

# 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.

## *Our Churches are now Open and Our Hearts delight*

**Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Community, Montmorency & Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Community, Eltham**

**Our churches and our hearts are now open to a new and early stage of renewal after 2 months.**

As we are now able to move out of our time of quarantine and personal isolation with gentle steps forward into 'stage one' - there are many initial restrictions that suggest this staged government approach to opening up the Australian community to a more normal way of life, will take some time.

Bit by bit, we are asked to take tentative steps forward and I hope to be able to offer you a responsible timetable for the next few weeks!

Starting with weekday masses and weekend times, the following are planned:

### **Weekday Mass Timetable: - starting May 19th**

Tuesday 9:30am Mass - Montmorency

Wednesday 9:30am Mass - Eltham

Thursday 9:30am Mass - Montmorency

Friday 9:30am Mass - Eltham

### **Weekend Mass Timetable: - starting May 23rd.**

Saturday Night 6:00pm Mass - Montmorency

Sunday Morning 8:30am Mass - Montmorency

Sunday Morning 10am Mass - Eltham



Please note that **only 10 people** are allowed at each service.

To comply with Government and Health restrictions for the next 2 weeks, those attending need to 'sign in' and add their mobile phone number for tracing requirements - please follow the notice in the foyer of each church.

No need to book, just first in - and common-sense on the 'space' requirements between each person attending a Mass.

Mass Live Streaming - 10am Sunday 24th. (Ascension of the Lord) from OLHC

Mass Live Streaming - 8:30am Sunday 31st. (Pentecost Sunday) from SFX

The Catholic Bishops of Victoria have issued a collective letter with regard to this new move into Stage One, please view on the web site: [www.cam.org.au](http://www.cam.org.au) (<https://bit.ly/BishopsLetter>).

We will have copies available in the church foyers along with the very lengthy new '[General Guidelines](#)' for your information from the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

If you can use the Internet then the Archdiocese website does carry all the latest information and is updated regularly. ([www.cam.org.au](http://www.cam.org.au)).

Funerals / Weddings and Baptisms are expanding with their available numbers of people but each have different public and health requirements that need to be complied with, so a call to our office (9435 2178) might help clarify any questions that you might have.

These are early days - and much will change again soon - but may I suggest that you visit your church and pay a private visit during the week, for personal prayer. I would also like to stress that Holy Communion is available to the many parishioners who are isolated at home and would love to receive the Blessed Sacrament without attending a Church Mass. Please let the office know and we will arrange a suitable visit.

Warmest thanks for your prayers and support over these difficult months.

Michael

*This parish has a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people in our community.*

*For more information visit [www.sfxmonty.org](http://www.sfxmonty.org)*

*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 Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

[terry.kean@cam.org.au](mailto:terry.kean@cam.org.au)

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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

Barry Caldwell

#### Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

9435 2178

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

[montmorency@cam.org.au](mailto:montmorency@cam.org.au)

Gina Ang:

Pastoral Worker &  
Caring Group Co-Ord

[gina.ang@cam.org.au](mailto:gina.ang@cam.org.au)

Beth Krolkowski: Parish Manager & Pastoral Worker

[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  
[montmorency.childsafety@cam.org.au](mailto:montmorency.childsafety@cam.org.au)

Website:

[www.sfxmonty.org](http://www.sfxmonty.org)  
[www.cam.org.au/montmorency](http://www.cam.org.au/montmorency)  
[www.olhc.info](http://www.olhc.info)  
[www.cam.org.au/eltham](http://www.cam.org.au/eltham)

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: Mr 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: Mr Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

[principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au)

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

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Mr Chris Ray: 9439 7824

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

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



Congratulations to  
**Marlis Dopheide**  
on the arrival of her  
first great-grandchild,  
**Isla May Calus**  
on 6 May 2020.

May God shower His love and  
blessings upon Isla and family.



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:

*Angelina Spiller*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Justine Best,  
Kristina Brazaitis, Desmond Deehan, Renee Eastwood,  
Debbie Edgley, Julian Forrester, Gennie Hannon,  
Samuel Hauser (Kyabram), Colleen Hussin, Jim Hussin,  
Tina Inserra, Adrian Jones, Pat Longton, Erin McLindon,  
Hasti Momeni, Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland,  
Montagna Mustica, Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen,  
Mercy Ocon, 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:

*Robyn Atherton, Baby Harriet Banks, Albina Croce,  
Jon D'Cruz, Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Fay Dobson,  
Rob Hutton, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins,  
Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen,  
Jo Porter, Sally Price, Paul Rushbrook.*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House  
9435 2178 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au).

