

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.

Homily – Fr Terry

What are your thoughts on the Black Lives Matter Campaign? Personally I have been quite moved by the rallies that speak up for the rights of a people who have been, and continue to be, so victimised and treated unjustly. I seriously thought of joining the rally here in Melbourne a month or two ago, but decided against it when taking into account the possible impact of COVID-19. Social distancing had to be a problem.

Whether I made a good decision or not, the issue of *'Black Lives Matter'* still cries out to be recognised and responded to and all of us are called to stand together, white or black, in bringing about equality and justice for all people.

Thinking about the *'Black Lives Matter'* rallies reminds me of a black woman who is famous in history for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white-coloured person. Many of you know her story.

Rosa Parkes lived in Montgomery in the United States and like all black people of her time, she by law had to give up her seat on the bus to any white-coloured person if they were standing. It was around 60 years ago, when Rosa Parkes refused to give up her seat to a white person. She was tired of being humiliated by this unjust law and she stuck up for herself and the black people of America. She was arrested by police, taken to court and fined \$10 which was a lot of money in those days.



The story didn't finish there. The black people in Montgomery were also tired of being humiliated by the law and they supported Rosa Parkes by refusing to board the buses for nearly 13 months. The bus companies didn't get their fares and they were very frustrated as their profits nose-dived.

The black people of Montgomery also challenged the law and they went to the Supreme Court of America and they won their case. No longer did black people have to give up their seats to the white people. And it all happened because of a woman named Rosa Parkes.

In some ways I see a connection between Rosa Parkes and the Canaanite woman in today's Gospel. The Canaanite woman came to Jesus shouting *"Jesus son of David take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil."*

Jesus didn't respond and it was only her insistence that prompted his response. She didn't limp off, saying, 'well that was a waste of time.' She stood up for herself and her daughter. She remained respectful and Jesus healed her daughter.

The encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite woman didn't start all that well but how fascinating that in the end it was compassion that brought them together. Perhaps Jesus didn't respond in the beginning because, as a Jewish person, he was meeting with a pagan, a woman, who believed in many gods. Maybe this was a moment for Jesus to recognise that his healing and teaching went way beyond his own Tradition to people of all faiths and beliefs. And he recognised that she had great faith and he praised her for this.

It wasn't in a court of justice that the Canaanite woman was granted her request. And so her story is different to Rosa Parkes. But she is like Rosa Parkes in her standing up for herself. And in the end her daughter was healed. Jesus saw her compassion for her daughter and the boundaries of division were broken down. She wouldn't go away and she stood her ground, because she loved her daughter and she thought Jesus could do something about it. And Jesus did. Her daughter was healed.

Where are we in all this? There are situations where we have to stand with people in bringing their cause to court. There are situations when we too have to stand up for ourselves. And there are situations when only compassion can bring us together. Let's pray for the spirit of Rosa Parkes and the spirit of the Canaanite woman to bless us as we too find the way of Jesus in bringing about healing and hope.

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



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

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

terry.kean@cam.org.au

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

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Kate Kogler:

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Gina Ang:

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

gina.ang@cam.org.au

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Child Safety Officer

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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

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MASS LIVE – STREAMING

Live-streaming Masses are scheduled for:

This Sunday, 16 August @ 10:00am

St Francis Xavier, Montmorency

please keep an eye on the

'Calendar of Events' for dates and times

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

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

Mario Grollo

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Thomas Caulfield, Watty Gatt, Alan Radcliffe

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Robert Baker, 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, Glenn McKay, Erin McLindon, Hasti Momeni, Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland, Montagna Mustica, Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen, Mercy Oson, Ron Pfeil, Susan Phelan, Andrew Pighin, Terry Said, Anthony Salvatore, Mary Salvatore, Maria Schroeders, Jeanette Steward, John Tobin, Bruno Treglia, Isaac Treglia, Aldo Viapiana, Sheryn Zurzolo.

Eltham

For the recently deceased;

Elaine Bunton, Carla, Cinel, Mario Grollo, Lorraine Spencer

For those whose anniversaries are at this time;

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Robyn Atherton, Francisco Azarcon, Hugh & Iris Azzopardi, Baby Harriet Banks, Ray Bowman, Geoff Bunton, Andrew & Lucinda Collier, Albina Croce, Jon D'Cruz, Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Marlis Dopheide, Maria George, Dennis Goddard, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Mary Irani, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Jo Porter, Barry Scully.

