

# 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.

## 16<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 2020

How's it been for you in Stage 3 restrictions once more for over a week now? My conversations with people suggest many of us are struggling with adjusting once again to the isolation and uncertainty of it all. Will we find a vaccine? And even if we do, it will be some time before it is fully tested. My sense is that people are more anxious about the virus as it seems all around us in a way. No place, no-one is completely safe even though most of us are being very careful.

One of the advantages of this time however is the gift of more time to do what we often neglect. Many of us have taken to the garden and despite winter, the gardens are looking in good shape. I think we'll see beautiful flowers in spring time.

With this in mind we turn to the Gospel today where Jesus tells the story of the farmer planting dandelion or weeds among the seeds of wheat. The servants say to the farmer, "Do you want us to weed out the field?" The farmer replies, "No because when you weed out the dandelion you might pull up the wheat with it."

Like any parable or story Jesus tells, there are so many meanings. Jesus certainly had a purpose in mind for telling this story. For there were people in his Jewish faith tradition wanting to weed out of the community people who were not living a moral life. 'Turf them out' was their view, as if they were the ones who were exemplary in living a moral life. And Jesus in his parable was saying 'let them stay'. The day will come when everyone will have to give an account of themselves.

We have the same situation today where there are people who take the high moral ground and have no time for those who do not follow the rules. It can be those who break the law of the land. How many of us have little or no time for people in prison because of their offences? It can be in our own Church story where we ban people from the table of Eucharist because they have not followed Church teachings. It can be in our own families where people do not even speak to each other because of some hurt from the past. And so often it's about a lack of compromise as if my way is the only way.

Yet who among us would say we are perfect or that we live in a perfect family, country, church or work environment? When we look at the way Jesus met people, he rejected no-one. He mixed with everyone, the so-called public sinners, the tax collectors, the unemployed. He came to table with everyone and at his table there was no exclusion. He saw the goodness, the possibility, in those who were judged unworthy.

The parable of the *'weeds and the wheat'* asks us to never give up on people. Even those who are considered 'weeds' in our community can come to a conversion moment, a transformation in their lives where they follow a different path and become a blessing for everyone and for our world. There's a place for everyone to grow, and a real hope that ultimately the good will prevail.

From another perspective the parable today asks us to reflect on our own lives. In so many ways each of us is a field of *'weeds and wheat'*, a mixture of good and bad, of gift and weakness, of saint and sinner. We might think we are more like the 'weeds' in today's parable and we fear what will happen to us when we are called to give an account of ourselves.



Can we look again and even say that the 'weeds' of failure in our lives are an important part of us? Could it be that the 'weeds' have their place in keeping us grounded, honest, less judgmental and more compassionate? Could it be that the 'wheat' in our lives grows when we realise we are not perfect but we are trying to live kindly, inclusively, compassionately, lovingly? Could it be that Jesus told this parable to help people realise they were far from perfect and so are we, but that ultimately the 'wheat' in our lives will prevail?

**Terry**

*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

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Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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Barry Caldwell

#### Parish Office

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[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

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

Holy Trinity Primary School

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Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Mr Chris Ray: 9439 7824

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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:

*Margaret & Kevin Brody, Glen McCormack*

*Mary Thomasina Said, Lino Zini*

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), Val Hayes,*

*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;

For those whose anniversaries are at this time;

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, Maria George, Dennis Goddard,*

*Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Mary Irani, Diana Jackson,*

*Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin,*

*Simone Owen, Jo Porter.*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

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

## MASS LIVE – STREAMING

Live-streaming Masses are scheduled for:

**Sunday, 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: 12 July 2020**

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
Eltham		
Montmorency		

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

**CDFFPay:** (alternate thanksgiving options)  
Montmorency - <https://bit.ly/MontyCDFFPay>  
Eltham - <https://bit.ly/ElthamCDFFPay>

#### *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!



## Prayers of the Faithful for 19 July 2020 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Peter & Anne Williams

**Celebrant:** Gentle God, you teach by Jesus' example, that justice is kind and that power can be mild. Let us learn from you, as we turn to you in prayer.