### May - The month of Mary, Mother of God

Every year during the month of May, the statue of Mary is brought up to the Altar at Our Lady's in Eltham, and Barbara Bibby leads the rosary on Monday nights throughout the month. This year, sadly the church building is closed, but Barbara would like to invite all of us to join her in reciting the Rosary together at home on Monday nights at 7 pm. She will be reciting the Glorious Mystery, praying for the community. Together we can be united in prayer through the Rosary.



If you would like further clarification, please contact  
Gina: 0423 947 858, or Barbara: 9439 8594.

#### RECONCILIATION

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

#### Collections last weekend: 10 May 2020

| Community   | Thanksgiving | Presbytery |
|-------------|--------------|------------|
| Eltham      | \$170.00     | \$0.00     |
| Montmorency | \$1,095.00   | \$30.00    |

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

## Homily - Fr Terry

Many of us were somewhat relieved to hear news of an easing of the COVID-19 restrictions last Monday. It means we are less home isolated, although we know caution is still very much required if we are to stop the virus from spreading.

Some of us however, have rather enjoyed the space, the quiet, the silence and we may even be reluctant to let go of this time. Somehow in the silence, if we embrace it, there is so much to be discovered. Perhaps we have discovered a new kind of awareness, of seeing with the heart, of appreciating life. Maybe in the absence of so-called normal life we have become more present and loving.

During the week I came across a beautiful quote from Cynthia Bourgeault in her book, *'Love is stronger than death'*.

"In the practice of conscious love you begin to discover ... a hope that is not related to outcome but to a wellspring ... a source of strength that wells up from deep within you independent of all outcomes ... It is a hope that can never be taken away from you because it is love itself working inside you, conferring the strength to stay present."

If we put this quote alongside our Gospel text for today, we listen to Jesus preparing his disciples for the coming of the Spirit of God. The time was coming for Jesus to leave them, but he would still be with them and not leave them orphans. He spoke of the way of love and promised that he and the Father would be ever present in their love. It's like Jesus, in John's Gospel, is inviting his disciples into a communion of love in God.

Whatever we make of all this, seems to me that in Cynthia Bourgeault's words, there is a wellspring inside us. I think of this wellspring as the Spirit of God, as love working inside each of us, conferring on us the strength to stay present.

There is a beautiful poet who died only recently, living well into her eighties, Mary Oliver. She once wrote "My work is loving the world, which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished." Listen to one of her poems:

*It doesn't have to be, the blue iris,  
it could be weeds in a vacant lot or a few small stones;  
just pay attention, then patch a few words together  
and don't try to make them elaborate.  
This isn't a contest but the doorway into thanks  
and a silence in which another voice may speak.*

Perhaps it's that silence into which another voice may speak that we ponder in our prayer today. Is that voice, the voice of the Spirit of God, welling up deep inside us and conferring on us the strength to stay present?

During this pandemic so many of us have been walking in nature and seeing the autumn leaves and the greenness of the gardens from the rains that have so watered our earth. Perhaps we have heard the song of the birds in the trees. Perhaps we have sensed within us a kindness that has expressed itself in our thoughtfulness for others. We have called them on the telephone or dropped something we have cooked at the front door of their homes. Perhaps we are strangely aware of a deeper loving inside us that makes us truly grateful. Perhaps we too can say with Mary Oliver:

"My work is loving the world which is mostly standing still and learning to be astonished."

The other voice, the Spirit of God, is calling us into a communion of life within God and this is an astonishing life.

Terry

## Live-Streaming of Mass

Long it seems since we have been able to come together with our Communities to celebrate Eucharist. Next Sunday, 24th May, you are invited to join Fr Terry for live-streaming of Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham at 10.00am - the [Feast of the Ascension](https://youtu.be/Aqk9sR5ZlaA) (<https://youtu.be/Aqk9sR5ZlaA>). Monday, 25th of May is the Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians, and right now, a very appropriate time to seek her help and protection.

On Sunday, 31st May, we will have a live-streamed Mass at St Francis Xavier, Montmorency at 8.30am. On this day we celebrate the great Feast of Pentecost. This then concludes the Season of Easter.

