

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.

Dear Friends,

Not again — we understand that these restrictions, given in detail below, are truly disheartening and will bring renewed distress to so many families and individuals. As two communities of faith, we remain constant in knowing that God is within us and seek his grace, patience, kindness and love during these unprecedented times.

This is an extract from:

#11 UPDATE: GENERAL GUIDELINES COVID-19 Implications
for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Information Updated: Wednesday 08 July 5.00pm

The Victorian Government has announced **Stay at Home Directions** for metropolitan Melbourne (which comprises 31 metropolitan Melbourne local government areas) and Mitchell Shire **from 11:59pm on Wednesday 8 July until 11.59pm on Wednesday 19 August.**

For six weeks, people who live in these areas are only allowed to go out for four reasons:

1. Shopping for food or other essential items;
2. To provide care giving, for compassionate reasons or to seek medical treatment;
3. For exercise (outdoor exercise only, with only one other person or member of your household);
4. Work or study, only if you cannot work or study from home.

IMPACT ON CHURCH SERVICES FOR THE NEXT SIX WEEKS

- **Weddings** will be **limited to 5 people** (the couple, two witnesses and the celebrant);
- **Baptisms** are to be **postponed** where possible, unless there is an urgent and grave pastoral need. In that instance, numbers will be limited to 5 people + celebrant;
- **Funerals** will be **restricted to 10 people** plus those required to conduct the funeral;
- **All public Masses** including masses in family homes, **Liturgies and communal devotions** (whether indoors or outdoors) **are temporarily suspended for 6 weeks** or until further notice;
- **Temporary closure of church buildings**, adoration chapels and other church buildings used for public prayer and religious services.

The Good News is that Jesus is available! In so many ways we are able to still receive Jesus in daily life. There are many ways to stay connected and be in touch as we journey through this next 6 weeks.

Please don't hesitate to be in contact with our Team who are around and available to support and minister to your needs and concerns.

Email or phone - leave a message and we will endeavour to answer your issues, whatever and whenever they may arise!

Warmest Love and prayers,

Terry, Gina, Peter, Kate & Michael

9435 2178

eltham@cam.org.au

montmorency@cam.org.au

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

For more information visit pol.org.au/eltham or pol.org.au/montmorency.

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



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

terry.kean@cam.org.au

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au

Barry Caldwell

Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

9435 2178

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

montmorency@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

eltham@cam.org.au

Gina Ang:

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

gina.ang@cam.org.au

Peter Williams:

Child Safety Officer

SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au

Website:

www.pol.org.au/montmorency

www.pol.org.au/eltham

(pol stands for Parish OnLine)

Facebook:

[St Francis Xavier Parish Montmorency](#)

Monty & Eltham Newsletter & Facebook items:

eltham@cam.org.au

Schools

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: 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

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

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:

Angela Yon

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Greg Livy

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Justine Best, Ray Bowman, Kristina Brazaitis, Desmond Deehan, Renee Eastwood, Debbie Edgley, Julian Forrester, Gennie Hannon, Samuel Hauser (Kyabram), Colleen Hussin, Jim Hussin, Tina In Serra, 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;

Alfred Muho (Alida's brother)

For those whose anniversaries are at this time;

Dorothy Hoolihan

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Robyn Atherton, Iris Azzopardi, Baby Harriet Banks, Ray Bowman, Andrew & Lucinda Collier, Albina Croce, Jon D'Cruz, Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Rob Doolan, Marlis Dopheide, Dennis Goddard, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Mary Irani, 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.

MASS LIVE – STREAMING

Live-streaming Masses are scheduled for:

This Sunday: 12 July @ 8:30am
St Francis Xavier, Montmorency

26 July @ 10:00am
Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham

Link: <https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE>

RECONCILIATION

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

Collections last weekend: 5 July 2020

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
Eltham	\$150.00	\$229.00
Montmorency	\$1,866.00	\$356.70

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

Volunteers Needed:

We are in need of volunteers to take donated goods, which can be left at the Parish House, from our parish to Alphington for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. One Thursday morning per month between 10am and 12 midday. Contact Tony Cotter (0408 028 501).