For openness of mind and heart: that the parables of Jesus may help us recognise the limits of our vision and understanding, and allow us to examine our lives and our actions from a new perspective.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our parish communities: that the Spirit of God will heal and transform our weaknesses and work within us to bring us to wholeness in those areas of our lives where we are most wounded and vulnerable.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the elderly and those who are lonely, especially in this time of COVID lockdown: as many elderly members of our community are isolated in Aged Care facilities or at home and have no one to check on them. Comfort them and free them from anxiety. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For Healthcare professionals: yours are the hands gently touching your patients; yours are the hands that show you care; you lift the hearts of those who suffer. Your hands celebrate the joy of healing; your hands bless all they touch with the spirit of compassion; may we carry you in prayer, and thank God for your selfless gifts of service.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are bound by hatred and resentment: that the Spirit will cultivate forgiveness and compassion within hearts and wither the seeds that yield revenge, violence and destruction. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all those involved in education: as our schools seek to continue their important work in stressful and difficult circumstances, that you keep them and their students safe. Grant them insight and courage as they work to plan for the coming school term, so that students may learn and everyone stays safe and healthy. Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who are ill: especially those listed on the sick list in our parish bulletin, and for all 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. We also remember Margaret & Kevin Brody, Glen McCormack, Mary Thomasina Said and Lino Zini whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Celebrant:** Father, help us grow and nourish us with your grace. 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



### Here's A Thought!



At this time of the pandemic most of us are spending a lot of time indoors. Saturated with television programs and other electronic material. At times I have turned to the rosary.

Yes folks - you remember that ancient and beautiful prayer.

Now here's the innovation - we could pray together through Zoom.

I know nothing about Zoom, but I know someone who could set us up. Saying the rosary is more enjoyable when there is more than one.

If you are interested in praying the rosary via Zoom, leave your name and email details at the Presbytery and I will be in touch.

Marisa



## Sustained in God's Love

Theme: *Wisdom in Times of Crisis*

Monday, July 6, 2020

James Finley

## WISDOM IN TIMES OF CRISIS

### Sustained in God's Love

Monday, July 6, 2020

*In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. Love is our origin, love is our ground, and love is our destiny.*

James Finley

*CAC faculty member James Finley offers a contemplative practice to help us experience the love of God even in the midst of chaos. Living out of that love transforms both ourselves and the world.*

What is the practice that matters now? A practice is any act habitually entered into with our whole heart that takes us to the deeper place. Some of these practices, we might not think of as prayer and meditation: tending the roses, a long slow walk to no place in particular, a quiet moment at day's end, being vulnerable in the presence of that person in whose presence we're taken to the deeper place, the pause between two lines of a poem. There are these acts that reground us in the depth dimensions of our life that matter most; so if we're faithful to our practice, our practice will be faithful to us. . .

In this contemplative practice, sit and renew your awareness that you're sitting in the presence of God all about you and within you. As you inhale, inhale God's silent "*I love you*," in which God is being poured out and utterly given away to you as the miracle of your very life. Then when you exhale, exhale yourself in love: "*I love you*." And so, we are breathing [along with God], "*I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you.*" From the reciprocity of love, destiny is fulfilled, and the foundations of suffering are healed.

As we sit this way, suffering arises. The suffering then might be our anxiety and concerns today, for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the world. As we sit in the midst of the arising of the anxiety, when we inhale, we inhale this love of God loving us through and through, anxiety and all, finding no hindrance in our anxiety, loving us so unexplainably forever. Then when we exhale, we exhale ourselves in love, anxiety and all, to the love that loves us. This requires gentle perseverance, because anxiety arises again. It doesn't automatically go away. We sit with it, we lean into it again, and we hold fast to this love that sustains us in the midst of things. It is in this way, little by little, that we come to understand the unsubstantiality of everything but love. Love and love alone has the authority to name who we are.

This practice, then, experientially grounds us in this love wisdom. This love wisdom—grounded in practice—empowers us to go out and share this with other people in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

### References:

From James Finley, "Practice That Grounds Us in the Sustaining Love of God," *Wisdom in Times of Crisis* (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2020), faculty presentation (April 26, 2020), YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-A16N4hKou0>.