Please join us for these celebrations and check the websites ([cam.org.au/eltham](https://cam.org.au/eltham) and [cam.org.au/montmorency](https://cam.org.au/montmorency)) which will be updated as details become available.

Spread the word!



A leading theologian and sociologist believes that, when the dust has settled on the pandemic, dioceses in England and Wales that had been planning for a future with fewer priests and fewer laypeople are likely to find the shrinking in Mass attendance to have been accelerated / **By Stephen Bullivant**

# After the storm

PHOTO: MAZUR/CATHOLICNEWS.ORG.UK



Preparations are being made by the bishops' conferences of Ireland, Scotland, and England and Wales to safely reopen churches for public Masses and for private prayer. I am not alone in wondering what Mass attendance figures might look like when all this is over.

I'm a sociologist and theologian with an interest in evangelisation. In *Catholicism in the Time of Coronavirus*, an ebook now available free from Word on Fire Institute (<https://www.wordonfire.org/covid/>) I look at the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the Church, especially in the United States, and how the Church's pastoral and evangelistic mission might most effectively respond. It is of and for a particular moment very aptly likened - as Pope Francis did in his extraordinary *Urbi et Orbi* blessing on 27 March - to a storm at sea.

Here I want to put on my sociologist hat and look at the likely impact of the crisis on Mass attendance in the United Kingdom. I lay out a mix of facts, reasonable theory, and informed-but-fallible speculation. A good deal of my analysis is not exactly cheering reading, though in my ebook I highlight some "silver lining" counter-trends. I have written in the past about the need for those committed to the new evangelisation to be clear sighted and realistic. There is no one, believe me, who would be happier to be proven wrong.

First, some background. Mass

attendance is already somewhat fluid. It fluctuates, sometimes quite dramatically, from week to week (as you've probably noticed from your ability to find a space in the church car park). Those surface ripples, however, average themselves out. One month each year - October is traditionally regarded as the most "normal" for these purposes, though this may differ from place to place - dioceses ask their parishes to count up who's there at all the "Sunday" Masses (including vigils). They're usually meant to do it on each Sunday throughout the whole month, and submit the mean figure, though whether they always do so is between a pastor and his confessor.

This produces an "annual Mass count" figure for each parish which, in turn, goes to produce an overall diocesan figure. While any diocese's precise number in any one year should, it's fair to say, be regarded as being a little fuzzy around the edges, the real value of these statistics is in enabling us to see how, in the long term, general trends play out.

As part of the research for a previous book, I spent a lot of effort contacting every diocese, and asking for their Mass count numbers, going back as long as possible. This allows us to set a sort of loose "base rate" of expected annual increase or decrease. For dioceses in England and Wales, there is an average drop in churchgoing of 2.3 per cent from year to year over-the five-year period to 2017. The figure for

dioceses in the US is very similar. Why Mass going is growing or falling, where, and by how much is a topic for another book.

Several other factors will of course complicate matters, but as I see it, there are three main pandemic-related factors likely to impact mass attendance negatively, over and above business-as-usual. First, people are dying. There is no point in sugar-coating this most brutish of facts. Furthermore, we have no solid idea yet what the final death toll will be. Like many of you, each day I get my fix of news and commentary from several sources; also like you, I've heard and read wildly divergent and ever-changing estimates of the ultimate death toll over the past months.

The most authoritative US projections vary enormously but put the top end of the number of deaths from Covid at 240,000. This amounts to roughly 0.05 per cent - 1 in every 2,000 people - of the total US population. The estimated probability of dying from Covid for UK citizens in the bleaker scenarios is not dissimilar. Nothing I write is intended to diminish its magnitude as a human tragedy. As Pope Benedict once beautifully put it: "Each of us is wiled, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary."

If Catholic churchgoers were a perfect microcosm of the general populace, then that's the kind of small percentage decrease one might expect as a direct result of Covid-19 deaths, in

addition to the base rate. In fact, they're not, in all sorts of ways. Catholic Massgoers are significantly older than the wider population. Inevitably, this means that church communities will be harder, perhaps even several times harder, hit than the average. Critically, the flip-side to all this is that churches have an outsized responsibility to help *now*.

Every parish has the contact details of both significant numbers of at-risk or otherwise vulnerable people, and significant numbers of people well able to (social-distance-compliantly) run errands, do shopping, collect prescriptions, or bribe small children to draw felt-tipped pictures of rainbows or pirates.