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

For anyone required to attend church premises for **cleaning**, especially after a live-stream mass or funeral, please contact Michael or Kate via the office to have a Worker Permit issued.

RECONCILIATION

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

Collections last weekend: 9 August 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.

CDFPay: (alternate thanksgiving options)
Montmorency - <https://bit.ly/MontyCDFPay>
Eltham - <https://bit.ly/ElthamCDFPay>

Prayers of the Faithful for 16 August 2020
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

(Jane McKenna)

Celebrant: Our father in heaven, in a time when the world feels the weight of the global health pandemic and world events continue to rock the safety of our communities, we ask that you hear our humble prayers.

We pray for our faith communities here and around the world. During this time of separation and isolation from our faith communities may our prayers continue to sustain and strengthen our faith until we can once again celebrate in our places of worship.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the people of Lebanon and those affected by the explosion in Beirut. May this terrible accident remind us of how important and fragile our lives and the wealth of nations are. We pray that this country receives the help and support needed to rebuild lives and sustain their country.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe, all those suffering illness, those who are grieving for loved ones, those who protect and care for the sick and those making daily sacrifices to help or protect others from this virus. We pray for their wellbeing as they care for others.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have lost jobs, are separated from families, who live alone and are isolated and all those whose lives and community have been affected by the pandemic. May our prayers help to sustain and console all those who at this time need to feel the love and support of our prayers.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick; may our prayers for healing and wellness be felt by all those listed in our bulletin.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have gone to eternal rest with our loving God: Elaine Bunton, Carla Cinel, Mario Grollo and Lorraine Spencer; and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Thomas Caulfield, Watty Gatt and Alan Radcliffe. May we feel strengthened by prayers of comfort and take comfort in the promise of eternal life with our risen Christ.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: May our faith be strong as these prayers are offered up to our gentle and loving God.

All: Amen.



2021 ZOOM Q & A
WITH PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

One of the difficulties for 2021 Prospective Parents is that with the sudden closure of schools to having visitors and parents onsite in March many did not get a chance to see our wonderful school (*or any school for that matter!*)

Last week we launched a Virtual School Tour Youtube video that has already had over 280 hits. This can be found at: <https://youtu.be/h0gWdvwJZHY>

On next **Tuesday 18th August at 5.30pm** we are trying something a little different. A live Zoom Q & A session with some of our Leadership team answering questions from new families who may be looking at our school next year.

If you know someone who may still be deciding or who may have missed out on a tour earlier this year please send them this link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hVED7U1Pp0U5ljE7PROSoDMhm3yKx7ZbvWMC3KGpcQo/edit>

We anticipate the session will go for about an hour. We have also had good interest from students in Year 1 to 6 from other schools and they are most welcome to join the conversation also. Everyone would know that deciding which school to send your child to is such an important one. Which school feels right for you, your family and your child. It is often a 7+ year commitment and so we are trying to think of ways to make this choice easier for parents.

Philip Cachia, Principal

There is fury in Beirut. But a writer who has been living in the city senses a second, different explosion: of a determination that there can be no return to the status quo; and beside the anger, a strange serenity and a defiant hope / BY PATRICK PAGE

The explosion

At first we thought it was Israeli jets. For two or three minutes, a low roar tore the air between the clouds, the sea and the mountains. People had come out on to their roofs and balconies and were facing the port, many of them filming with their phones. But we couldn't see, the windows didn't face that way - a fact that probably saved us.

"It's a fire!" they shouted to us when we asked. They were grinning that uncontrollable grin of someone witnessing an awesome spectacle, in the literal sense of the word. "This is not what Lebanon needs," I say to my friend Bashar. We'd been sitting in their Airbnb just 500 meters away from the port, our feet up on the coffee table, having a cold beer. Bashar had just been telling me that he had left his job at a bar because his daily salary was now worth less than \$7. His girlfriend Kate had popped out with their small dog to get some cigarettes. (Bashar and Kate are not their real names.)

