

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.

Health and Aged Care - Public & Private, October

I cannot believe just how exhausted I feel at this time - when in reality I'm doing nothing! I have never slept or rested so much, but still feel very tired and lethargic! Obviously doing nothing is difficult and certainly boring - thus no need to go to the local doctor because I do not have any symptoms of a cold or annual flu... actually I know that I am physically well. This strange time has turned out to be an alert on our mental health. People who live on their own and have had little contact with other people during this Covid19 time are at risk or certainly vulnerable!

Many young families have managed these months in a wonderful way, while others are climbing up the house walls to try and escape each other! These are still certainly unsettling weeks and I am definitely over it all, hoping to get back to a normal that might exist after the month of October.

In my prayer time, I have been wondering how to get through the month of October and make it creative and supportive for others and my mental health. Trusting that in Victoria - this month coming up might/will be our last in any sense of a 'lockdown'. Four more weeks before any meaningful gatherings and clear opening up of society as we have known it.

I thus have decided to focus my prayer time on 'Gratitude' (in the month of October) to the Health Care workers and Emergency personnel who have been on the front line throughout this year! Yes, Police and Ambulance workers first, then the amazing Doctors & Nurses, Healthcare professionals and those in the aged care sectors - Cleaners and Volunteers who help keep these hospitals and nursing homes open and clean during this terrible virus attack on society, that has lasted so long. I am reminded of my time at Royal Melbourne Hospital for ten years as catholic chaplain and I have been watching in admiration of their workload and the seriousness of the pressures that they have all been under on a daily basis for months. They are truly exhausted!

I am deeply grateful for their ministry to all people in need.

Maybe, as we enter into this final and important month of October, you too might spare a prayer for all of these people - some who you will know as family or friends - who have daily put their lives on the line to help and save us in Victoria.

Michael



WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE become priests, sisters or brothers? Are they uncommonly holy, unusually saint-like? No. They are people who make mistakes, people who aren't afraid to be human while in God's service. Are they people who can't face the competition and cruelty of the 'real' world? No. They are people who believe that through ministry they can immerse themselves in the world and make positive changes. Are they people who don't relate well with other people? No. They are people who love others - people who find real satisfaction chatting with a 93-year-old parishioner, holding the hand of a cancer patient, listening to the troubles of a street-wise teen. They are people with the courage to touch lives, hearts and souls in a high-tech, unchurched world. Are you that kind of person?

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

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

RECONCILIATION

Saturday, 10:30am Monty ~ Terry

1/2 hr prior to any mass said by Michael

Collections last weekend: 20 September 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>

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

Hylar Nagapatan (Philippines)

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Peter Brewer, Tom Way

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Robert Baker, Justine Best, Fr Glen Bourke, 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, Kate Lagerevskij, 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, Bruno Treglia, Isaac Treglia, Aldo Viapiana, Sheryn Zurzolo.

Eltham

For the recently deceased:

George Gunton, Bevan Hall

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, Eileen Culbertson, Jon D'Cruz, Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Marlis Dopheide, Maria George, Dennis Goddard, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Mary Irani, Jack Issai, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Val McDonough, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Jo Porter, Barry Scully, Kath Wheelahan.

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.

Live-Stream Masses

As the number of positive cases trend downward, our spirits begin to rise up and our hearts become tender at the prospect of being with family and friends again, that touching presence we miss and so treasure. Our aching hearts also dream of the time when we are able to gather around the table of Eucharist again. We will share our stories and the pain of what we have all been through, with a sense of Alleluia!

And no, it was not your device that was the problem with live-stream Mass last week, we had not eliminated the gremlin, but hope at 10am this week, all will be well again. Thank you for your patience.

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

Patsy & Team (0429 439 675)



Homily — Going to the Vineyard 2020

It was a Sunday afternoon and a young couple arrived at Sacred Heart Church, St Kilda for the baptism of their baby. Fr Hal Ranger was about to begin the baptism ceremony when he noticed a stranger in the Church who he knew could, well, be quite difficult.