Your generous parish donations are enabling the ASRC to supply groceries to those people in lock-down in the housing commission towers in the inner city.

Thank you!



Asylum Seeker
Resource Centre

Prayers of the Faithful for 12 July 2020 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - John Ramsdale

Celebrant: God's providence is for all. Let us turn to God, leaving no soil untilled, and bring the needs of the world before him.

We pray, under the guidance of Pope Francis, for a renewal in our Church. We pray that the Holy Spirit will lead our bishops, clergy and laity in the way of love, truth, generosity, justice and the care of the poor and vulnerable.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for leaders in every field of endeavour, that they continue to lead and guide, in these very difficult times. We also pray that they maintain their own health and well-being so that they may continue their work.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

At a time when many parishioners are experiencing financial difficulties and uncertainties of their own, we give thanks for their sacrifices, their generosity, and their care in their support of others in need. This was demonstrated recently through their support of the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal and the food drive conducted by our three primary schools. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all the teachers and students who had been planning on returning to their classrooms, but may now have to return to remote learning. We also pray for the teachers, parents, grandparents and carers who once again have to support and encourage students, especially those in VCE, with their learning. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are struggling socially, emotionally and economically from the impact of the Corona Virus. We pray that, as a society, we can work together and support one another, especially those who experience loneliness and feel they are marginalised. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the welfare of those people living in less fortunate regions of the world, especially in refugee camps, who, at best of times, have very limited access to the health care that we take for granted. We pray that they are not forgotten by the rest of the world. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all of those who are listed on the sick list in our parish bulletin and for all others who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. We pray that they will experience the healing touch of Christ. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have died recently, including Alfred Muho & Angela Yon. We also remember Dorothy Hoolihan whose anniversary occurs at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: O God, sower of the seed, your word transforms all who have ears to hear. Hear these prayers and may your word in us yield a fruitful harvest. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Live-Stream Masses

It appears some folk have been having difficulty in joining the live-streaming Masses. There are many levels of understanding around technical issues, and a variety of devices being used. I hope these simple steps will prove helpful. For those more competent folk you are already there!

1. Go to [google.com](https://www.google.com), type: olhc sfx youtube (click search)
2. OLCH SFX YouTube will appear (click on it)
3. You will see the thumbnail of Masses already streamed
4. You will see somewhere on the screen *subscribe* (red box) - click on it
5. Then click on any of the Masses or watch the live-streaming Mass of the day

Good luck, let us know if you are still having difficulty.

(Patsy, Mob: 0429 439 675)



Alida's sad news... (sudden death of her brother)

Poor Alida ... she recently lost her job due to organisational restructure, and her brother, Alfred (46), passed away tragically and suddenly on Wednesday evening.

Alfred was Alida's rock, a father-figure to her boys and of course her only family here in Australia.

Alida came to Eltham a couple of years ago as an Asylum Seeker, a single mum to two boys. We at OLHC are privileged to have known her and have been as family to her and the boys.

A [Go-Fund-Me](#) page has been set up to help with funeral costs.