Then there was a bang and a change in air pressure. The building vibrated slightly but perceptibly. "An oil tank?" I suggest. A few seconds passed in silence. Then a boom that was incomprehensibly loud filled the air, the walls seemed to implode and the whole building shook as if we were in an earthquake. We were on the seventh - and top - floor, and immediately rushed to the stairs. We thought the building would collapse, especially if there were to be another explosion. We joined other dazed people navigating their way down stairs

strewn with broken glass and mangled window frames.

Out on Mar Mikhayel Street all was grey and muted. People covered in dust and blood walked around with no purpose. Some were lying on the ground, still. The man in the shop where I had bought the beers half an hour previously was lying, bloodied, in the space between the door and the counter, giving instructions in a strangely steady voice to a young woman on a phone. A middle-aged woman was walking slowly, with an upright bearing, carrying her handbag on an arm covered in blood. She was asking repeatedly for the Red Cross. I walked beside her for a few metres, before realising that I had no idea where I was going. I eventually left her with some soldiers, who were just as confused. Kate appeared running towards us. She was carrying the dog in her arms. We embraced and looked at each other in silent enquiry. Around us people were shouting. Then we climbed up the hill, hoping to get out of the danger zone.

For the next half-hour we walked like zombies towards my flat. Our route took us through the area of Achrafieh, where the damage seemed to be just as terrible as it had been closer to the port. People were crying and shouting names. One image that won't leave my mind is a collapsible bird cage on the pavement with a small, dead, grey bird trapped between the folded wire walls.

We passed the Orthodox (Al-Roum) Hospital. It had been gutted. People



thronged at the entrance, which had been cordoned off. Some doctors and nurses and other medical staff stood there, many of them injured too. I later heard that half the patients in the intensive care unit had died in the blast, along with several medical staff.

On the sloping pavement, a man was lying down. He looked about 60, his shirt was rucked up to reveal his stomach. We couldn't understand why he had been laid down on the slope so that his head was lower than his feet. We moved towards him to help but another man stopped us with an open palm: "Maat" ("He died"), he said.

The article I wrote for the Tablet in January this year described a walk along the mountains of Lebanon in May 2019, looking for hope at a time when my life had been drained of colour. I wrote that I had come to a country "where hope is as defiant as it is improbable". Since then, a grim sequence of events has conspired to destroy any such hope. First, there was a revolution which forced the resignation of the Prime Minister, Saad al-Hariri, but brought in a new government that has been, in the opinion of most Lebanese, more of the same; this week, it too has been forced to resign.

Then, of course, the coronavirus pandemic changed everything. Medical supplies

PHOTO: RA/ASS, MAKIM GRIGORIEV





Left, a military helicopter tries to extinguish a fire after the explosion on 4 August. Opposite, bottom left, an anti-government protest on Monday

gathered glass shards into plastic bags.

There was a tangible feeling of goodwill in the neighbourhood. People who usually barely spoke to each other showed real concern; neighbours went to check on each other. My own elderly neighbour told me with a surprised smile that the man who lives below us - whose habit of sitting on his balcony in Y-fronts disgusts her ("and he's a doctor!") - had offered to help her fix and clean up her flat. Gangs of young people, some covered in bandages, patrolled the streets carrying brushes, spades and buckets, offering their help to anyone in need. I kept hearing, in Arabic, "Thank God for your safety", and "May God give you vitality/health". The phrases, often used in a perfunctory way, suddenly took on a new meaning.

I have recently been reading Rebecca Solnit's investigation into how human beings respond to major urban disasters. She challenges the popularly held assumption that, in chaos, humans turn either to our "monstrous" or our "helpless" natures. Studying reactions to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, Solnit found that, on the contrary, "most people are calm, resourceful, altruistic and creative". Rutger Bregman discovered the same while researching *Humankind: A Hopeful History*. Looking at eye-witness accounts of the Blitz in London, for instance, Bregman found that the one thing they have in common is a description of a "strange serenity" that settled over the city. And of course, for many the Covid lockdown has been a time defined by the kindness of strangers.