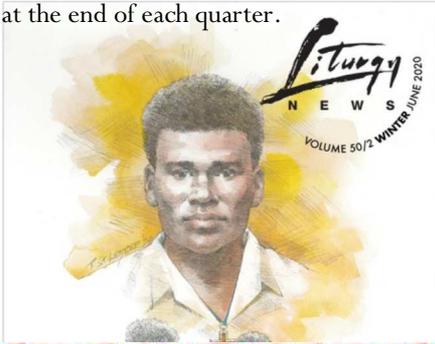
Epigraph: "Renewing That in Us Which Sees the Light," *Wisdom in Times of Crisis* (Center for Action and Contemplation: 2020), faculty presentation (April 20, 2020), YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=413RVIPCEtE>.

IMAGE CREDIT: *CUEVA DE LAS MANOS* (DETAIL), CAÑADÓN DEL RÍO, SANTA CRUZ, ARGENTINA. PHOTOGRAPH COPYRIGHT 2012 PABLO GIMENEZ.

Inspiration for this week's banner image: *As a spiritual practice we can wake up to the possibility of building a new order. We can improvise those possibilities; try them out in the creative microcosm of a shared public life, realizing that our way of life before the pandemic was not perfect.* —Barbara Holmes

Liturgy News - Winter 2020  
available free at this [link](#)

Liturgy News is a quarterly magazine from Liturgy Brisbane. Each issue features commentary and insight from Australia's leading liturgists and is written for parishes, school, experts and novices. This sixteen-page journal, printed in colour, is sent to subscribers at the end of each quarter.



**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/](http://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/prepare/Sunday-readings-and-family-prayer/) and are updated each week.

**FAMILY PRAYER**  
WEEK BY WEEK

For anyone wishing to obtain a paper copy of the bulletin each week, either for yourself or to deliver to a fellow parishioner who is in isolation, please note that copies are available at both St Francis Xavier & Our Lady Help of Christians each Friday afternoon (after 3pm). Copies are placed in outdoor document holders, to the right of the church entrance door.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact the office on 9435 2178 or via email if you have any concerns or suggestions.



Covid 19 has changed our society and our world and, has therefore, changed our church. How will we respond to the demands of the present and those emerging for the future?

Before the isolation disappears, now is the time to focus our attention on what needs to be done to bring about the change that our new world offers and demands. We encourage you to reflect and to voice your opinions on Christ's presence in our changed world.

We, the undersigned, have with others established a website [www.senseofthefaithful.org.au](http://www.senseofthefaithful.org.au). The purpose of this website is to stimulate discussion across parishes, and the individuals involved in them, about the future of the Australian Church.

Please read the articles this website contains and join in our conversation. Pope Francis is asking us to do so and, more importantly, the Holy Spirit asks us, the baptised People of God, to join in the dialogue.

None of us has the complete answer.

However, we can be certain that "a return to business as usual is not the answer. Respectful dialogue, through discernment and synodality, is the way towards the truth.

Before we return to the constant busy demands of parish life, now is the time to join with your fellow pilgrims. The deferment of the Plenary Council may be one last chance the Holy Spirit is offering us to embark on much needed renewal.

Please reflect on these matters and, with others from your parish, join the conversation.

We invite you to take up the challenge our website offers you. Active involvement from many parishes is necessary to achieve genuine renewal. The deferred date for the plenary council allows to become active again as you were at the time of the initial submissions.

Warm regards,

Gerry McKernan on behalf of the other members of the committee

Rowan Ireland, Anne Marmion, John Davies, Peter Sheehan & Richard Curtain



**Plenary Council 2020**  
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

Today I have time to think and recall, so I want to clear up some misconceptions of the Covid 19 lockdowns in the public towers. You, my family and friends have shown so much concern and support, and this is also a great debriefing for me. This is probably jumbled to read, but whilst things are fresh in my mind I wanted to write it down.

The last few days have been a plethora of emotions and a humbling experience. After working with the community for Covid19 testing, I was unsure what we would experience at the public housing towers, where they were under total lockdown. The media had portrayed them as being full of hostility, drug and alcohol concerns, and as I saw it, a frightening place to go. They had shown residents pleading for help for food and basic supplies, protests and a lot of anger.

Over the last few days, our amazing team from Knox attended the towers in Flemington and North Melbourne. When I first arrived and found the massive police presence and strict lock down, my heart was in my mouth. I have not been exposed to public housing, violence or police incidents. The media were set up outside in the roads and I was reminded of the news stories I had seen. We were guided in to don our PPE and then our teams were the first to be gathered to start working our way through each floor.

