



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

You may remember a short film of many years ago. I can't remember the title, but it could have been 'The Parable of the Walls'. It's the story of a man who built a house in a remote part of the countryside, seeking to escape the world. He opted for self-sufficiency as much as he could and he lived alone, shut out from contact with the world of people. Perhaps he had been hurt in life, perhaps he had been way too busy in the world of work. Who knows?

One day two little children were playing nearby and they were intrigued by the house and decided to take a look. It was an odd house with very few windows, but eventually they found a way to look inside. They peeped through a curtain and their eyes met the eyes of a sad and lonely man. They ran off into the countryside but their laughter and smile had touched the heart of the man. He realised his way was not the way to live and so the walls of his house came tumbling down as he sought once more the world of people.

It's a rather poignant parable for us to consider today. In finding our way through these Covid-19 days, so many of us are living in isolation, where the walls of our house protect us from the world of people. Even beyond our house, we find ourselves walled in from the world of overseas travel, our countries protected from one another. Even our States, and our city of Melbourne have boundaries we are not to break.

This is understandable of course, if we are to protect ourselves and others from the virus. But it comes at a cost and many of us are longing for the day when we can gather together, enjoy the company of one another, come to Church again and resume some normality of life.

How will this look, as little by little, we move out of lockdown? We'll probably be social distancing and wearing masks for some considerable time. How will this affect our relating to one another?

We look at our Gospel today for some word of guidance. Jesus is asked what is the greatest commandment of the law, to which he replies, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. The second resembles it. You must love your neighbour as yourself.'

It's the way of love that is the way to live. We can wonder who is our neighbour and we are to realise that our neighbour is more than the person who lives next door, more than our friendship circle, more than our work colleagues, more than the family to which we belong. Our neighbour is the stranger, our neighbour is the person we don't want to know, our neighbour is even the person who has hurt us. And it's the way of love that we must live.

It's interesting in these Covid-19 times how the mask is a symbol of protection and distancing. Do you find on your walks a wall of apartness as we pass each other with masks hiding any smile? We don't even say hello, as if the stranger is someone we must avoid.

Again we can say we must be careful in these corona virus times. But when the time comes for us to be more engaged with each other, let's remember it's the way of love that is to be our way. Will we hug, will we kiss, will we shake hands or will we let the mask become a wall over our heart as we protect ourselves from the world of people.

The way of love ultimately is the way of hospitality, connection, affection, compassion. The man in that film, 'the parable of the walls' eventually realised this and we too realise that walls that separate us from one another are not the way to live. And perhaps it will be the children who will best lead us when the walls of corona virus tumble down. We pray this day comes soon.

**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



*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](mailto:terry.kean@cam.org.au)

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

[michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au](mailto:michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au)

Barry Caldwell

#### **Parish Office**

86 Mayona Road

9435 2178

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

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

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

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

Gina Ang:

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

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

Peter Williams:

Child Safety Officer

[SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au](mailto:SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au)

Website:

[www.pol.org.au/montmorency](http://www.pol.org.au/montmorency)

[www.pol.org.au/eltham](http://www.pol.org.au/eltham)

(pol stands for Parish OnLine)

Facebook:

St Francis Xavier Parish Montmorency

Monty & Eltham Newsletter & Facebook items:

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

#### **Schools**

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: Mr Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

[principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au)

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

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Mr Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

[principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au)

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

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Mr Chris Ray: 9439 7824

[school@olheltham.catholic.edu.au](mailto:school@olheltham.catholic.edu.au)

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

#### **RECONCILIATION**

Saturday, 10:30am Monty ~ Terry

1/2 hr prior to any mass said by Michael

#### **Collections last weekend: 18 October 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/CDFpayMontmorency>  
Eltham - <https://bit.ly/CDFpayEltham>

#### **Montmorency**

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Kevern Billings, Salvatore Cantone, Anne Haslam, Nelly Kandelaars, Frank Salmic Snr, Ivan Skender, Bill Tapley*

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, Angus Kossatz, Kate Lagerewskij, Erin McLindon, Hasti Momeni, Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland, Montagna Mustica, Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen, Mercy Ocon, Ron Pfeil, Susan Phelan, Andrew Pighin, Anthony Salvatore, Mary Salvatore, Sr Amor Samonte RGS (Philippines), Maria Schroeders, Jeanette Steward, John Tobin, Bruno Treglia, Isaac Treglia, 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:

*Gina Ang, Robyn Atherton, Ray Bowman, Geoff Bunton, Andrew & Lucinda Collier, Albina Croce, Eileen Culbertson, Jon D'Cruz, Ruth Decker, Dennis Goddard, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Jack Issai, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Moira Lyons, Val McDonough, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Kath Wheelahan.*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

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

### **The Bottom Line**

Moses drew the bottom line for the people of God when he presented the stone tablets to them at the base of Sinai: *Here are ten things you must, and must not, do.* Love God, honour your parents; don't lie, steal, kill. Most of us know the commandments well enough to know when we break them, without peeking back at Exodus.

To ask - which commandment of God is the greatest? - is a bit like asking for a hierarchy of evil for future reference. As Robert Orbin says, most of us would like to be delivered from evil - but would like to keep in touch. The great commandment of Jesus doesn't give us that option. Loving God with heart, soul, and mind is a pretty exclusive commitment. When it comes to life commitments, even a little infidelity is too much.

***How does your commitment to God measure up against the Ten Commandments?***



***How does it measure against the love command of Jesus?***

Express your love for God this week in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Express your love for your neighbour, near and far, in concrete and significant ways. *"These two commandments are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs on them".*

GPBS eNews ([www.gpbs.com.au](http://www.gpbs.com.au))

At a time of increasing fractiousness, *Fratelli Tutti* is a powerful reimagining of the human predicament as a shared opportunity for mutual enrichment, in which the gifts and needs of the other are respected and honoured. Yet the experiences of women are neglected, their voices unheard / BY LIZ DODD

# Silent witness

The day *Fratelli Tutti* came out I was between three crises. Two of the guests at the east London soup kitchen and drop-in centre where I volunteer had been evicted from their temporary accommodation. Neither had any recourse to state support; our emergency tent was already loaned out, and one man's meagre possessions, dumped on the pavement by his landlord, were disintegrating in the same rainstorm that was hampering my attempts to cycle between drop-offs with a leaking pannier full of hot meals and sliced bread.

So it took me until the evening to sit down with the lengthy document, a call to universal solidarity that - as I'd hoped - gave spiritual impetus to our efforts. It explained why our volunteers spend Sundays stirring vats of rice, waiting in gridlocked traffic to deliver a family's food for a week, why I sat against the radiator while I read *Fratelli Tutti* with rain dripping from my hair on to its pages. My first reaction, as a newswoman, was that Pope Francis could do with an editor. After two further read-throughs, I feel differently.

To come alongside the Pope when he says there is no such thing as just war, or an over-riding right to private property, or that "each country also belongs to the foreigner, inasmuch as [its] goods must not be denied to a needy person coming from elsewhere", you have to try to inhabit the prophetic thoughtscape he sketches at first. One where your neighbour is no longer defined by geography or biology, but by need. Once inside, concepts such as "self-defence" or nuclear deterrence stop making sense: what, after all, qualifies as "self" in the Kingdom of God?

The response to the encyclical, on my corner of Twitter, was dizzied. "My man did it, he actually did it," said one of my favourite left-wing Tweeters, of the passage on the universal destination of goods. But there was a more muted response from the women I follow: the kind of resigned, bittersweet joy we know too well.

Of the 292 sources cited across the 288 footnotes in *Fratelli Tutti*, none are women. You do not hear from a female voice in this encyclical at all. Not Dorothy Day on voluntary poverty or peacemaking, nor St Clare of Assisi on downward mobility, nor Elizabeth Johnson on deep ecology and the suffering environment, nor Helen Prejean on the death penalty.

When I and two other women journalists put together the lead story for *The Tablet's* news pages last weeks, all the lay responses to the encyclical we gathered came from women. This was not deliberate: who better than the heads of Cafod, Pax Christi and the St Vincent de Paul Society to speak about local and global poverty, peacemaking and migration?

