

# 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.

## Anything but Ordinary Time

Each year, after the Easter Season is completed - usually around the end of May, the Church moves back into the Season of 'Ordinary Time', and we journey through a synoptic Gospel for the next six months. This year the Gospel we are slowly making our way into is Matthew. You won't be surprised to know that this Gospel was written for people in crisis!

Now that I have your attention - the people in the late first century, in the Middle East had a crisis of Faith - who to believe, when all seems lost!

Over the past 5 months our world has experienced this Pandemic that we have come to know as Covid19 and our lives have been truly governed by Health Authorities, instructing the local population on the best and safest course of action. Daily life has been far from normal or ordinary, very frustrating and sad to say the least.

Each day over these past months I have looked at a website that gives the Coronavirus numbers in total and by country! (<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>) This weekend, unfortunately, a milestone will be reached of 10 million infections and 500 thousand recorded deaths. With 220 countries recording these grim human statistics, Australia is placed at number 71. Many countries are unable to record accurately because of poverty, village isolation and any form of appropriate health care.

The top 10 countries are in a race that nobody wants to win and they are growing at an alarming rate.  
(USA, Brazil, Russia, India, UK, Spain, Peru, Chile, Italy & Iran.)

In Melbourne, the health authorities are worried about local 'hot spots' because the rate of infections are growing and the source of these outbreaks are unknown. So, these are worrying days for us as Victorians and our days are certainly anything but ordinary! Keep Safe - wash your hands regularly and appropriate social distancing certainly helps everyone avoid this Coronavirus where possible.

We will get through this difficult time for our world, but it will take time!

Ordinary Time, I don't think so. Our faith in Jesus of Nazareth can provide a different perspective on our times - like Matthew is suggesting, nothing will be lost in God.

This weekend for my family marks the first anniversary of the death of Patrick Green. He was only 19 when he died as a result of a vehicle accident in America and I cannot believe just how quickly 12 months have passed. Patrick's sudden death continues to rock our family for sure, and I take comfort from this weekend's Gospel that his good works will not be forgotten. What a strange year we find ourselves in ... nothing seems Ordinary at all.

Michael

*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).*

*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

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9435 2178

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

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Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

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

Gina Ang:

Pastoral Worker & Caring Group Co-Ord—**Eltham**

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



*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:

*Marie Boyd, Kevin Mannix*

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, 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;

*Rob Hutton (Tasmania), Carolina Napolitano (Italy)*

For those whose anniversaries are at this time;

*John Amato, Charles Doroszlay*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Robyn Atherton, Baby Harriet Banks, Ray Bowman, Andrew & Lucinda Collier, Albina Croce, Jon D'Cruz, Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Fay Dobson, Rob Doolan, Marlis Dopheide, Dennis Goddard, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Jo Porter, Sally Price.*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

9435 2178 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au).

#### **MASS LIVE – STREAMING**

This **Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June** the 10:00am Mass at Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Eltham will be live-streamed. (<https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE>)

As we have had a set-back with the number of positive tests for COVID-19, and in turn no increase allowed for attendance at Sunday Masses, we hope to continue live-streaming for those who are unable to be in our Churches. We will include further dates for Masses in next week's Bulletin.

Weekday Masses are a blessing for those who are able to attend, but for those who must continue in isolation, we want you to know you are not forgotten and are still very much connected with the wider Community. We hold you and each other in heart and prayer at this very 'weird' and painful time, as indeed, we continue to pray for slowing of the spread and a vaccine or treatment to halt this virus!