Second, the number of immigrants into England and Wales will slow down, which means fewer people frequenting parishes. In Britain, as in the US and very many other places - first- and second-generation immigrants make up a disproportionate number of those Catholics actually at Mass on a Sunday. The current chaos has greatly disrupted the normal flow of people in, out, and around countries, and looks set to do so for months if not years to come.

Whatever one's view about this or that aspect of government policy, the Catholic community is certainly a net beneficiary of immigration in terms of laity, clergy, and Religious. In fact, with the Catholic birth rate not being quite what it used to be, and high levels of lapsation and disaffiliation, this immigrant effect is all the more important to Catholic pastoral vitality. I have no specific numbers to suggest here, but this period will almost certainly have a negative effect, at least in the short term. Sure, many of those who would have come here to work this year, will simply come next year instead. But I very much doubt that all will, especially not in light of coronavirus' significant economic side effects.

Third, we are creatures of habit. Old habits may die hard, but once dead, they may well revive hard too. What I'm trying to say is this: difficult though it may be to imagine, not everyone who sits in Mass on a Sunday does so "fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and" - to the best of their knowledge, at least - "enriched by its effects" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 11). Some people keep attending despite knowing full well that they're "only doing so" because, well, they did last week. For others, it is only after a period of *not* going for some other reason, that they realise they don't especially miss it, or at least not enough to do much about it.

This is common, for example, when people move to a new area, or go off to college, and never quite get round to "finding" a new church. For others, the habit just sort of slips, from every week, to most weeks to, well, "We'll definitely make sure we go next week ..." There have now been several studies asking Catholics why they stopped practising, and, in among a suite of other reasons and factors, these observations hold very consistent across them all.

Such people have, one might say, little "intrinsic motivation" for attending Mass. They go because they always have, or because they feel vaguely that they ought, or because they never quite had the heart to tell Mum they don't really want to anymore (little suspecting Mum secretly feels the same way). Now this is certainly not true of everyone.

There are plenty of Catholics feeling near-viscerally starved of the sacraments, and who are longing for restrictions to lift "more than watchmen for daybreak" (Psalm 130:11). But I fear it is almost certainly true of a decent minority even of weekly Massgoers. And for them, a period of weeks or months when they can't go to Mass might easily be the nudge required to stop altogether. This will be especially true if, as seems likely, we will have a long period where people *can* go to church again, but when being part of a large gathering is still widely viewed, and possible officially cautioned against, as an "unnecessary risk". In such a situation, certain groups may well be very strongly advised to stay home. Many others, "out of an abundance of caution", might well agree. Again, I have no specific figures to add here. But I think it's likely this factor alone will cause a drop in Mass attendance by at least a couple of percentage points.

These three factors will play out differently across different parishes and dioceses. But all will, I fear, be hit to some extent by the third factor: and those areas already hard-bitten by generational decline may be hit very hard indeed.

Bishops would also be well advised to think ahead about the likely effect on their numbers of active clergy. The average age for a priest in Ireland or Britain hovers around 70. A 2009 study estimated the average age of US priests to be 63, and based on past trends (the average age in 1970 was 35), that's likely to have risen in the past decade. Older men seem to be a doubly at-risk demographic to begin with (intersectionality is ruthless like that). What's more, being the "good shepherds" I know the vast majority of our priests to be, large numbers are

likely to have risked their own health in tending to their flocks.

Many dioceses' clergy are already well over-stretched, serving two, three, or more churches, in addition to other responsibilities. Whether this is, in the strictest sense, due to a shortage of priests is a debatable point: in England and Wales the actual priest-per-practising-Catholic ration is as good, if not better, than it has been for decades. The sadder truth is that, in many places, we have vastly fewer of both clergy *and* (especially active) laity than we used to. However, we eke them out over an inherited parish infrastructure, built in better times to accommodate many more of each.

Biting this particular bullet has been on the cards for many years in lots of dioceses. Yet the trouble with all those "If present trends continue, by 2030 we'll have only X number of priests to serve just Y number of active worshippers" -type diocesan restructuring proposals is that "present trends" haven't "continued". When the dust finally settles on the Covid-19 crisis, dioceses may well find the trends have been fast-forwarded by at least several years, with significantly fewer priests and laypeople than anticipated even in the most "realist" projections.