Hal said to the couple quietly: “Look, we can ignore this person and just continue on the ceremony, but he will question and make comments. Or we can invite him in and make him feel welcome.” The couple agreed to invite him.

This man, whom I’ll call George, gratefully accepted the invitation. He was homeless and he had a long grey beard and a pretty dishevelled appearance. At some point during the ceremony, he asked the mother if he could hold the child. The mother looked surprised and not overly comfortable with the request, but she handed the baby to him. He ever so gently took the child in his arms and he then asked if he could kiss the baby. Again the mother didn’t look overly comfortable, but she nodded a yes. George kissed the baby and then said, “You know, I was once loved like you.” Then he handed the baby back to the mother with much delight and gratitude.

What would we have done if we had been in the same position as that mother? Who knows how George had ended up on the streets of St Kilda. Who knows how he was once loved and what had happened to change all this. We will never know.

Why write about this story when today’s Gospel is about a father asking his sons to work in the vineyard? One son said ‘no’ but later thought better of it and went to work in the vineyard, the other said ‘yes’ but didn’t turn up. Jesus told this story in his conversation with the chief priests and elders of the people.

It was a loaded story, a comment on the chief priests and elders saying ‘yes’ to work in the vineyard of the kingdom of God and they hadn’t turned up. It was the tax collectors and the prostitutes who had first said ‘no’ but had thought better of it and had gone to work in the vineyard.

What do we make of all this? We know that the people who best understood Jesus were the people who were the outcasts, the rejected, the despised by so many people. The tax collectors and prostitutes understood Jesus and what he was on about, much more than the leaders of his Jewish tradition.

The chief priests and the elders not only had judged tax collectors and prostitutes but they had judged Jesus as an imposter and they had dismissed him. In doing this, they had said ‘no’ to working in the vineyard. The tax collectors and prostitutes were people who had first said ‘no’, but in understanding Jesus, they had now said ‘yes’ to working in the vineyard.

What might all this say to us? We are living in strange COVID-19 times where we can easily be judgmental of people. We can blame the mistakes of others. We can find racism in our comments about those Afghans who didn’t follow the rules or about the Chinese as starting the virus. We can be angry at the protestors who rally and speak out against the restrictions.

The catch is, we may have good reason to be judgmental, but we can then find ourselves more like the chief priests and the elders in today’s Gospel who think we’re right and we don’t really know the full story. We can lose the way into the vineyard of the kingdom of God where compassion, kindness, forgiveness and mercy are the core of our faith in Jesus.

Think back to George. No-one knew his story of life that day, and most people probably would regard him as a nobody. Maybe he’s the son in today’s Gospel who first said ‘no’, yet went to work in the vineyard. Thank goodness for those young parents who welcomed him.

Terry

106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees - Sunday 27 September 2020

Remembering, working and praying for migrants and refugees

On this 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, we remember, pray for, and commit to working to change the horrible reality of many in ‘our own backyard’. We acknowledge and give thanks for the many parish communities across the state, along with those working within our Catholic social services and other organisations and community groups, who are making considerable efforts to assist people seeking asylum, refugees, and other migrants who hold temporary visas — many remain in harsh circumstances in detention centres, and the majority of the 115,000 living in the Australian community have been deemed ineligible for any federal government support payments during COVID-19, making many at risk of homelessness and despair. In his message for World Day for Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis tells us, “You have to know in order to understand” and “It is necessary to be close, in order to serve”. Only when different elements of the community work together — individuals, parishes, schools, universities and organisations — can we effectively advocate for systemic change and provide for people’s immediate necessities and other spiritual and social needs. We encourage you to read more, [here \(www.css.org.au\)](http://www.css.org.au).