And so too in Beirut. The morning after the blast, hardware stores were selling brushes at a discount price, despite the huge demand. The head of our broom had been snapped in half by the blast, so I bought a new one and joined a group of three young women sweeping glass off the road near the Orthodox Hospital. They were happy to let me join them, even though, as they put it, they "had no point, no goal, just moving the glass off the road". Every few seconds a car would approach, so we would stand back, wait and then feverishly sweep before the next car arrived. We were joined by the Ethiopian lady who works in the café where I usually go to write. The café was "all gone", she told me, "all of it". This was in some ways a Sisyphean task, absurdly shifting the sea of glass from one place to the next, only for more glass to take its place, but it was not a thankless one. Nearly every driver stopped, wound down their window and wished us strength. "May God give you health."

Patrick Page is a freelance writer living in Beirut.

became scarce, work dried up, people were starving. Just when the Covid-related restrictions began to ease, the Lebanese lira went into freefall, losing around 80 per cent of its value. It became practically impossible to buy anything imported, which, in Lebanon, is almost everything save vegetables and fruit. Then the country experienced power cuts lasting up to 22 hours, food rotted in fridges, we drank warm water and, without air-con or fans, spent tortuous nights in the sultry heat, writhing on damp sheets. Dark lines grew under everyone's eyes.

Then, just after 6pm on Tuesday, 4 August, 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in the port, devastating large swathes of Beirut, leaving an estimated 220 dead (at the time of writing), over 100 missing, several thousand injured, and around 200,000 homeless. The ammonium nitrate had been impounded in 2013 from a ship from Georgia en-route to Mozambique, and had been sitting in a warehouse ever since. How this was able to happen is being, and will be, discussed at length by people far better informed than me.

So where does hope fit in now? I am conscious that talking of it in the face of such suffering may seem callous. But, as Rebecca Solnit put it in *Hope in the Dark*,

"hope... is not the belief that everything was, is, or will be fine." Hope, for Solnit, "is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists".

I want to talk about hope because I need to do justice to what I saw the morning after the explosion. I awoke to the high tinkle of broken glass being swept across tiles and tarmac, and the hollow hammerings of window frames and doors being fixed or taken down. The dust clouds had lifted, the sky was blue, and there was a cool breeze. Shattered glass had arranged itself like snow on the roads as cars had driven over it. Windows hung off the balconies, ready to crash down. Metal garage doors were billowed and warped, as if rammed by a truck. In places, the glass and pavement was stained dark red. Church doors, normally locked, were all blasted open. People walked down the streets with huge holdalls and wheeled bags, on their way to meet relatives and friends who had offered to give them somewhere to stay. Strangers, too, were using social media to offer their homes to anyone in need. I saw a man in a white shirt with "Middle East Security" written across the back, and a huge bandage wrapped in a cone around his head. He was chatting to his colleagues with a smile as he

Victory in the Pacific Day

FOR THE FALLEN

*They shall not grow old
as we that are left grow old,*

*Age shall not weary them,
nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of
the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

15 August,
Victory in the Pacific Day,
commemorates
Japan's acceptance of the
Allied demand for
unconditional surrender,
made on 14 August 1945.
For Australians, it meant that
the Second World War
was finally over.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/75th-anniversary-end-world-war-two-wwii>



A Message from our Pastoral Worker - Gina Ang

I hope you are all doing well during this lockdown. A few parishioners have shared with me that their garden and their pantry are in immaculate condition, some are busy cooking, making jams and even starting to prepare the fruits for their Christmas cakes. I know who I am visiting after the lockdown is over. I am thankful that most of us are trying the best we can to do whatever it takes to get through this very difficult time. We lean on each other and we all lean on God who is our strength.

Here is an article from Fr Hsien that I would like to share with you:

In the last few days, I have been sitting with this reflection; "Leaning on God - Some people lean against fence posts when their bodies ache from toil. Some people lean on oak trees, seeking cool shade on hot, humid days. Some people lean on crutches when their limbs won't work for them; and some people lean on each other when their hearts can't stand alone. How long it takes to lean upon you, God of shelter and strength; How long it takes to recognize the truth of where my inner power has its source. All my independence, with its arrogance, stands up and stretches within me, Trying to convince my trembling soul that I can conquer troubles on my own. But the day of truth always comes when I finally yield to you, knowing you are a steady stronghold, a refuge when times are tough... (from Joyce Rupp, Essential Writing, Orbis Book Maryknoll, New York 10545) Thank you offering my strength, for being the oak tree of comfort; thank you for being the sturdy support when the limbs of my life are weak. Praise to you, Eternal Lean-to, for always being there for me. Continue to transform me with the power of your love. Which of you walks in darkness and sees no light?... Lean on God". With a gratitude heart, I wish to say to each of you 'Thank you for being there!' Each person has a purpose and each mattered in the life of our community. We are, each known and named, each called and loved. In absent, we are thinking about one another more often!