*Oh God, keep hope alive and continue to bless us and our world, with your love and Peace, as we do our best for the common good.*

#### RECONCILIATION

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

#### **Collections last weekend: 21 June 2020**

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
Eltham	\$139.00	\$136.00
Montmorency	\$1,125.00	\$222.00

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



#### **Baptism**

This weekend we welcome to our Montmorency Parish Community on Sunday at 12 noon:

**Mary Hope Yzabelle Fanlo**  
daughter of Gary & Monique

We pray for Yza, her parents & Godparents.  
*May God keep them always in His love.*

Calendar of Events		
<b>Saturday, 27 June</b>		
10:00am	Montmorency	Funeral: Paul Rushbrooke
6:00pm	Montmorency	Mass
<b>Sunday, 28 June</b>		
8:30am	Montmorency	Mass
10:00am	Eltham	Mass - live-streamed ( <a href="https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE">https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE</a> )
12:00pm	Montmorency	Baptism
<b>Tuesday, 30 June</b>		
9:30am	Montmorency	Mass
<b>Wednesday, 1 July</b>		
9:30am	Eltham	Mass
<b>Thursday, 2 July</b>		
9:30am	Montmorency	Mass
<b>Friday, 3 July</b>		
9:30am	Eltham	Mass
<b>Saturday, 4 July</b>		
6:00pm	Montmorency	Mass
<b>Sunday, 5 July - Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Sunday</b>		
8:30am	Montmorency	Mass
10:00am	Eltham	Mass
12:00pm	Eltham	Baptism

Rosters - 4 & 5 July	
<b>Montmorency</b>	
Goodison, Pauline	CLNR
McKinna, Jane	PRYR
O'Connor, Pat	GRDN
Wood, Marie	CLNR
<b>Eltham</b>	
Frediani, Gabriella	Altar Society
Leahy Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue



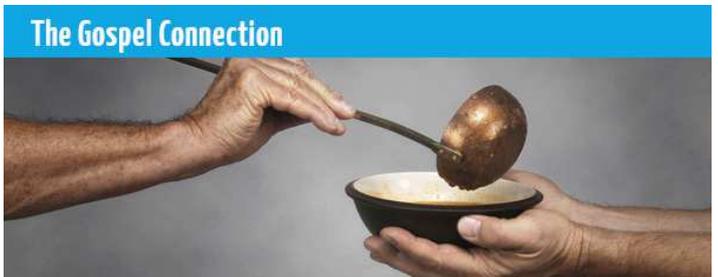
Happy 80th Birthday to  
**Joyce Farrell**  
for this Tuesday, 30th June.  
We wish you a wonderful birthday and  
fabulous year ahead.  
May God bless you,  
From all at the Eltham & Montmorency parishes.

## Eltham Book of the Month

In this time of feeling hard-done-by, we might like to take a look at Bert Facey's wonderful autobiography and discover, as he did, despite adversity his was indeed "A Fortunate Life".



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### The Gospel Connection

#### Welcome, Prophet

Something needs to be said about the flip side of receiving a prophet into your home. Yes, you may receive a prophet's reward. But you also have to listen to the prophet and the prophecy. This may be why prophets aren't swamped with invitations when they come to town.

When Jesus came to town, sinners and religious folks alike vied for his presence in their homes - at first. But Jesus had a way of criticising his hosts, even berating the manner in which he was received by them, that made a second invitation unlikely. Only those willing to take his words to heart and repent were glad that Jesus came under their roof.

Prophecy is by its nature a challenge to the way things are. If we don't want to change, then prophets will always seem like threatening characters. They don't come to affirm us, but to invite us to come closer to the will of God. Receive a prophet if you dare but be prepared to do more than rearrange the furniture of your world.

***Have you ever received a prophetic person into your life? How did she/he challenge you?***

Find the corner of your life where the irritability factor is high. Chances are this is the very place where prophecy is trying to speak. Listen to the challenge being offered to you, and reply. [\*\*GPBS eNews \(gpbs.com.au\)\*\*](http://GPBS eNews (gpbs.com.au))

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**LITURGY** Wonderful resources from  
**BRISBANE** *Liturgy Brisbane,*  
comprising:

- Sunday Readings - Read at Home**  
In these unique times where our Sunday Masses have been suspended, you may wish to read the Sunday readings and associated commentaries at home.
- Family Prayer: Week by Week**  
This resource is designed for families with young children and has been a joint endeavour of Liturgy Brisbane and Evangelisation Brisbane. An extract from the Sunday gospel is provided, along with some reflection questions, family activities and a worksheet for children.