A story from before COVID – Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project

One day recently a man (we will call him Reza) was released from Yongah Hill Immigration Detention Centre north of Perth. He had been detained for two years because he had been accused of something which proved not to be true. Then he was continued to be detained because his visa had expired. He was released with \$60 which he spent on some accommodation overnight waiting for a plane back to Melbourne. Reza



has a wife and teenage son. The Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project has been supporting this family for two years and since Reza has no work rights, they need ongoing assistance. There is no income support for families such as these — they do not qualify for JobSeeker, JobKeeper or any other Government funding. We encourage you to find more, [here \(www.basp.org.au\)](http://www.basp.org.au).

The ones with the least give the most: Sr Rita Malavisi RSJ

Wednesday 23 September 2020

Communications Office

This Sunday 27 September marks the **2020 World Day of Migrants and Refugees**. To gain some insight into the daily realities faced by displaced people, we spoke to Sr Rita Malavisi, rsj, long-term volunteer with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) and recent winner of the National Volunteer of the Year Award from the Fundraising Institute of Australia for her fundraising efforts for the ASRC. Sr Rita has been with the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart since 1986, and for the last 18 years, has volunteered with the ASRC, visiting refugees in detention centres regularly, to bring hope to a place where hope is often in short supply. She is currently living in Melbourne, completing her Master of Arts - Pastoral Studies from Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, after just having completed the Institute of Religious Formation Program from CTU, Chicago.

Could you tell us more about the National Volunteer of the Year award in 2020 from the fundraising institute of Australia?

Around July last year, the ASRC, they calculated that I had raised thousands of dollars for the ASRC through my different efforts through schools, or advocating for social justice or getting a group together called Nuns on the Run, where we run for refugees in the Melbourne Marathon.

Every year for the Melbourne Marathon, I've done the 10k run for refugees. When we did a Nuns on the Run team. And for that year we had a super-duper fundraiser. The team of nuns on the run raised \$17,000 for that one year. I raised \$4,000. Because of that, they nominated me to the Fundraising Institute of Australia. I had no idea.

I won the Victorian award in November last year so they Skyped me from Chicago to let me know that I'd won the Victorian award. And then in February this year, they rang me to say that I'd won the national award.

What motivates you in this work?

In the bible, Matthew 25:35 says, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I believe that Catholic Social Teaching also takes its message from early in the Old Testament. That's where the respect and care owing to the stranger is established. In the book of Leviticus we find the following exhortation: When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:33-34).

Why do we do the things that we do? For me, it's also being a sister of St Joseph following the footsteps of Mary MacKillop who said in one of her letters, 'Be kind to foreigners. Remember I was a foreigner once, and as such was never laughed at, nor unkindly treated' (letter dated 6 March 1900).

In my family psyche, there's been displacement. When anyone asks me about my origins and my family, I always start with 'oh, it's a long story'. I am first born Australian. My mother and father came to Australia from Syria in 1957. My brother was born in Syria. My mother's background was Palestinian and my father's background Italian. In 1948, my mother's family had to leave Palestine and returned to Syria. Displacement is in my family story, so of course I'm going to work with asylum seekers and refugees.

You took students so from a variety of different schools. What was their response?

I was working at Penola Catholic College at the time. We decided to visit a detention centre as part of the Christian service program, which still continues. Whenever asylum seekers and refugees and migrants came up in their classes in their RE topics, the students would say, 'they're boat people! They're queue jumpers! We shouldn't let them in.' and so a couple of teachers and I thought, why don't we offer students the opportunity to visit a detention centre so that they can meet people genuinely coming into our country to escape persecution? So we talked to students and took a group.

There was one student, one of the most vocal against asylum seekers, who came with us. And after visiting, her life was changed. She was shocked. 'They're not supposed to be in there, we're going to do something about it!' She then motivated the other students to come with her on more visits.

I've found that if you bring a person to meet an asylum seeker, it will change them completely.