I was troubled to see that - with a few notable exceptions, such as the US-based theologian and ethicist Kevin Ahearn, who did the hard work of cataloguing *Fratelli Tutti's* footnotes - our male allies in justice and peace work were strangely silent about this omission. Yes, "brothers and sisters" is used throughout the encyclical; yes, the wonderful Anna Rowlands led the launch press conference; yes, there are nods to women's emancipation in the document. But this is linguistic, and theological, whitewashing so long as the Church acts as if we have nothing to contribute.

At least when the papal biographer (and my friend) Austen Ivereigh wrote, "fascinating how all the faux indignation about *Fratelli Tutti's* supposed gender exclusivity has vanished in the hours since its publication", he stayed around to engage with the backlash - even clarifying that he meant "misplaced" indignation rather than manufactured. I won't name names, but many of the Pope's most vocal, male supporters have overlooked the issue, as if to say: this encyclical is everything we hoped for, in most places. Don't rock the boat. Thing is, rocking boats is Jesus' speciality.

Of the women's voices I wish had been included in the encyclical, the one I missed most was that of

Margaret Anna Cusack, or Mother Clare. A prophetic peacemaker, anti-poverty campaigner and advocate for women's rights, she is the founder of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace (CSJP), whose charism centres on bringing about peace through social justice. Last week I was accepted into her Congregation as a Candidate. Discerning a call to Religious life in the middle of a pandemic has involved a lot of listening: to spiritual guides, mentors, to myself and my desires, but above all to God, when he ignites in my heart an idea, something like this from the CSJP Constitutions: "Our charism of peace challenges us to prophetic risk so that God's reign may be more fully realised."

I experienced moments like this when I read *Fratelli Tutti*. But I can't help but feel there would have been more if I'd recognised my sisters' - and Sisters' - voices and vocations in the text. In the encyclical, Pope Francis talks about "hidden exiles who are treated as foreign bodies in society". This is the experience of women in the Church. Just like the wounded traveller in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the analogy at the heart of *Fratelli Tutti*, it is so often the priests and religious people that walk on past us. Maybe because this has been our lived experience, it is often women who, in solidarity, cross over to help: to accompany trafficked women, to face arrest at the gates of nuclear weapons silos; to make sure that the last thing a man electrocuted on death row sees is the smile of someone who loves them. Why are none - not one - of them allowed to speak in this letter?

As Pope Francis has so skilfully outlined, a society that normalises universal maleness has brought about conditions of extreme injustice and inequality. Perhaps what we need, for a change, is sisterhood. For me, that is what the future looks like: it is beautiful and inspiring.

Liz Dodd is *The Tablet's* home news editor.



In his new encyclical, Pope Francis draws on the example of his namesake, the Saint of Assisi, to inspire the people of the world to believe that even at this time of political and moral crisis, transformation can be achieved / **BY CHRISTOPHER LAMB**

# A better way is possible

A rising tide of populist nationalism. Polarised debates that leave people in a permanent state of confrontation. A global pandemic which has exposed the weakness of free markets. Ideologies and hatred being spread on social media.

As Pope Francis writes in his new encyclical letter, the world is showing signs of a certain regression”.

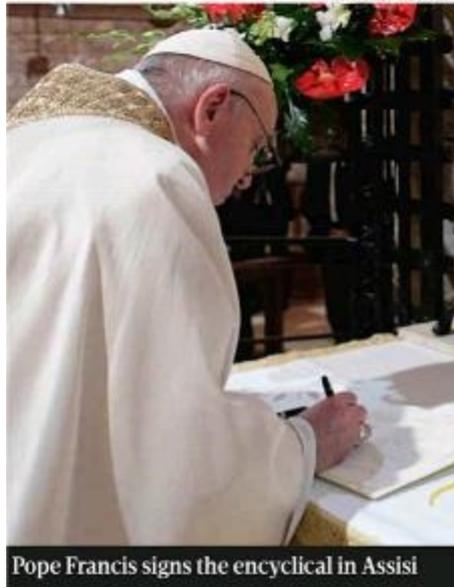
*Fratelli Tutti* is the 83-year-old Roman pontiff’s attempt to show that a better way is possible. Covid-19 has shown that we are a “global community, all in the same boat”. The Pope calls for a new kind of politics, one which is kinder and more tender, open to dialogue and expressing love of neighbour.