Available at: <https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/prepare/sunday-readings-and-family-prayer/>



## Re-emerging with purpose

*Using what we learnt during lockdown to build more fruitful parishes*

**O**ur family has enjoyed our weekends during 'lockdown'. Without the sporting commitments and social activities that usually fill our weekends, we have enjoyed board games, quiet days in the garden and regular exercise. We have learnt from this lockdown time that we want to be more vigilant about the choices we make with our family time—what we say 'yes' to.

This is also true for our parishes. During the last couple of months, much of what we would consider 'essential' to a parish community has been stripped away. We have had to abandon the way we normally do Mass, evangelisation, faith-sharing and social gatherings. So much of how we habitually express our faith and our relationship with Jesus has changed. Yet these have been weeks of unprecedented innovation, vibrancy and a commitment to reaching out into our communities.

Will we allow this temporary 'new normal' to teach us a new way forward for our parishes? Here are four things that parishes may consider as we re-emerge.

### 1. God is here

History tells us that some of the greatest religious revivals in the past have occurred as a response to catastrophic events such as flu pandemics, plagues and wars. God has worked very powerfully in people's lives through these times. We can trust that God can and *is* also working now, in 2020, in perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime way. [The Tablet](#), for instance, recently reported on a study that documented an enormous increase in Google searches for 'prayer'. God has the world's attention right now.

### 2. Constraints lead to creativity

*Take a moment to write down everything good that's come out of the changes your parish has had to make since this disruption started.*

We are seeing an unparalleled burst of creativity and innovation. In a few short weeks, parishes have learnt to livestream Mass and to meet and pray together online. Many parishes have a new vibrancy, with a fresh focus on finding ways to reach out to their community. There is excitement in the air!

As we slowly begin to open again, there's more at stake than just access to buildings and Masses. The biggest mistake many parish leaders will make is that they'll step straight back into the past the moment they step back into their building.

Ask yourselves:

- Can we draw a line in the sand here?
- Can we use our re-emergence in a creative way, not just to go 'back to normal'?
- Can we resist the temptation to relax and take our feet off the pedal of rapid change we have been experiencing?

Things have changed. The world has changed. Profoundly. Deciding not to continue along the path of change we have just commenced during lockdown is to choose to block the channel of creativity and energy that the Holy Spirit has initiated these past weeks. As the world slowly reopens, don't go back to 'normal'; instead, move forward into a 'new normal'. Let's take our new skills into a new way of being in the world. Don't waste the progress we have made!

### 3. Everyone we want to reach is online

*Make a list of the people your parish would like to draw into your parish life.*

Probably your list, like mine, includes youth, young adults, school families and so on. Where are all these people? Well, probably lots of places, but one place they *all* are is online—a lot.

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference recently released the [Guide to Social Media for Parishes](#). It notes an almost 100 per cent social media engagement in the under-forty age groups. If we *really* want to reach that list of people above, online is where they are—and where we need to be too.

#### Social media use by age group



Source: based on data from Sensis, [The must-know stats from the 2018 Yellow Social Media Report](#).

Pope Francis calls the internet a 'digital continent'. In his 2014 [message for the 48th World Communications Day](#), he likened the 'digital highway' to 'a street teeming with people who are often hurting, men and women looking for salvation or hope ... Keeping the doors of our churches open also means keeping them open in the digital environment so that people, whatever their situation in life, can enter, and so that the Gospel can go out to reach everyone.'

More people are coming to our 'digital' doors—via our websites and livestreams—than habitually come to our physical doors. Clicking on a link is much easier than getting in the car and driving down the road. Also, people share online more deeply more quickly—they type deeper than they talk! Your website is your 'front door', especially for people under forty years of age. It is the first place most people will go if they are exploring your parish. Is your front page welcoming? Beautiful? Engaging?