That's one of the reasons why I started working and volunteering for the ASRC more than 18 years ago. It's not until you meet someone that they become a person, not just a label. Most of these people are fleeing persecution; persecution unto death. They're not just economic migrants, or just people coming here for a bit of a better life.

Do these people continue visiting or volunteering by themselves.? Did it start a chain reaction of care and compassion?

Some went on themselves to be teachers, particularly the ones that I reconnected with post-school. At the school, whenever someone else heard that they that someone else going to the detention centre, others would say, can we go as well? It creates little waves almost. The little ripple effect that goes out.

What is ASRC doing during COVID? How are these people who are arguably some of the most vulnerable people in our society coping?

Since COVID, the number of families that the ASRC are helping has doubled. At the moment the ASRC are feeding about 1,400 people fortnightly with food delivery. So that's about 500 families or 500 households.

Many people in the refugee community had entry-level employment, especially in hospitality, so they lost their jobs. These people are either asylum seekers who have come to Australia and have been accepted as refugees or asylum seekers waiting to be processed. They're living in the community, working, but because they are mainly working in hospitality or cleaning, most of them have lost employment. And they're not covered under jobkeeper; there's no safety net for them.

That's a bleak picture, with so many people basically dependent on the ASRC. What's the way out?

If people want to help, they can always do an online supermarket delivery to the ASRC. During restrictions, they're not allowed to accept donated goods directly. Coles does free delivery to the ASRC on a particular day. So, if I buy some groceries and have them delivered to the SASRC, I don't have to pay a delivery cost. The information is there on the website or the Facebook page. They're also still taking financial donations for their September appeal.

I'm supporting a school around the corner here once a month to do a grocery drop off. We've got Fitzroy flats right here and Collingwood flats. Families there are doing it tough too. Families everywhere are doing it tough.

The lockdown is affecting everyone - we look at our own situations and sometimes forget about other people, including those from refugee communities, and how much more difficult it probably is for them. It throws everything into perspective.

Maybe the lesson is to think of ourselves less and other people more. I take my inspiration from Pope Francis. In his first pastoral visit out of Rome after he was made Pope was to the island of Lampedusa in 2013 where thousands of refugees have lost their lives. He did that so that we could see his witness. It's our duty as Christians, as followers of Jesus, to reach out to those who are most in need. Afterward at that Mass he prayed: Father we beg forgiveness for our indifference to so many of our brothers and sisters.

And our Australian Catholic Bishops have said that so many times in different little things that you know that we have to respond. These bishops are continually asking us to reach out to those who are in need. In their 2015-16 social justice statement, the Australian Bishops talk about migrants and refugees saying: 'we have lost sight that these are the faces of our brothers and sisters who are lost, hurting and displaced.'

You were studying in Chicago earlier . When your studies finish, do you have any plans to go back to and volunteer for the ASRC or continue your volunteering activities?

It's depending on where I'm appointed. But somewhere in my life, I will make room to work with asylum seekers. And I'm not sure which organisation that will be with. Social Justice is a passion for me. Catholic social teaching is a passion for me, it will always be a part of my life. I will still be advocating for asylum seekers wherever I am.

Are there any connections that you've made over the years that have particularly stood out to you?

There was a family that I knew from where I was when I was working in Footscray. The three children were all Primary School at that time. I have remained firm friends with that family and two of the children are adults now, permanent residents in our country, and they have their own children. When I met them, they got letters from the government to say they had two weeks before they were going to be deported. So you work with those people to help them to get their cases heard. You really stay close to those families.

You're always building lifelong connections with people the first guy I went to visit in detention, he will always be special to me. When he was released from detention, a group of them were put into empty presbytery in Balwyn. Two of us volunteers drove there the night they were released and we saw them walking down the street. The joy in us and the joy in them! Your world just expands.

When someone goes out to visit a detention centre, what's it like for someone in detention who meets with them? Is meeting a random assortment of people who are genuinely welcoming and trying to help something that really makes a difference?