I have been spending my time making lots and lots of phone calls to parishioners trying to connect and reach out to one another during this lockdown.

I am excited. Our Prayer Shawl Group will be having our first Prayer Shawl session on Zoom this coming Tuesday, 18th August at 11 am, which is our usual Prayer Shawl time. Please contact me at gina.ang@cam.org.au and I'll send you the invite to the link. If you can't get on, do light a candle and I'll send on a Prayer that we can do together in our own living room.

Our group have been connecting through our email chat group and we occasionally show off photos of our shawls, knitted during the lockdown. We have received cards and even photos of people with our beanies and shawls and that keeps all of us going, or should I say, knitting.

If you or anyone you know, would like to join our group, please let me know. We would love to have you.

I am also currently working with a couple of people online or over the phone on adult sacraments. This is an adult group, we discuss and reflect and hold each other in this journey. So again, if you would like to be involved or are interested to know more, please contact me at Gina.Ang@cam.org.au.

Prayers of the Faithful

Dear Parishioners of OLHC & SFX, we would like to invite you to consider helping on a roster with Prayers of the Faithful. Our evidence suggests people love reading these important prayers. So if you would like to participate on a roster, please give us a call (9435 2178) and leave a message, and we will endeavour to get back to you asap.

Calendar of Events

Sunday, 16 August

10:00am	Montmorency	Mass - live-streamed
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Sunday, 23 August

10:00am	Eltham	Mass - live-streamed
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Sunday, 30 August

10:00am	Montmorency	Mass - live-streamed
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Rosters - 22 & 23 August

Montmorency

Ramsdale, John	PRYR
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Eltham

Dhanasen Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Hall, Vali	Altar Society
Milwain, Gianna	Altar Society

Monty & Eltham : what Lockdown 2.0 looks like for us...



1. Guess who?
2. Lindsay & Anne singing for a Zoom 80th birthday!
3. Guess who?
4. Lindsay checking the waiting room for his U3A class, surprised by a MASKED MAN!
5. Guess who is a Primary Producer?

Please send through your pictures of what Lockdown 2.0 looks like for you. By sending a picture you agree to its use in the bulletin etc.

John Hume - an ordinary family man, I don't think so.....

Tributes from Pope Francis, the Dalai Lama and Bono have been read at the funeral of John Hume, a key figure in Northern Ireland's peace process.

The former leader of the nationalist SDLP, widely regarded as the architect of the Good Friday Agreement, died on Monday, aged 83. With his family and a small number of guests in attendance, it was a socially-distanced funeral for the man who had brought people together. Officiating at requiem mass in St Eugene's Cathedral, the Bishop of Derry, the Most Rev Donal McKeown, read a message from the Vatican. The message read:

"His Holiness Pope Francis was saddened to learn of the death of Mr John Hume and sends the assurance of his prayers to his family and to all who mourn his loss,"

"Mindful of the Christian faith that inspired John Hume's untiring efforts to promote dialogue, reconciliation and peace among the people of Northern Ireland, His Holiness commends his noble soul to the loving mercy of Almighty God."

The message from the Dalai Lama read:

"It was his leadership and his faith in the power of negotiations that enabled the 1998 Good Friday Agreement to be reached. His steady persistence set an example for all of us to follow."

"Although my fellow Nobel laureate is no longer with us, his message about peace and non-violence in the resolution of conflict, no matter how protracted or difficult it may seem to be, will long survive him."

"He lived a truly meaningful life."

Bono, the lead singer of U2, wrote:

"We were looking for a giant and found a man whose life made all our lives bigger."

"We were looking for some superpowers and found clarity of thought, kindness and persistence."

"We were looking for revolution and found it in parish halls with tea and biscuits and late-night meetings under fluorescence."

"We were looking for a negotiator who understood that no-one wins unless everyone wins and that peace is the only victory."

"We were looking for joy and heard it in the song of a man who loved his town so well and his missus even more."