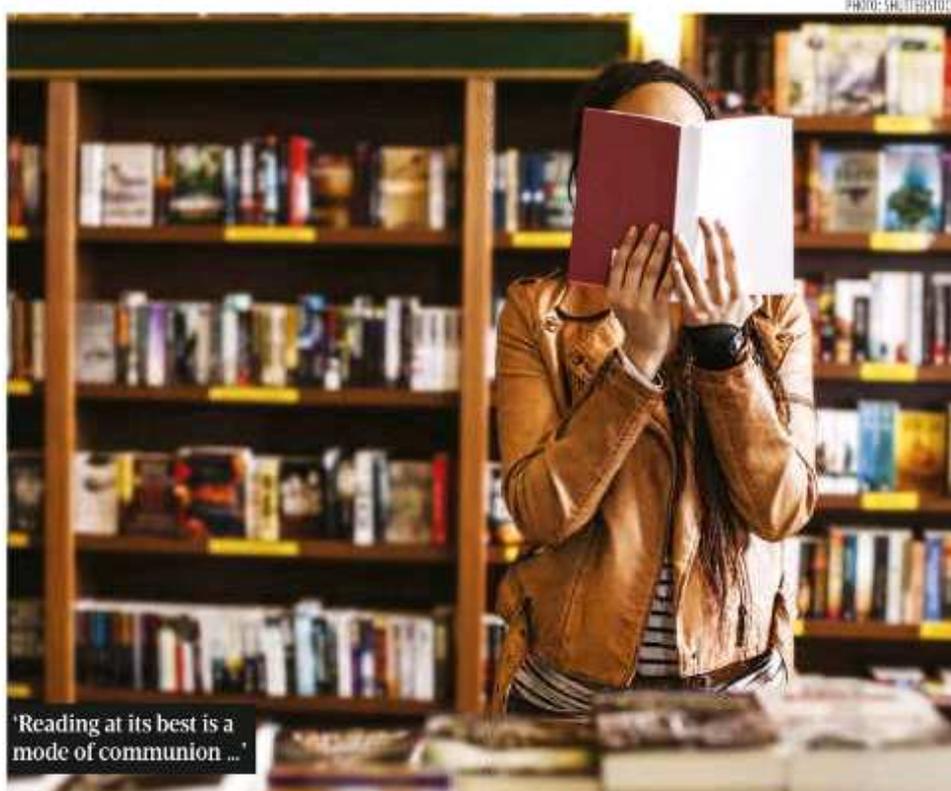
Please pray for Alida and family as they need God's healing and strength to get through this.

"We appreciate it so much, from the bottom of our hearts. Thank everyone in the church. God bless & give you happiness. We love you all." - Alida

Should you have any questions regarding this, please contact Gina on her mobile (0423 947 858) or email (gina.ang@cam.org.au)

In a transactional, technological world riven by crisis, have literature and philosophy become redundant? An American academic argues that the renewal of our inner life is fundamental to preserving our humanity / **BY ZENA HITZ**

In defence of bookworms



Hard-boiled bookworms like myself sometimes find ourselves in a crisis of conscience when dramatic human suffering forces its way into our awareness. When I was a PhD student in philosophy, the smoking ruins of the World Trade Center shook me out of my contemplative slumber. I felt I could not live in a library: I had to “make a difference”, to help to heal the broken fragments of the world.

The desire to make a difference is not always easy to distinguish from the urge to make a splash. So, in turn, one can end up making a spectacle of oneself. We live in a social world where the thirst for justice seems to lead on to fixed and rigid pathways, and where absurd performances can take precedence over substance. This is nothing new. Caryl Houselander wrote in 1944 of an invalid lady who could not forgive God for not permitting her to be eaten by a cannibal and so achieve martyrdom. “She could not accept herself as a sick woman,” Houselander wrote. “But

she would have achieved heroic virtue as a cutlet!” We prefer the fictional role of a cannibal’s dinner to the real tedium of illness.

It is easy to snark, but difficult to know what to do. Amid a global pandemic and a powerful movement against police violence and racism, what point could there be in studying literature, philosophy, poetry or mathematics? Aren’t all those self-indulgent hobbies for quieter times? Aren’t we bound to dedicate ourselves to the welfare of our neighbours, now more than ever?

Two sets of walls divide us both from learning and from service, from the true life of the mind and the true life of the heart. The first, as I have suggested, is a tendency to dwell in fantasy. Just as we may devise a theatrical fight for justice that never leaves the realm of pixels, we can study and think precisely to avoid the demands of others. We may retreat into our imagined proofs of our superiority to others, assembling an

arsenal of facts with which to bludgeon our unsuspecting enemies. So we imagine we recover status lost in erotic or athletic contests.