Yes. When the system imprisons them or detains them and gives them no hope whatsoever, the visitors are the ones that bring hope for them. Even though we are not professionals, we're not lawyers, we're not going there with a particular purpose, we are there as companions. We're there to make their time pass a little bit easier, a little bit quicker. Our role is also to love them, and to say, 'we support you even though the whole system has you detained. We don't agree with it. And we will be here with you.' Didn't Jesus say 'whatever you do for the least of these you do for me?'

One lesson I learned is that I go there to help them, but it's actually the people who've got the least are the ones that give the most. I get more out of it than what I'm giving to it, and I didn't realise that that was going to happen as well. They give me hope, by what they're going through. They've got nothing to give me.

Here's a story: there was a youth minister that went to visit. It was his birthday coming up. He was a trained chef. The boys in detention, there were about 10 of them, these boys saved at the butter portions for the week and they made a cake using two-minute noodles. That was the birthday cake. They put the butter portions into the two-minute noodles to make it more tasty. Now, here they come presenting the two-minute noodle plate to the trained chef. And to this day he still says to me that was the best birthday cake ever. The boys had nothing to give but their butter portions for the week to make his birthday cake from two-minute noodles. The ones who have got the least give the most.

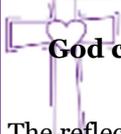
If you'd like to donate food to ASRC, click [here](#).

Visit the ASRC [website here](#) and Facebook page [here](#).

PRAYER IS A MOVING FORCE in vocations development. Prayer is effective; prayer is powerful; prayer is essential. Few are called to priesthood or religious life, but all are called to pray for vocations.



OLHC and SFX Caring Group



God comforts us, so we may comfort others.
2 Corinthians 1:4

The reflection that started our catch up last Tuesday on Zoom. Thank God for technology, we were able to see each other and share with one another how we are travelling in this Lockdown.

We also had some 'zoom tutoring', so don't shy away. If you want to come on next time, there is always someone, who will be happy to walk you through 'zoom'.

It was nice to see that we come together as one, both communities of Eltham and Montmorency. We are The Caring Group - One in the Bond of Love!

We realized in the conversation that we all have our ups and downs, but at the end of the day, we are always ready to reach out to one another. I can't help going back to these words, "God comforts us, so we can comfort others".

We had some ideas and suggestions, looked into how we can reach and stretch our hands out so others can hold on to it.

Some of the ideas we came up with are:

1. If anyone has a group, family group, prayer shawls, craft, rosary, walking, golf, etc, please do contact the office, so it can be published in the bulletin. We can reach out to more people who may be looking for some ways to fill their time in this lockdown or just want to connect.
2. Walking connection: if you are walking on your own and would like a partner to walk with, we can put out some names and you can pair up and walk with someone.
3. Sharing of meals: we have temporarily stopped this in Stage 4, but when we ease the restrictions, we may consider bringing this back. If you are cooking a meal or baking a cake and have an extra to spare, you can drop it off to someone who may need or appreciate the gesture. It's a way of spreading God's love.
4. Christmas plans and ideas: Christmas is not that far away. Hopefully we are able to be as normal as we can be by then, but while we are now in lockdown we can make some plans of how we can spread Christmas joy to both our communities. We have suggestions of colouring picture of baubles, decorating tea lights, making cards and dropping them in letter boxes in both Eltham and Montmorency.
5. Reaching out to residents in Nursing homes and Aged Care, Asylum Seekers and Refugees by cards and little notes to brighten up their days.