In the middle of this corona storm, without distracting from the media's and public's understandable focus on death tallies, infection rates, or how "flattened" or "spiky" a given state or country's curve is looking, a good deal of attention is being given to the economy's future ability to "bounce back". This is good and important. But the economy of salvation is an immeasurably greater contributor in the grand scheme of things to the "common good". And Christians' capacity to help its shareholders' reap their dividends - "For to everyone who has will more be given, and they will have an abundance" (Matthew 25:29) - depends on our ability, both individual and collective, to "bounce back".

As Pope Francis said in his recent interview with Austen Ivereigh for *The Tablet*: "[The] aftermath has already begun to be revealed as tragic and painful, which is why we must be thinking about it now ... I'm living this as a time of great uncertainty. It's a time for inventing, for creativity ... What we are living now is a place of metanoia (conversion), and we have the chance to begin. So let's not let it slip from us, and let's move ahead."

**Stephen Bullivant** is Professor of Theology and the Sociology of Religion and Director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society at St. Mary's University. He is the author of *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America since Vatican II* (Oxford University Press).

The social and economic impacts of drought, fires and now COVID-19 will have profound impacts in parts of regional, rural and remote (RRR) Australia. The economic shock of natural disasters or events like the unprecedented COVID-19 health crisis create impacts that are immediate – and that is to be expected. What is often not expected or well understood is the effect of ‘lag time’ aftershocks in our regions following economic crisis. Lag time is an attribute of some RRR communities and is most often seen in economically path dependent and single industry communities, many of which of course, comprise RRR Australia.

When a crisis hits in these communities, there is often a period where workers have received payouts and redundancies, or other special forms of support. The effects of those payouts and redundancies can act almost as a stimulus in local economies because the workforce is quite concentrated in a single geographical location. A good example is the Upper Spencer Gulf, in South Australia which felt the impact a few years ago of the ‘perfect storm’ of mining downturn, the misfortunes of (then) OneSteel and the closure of the Playford and Northern power stations. Anecdotally, car dealers in one local community said they experienced their best six months ever, immediately following the closures as payouts and redundancies were spent locally.

Research undertaken by the Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise indicates that this ‘bubble effect’ of local spend can be quite significant. The research showed that for every dollar invested in local services another 2.3 more dollars are generated. While this effect was observed in a small study and the single context of social services, one could imagine that the same effect could be expected in other domains, and anecdotal evidence would at least suggest this.

In part, it creates a time-limited buffer that that can mitigate immediate negative impacts and that is positive. However, this lag time can create false hopes and expectations for the future. Indeed, even in this current crisis, we are seeing the effect to some extent. The immediate cash injection of stimulus funds into our communities is welcomed and making a difference. There are reports nationally that the increase in the sale of freezers has been huge during COVID-19 as people sought to stockpile otherwise perishable foods. And panic buying, with all its inherent problems of leaving the most vulnerable more vulnerable, has had some effect on the local economic bubble through its local spend. In the local electrical stores across my region for example, it is currently impossible to buy a webcam as more of us move to work from home. Much of that initial spend is supporting local economies, despite some economic leakage to supermarkets and national chains.

There are deep concerns however, that beyond the initial spending, and beyond the government-initiated stimulus packages, such lag times will create a false sense of security. Social services providers like Centacare Catholic Country SA saw the pain bite harder and more deeply in the second six months after the events that precipitated the downturn in the Upper Spencer Gulf. House prices fell and we saw significant depopulation, particularly in Whyalla, as those who were economically able and with transferable skills moved on.

The exodus of a workforce created a hollowing out of the community and for those who couldn’t leave, the hard times bit harder. There was a cohort of people who couldn’t leave because of debt. Some had purchased investment properties and with the exodus of a skilled workforce, were left with properties they couldn’t sell or rent. Indeed, during this period, our financial counsellors and family dispute resolution practitioners saw much more debt than equity in property settlements.

At the community level, it is wonderfully heartening to see and experience kindness and care and beautiful acts of shared giving during this pandemic. But it would be awful to lose that in the reality-bite of the COVID-19 aftermath. When others are on a path to recovery, the lag time effect in RRR communities may create a level of negativity and hopelessness that builds and is difficult to counteract, and this is intensified in the dense social networks of smaller communities, in just the same way that giving and kindness are spread.