We waited for what seemed like an eternity whilst the logistics of the police accompanying us were coordinated. We were in teams of two nurses and two police and had a trolley set up with all our needs. Its weird, as this trolley became "ours" and was part of our team and we were so protective of it. At one stage we had to leave it downstairs when we doffed and had a quick break for a drink in a different building. We entrusted the police to guard it. Well that didn't work as when we got back a box of gloves was gone. From then on, for the next two days we placed a piece of paper with "Fiona and Lisa's trolley, please do not touch". I'm sure there is a psychological reason for this attachment as we became very possessive.

We were given a list of residents on each floor and started at the first apartment and continued until the last had been visited on each floor. The tests were purely voluntary, yet not one resident said no. They were incredibly thankful, respectful and grateful for us being there. We started writing our names on our gowns as we were wearing full PPE and all they could see were our eyes. The police stood back away from them and us, showing the same respect and kindness at every door we knocked at.

At every apartment, we asked are you okay? Do you have enough food, do you need any medications, is there anything we can do to help? There were some very simple requests, lactose free milk, an onion and tomato, dish-washing detergent, sanitary pads and toothpaste. We could see the bags and boxes of food delivered to them in the foyers, under tents outside, outside their doorways, inside their rooms. One man told us they had never had this much meat before, with the biggest smile on his face.

After each floor was completed, we came back down to "doff" which is to remove our PPE in a particular way to not contaminate ourselves or others. We had teams of paramedics to assist with each step. They possibly thought their job was insignificant, but it was just as important as ours. One little break in our PPE and we could become the next cause of community transmission. With that weighing on my mind, and of course the safety of our immediate family, I have never been so anxious about doffing in my decades of nursing! The police were guided

as well and they too were grateful as I'm sure they were as anxious as we were.

We then cleaned and restocked our trolley, donned PPE and set off again with a new list and more amazing and beautiful residents to test. At one stage on the first day when we were donned waiting to go in, I looked up at the frightened people on the third-floor balconies watching us from behind the glass. We sent the biggest, animated kisses with both hands to them and they were delighted! We continued to blow kisses backwards and forwards and it made my heart so full knowing that they knew we really do care.

The first day we worked there was no food available at a quick lunch break as it had all been eaten. There were a lot of hungry nurses lol. There were 10 teams of us who agreed to stay on and try and get through the swabbing, and we swabbed until 9pm. We had to stop as its unfair on the residents to keep going later than that. We were disappointed to find there were a couple of floors left, but we had done each building at Flemington Road towers by then, an amazing effort by so many.

Yesterday was the North Melbourne towers. We attended 3 different towers. The first one the lift was broken. We were meant to start at 18th floor. I said I could go up the stairs for a few floors, but not many as we had to carry our trolleys with us. We were lucky to have the first floor and when we had finished there, the lift was fixed.

Again, the residents were so grateful for being tested. They were so worried for their health and that of their families. They proudly showed their negative results on the texts on their phones and wanted to be tested again as that was a week ago. Most were worried about not being able to go to work and support their families or lose their jobs. For many there were single parents because the spouse had been locked out, some had nieces, nephews, cousins etc that had been locked in. There were some laughs at not knowing the birth dates of these young relatives. These people had simple requests as well. We were so lucky to have a social worker with us yesterday as she was able to arrange what was needed then and there.

My heart was full when I left thanks to the "I love you" said to us, the constant thanks and displays of gratitude. We were invited into many homes, even offered a tea or coffee. I went into a few rooms with elderly, frail and young children. This was optional and only if we felt safe. We did, we felt like guests. I saw many, many boxes of food and supplies at the three towers we attended yesterday.

I have so many wonderful memories of the last few days, none were bad, they were all positive. So please understand that whatever the media portrays is not necessarily true. We were there with firsthand experience. The wheels are in motion to support these people, maybe it was slow to happen, but from what I saw it has now been put in place. There are translators, social workers, support systems and many resources out there.

I want to express my thanks and gratitude to the most incredible nurses from Knox that I have had the honour to work alongside. We have supported each other and together we have made an incredible difference to these peoples lives. I am so honoured to be a nurse and have each of your backs, as you have mine!