We look forward to more ideas. Please contact me at gina.ang@cam.org.au if you would like to know more and have ideas to share. We are in this together. Let us share God's comfort and love for us with one another. **Gina**

Calendar of Events

Sunday, 27 September

10:00am	Montmorency	Mass - live-streamed (https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE)
---------	-------------	---

Sunday, 4 October

10:00am	Eltham	Mass - live-streamed (https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE)
---------	--------	---

Rosters - 3 & 4 October

Montmorency

Ramsdale, John	PRYR
----------------	------

Eltham

Reardon, Kathy	Altar Society
Scully, Helen	Altar Society
Stewart Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue

Join us for a Prayer Shawl session on Zoom

Our Prayer Shawl Group will be meeting on Zoom on Thursday, 1st October 2020 @ 7.30pm.

We are a group that comes together in prayer and friendship, to knit shawls, blankets, beanies, etc. We share our stories, our ups and downs, have a cuppa and also teach each other how to knit or crochet.

Our shawls, once completed, will be blessed, wrapped



and sent out to anyone in need of comfort and love.

Come join us, we love to see you.

Zoom Invite:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86383440558?pwd=ckZuUFhuV3R1cFAxYS9lL0xPZWxiQT09>

If you wish to know more about what we do or need a shawl for yourself or someone you know, please contact Gina.Ang@cam.org.au

HOLINESS IS A CHALLENGE for us all, whatever our specific vocations. We are called to be holy in all aspects of our lives. This is an ongoing process, often slowed by setbacks. When the saints were alive, they did not regard themselves as saints; rather, they knew they were sinners - and they strived to be saints. The process of becoming holy is, even for saints, painful and filled with struggle.

Know you are a sinner; strive to be a saint.



LIVING WATER

(<https://www.thelivingwater.com.au/blog/the-grace-of-being-present-even-in-times-of-suffering>)

September 14, 2020

The grace of being present, even in times of suffering

How can it be that when we take time to sit for a while each day in silence, a new way of being seeps almost imperceptibly into every corner of life? It sounds so easy, to sit down twice a day in silence, beyond words, beyond thought, beyond image-making - 'pure prayer' our Christian forebears called it. But it isn't easy; we don't succumb to this sort of radical simplicity as readily as we might hope. We have to learn how to stick at it. Yet if we do persevere, regular spending of time being inwardly present really does begin to spill over into our daily activity and from time to time makes itself especially clearly realised. Two such times of realisation have come for me in times of struggle and pain.

Some years ago my husband and I teamed up with another couple and sank everything we had into a project to form a small community at the service of others. It didn't work out; we had to give up on it, sell up and part company. It wasn't an easy house to sell and it all took time. I could so easily have fallen into the all-too-usual human patterns of regret, anxiety, anger, blame, impatience to escape into a new future, wondering why it had happened, where God had gone etc.

But I found myself graced by a quite different approach. I had come to understand that God is in every moment and that there are blessings in every day, if only we are clear-eyed and present enough to notice them and open-hearted enough to receive them. And so it proved to be. There were indeed blessings in every day and that difficult period was transformed from being a time of arid, impatient waiting to a time of growth, learning, fruitfulness and deepening trust in God.

This January my husband died. I knew what it was like to grieve a beloved as my first husband had died many years previously. And I knew that the love between us ran even deeper than the first time. I wondered how it would be. I wasn't foolish enough to think that years of silent meditation would make it easy. And it hasn't made it easy in one sense, but it has transformed it.

The gift of grace this time was to realise that I had to be present to all of it, to tears, to joy, grief, friendship, loneliness, new growth, pain, healing, calm, discomfort, comfort, new insights, new creativity, confusion - all of it. I needed neither to fear the difficult emotions, trying to keep them at bay, nor to hold on to the them. The difficult emotions have their due season; they come and they go. Everything is transient, except God, as St Teresa of Avila reminds us in the prayer found in her Bible. *

I learned to accept the joyful times, moments of deep peace, love and healing too, but without trying to prolong or keep hold of those times either; they come and they go. Everything has its season.