To adapt the popular prayer attributed to St Francis: “Where there is populism, Pope Francis focuses on people; where there is nationalism, he calls for reform of the United Nations; where there is individualism, he pushes for solidarity; where there is digital trolling, he asks for kindness; where there is inequality, he urges fairer distribution; when politicians hate, he recommends dialogue; when there is ideology, he calls for genuine faith.”

The encyclical takes an uncompromising stand against the “myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism” that Francis sees growing across Europe, the United States and parts of Latin America. One official in Rome put it to me this way: “It’s a kick in the head to the rising tide of barbarism.”

The encyclical is the third major document of Francis’ pontificate. The first, *Evangelii Gaudium*, an apostolic constitution, offers a manifesto for church renewal. The second, *Laudato Si’*, an encyclical, recasts the Church’s teaching on protecting the natural world. And his third, *Fratelli Tutti*, is a natural next step, as it looks to repair and enrich relationships across the human family. If the message of *Laudato Si’* is “Everything is connected”, the message of *Fratelli Tutti* is “Everyone is connected”.

The 43,000-word document contains 287 paragraphs, and brings together all the elements in the Pope’s teaching on social justice, politics and the common good. The encyclical is not a direct response to the coronavirus but, as the



Pope explains, the pandemic “unexpectedly erupted” while he was writing it and is “exposing our false securities”.

There are three points that stand out when reading the encyclical.

First, it shows that at the heart of the Francis pontificate is a Gospel-based leadership rooted in the spirit of St Francis of Assisi, the Pope’s namesake. The text was signed in Assisi and released on 4 October, the feast day of the saint renowned for his message of peace, dialogue and care for creation. In *Fratelli Tutti* (the title is taken from the writings of St Francis), the Pope approaches the complexities of global politics with the story of the Good Samaritan and the story of St Francis’ 1219 peace mission, where he crossed the battle lines of the Crusades to meet the Sultan of Egypt in a bid to end the conflict.

Both stories emphasise crossing the existential borders which separate people. St Francis, the Pope writes, had an “openness of heart, which knew no bounds and transcended differences of origin, nationality, colour or religion”. Francis’ reflections on the contemporary political situation and his warnings about nationalism and populism are an attempt to apply the Gospel in the spirit of the poor man (*il poverello*) from Assisi.

The parable of the Good Samaritan, Francis points out, is not “abstract moralising, nor is its message merely social and ethical” but shows how

humanity can be changed by coming into contact with suffering. Francis’ vision is non-ideological, and its power is in its simplicity. In *Fratelli Tutti* he critiques both ends of the political spectrum - the free market will not resolve the world’s problems now will liberal approaches which don’t offer a “shared narrative” and ignore “human weakness:. Instead he focuses on practical actions which, step by step, build the Kingdom of god. Far from rejecting the work of politicians, he praises politics as an attempt to put charity into action. “While one person can help another by providing something to eat, the politician creates a job,” the Pope writes.

Here we come to the second point, which is how Francis’ encyclical sits within the Catholic Social Teaching tradition and seeks to apply it to a contemporary context.

One development of the tradition can be found in the Pope’s reflection on the centuries-old Just War teaching, which sets the conditions that would make armed conflict morally justifiable. Although he stops just short of abolishing the theory altogether, he writes only of the “potential right” to go to war and warns that the development of nuclear and chemical weapons means they have an “uncontrollable destructive power over great numbers of innocent civilians”.

One of the conditions of a Just War is that, even when going to war is morally justified, only proportionate force is used. “In recent decades, every single war has been ostensibly ‘justified’,” Francis explains. “It is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a ‘just war’. Never again war!” Francis is pushing the Church a step closer to a complete rejection of war, a year after his visit to Japan when he declared that the possession - and not just the use - of nuclear weapons was immoral.