In our RRR communities, the many aspects of community social and economic wellbeing, relationships and lifestyles that are such positive features will be impacted by the aftermath of COVID-19. School enrolments; service and retail businesses; community volunteers; and sporting and social club memberships will likely continue to decline beyond the immediate impacts, should we see significant depopulation. Decreased disposable income in the remaining population leads inevitably, to a decrease in community resilience and – and worse – to a situation where there is little capacity in the residual workforce to respond to new economic opportunities if they present.

Of great concern, for example, is the potential decimation of our disability workforce in RRR Australia. In the context of the existing thin NDIS market in many parts of RRR Australia, the pandemic has created an immediate decrease in demand for services, as people undertake social distancing and implement the other practices enacted to stop the spread of the virus. In some cases, providers have lost up to 80-90 per cent of their income. This has led to stand-downs and decreasing the hours of staff. In a workforce that is already casualised and where sub-contracting is the norm in many RRR communities, we can expect to see lasting impacts on this workforce. Many qualified workers will eventually leave the regions to return to the cities where there is a perceived sense of greater stability. In disciplines which are already quite difficult to attract to country areas, e.g. allied health workers, rebuilding this workforce will be difficult. Indeed, it was already difficult.

A high level of responsiveness, deep understanding of community and engagement practices that are ‘fit for purpose’ are essential to mitigating these challenges. Embeddedness of services in community, understanding how [social networks operate](#) and how community decision-making functions are critical components of providing an engaged response to both crisis and its longer-term effects. Programs that can support both individual growth and change will be important, but programs that can help to build community confidence and resilience are equally important in rebuilding a sense of hopefulness in our communities and in counteracting the effects of lag time.

Any of the benefits of increased economic opportunity when recovery begins will be difficult to realise in RRR Australia without significant attention to the twin challenges of social and economic capacity building including workforce development, a rebuilding of community cohesion and a sense of confidence that the robustness of any such opportunities will present longer-term sustainability rather than short-term (and possibly cyclic) economic gains. So it is imperative that both social and economic challenges are addressed simultaneously to best support our RRR communities to address recovery, and both need to be the focus of policymakers.

(continued next page...)

## Prayers of the Faithful for 10 May 2020 Fifth Sunday of Easter - John Davidson

Celebrant: God-made-flesh is God-with-us, never abandoning us and always filling us with life. With confidence we place our prayers before God.

For Pope Francis who speaks hope to a frightened world, and who stands in prayerful solidarity with the sick, the poor and the vulnerable. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray that the Spirit who comforted Jesus in his personal sufferings might do the same within us. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Today we offer a prayer of gratitude for Fr Terry who celebrates his anniversary to priesthood next Friday, 22nd May. For 49 years Terry has walked his journey hand in hand with his people. For the last 13 of these years he has loved, laughed, blessed, prayed, and shared meals with us. He has Baptised, Married, Buried and Anointed many in our Community. Terry continues to warm our hearts, we thank him for this and we thank God for the gift of his caring presence among us always. Keep well and God bless you Fr Terry. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for courage to sustain our faith without the Eucharist and the community we celebrate with each Sunday. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for our young and those who were to join our community at Easter that the truth that Jesus Christ saved us continues to be a support in their lives. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves that we can truly live out the commandment to love. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are sick with the coronavirus and other illnesses, who are fearful and in great need, or who feel the added burden of isolation. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those in Australia and around the world who are fearful of the future for themselves and their families, who have become unemployed, who are not entitled to any government assistance, or who are struggling to pay for food, medicines and housing. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who are now vulnerable to the pandemic: those in refugee camps, those in close living in poor districts of cities in South America, Asia and Africa, those in crowded prisons, in migrant worker housing and those on ships and liners, that they will not be forgotten by the rest of the world. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who have died recently: and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Angelina Spiller, that they may experience the fullness of life in Christ and live in God's presence forever. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Celebrant: Loving God, relying on the prayers of Mary, our mother, we ask you to embrace our world with tenderness, and in this time of universal need lift us from anxiety to hope, from isolation to community and from confusion to faith. Through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

The social and economic, particularly in RRR communities, do not operate in isolation. They are connected, interwoven and interdependent. Impacts in one domain will also be evident in the other. The links between disadvantage and the social determinants of health have strong implications for economic policy — particularly in how this might be enacted in RRR Australia. Recent research undertaken to examine persistent disadvantage in Australia found that federal electorates in regional Australia are well below the national disadvantage average. Most of these federal seats are currently held by Members of the National Party. Any post-pandemic adoption of austerity policy is thus likely to have greatest negative impacts in conservative constituencies.