A text from St Paul had hovered around the edges of my mind for many years. I had always somehow understood it didn't just apply to food for the stomach, and now it was coming home for me in a much more profound way: "For I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little and what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and being in need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." 4:11-13)

**Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away.
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.*



*Liz is a member of The World Community for Christian Meditation and lives in London. She has served the meditation community in various capacities over the past 25 years, including a term as UK National Coordinator. She now focuses on teaching meditation, leading weekend and seven day retreats and offering spiritual direction. She is drawn increasingly to the Christian mystical tradition and to contemplative approaches to the Bible. She also has a developing interest in meditation in prisons, and in 12 step programmes for freedom from addiction and in contemplative approaches to spiritual direction. She contributed two chapters to the book 'The Journey to the Heart' on the Christian mystics and recorded the CD 'Images of Meditation' with its accompanying booklet.

After graduating with a degree in Latin, Liz pursued a career in the UK public library system to senior management level. Retiring early, she took the opportunity to study for an MA in Theology.

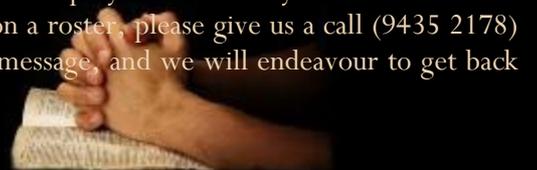
For more information about Christian meditation see the [Christian meditation section](#) of *Living Water*. See also www.wccmaustralia.org.au or www.wccm.org

FAMILY LIFE CAN BUILD VALUES integral to a strong vocation - whether to priesthood, religious life or marriage. Teaching your children to value commitment, service and prayer will help them make strong vocation decisions as adults and live out those vocations with success and fulfilment.



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.



Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go," but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir," but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'



Reflection

In between last Sunday's parable and this, much has happened in Matthew's gospel. Jesus has made his mock triumphal entry into Jerusalem and has cleansed the temple; he has also taught and healed and engaged in the prophetic act of cursing the fig tree. This section of the gospel (20:17 - 21:27) is worth reading through because it provides important context for today's parable.

The entire gospel drama is coming to a climax. The last days of Jesus' life are under way. His final confrontation with the forces gathering against him is about to occur. A preliminary skirmish between Jesus and the Jewish authorities is now taking place in the temple. They challenge his authority in vain. This prompts Jesus to respond with a series of parables which we hear over three Sundays, starting today.

As Matthew presents them, Jesus uses these parables to accuse Israel's leaders of wilful refusal to accept him or the Baptist before him. But by recording them in his gospel Matthew is alerting later generations of religious leaders to the perennial danger of resistance to God's call. The risk extends to church communities in general and to their individual members. The categorical judgement that Jesus passes - "Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him" - makes sense in the context of Jesus' own impending condemnation.

Break Open the Word 2020

Prayers of the Faithful for 27 Sep 2020 Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Jane McKinna

Celebrant: Aware of God's ever-presence with us as we live each day, we turn to our loving God to hear our own silent prayers and those prayers which we share today as a community.

We pray for our faith communities here and around the world. During this time when we cannot meet as a formal faith community to worship, that our home prayers continue to sustain and strengthen our faith until we can once again celebrate together.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for school children who are trying to learn and grown during this lockdown period. May their staged return to school after the holidays help to provide an environment of learning and rekindling of the friendships and support needed to help children grow.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for our natural land and all it provides to us. We pray that the custodians of our lands, governments, farmers, miners, Indigenous communities and all who manage our lands are responsible and care for these precious resources so future generations can enjoy the earth's natural gifts.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We ask God to comfort and bless all those who are sick and in need of gentle healing. We pray for those whose illness cannot be fixed by time or medicine. May the gift of faith support those experiencing such challenges.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have gone to eternal rest with our loving God. We especially remember George Gunton & Bevan Hall, and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Peter Brewer & Tom Way. 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: Loving and gentle God, we ask that you hear our prayers and that you help us to live rich and full spiritual lives.

All: Amen.