The second wall is our comfort. As a PhD student, luxury more than competition was my obstacle. I was comfortable, safe, travelled regularly, went to parties, and was successful at prestigious work that I loved. When the Twin Towers came down on 11 September 2001, I realised that my comfort wasn’t all there was. The fact that others suffered while I flourished seemed not right. Surely I ought to suffer for them and with them? While fantasy substitutes for reality, comfort gives an only partial view. To catch a glimpse of what has been obscured changes us.

When we read or study seriously, not to compete for status or to distract ourselves, we encounter the object of our attention in all of its messy, unpredictable reality. Such reading and thinking involves discipline to undertake, and a willingness to surrender to whatever one may find. We may not know in advance how entering a fictional world or considering a philosophical theorem might change us. The great chronicler of peregrine falcons, Essex office worker John Baker, may not have known in advance that he would find himself admiring the colour of blood, as he learned over time to identify with his bloodthirsty birds. Learning requires abandonment, the fear of which has to be overcome at the outset.

Our intellectual comfort is our certainty, our confidence, our sense of righteousness. It is the ease of life with others who share our views. Any encounter with the real threatens to unsettle that comfort, leaving us in confusion of loneliness, just as a drive through an impoverished neighbourhood may mar the beauty of one’s own luxurious garden, or a visit to the hospital may reveal our health to be the accident it is.

Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker movement, opened up houses of hospitality all over the United States, and began a tradition of Catholic anti-war activism, protesting against the atom bomb and nuclear weapons testing. She might seem above all a woman of action. And yet in an interview with a biographer, she said something surprising: she wanted to be remembered especially as a lover of books.

Day did not consider herself a scholar. But she considered that her call to love her neighbours came through avid reading. As a young woman, she read authors with a heart for the poor, Dickens, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, and came to see working people through their eyes. She read the Psalms, and when in jail after a suffragist protest, she felt the words of the Psalms echo through her own experience and through the desperate people imprisoned with her. For Day, books were not an escape so much as they were a way to meet the real world that her middle-class upbringing had hidden from her.

We are by nature animals who perceive and think. Yet for the most part we live windowless lives. Our appetites and aspirations for ourselves come first: I am in pain, I am hungry, I am tired, I have been insulted. We animals of the screen who have evolved over the last 20 years are more sophisticated: I think this, not that; he is right, she is wrong; he is evil, she is admirable; I like this, I don't like that; smiley face, angry face; heart, retweet.

In every book is at least one other human being: an author. The author offers us a way of seeing, glimpses from high places or low from which we had not yet examined things. Sometimes the author shares other people with us, and we come to see their thoughts, desires and limitations. Reading at its best is a mode of communion more than it is a vehicle of distraction.

Augustine said that love could not bind people together if no one learnt anything from anyone else. He meant, I think, that books and learning develop our capacities to love and to choose. So too, they give us a dignity beyond our ordinary usefulness as a grocer, a barrister, or a cleaner. They open up points of connection with other human beings, where we see them, and they us, not as vehicles for power or for pleasure, but as fellow travellers or fellow labourers in the endeavour of understanding. Like all common endeavours, learning is a

bond of unity in which our differences first drop away, then return graced with new worth.

The memoirs of the marginalised and the impoverished testify to the power of learning to elevate and to forge bonds of unity. The oppressed find through books, plays, poetry and astronomy a dignity denied them in ordinary life. Jonathan Rose's wonderful book, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, collects many such testimonies. The black American scholar and activist, W.E.B. Du Bois, writes of finding among dead authors such as Aristotle or Balzac a community of equals where skin colour dropped into irrelevance. Many black American leaders and authors describe their education in similar terms. They find a freedom in old books often denied them by living neighbours.