In the same way that remote work will become the new normal for many people in the wider economy, online parish experiences may become a first option for many people. (Just because we don't like something doesn't mean it isn't happening.) If we dismiss online ministry, we'll miss most of the very people we're trying to reach. Everyone we want to reach is online. It's time for us to act like it and to plan accordingly.

#### 4. Turn clicks into bricks

How, then, do we turn those 'clicks' into 'bricks'—into people moving out of the digital world into the 'bricks' of our physical church? Thanks to the coronavirus, many parishes currently have a substantial online presence. How can we plan to maximise this opportunity in order to make disciples?

As you re-emerge, the people you have reached online may come and have a look at you on a Sunday. They may give you one, perhaps two, opportunities to welcome them 'live' before they move on somewhere else. Plan to meet, welcome and engage with new people who have been part of your online congregation. This will be much easier if you have already begun this process online.

The intentional digital engagement pathway outlined below moves people from 'clicks' to bricks' and is already being used by churches around the world.

##### Stage 1: Digital

- Meet people online via your livestreams.
- Engage digitally, encouraging them to express views and to converse with you via posts, emails and online faith or evangelisation groups.
- Invite them into a personal 'conversation' via phone or online chat.
- Invite them to meet physically for a coffee or at a parish gathering.

##### Stage 2: Physical

- Meet and welcome people at the church door.
- Match them with people of similar interests, so that they form relationships within the community.
- Move them into a process where they will hear the kerygma and be invited to say 'yes' to Jesus.
- Encourage them to participate in sacramental initiation and ongoing catechesis.
- Support them to grow in discipleship and service.

##### As you physically gather again:

- Don't be tone deaf to the fears of people about gathering. Respect their caution.
- Plan to provide both online and physical opportunities to gather and pray.
- Acknowledge the presence of new people in the congregation.
- Make sure your hospitality is warm and welcoming.
- Preach engaging, kerygmatic homilies about God's personal love.
- Offer 'entry points' that invite new people into something more—a way to explore faith, a particular person or family to connect with, an invitation to dinner in someone's home, a beginner's discussion forum such as Alpha.

Remember you have one chance, at the most two. Plan to use it.

Making disciples: from 'clicks' to 'bricks'

##### Leading forward

Most of us have done a good job reacting to uncontrollable events. Now, how do we lead our communities into being the prophetic presence of Jesus in the 'new normal' of a changed world?

First, don't settle for what you have already done. Don't 'ride out' the rest of this gradual re-emergence while you wait for 'normality' to return—keep leading, keep innovating, keep trying.

Second, gather a small group of people who can work together to develop a new range of pastoral activities, now that our usual ones have disappeared. The following steps may help your team to assess and discern:

- Ask yourselves what you have learnt during this crisis so far.
- Look over your usual parish activities, and make a plan:
  - ~ What will you keep the same?
  - ~ What did you used to do that wasn't fruitful, or is no longer relevant and should be permanently dropped?
  - ~ What new things will you start doing? What opportunities does the new normal make possible?
- Spend significant time discerning the 'why' behind each 'what'. ('Because we have always done it this way' is not a good reason to continue!)
- Develop a timeline and communication plan for your team that will help you roll out any changes.

The next year will be critical for many parishes. We will need to be vigilant and purposeful about what we do with our time and resources, what we say 'yes' to. Because crisis is an accelerator, the decisions you make will have a significant impact on the long-term fruitfulness of your parish. May these weeks of unprecedented innovation, creativity and gospel boldness begin a new era of fruitful mission!

**The Archdiocesan Animation Team is available to discuss strategies with you and/or your team, and to facilitate sessions with your team (remotely) on many topics and issues. Just ask!**

**Contact Lorraine on 0402 217 123 or at [lorraine.mccarthy@cam.org.au](mailto:lorraine.mccarthy@cam.org.au).**

**NEXT WEEK: 'The five pillars of a fruitful parish'**

## Homily - Fr Terry

If someone asked you who has inspired you in your life would you have an answer? I think back on my life and I vividly remember the day when Jesuit priest Jon Sobrino stepped into a class of 50 or so people at Boston College, U.S.A., some almost 7 years ago. I was privileged to be there.