*Fratelli tutti* is the first papal encyclical to offer a detailed critique of digital culture. The Pope warns that “social aggression has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices” and that ideologies have been given “free reign”. Social media, he says, has seen “some political figures” say things in the “crudest of

terms” which in the past would have risked the loss of universal respect. In chapter six, Francis warns of the “parallel monologues” taking place on social media, the discrediting and insulting of opponents and divisive political campaigns. “The heroes of the future will be those who can break with this unhealthy mindset and determine respectfully to promote truthfulness,” he writes. The Pope’s remedy is an “authentic social dialogue” which respects other points of view and uses digital medial in a way that seeks a genuine encounter. The third striking point in the encyclical is that it shows the Pope’s willingness to be critical of the Church. He pitches the document to “all people of goodwill”. He draws inspiration from non-Catholic sources such as Martin Luther King Jr, Mahatma Gandhi and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Why did it take so long for the church to condemn slavery and violence, he asks, pointing out that “we have no excuses” not to stand against contemporary injustices. Yet there are still those, Francis writes, “who appear to feel encouraged or at least permitted by their faith to support varieties of narrow and violent nationalism, xenophobia and contempt, and even the mistreatment of those who are different.”

**The Pope’s** encyclical will amplify the collision course he is already embarked on with some in the church. They include some conservative US Catholics, particularly those who have aligned themselves with President Donald Trump. *Fratelli Tutti* reiterates the church’s opposition to the death penalty at a time when William Barr, the US attorney general and a prominent Catholic, has reintroduced executions by the federal government after a gap of 16 years.

The Pope’s strong critiques of contemporary capitalism have already upset a number of wealthy Americans, including big donors to Catholic institutions. In the encyclical he declares that the right to private property is a “secondary natural right” to the principle of the universal destination of goods. This is a reaffirmation of the traditional teaching of the Church, but comes after several years during which some have tried to blend an endorsement of unfettered economic liberalism with Catholic teaching.

**Francis is** willing to upset some elements in the Church if it means bringing Catholic Social Teaching to a wider audience. On Monday the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb,

tweeted that “my brother, Pope Francis’ message” in *Fratelli Tutti* “addresses people of goodwill and living conscience, and restores scruples to humanity”. It is also, the Grand Imam adds, a continuation of the human fraternity document the Pope and the Grand Imam signed in Abu Dhabi last year, which set out to deepen interreligious dialogue and co-operation.

Francis’ message runs counter to a contemporary political culture in which the loudest, most aggressive voices are often those that get the most attention. It stands against those who deliberately exploit divisions and fuel hatred in order to seize power. Francis ends with the reflection that Blessed Charles de Foucauld, who, with little success during his lifetime, worked as a missionary among the poor and the abandoned in the Moroccan desert. “Only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all,” Francis writes.

In his bold, courageous, sometimes lonely mission to inspire the people of the world to believe that there is a better way, that political transformation *is* possible, the Pope has placed his trust in patient dialogue, the upside-down logic of the Gospel, and the spirit of St Francis.

### Prayers of the Faithful for 25 October 2020 Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Celebrant:** Brothers and sisters, the Lord is our fortress and our strength. Let us bring our needs before the God who saves us.

That we enjoy the easing of restrictions but still take care to protect ourselves and others from catching the virus, covid-19.

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

That as a Church we find more and more ways of opening the doors to people who carry hurt and grievance.

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

That refugees and asylum seekers find a welcome and a home and not the walls of prejudice and judgement.

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

That our parishes will respond well to the opportunities to regather as communities when the time comes to open the doors.

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

That we give our love to God and our neighbor in the practical and compassionate ways we meet the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

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

That sick people may find healing and peace in their illness and the support they need to recover well.

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

That those who have died will be raised to eternal life; we remember those whose anniversaries are at this time, including Kevern Billings, Salvatore Cantone, Anne Haslam, Nelly Kandelaars, Frank Salmic Snr, Ivan Skender and Bill Tapley.

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

**Celebrant:** Compassionate God, you are a refuge for the poor and helpless. Hear our prayers and place in our hearts the desire to live your commandment of love. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen.**

Calendar of Events		
<b>Sunday, 25 October</b>		
10:00am	Montmorency	Mass - live-streamed ( <a href="https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE">https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE</a> )
<b>Sunday, 1 November</b>		
10:00am	Eltham	Mass - live-streamed ( <a href="https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE">https://bit.ly/2ZNZxaE</a> )

Rosters - 31 Oct & 1 Nov	
<b>Montmorency</b>	
Davidson, John	PRYR
<b>Eltham</b>	
Reardon, Kathy	Altar Society
Rigg Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Scully, Helen	Altar Society

**SVdP Christmas Cards 2020**

As indicated in last week's bulletin, the Montmorency conference of SVDP is pleased to advise that SVDP Charity Christmas cards are now available for any folk especially for those who wish to send a card overseas. This year the cards are in packs of 5 rather than 8 as in previous years. With just 5 cards per pack we have reduced the cost to \$2.50 per packet. This is slightly cheaper per card than last year, but all we wish to do is to cover our costs and offer cards about the real meaning of Christmas.