We live these days under a funny kind of authoritarianism. We are not meant to pick up a great book and encounter the author as an equal, but to sit at the feet of an expert who tells us how to think. Likewise in service: we are not meant to simply visit our neighbour, get to know them, and help as we can, but we must support top-down initiatives, five-point plans and policies - all designed from on high by people who do not know those whose lives they will shape. But we ourselves will not grow in either learning or love unless we look at one another at eye level.

Through serious reading, Du Bois found a community of the dead, and his own dignity. Dorothy Day found a way to build a community of the living that offered a window on to the whole of humanity. She felt, reciting the Psalms in jail, that she experienced the sufferings of others through the sufferings of Christ.

The mystical body of Christ, in the world of the living, is a suffering body. We resist serious reading, just as we avoid the suffering of our flesh-and-blood neighbours, because we do not want ourselves to suffer. If we are to pick up the fragments of a broken world, we must steel ourselves for pain, fear and uncertainty. Serious reading provides both practice in endurance and fuel for reimagining the future. Real change is organic, and so requires patience. Patience, as Gerard Manly Hopkins says, comes those ways we know.

Zena Hitz is a tutor at St John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. Her latest book, *Lost In Thought: The Hidden Pleasures of an Intellectual Life*, is published by Princeton University Press.



A Short Note from Fr Terry

With the increase in restrictions due to the corona virus threat, I will be spending the majority of my time at my house in North Caulfield for most of each week over the next 6 weeks.

It is still my plan to come to the Parishes every week, most likely on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Terry

The Gospel Connection



Blessed Eyes, Blessed Ears

"That's why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people towards receptive insight". (Jesus)

My Dad's hearing is starting to fail. My vision has gotten to the point where I need two kinds of lenses in my glasses. Our senses have a built-in obsolescence that we ignore till they balk and we find out there's no warranty.

Seeing and hearing are gifts not to be taken for granted but understanding with the heart is greater still. Jesus never blames a blind man for blindness, nor a deaf person for not responding. But he does have a lot to say about people who walk wide-eyed into episodes of sin. Jesus is blunt with religious people who refuse to change their hearts. They (we!) enjoy the advantage of having God's word sown like seed in our soil, and yet nothing is cultivated, and nothing grows. No plot of ground that is planted and yields dust! Far better to stop going to church and stop calling ourselves Christian, than to adopt the name and go on, deaf and blind to Jesus.

How do you prepare the soil of your life for the word of God to take root in you?

Make a commitment to God's word. Get a readable Bible - it may not be the big leather one in the family room. Spend a few minutes a day, on one passage or even one verse. Make a commitment reasonable enough to see it through.

GPBS eNews (gpbs.com.au)

15th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 2020

Do you know very much about farming? I certainly don't, having spent all my life in the city. However one thing I would know is a farmer has to be a good manager to be successful. Droughts, floods and fires come along at various intervals and the crop is ruined or yields little harvest. Being prepared for these situations and making the most of the years of abundant harvest are surely in the farmer's planning and management.

Farming has changed over the years of course with machinery doing much of the work. It would be unheard of in today's farming techniques for a farmer to sow seed by hand. Back in the time of Jesus however, a farmer sowed his crop by hand.

So the story of Jesus today is the parable of a farmer throwing seed everywhere, on the edge of the path, on patches of rock, in amongst the thorns and on the rich soil

To the people who listened to Jesus telling the story, it would have been astonishing that a farmer would do this. So many of them had a small plot of land to farm and they would be very careful to make sure all the seed fell in rich soil. They would judge this farmer as a fool, a poor manager and they would expect him to fail and lose his farm.

So what's the point of the parable? What is Jesus trying to tell his audience? What is he saying to us as we ponder the message?

Like any parable there are many meanings but one central message in this Gospel revolves around naming the farmer. Who is the farmer?

In the parable Jesus is naming God of mercy and love as the farmer. God throws the seed abundantly, and it lands in even the most hostile or unwelcoming environments. Jesus is saying, 'God is not a manager running a business.' God throws the seed everywhere.