Our policy responses need to be well thought through, and, importantly, those with specialist expertise and experience in RRR Australia need to be included in the discussions and decision-making about the future and how to create it. COVID-19 has wrought havoc and devastation across our world. In combatting it so well in Australia, we have created for ourselves the space and time to think. Now, more than ever, is an opportunity to create lasting change in RRR Australia. When we emerge from the COVID-19 cocoon, let it be with a deep and fully articulated policy commitment to our heartlands.

Dr Jen Cleary is the CEO of Centacare Catholic Country SA, a for purpose agency providing social services across a footprint of some 980,000km<sup>2</sup> in regional, rural and remote (RRR) South Australia. Dr Cleary is a human geographer with a special interest in RRR communities, where she is recognised for her expertise and experience in social services, social policy, and community and economic development. She continues to write and contribute to policy directions in regional, rural and remote Australia through her connection with the Centre for Global Food and Resources at the University of Adelaide, where she holds an adjunct position as Associate Professor. Dr Cleary is also a member of the SEGRA (Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia) National Steering Committee and a member of the TAFESA Board.

## Gospel: John 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If you love me you will keep my commandments, I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for ever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you. Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.’



## Reflection

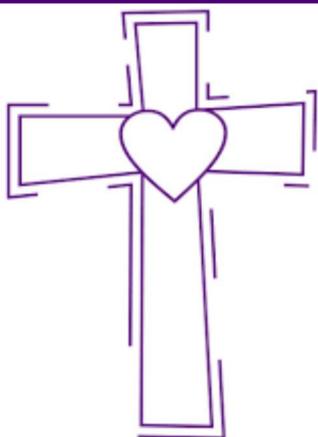
The gospel for today invites us into two intimate relationships. The first is that between Jesus and his disciples, the second is that shared between Jesus, his Father, and the Spirit.

Throughout this farewell discourse we have the sense of eavesdropping on an intimate conversation. The atmosphere is intense. The disciples have gathered with Jesus as the darkness deepens around them. They have been profoundly moved by Jesus’ extraordinary gesture of washing their feet. They are troubled by his talk of treachery and desertion. This is the setting in which Jesus opens his heart in words of boundless affection.

In doing so he invites them - and us - into the communion of love that he shares with the Father and with the Spirit. He and the Spirit will not leave his chosen ones orphans; the disciples will come to know “that I am in the Father and you in me and I in you”; they will be loved by Father and Son and Jesus will make himself known to them.

This “loving out loud” does not proceed in a straight line. It spirals around as one idea suggests another by association. We are invited to let Jesus’ words wrap us around with love that knows no bounds. This is the final extract we have from the farewell discourse this season.

**Break Open the Word 2020**



## Caring Group ... spreading God's love to our community.

We practise social distancing, we can't give you a hug or shake your hands, but it doesn't stop us from caring and sending you love.

Our Caring Group spreads God's love and care to the communities of Eltham and Montmorency by preparing and dropping off meals and treats. If you know of a parishioner, a relative, a friend or a neighbour in Eltham or Montmorency, whom you think might benefit from this, please contact Gina Ang, 0423 947858 or [Gina.Ang@cam.org.au](mailto:Gina.Ang@cam.org.au).

If you would like to be part of our Caring Group of Eltham & Montmorency, or to learn more about what we do, please do contact me. Gina

### Rosters - 23 & 24 May

#### Montmorency

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Collins, Leo  | GRDN |
| Lucas, Maree  | CLNR |
| McKinna, Jane | PRYR |
| Muller, Joan  | CLNR |

#### Eltham

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Dunell, Lindar       | Altar Society         |
| Rough Family         | Pilgrim Rosary Statue |
| Saltamacchia, Carmel | Altar Society         |



## ENROLMENT

Limited places available for Year 7 2021.  
Enrolment applications for Year 7 2022  
closing 21 August 2020.

For information please contact our College Registrar:  
03 9433 0203 or [registrar@loyola.vic.edu.au](mailto:registrar@loyola.vic.edu.au)

## VIRTUAL TOURS

Visit our website and explore our campus through a virtual tour, then meet our Principal live online to answer all your questions.

Friday 22 May  
Tuesday 26 May

Monday 01 June  
Wednesday 10 June

TO REGISTER FOR A VIRTUAL TOUR VISIT  
[loyola.vic.edu.au/bookatour](http://loyola.vic.edu.au/bookatour)



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