For the moment, due to Covid-19 restrictions, you may purchase the cards from any of the following SVDP members:

John Ramsdale	0410 128 821
Bob Fraser	0404 960 337
Mike Said	0417 221 245
Vinka Heagerty	

We hope to have other distribution points once there is a change in Covid restrictions.

**Ready, Set, Pray!**

Children's Liturgy of the Word @ Home

*The Ready, Set, Pray! Children's Liturgy of the Word @ Home video series has been created to provide an engaging space for families to encounter Jesus through the Sunday gospel.*

*Each week includes an invitation for families to create and gather in their own prayer space, to sing, hear the Gospel, pray and respond creatively through an activity.*

*This weekly resource follows the familiar Children's Liturgy of the Word format provided in many parishes – but moved to an online setting. It can be used by families in their homes, and also by teachers and catechists.*

*The series consists of 10 weekly sessions of 15-20 minutes duration, commencing from Sunday 18th October and continuing each Sunday until Christmas. We hope this experience of gathering for prayer will encourage families in this time when they cannot gather for parish celebrations of Eucharist.*

*It is produced by Proclaim: The Office for Mission Renewal at the Archdiocese of Melbourne. <https://bit.ly/ReadySetPray>*

**Live-Stream Masses**

We feel we are getting closer to more easing of restrictions. Still we are tentative as we wait each day for the numbers! The numbers, we are all so focused on the numbers, why? Because our freedom depends upon them. Our dreaming and yearning to celebrate Eucharist together again, is welling up within. So, we hold each other in whatever ways we can and continue with live-stream Mass at 10am Sundays, until the real thing comes along! We reflect and pray in the waiting time; on the great gift we have in Christ, present in the Eucharist and in each other. Let us make each moment count, God is as near as our next breath. Let us pray.

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

1. Go to [www.google.com](http://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



**12 months ago.....**

**September**

Better get the Christmas pudding happening. My recipe calls for a lot of dried fruit. Need a bottle of brandy so pop into Dan's. Feel a bit guilty clutching a bottle and hope I don't meet anyone I know! :) The fruit is happily soaking in the brandy, imbibing all the grapey goodness.

A weekly top up until December should do the trick to ensure a moist result.

**October**

Time to think about Christmas music and ring our organist. Matthew has worked with us for many years and says he really enjoys the experience. His fee covers two sessions, one rehearsal and Christmas Eve. Over the years he has come to grips with the intricacies of the liturgy and responds to prompts immediately. Must check that Mike is able to play the trumpet again. It adds such flair to the event.

Twice-monthly choir practice will now focus on Christmas music. We introduce one new challenge each year to keep our musical brains turning over, although people seem to prefer the familiar carols.

**November**

Cup Day Party this Tuesday... A great Melbourne tradition and a chance for the choir and long-suffering partners to get together and have a flutter.

Got confirmation from Matthew and Mike today... all systems go... practices going very well.

**December**

Down the final strait! Pudding done! Everything is on track for a great Festive season.

PS. Christmas Eve was a wonderful celebration. Thank you Fr. Terry. Went without a hitch... well, maybe a few little ones!

What does 2020 hold? BH

## Some simple but urgent guidance to get us through these next months.

I awoke on Saturday, September 19, with three sources in my mind for guidance: Etty Hillesum (1914-1943), the young Jewish woman who suffered much more injustice in the concentration camp than we are suffering now; Psalm 62, which must have been written in a time of a major oppression of the Jewish people; and the Irish Poet, W.B. Yeats (1865-1939), who wrote his "Second Coming" during the horrors of the World War I and the Spanish Flu pandemic.