We wonder as to the seed? What is the seed? In the parable Jesus is saying God is throwing the seed of mercy and love everywhere. No place, no-one misses out. And even though some of the seed will not produce fruit, will not bring forth goodness and love in the hearts of all who receive it, there will still be a harvest, of thirty fold, sixty fold, a hundredfold.

It's a wonderful story, so reassuring and hopeful. So many of us have grown up with a different sense of God. Have a think about it? How many of us would think of God, let alone believe in God who lavishes love and mercy everywhere?

We are living in strange times and we are now back in lockdown because of the outbreak of the corona virus again. Some of us may even be wondering if God is punishing the world for a failure to love.

If we put on a different lens and see God as lover God we can see such beautiful stories of God's love revealed in the compassion and care of people.

Think of people in the health industry and their care of those with the virus. Think of all the food parcels so lovingly packed and generously given to people who are struggling to manage financially. Think of all the telephone calls of hello, how are you. The list is endless and we are seeing even in these times a harvest of love, that is the Word of God in action bringing forth the Kingdom of God.

Sure there will always be people who do the wrong thing, and they may well be the people in the parable today where God's love and mercy has fallen on the edge of the path, or patches of rock, or amongst thorns. Even so, the lavish giver, God still throws the seed of love and mercy everywhere and there does come forth a harvest of thirty fold, sixty fold, even a hundred fold. Hopefully we can say of ourselves, we are in rich soil.

Terry

In the middle of the sadness of the coronavirus pandemic and the silence of the lockdown, city-dwellers have found consolation and connection in the sound of birdsong / **BY MARY COLWELL**

Listen to our singing planet

THE DAWN chorus of the lockdown flows in through open windows. Suddenly, an atmosphere that is usually dulled by the humdrum of working life is vibrating with cadences of joy.

The liquid-gold song of a blackbird is a warm bed of thoughtful phrases; he is a black-frosted preacher with the voice of an angel. A wren provides the power, a trilling, a pulsating aria that cannot be ignored. It contrasts sharply with the self-consciously pretty song of the dunnock, who seems too shy to take centre stage, and, anyway, has forgotten the words. “Goodbye my mother-in-law. Goodbye my-mother-in-law” change the irascible blue tits, too busy with greenfly to waste time with lyricism. Then, like a sprinkling of sugar, goldfinches flutter into the trees and tinkle. No choir of seraphims could sound so sweet. All these characters have lived in my city garden for years, but now I can hear them. Now at last I have the time to listen.

Further out, in the woods that fringe the city, I walk my dog to music that is developing in complexity as more musicians join the orchestra. Nuthatches send an urgent piping through the leaves, which is more assured than the scratchy wail of a treecreeper, or the tiny, high-pitched whistle of a goldcrest.

CHIFFCHAFFS, unfazed by their exhausting migration over desert and ocean, announce their arrival from Africa with their rhythmic tick-tocking. Their lives beat to a different rhythm to ours, one dictated by subtle changes in day length and heat, and barely discernible alterations in the breeze. So small, so light, so tough, these little beings feel the yearly changes and take to the air. Chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff. This simple song brings the heat of the Sahara and rolling ocean waves to a beech tree in Bristol.

They keep rhythm for the maestros of complexity, the blackcaps and garden warblers, who tell of their migration journeys in tumbling songs that transform the woodland into a concert hall. If you are lucky, you may live in a square where nightingales sing.

Above them all, sailing on powerful wings, a buzzard’s mewing makes our

eyes turn heavenwards. This workhorse of the skies tells us a very different story. Its tale is of abundance, then loss and now recovery. To hear and savour its soul cries is to be reminded of our hold over the planet. Once common across Britain it was persecuted to virtual extinction by the beginning of the twentieth century. With protection, it is returning to reclaim the fresh winds over farmland and copse. It is a privilege to hear it without the roar of motorway traffic.