"We were looking for a great leader and found a great servant."

"We found John Hume."

Ireland's President Michael D Higgins and Prime Minister Michael Martin came to pay their respects. First Minister Arlene Foster and Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, represented the power-sharing devolved government of Northern Ireland.

Paying tribute to his late father, John Hume junior, said:

"At this time of planetary fragility, more than ever, he would be urging that we move beyond our flag-based identities, and recognise the need to protect our common home."

"Central to dad's work was his deep appreciation of human interdependency."

"We all need one another, we all have a role to play, and all our roles are of equal importance."

David Blevins, senior Ireland correspondent



Good to hear a story of an ordinary man who achieved extraordinary peace! (M)

Live-Stream Masses

Though restrictions remain, we are grateful to Fr Michael and Fr Terry for continuing to offer the opportunity for us to gather round the table of Eucharist, or as close as we can be for the moment. As we pray this Mass today, let us remember Peter Leyden (our Scottish friend) from 8:30am Mass at Monty. When we are able to regather, Peter's bright, infectious presence will be sadly missed.

We leave the steps below in case you still require them to help stay connected:

1. Go to www.google.com, type: olhc sfx youtube (click search)
2. OLHC 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 it)
5. Then click on any of the Masses or watch the live-streaming of Mass of the day

We take a lesson from the plucky Canaanite woman in today's Gospel, who will not go away until her request is granted by Jesus. Her great Faith has saved her daughter. So in faith, we too persist with our prayers of intercession for our own needs and for our tired, struggling world. As light approaches, speak quietly to yourself of more promising days. Patsy & Team (0429 439 675)

Gospel: Luke 1:39-56

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

And Mary said: 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour; because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid. Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy - according to the promise he made to our ancestors - of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back home.

Reflection

The gospel reading includes both the narrative of Mary's visitation to Elizabeth and her song of praise, the Magnificat. The account of the visitation has both human appeal and theological intent.

We can readily identify with the shared joy of the two unexpectedly pregnant women, one young and unmarried, the other "getting on in years" and barren. Luke's story of their affectionate meeting has fired many a Christian imagination. But his purpose is far more profound than gaining our human interest. The whole scene is permeated by the Holy Spirit; both women are blessed and inspired. But there is a difference. It is Mary's child who is the Lord, and even in the womb the Baptist bears witness to this.

Mary's jubilant song of praise is a mosaic of utterances from the Old Testament. It especially relates to the song of Hannah at her son Samuel's birth (1 Samuel 2:1-10). Luke thus presents Mary as bringing to fulfilment the long succession of Israel's "poor in spirit". She gathers their prayers together in one great hymn of blessing.

This is a very familiar text. The challenge for the reader is to proclaim it with freshness. It invites the congregation to celebrate this feast with Mary's own joy and thankfulness.

Break Open the Word 2020



Gospel: Matthew 15: 21-28

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.' But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. 'Give her what she wants,' they said 'because she is shouting after us.' He said in reply, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.' But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. 'Lord,' she said 'help me.' He replied, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the house-dogs.' She retorted, 'Ah yes, sire; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.' And from that moment her daughter was well again.

Reflection

The gospel story of the Canaanite woman has its counterparts in ancient literature. There were other tales at the time in which powerless petitioners used their wits to win over their lords with a clever word or two.

There is a degree of paradox in the story. In the cut and thrust of the conversation with the (unnamed) woman, Jesus defends himself with the declaration that he "was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel". Then what was he doing in pagan territory of "Tyre and Sidon"? He could hardly have been farther away from Jerusalem. Perhaps he was searching for "lost sheep" rather than seeking pagan disciples, but the location suggests a vulnerability on Jesus' part - he is a long way from home.

It is tempting to put a gloss on Jesus' dismissive reply to the woman. This is uncalled for; it is entirely consistent with the account he gives of his mandate. Nor is it necessary to interpret the woman's words ("Son of David" and "Lord") and behaviour ("kneeling at his feet") as those of a Jewish believer. Her kneeling, for example, may well have been a pragmatic manoeuvre designed to stop Jesus in his tracks.

What is certain is that the woman's feistiness and persistence get her the result she wants. It is also certain that Jesus' ministry from start to finish is focussed on his own people.

Break Open the Word 2020