recognise him; the first to be named by him; and the first to be sent by him. Mary rightly is the first apostle, the one called and sent to proclaim Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. Yet, all of this happened quietly, and away from the public gaze that had marked the suffering and death of the world's Saviour. Jesus did not return to his people in a blaze of publicity; but quietly, gently, personally – he called Mary by name.

It is worth honouring Mary Magdalene at this strange and disorienting Easter of 2020, when none of our customary ways of marking these Greatest of Days can occur. For in the tender meeting of Jesus with Mary we have a sure sign of how we might make our way through these days of suffering.

Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead so as to show the world something marvellous and clever. His rising instead showed that suffering and death would no longer have the last word. Rather, that first word spoken to Mary and then repeated through the generations is a name, bearing hope and life for each whose name is called. Easter is a word that re-created the world.

Christians have not been able to gather physically to participate in the Easter Ceremonies this year. Friends and family have not been free to socialise together. No shared leisure; no common activities; no sport. There are no public ways to mark this religious festival. Yet, that first word Jesus spoke at his resurrection – a name on the lips of God – he is now speaking into this storm that has engulfed us. Overwhelmed, disoriented and fearful as we might feel, a calm, clear and tender voice is calling our name.

It is not a voice to magically whisk us away to comfort and security, nor a voice that pretends there is no storm to ride through. It is, rather, the voice of the Risen One, who has known suffering and death, and has tamed their power to overwhelm us. He stands with each of us, so that we need not stand alone. He calls each of us, so that we have a sure compass point. He walks with each of us to show the way through.

Death does not have the last word any longer, even though it's threat remains. Our lives – held in the heart of God and carried through death to life by his Son – have not been forgotten. We are remembered by God; he calls each of us by name.

And as Jesus is calling us, he is also sending us to speak words of care, support and comfort into the lives of those around us, and into our #HomeChurch. He is the voice that speaks through those we are close to at this time – our children we are caring for, our leaders protecting the people, our healthcare workers serving in danger, our spouses and loved ones.

As we remember this Easter that the first word of the risen Jesus was the name 'Mary', may we hear our own names echo in that call. Let us hold onto this anchor in the storm we are currently living through. To borrow a colloquial phrase, Christ has our back, and we will be OK with him.

Happy Easter.