Our enforced slowing down has left us with these fellow travellers as singing companions to cheer us through the days. Each has a story to tell about finding its place in our human-made world. Out there, among the rose bushes and the hawthorn, singing storytellers ask us to listen to their tales.

Many are finding it restful to be treated to this natural music every day. On Twitter recently I came across this moving post: “I wake to the first birdsong every morning and am so thrilled to hear it and know I’m still alive. I could weep to think it’s taken terminal illness to make me so aware of this beauty. What a waste it’s been, waking to the alarm for work all my life.”

A bird singing in the garden had produced an intense connection to what it is to be human. The music of nature can prompt us to question ourselves; it draws us to a reality that does not need our participation, or even our presence. We are a sideshow to their world. Birdsong existed before we hunted and gathered, before we lived in cities, before we created gardens. The music of the birds has enlivened our planet for many millions of years; it is humbling to have come so late to the journey of this singing planet.

St Francis knew this, of course. His life danced to the music of nature and its sacred connection to God. In *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis turns our gaze from the concerns of modern life to the insights of this holy man of the earth. We are asked to share in the awe and wonder that the saint experienced every day. “Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals,



he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise.” And when we are in love we meld our lives to the other, bringing out the goodness of ourselves and of that which is loved - and that includes the earth.

ST FRANCIS understood that all beings sing to God; that we are part of a massed choir whose notes reach heaven. This global orchestra can only be heard in its entirety by the creator. Each of us in our own section only perceives the immediate music around us, but this is just one small part of a vastly greater whole that stretches to infinity. We hear the birdsong, the wind, the sound of rain on leaves in our own patch of the earth, oblivious to the rest. Some songs may seem discordant to our ears, but they are only part of the perfect and harmonious score of the planet.

God hears the endless symphony of the universe in its entirety. What it is to be one phrase of that music, to be just one element that is broadcasting our sacred presence among a countless throng, is a privilege we must never forget.

A scientist friend wrote to me from America this week. “For me,” she says, “lockdown has made me more aware and more connected in many ways, especially this morning. It is in these gentle moments that I feel the closest to nature and I can truly breathe. I just now feel like I am breathing much deeper.”

Mary Colwell is a producer and writer. Her latest book is *Curlew Moon* (HarperCollins, 2018).

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-23

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because', he replied, 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive. For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed by me.

'But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path. The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing. And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'



Reflection

This reading falls into three parts: the parable itself, Jesus' teaching on the purpose of parables, and an allegorical explanation of the parable that most scholars consider secondary

The opening section of the reading sets the scene: such a crowd on the shore of the lake that Jesus must teach from a boat. Note that he adopts the posture of a rabbi - he sits.

What Jesus describes would have been very familiar to his listeners. How often they would have seen sowers cast seed about them on the fields and hillsides of Galilee. And how well they knew the terrain, some of it fertile soil, much of it rocky and unpromising. What Jesus wants to do is to draw their attention to the extraordinary harvest produced from the rich soil. The contrast between the unimpressive seed that is sown and the abundance of grain that is gathered is remarkable. Without actually saying so, Jesus implies that this is what the kingdom of heaven is like. Its beginnings may be very unpromising, but what it will grow to be is astonishing.

The later interpretation of the parable sought to give meaning to each element of the story - the rock, the thorns, and so on - instead of giving priority to the conclusion and its dramatic implications.

Break Open the Word 2020

Rosters - 18 & 19 July	
<i>Montmorency</i>	
Collins, Leo	GRDN
Williams, Anne	PRYR
Williams, Peter	PRYR
<i>Eltham</i>	
Dunell, Linda	Altar Society
Rough Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Saltalamacchia, Carmel	Altar Society

SUNDAY READINGS READ AT HOME

Resources from Liturgy Brisbane's weekly resources can be found at:

www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/prepare/Sunday-readings-and-family-prayer/ and are updated each week.

FAMILY PRAYER WEEK BY WEEK