Just a little background on Jon Sobrino. He is Spanish born and at the early age of 18 years, joined the Jesuits. After his ordination to priesthood, he was sent to teach theology at the University of Central America in San Salvador. Civil war broke out in San Salvador and in 1989, right-wing militia murdered his community of 6 fellow Jesuits and housekeeper Elba Ramos and her 16 year old daughter Celina. Jon Sobrino was away from El Salvador when this happened.

Jon Sobrino returned to El Salvador and there he has lived and worked despite the risks to his life. He is a highly regarded author and theologian. A courageous man with a brilliant mind. He is an outspoken proponent for peace.

Anyway back to this day when Jon Sobrino stepped into the class. He was in his mid-seventies, and looked a very frail man. He began to speak and his words came out of a heart that was humble and so authentic. We immediately began to experience his love for the people, and his passion for working with the poor of El Salvador.

I remember looking around the class and all of us students, mostly young people, with a few of us oldies thrown into the mix, had tears in our eyes. Here we were meeting a man who has given his life for what he believes in, and here we were experiencing a real Jesus-person totally committed to making this world a better place.

For two weeks we sat in class at the feet of Jon Sobrino and every day he continued to touch our hearts and grace us with wisdom, insight and a longing to join him in living the Gospel in the story of our own lives today. He has been an inspiration for me. Who would you name?

Why speak about Fr Jon Sobrino today when our Gospel speaks of Jesus instructing the Twelve, 'anyone who prefers father, mother, son or daughter to me is not worthy of me; anyone who does not take the cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me; anyone who finds their life will lose it and anyone who loses their life for my sake will find it'?

Hard words, challenging words. What do they mean?

Remember Jesus addressed them to the Twelve, the apostles, his intimate band of companions who were to share his life fully. He wasn't talking to the crowds. He asked this commitment of those who were his closest followers.

And he could see into the future where his companions would be asked to give their lives fully, even to death. They were to live the way of Jesus, and they would have to sacrifice everything, even their family life for their fidelity to Jesus.

Today we honour all those people who have given courageous witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ no matter the cost. Down through the ages of history many men, women and children have given their lives for their faith in Jesus Christ. They are the martyrs of our Christian story.

We also honour the many men, women and children who have shown us the face of the Risen Jesus in their compassion, in their courage and love for people. They too are people who have lived this Gospel today and they are still all around us to inspire us and draw us more deeply into living the Jesus story today. Fr Jon Sobrino is one of these people and you will name others. And perhaps you may even be one of them.



The churches are open for private prayer, and public Masses will soon resume. But for many Catholics, the lockdown has taught them new ways of living their faith / **By CATHERINE PEPINSTER**

# How much does Mass matter?

This week, for the first time in months, Catholics in England ventured across the threshold of their churches. It was really only a tiptoe, a peek around the door after months of being locked out. There was no gathering for Mass, no congregating for the Rosary, no joining together for vespers. But it was at least a start, to see again the familiar statues of the Virgin Mary & the Sacred Heart, to pray in thanks before the Blessed Sacrament, and to remember those who have died. People are back in the familiar places that they have only been able to see via live-streamed Mass, though now as they enter the church, rather than crossing themselves with holy water, they must dab their hands with sanitiser.

For many people, lockdown has meant a moment to think again about how one prays, why one attends Mass, why people feel the need to be in what is often called a sacred space. After all, God is everywhere. Why does the church building matter so much?

Online Masses have proved popular. People have become Mass pilgrims, seeing from their armchair how the liturgy is enacted across the country and even the globe. Paul Farmer, chief executive of the mental health charity Mind, said that for him it had emphasised that he belongs to a universal Church. Mgr John Armitage, rector of the national shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, told me: "the lost group of Catholics have been people who didn't go out even before lockdown because of ill health and frailty and suddenly they feel part of something again." He's noticed that people wanting to try out the Church, or who have lapsed from their faith, find live-streaming Mass a much easier way of venturing in for the first time, or coming back.