#proudtobeanurse #staysafe #washyourhands  
#stayathome #goteamknox

Feel free to share x



We invite you to participate in a

## Retreat in Everyday Life *"All Shall Be Well"*

This at-home retreat, available via Zoom, spans five weeks. It begins with an introductory session on Monday, 3 August 2020, at 1.15 pm AEST, and concludes with a closing reflection on Monday, 31 August at 1.45 pm AEST.

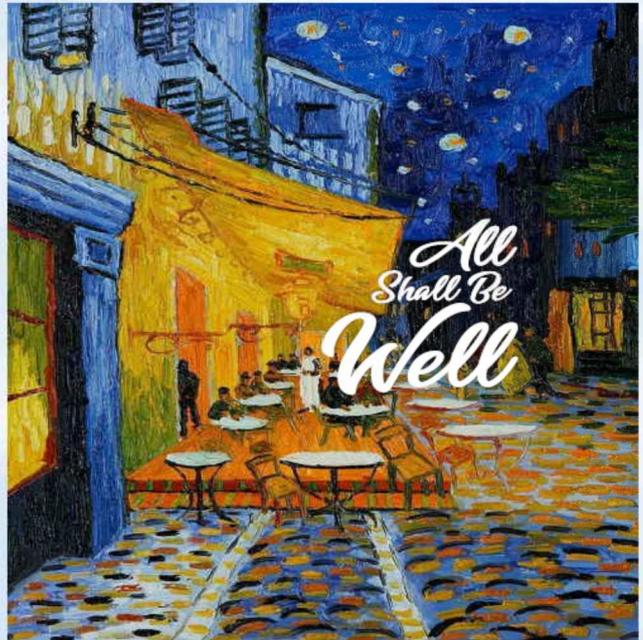
The retreat's two-part process provides an opportunity for you  
\* to spend some time daily in prayerful reflection, pondering your experience of the day,  
\* and to be accompanied by a prayer-companion once a week, at a mutually-suitable time.

A weekly reflection sheet to help focus your prayer will be made available to you.

If interested, please apply before 27 July to  
Heart of Life @ +61 (3) 9890 1101 or  
info@heartoflife.melbourne  
(Limited number of participants.)

If you are not familiar with Zoom and would like to take part – we could explore you being involved by another means eg. phone, Facetime etc.

*A small donation will be welcome.*  
<http://www.heartoflife.melbourne/bookings/donate/>



### Heart of Life

Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation

296 Glenferrie Road, Malvern, Victoria 3144, Australia  
Tel (03) 9890 1101 Email info@heartoflife.melbourne Web www.heartoflife.melbourne

## **Gospel: Matthew**

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner’s servants went to him and said, “Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?” “Some enemy has done this” he answered. And the servants said, “Do you want us to go and weed it out?” But he said, “No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn.”

He put another parable before them, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.’

He told them another parable, “The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through.’

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. This was to fulfil the prophecy:

I will speak to you in parables  
and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to him and said, ‘Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us.’ He said in reply, ‘The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil one; the enemy who sowed them, the devil’ the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. The Son of Man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offences and all who do evil, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!”



## **Reflection**

The structure of the gospel reading for today is the same as last week’s. It begins with Jesus’ teaching in parables, adds a comment on the purpose of parables, and finishes with an explanation of a parable. The difference this week is that the first section contains not one but three parables. The lectionary offers the option of a shorter version which consists only of the first parable. Once again it will be a pastoral decision as to which is the more fruitful option to take. One might regret that the shorter version did not extend to the extra two short parables.

Each of the three parables differs in length and character.

There is an interesting difference between this and last Sunday’s gospel. The section that deals with the purpose of the parables offers two contrasting perspectives. Last week’s full text contained quite a lengthy passage arguing that the parables were designed to hide the truth; only the disciples were to be given access to the “mysteries of the kingdom”. The corresponding section in today’s reading is not only much shorter but suggests the exact opposite. Jesus quotes from Psalm 77/78 to say “I will ... expound things hidden from the foundation of the world”. These divergent points of view go to show that the gospel continually defies simplistic interpretation.

The final section offers an allegorical explanation of the parable of the wheat and the darnel (or weeds).

**Break Open the Word 2020**