These three sources form the core of my invitation. Read each one slowly as your first practice. Let us begin with Etty:

*There is a really deep well inside me. And in it dwells God. Sometimes I am there, too ... And that is all we can manage these days and also all that really matters: that we safeguard that little piece of You, God, in ourselves.*  
~ Etty Hillesum, Westerbork transit camp

Note her second-person usage, talking to "You, God" quite directly and personally. There is a Presence with her, even as she is surrounded by so much suffering.

Then, the perennial classic wisdom of the Psalms:

*In God alone is my soul at rest.  
God is the source of my hope.  
In God I find shelter, my rock, and my safety.  
Men are but a puff of wind,  
Men who think themselves important are a delusion.  
Put them on a scale,  
They are gone in a puff of wind.*  
~ Psalm 62:5-9

What could it mean to find rest like this in a world such as ours? Every day more and more people are facing the catastrophe of extreme weather. The neurotic news cycle is increasingly driven by a single narcissistic leader whose words and deeds incite hatred, sow discord, and amplify the daily chaos. The pandemic that seems to be returning in waves continues to wreak suffering and disorder with no end in sight, and there is no guarantee of the future in an economy designed to protect the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor and those subsisting at the margins of society.

It's no wonder the mental and emotional health among a large portion of the American population is in tangible decline! We have wholesale abandoned any sense of truth, objectivity, science or religion in civil conversation; we now recognize we are living with the catastrophic results of several centuries of what philosophers call *nihilism* or *post-modernism* (nothing means anything, there are no universal patterns).

We are without doubt in an apocalyptic time (the Latin word *apocalypsis* refers to an urgent unveiling of an ultimate state of affairs). Yeats' oft-quoted poem "the Second Coming" then feels like a direct prophecy. See if you do not agree:

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.*

Somehow our occupation and vocation as believers in this sad time must be to first restore the Divine Centre by holding it and fully occupying it ourselves. If contemplation means anything, it means that we can "safeguard that little piece of You, God," as Etty Hillesum describes it. What other power do we have now? All else is tearing us apart, inside and out, no matter who wins the election or who is on the Supreme Court. We cannot abide in such a place for any length of time or it will become our prison.

God cannot abide with us in a place of fear.  
God cannot abide with us in a place of ill will or hatred.  
God cannot abide with us inside a nonstop volley of claim and counterclaim.  
God cannot abide with us in an endless flow of online punditry and analysis.  
God cannot speak inside of so much angry noise and conscious deceit.  
God cannot be found when all sides are so far from "the Falconer."  
God cannot be born except in a womb of Love.  
So offer God that womb.

Stand as a sentry at the door of your senses for these coming moths, so "the blood-dimmed tide" cannot make its way into your soul.

If you allow it for too long, it will become who you are, and you will no longer have natural access to the "really deep well" that Etty Hillesum returned to so often and that held so much vitality and freedom for her.

**If you will allow, I recommend for your spiritual practice for the next four months that you impose a moratorium on exactly how much news you are subject to - hopefully not more than an hour a day of television, social media, internet news, magazine and newspaper commentary, and/or political discussions. It will only tear you apart and pull you into the dualistic world of opinion and counter-opinion, not Divine Truth, which is always found in a bigger place.**

**Instead, I suggest that you use this time for some form of public service, volunteerism, mystical reading from the masters, prayer - or, preferably, all of the above.**

**You have much to gain now and nothing to lose. Nothing at all. And the world - with you as a stable centre - has nothing to lose. And everything to gain.**



Richard Rohr, September 19, 2020

## Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they got together and, to disconcert him, one of them put a question, 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: you must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.'



## Reflection

The gospel text is short and well-known. The question put to Jesus by the Pharisees - "which is the greatest commandment of the Law?" - was not devious in itself. The issue was commonly debated among rabbis in those times. But Matthew attributes malign motives to the Pharisees in posing the question. This prepares his readers for the rejection and condemnation of Jesus that will soon follow. The negative portrayal of the Pharisees may also reflect later antipathy between Christian and Jewish communities.

Jesus' reply is not original. He quotes two texts that would have been familiar to his audience, Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Nonetheless he makes his reply with the sureness of an authoritative teacher. Before long he will bear witness to the spoken word in the manner of his death.

The implicit hostility in the Pharisees' question does not need to be overplayed, but Jesus' reply, now so familiar, should be proclaimed with deliberation and great warmth.

**Break Open the Word 2020**



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