Others can't wait to get back to being part of a congregation. The notion of "spiritual communion", instead of receiving the Eucharist, has not been enough. Research undertaken by Professor Francis Davis of the Universities of Birmingham and Oxford in collaboration with Catholic Voices found that 93 per cent of those surveyed said they had participated in online worship to some degree, but 83 per cent said they missed their churches. Only 17 per cent said they would mostly continue to worship online.

For those who study the liturgy, this desire for church confirms what they understand of anthropology. Daniel McCarthy, of the Pontifical University of Sant'Anselmo in Rome, says that the gathering of the people is what matters, and that thinking of a church as a special, sacred space is problematic. "The problem with calling a church a sacred place is that it objectifies sacredness as a thing 'out there'. Since the incarnation, sacredness resides in the human person and community primarily, and only by association in the place. A building is called a 'church' by association with the church as a community gathered inside. People watch sporting events on TV and no one says that the sitting room is a stadium. But the viewers participate as they can in the activity."

Professor McCarthy's liturgist colleague,



A worker disinfects before Mass at Rome's Basilica of Santa Maria in Campitelli

James Leachman, also stressed the importance of being physically present at Mass. "Online liturgies allow only 'spectator' participation," he says. "I find the idea of 'spiritual communion' during media participation inadequate because the relational and community dimensions are missing."

That relational aspect of Mass was something that was brought home to Francis Davis when it was missing during lockdown. "When I go to Mass in a city-centre parish, I sit next to an Indian man who works nights at the hospital and someone else who is high up in the Royal Society of Chemistry. There is that huge mix of people and they are all there together. It is about solidarity and a community."

Solidarity, though, is not just a nice, warm feeling that ends when mass ends, but feeds our relationships with society and has a noticeable positive impact on the wider world. According to Pew Research's 2017 report, "Being Christian in Western Europe", across 15 countries in Europe, participation for at least an hour a month in a community group or voluntary organisation increases with the individual's level of commitment to Christianity. So an individual's strength of religious affiliation - a variable which polls often struggle to capture - makes a difference to engagement with local voluntary action.

For many Catholics, that engagement has become more meaningful during lockdown. They have found God beyond church - just as they always do - but it has mattered even more. The Catholic Voices study shows that 60 per cent of Catholics say that lockdown has helped them feel more neighbourly, with people stepping up to volunteer, keep an eye on other parishioners, and working to support NHS workers and the homeless.

Lack of Mass has also inspired people to find God in nature and in other forms of devotion. Theologians Tena Beattie and Julie Clague, for example, both told me how they have noticed how important Creation has become to them. Marcus Pound, of Durham University, has noticed people finding their own means of devotion. Yet many have found that church cannot be easily replaced. They have discovered how

important it is to celebrate Mass in a place that acts as a link with both past and future. As Beattie says: "There is something about the sense of history, about the continuum, that we find in a church that matters. We are sensory creatures and Mass in a Catholic church appeals to all the senses."

Clague has noticed how much the rhythm and routine of Mass matters, particularly to the elderly. She usually takes her uncle, who has dementia, to Mass and he has constantly asked about going to Mass on Sundays. But the slowing down of life has helped her own spirituality. "Here is a situation where I can give something my undivided attention and that enables us to be more meditative." The Catholic Voices survey showed that 55 per cent of Catholics surveyed said that lockdown had helped them to become more prayerful.

So what will we want from the Church when stepping into church again, if only for private prayer? Conversations with Catholics, especially women, indicate that watching live-streamed Mass with a solitary priest at the altar has made them even more aware of how clerical and male-dominated the Church seems. Some are going further and asking whether we have become too focused on the Eucharist for our prayer life.

According to Marcus Pound, there has been "a eucharistic centrism that defines Catholicism in England in a way that does not happen elsewhere" - something that he thinks might be "due to our recusant nature": a connection to the past when Mass was illegal and infrequent, and made Mass and receiving Communion all the more precious.

Daniel McCarthy has also noted the way in which the Eucharist has come to dominate Catholic life. "The sole reliance on the Eucharist in healthy times is exacerbated in time of pandemic," he said. "Had we developed the celebration of the liturgy of the hours more fully, then people at home could actually celebrate liturgy and all this fuss about spiritual communion would be obviated."

Nevertheless, different ways of praying have been discovered. Cardinal Vincent Nichols has commented on the way in which the home has become sacred - something that has been strong in Judaism, but not understood so powerfully among Catholics. Christopher Jamison, abbot president of the English Benedictine Congregation, says the pandemic is leading to a "new way people are learning to live their faith". Part of that, he observes, is being less clergy-centric. But it is so much more than that. It is being ready to embrace a calling to service: "As the health crisis morphs into an economic crisis, the poor will grow in number dramatically. The Catholic Church in Britain, however, isn't yet ready to bring the poor on our doorstep to the very centre of life in every parish and every monastery."

Jamison offers this challenge: "How can the community give both social and liturgical expression to the sudden emergence of a vast number of people in need? We have a Pope who has lived such a response for years in Latin America, and following his lead, we can become the Church of the Good Samaritan."

Catherine Pepinster is former editor of The Tablet.

## Gospel: Matthew 10:37-42

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.

'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.

'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy man will have a holy man's reward.

'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.'



## Reflection

The concluding section of Jesus' second discourse in Matthew, his mission sermon to the disciples, falls into two parts. The first is full of challenge, the second full of promise.

Jesus begins by throwing down the gauntlet. He demands priority for himself over the most binding family ties. Matthew may appear to soften Luke's language about "hating" one's family members but the call remains uncompromising. And Jesus' insistence that the cross and self-sacrifice are the only path to life is inescapable; Matthew makes sure that his readers hear this hard saying again later in the gospel.

The assurances that follow arise from the intimate bond that links "little ones" and the disciples to Jesus and Jesus to the Father. Together they form a community that transcends earthly relationships. This teaching of Jesus has a warmth and appeal that counterbalances his confronting words about the cross.

Each of the two parts is made up of a series of sayings in similar format. The temptation to rush through them should be resisted. Each saying should be given its own time and emphasis. It would also be helpful if there is a distinct pause and change of tone between the two halves of the passage, allowing the congregation to appreciate the shift of focus. It is a pity that the concluding verse of the discourse (11:1) has been omitted from the lectionary.

**Break Open the Word 2020**

## Prayers of the Faithful for 28 June 2020 Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - John Davidson

**Celebrant:** Sisters and brothers, in this time of great need we place our prayers before God who knows our every need.

**For the Church:** that we who have died with Christ in baptism, may recognize our dignity in being children of God, and sisters and brothers to one another. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**For leaders of nations:** that in all countries, leaders ensure that indigenous and marginalized peoples are treated with equality, protected by law and live lives free from oppression. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**For people subjected to racial discrimination:** that the human family learn new ways of speaking, which will give rise to heightened respect and rejoicing in the presence of people of all colours. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**For our own faith and culture:** that we will learn from other faiths and cultures how important and liberating it is to offer hospitality to the poor and the homeless, the stranger and the lonely, the sick and frightened. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**For our world:** that as the rates of COVID-19 infection continue to increase in Victoria and around the world, governments and citizens will continue to play their part in striving to halt its spread and assist those whose lives are affected by it. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**For care for our common home:** that we may recognize God's gift to us of earth and its resources, and work to preserve it so that all of earth's inhabitants may be blessed by it. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**For those who have died, especially during this time of COVID-19 and those that mourn them:** we remember Rob Hutton and Carolina Napolitano who died recently and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, John Amato, Marie Boyd, Charles Doroszlay and Kevin Mannix. May they know the peace of the risen Lord. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Celebrant:** Father of heaven and earth you have revealed to us in your Son the power of your Spirit. Strengthen us in faith, hope and love, that we be gentle and humble as we share in the mission of Christ, who came to serve rather than to be served. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**