

# 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

One of the hardest pills to swallow is a sense of failure, particularly when we have given our best. Many parents will relate to this. They are not perfect parents but they have raised their children with love and care. And they feel a failure, for one or more of their children have a very different set of values and have gone their own way, seemingly without much appreciation of what their parents have done for them.

Or a teacher has put so much time and effort into their preparation of classes and their support of their students and some of them are not showing any interest in learning. Or a marriage has broken down and both husband and wife are fine people but they just couldn't get it together. Or a job hasn't worked out and the person employed has given it their best shot.

These are just a few examples of where people can feel a failure, even after trying so hard and giving so much of themselves. Between us all we will add many more, for we all know the disappointment and disillusionment that comes with having given our best and it hasn't worked.

How do we deal with failure? Do we give up or do we reset our expectations or do we keep on loving despite the disappointment that will still come our way? How do we find the strength, the insight and the courage to keep on doing what we still think is best?

We turn to the Gospel today, to see if we can find any answers. It is Mark's account of the transfiguration of Jesus. It would seem that Jesus had reached rock bottom in his life. He had failed. No one understood him. His own faith tradition had rejected him and the scribes and the Pharisees were looking for ways to kill him. His own family didn't want to know him and were trying to silence him.

The crowds who had gathered so often were thinking of him as a miracle worker and revolutionary who would lead them to political freedom. Even his closest companions would leave him. Jesus could see this. His dream of the kingdom of God was not working.

In his emptiness Jesus went up a mountain with Peter, James and John and strange things began to happen. His clothes became dazzlingly white and we are told Elijah and Moses, who had died long ago, began to speak with him. Then a cloud appeared and a voice from the cloud called Jesus' name in love 'This is my Son the beloved.'

It was a moment of profound affirmation, a time of strengthening as Jesus glimpsed the road ahead of him. It would be the way of the cross to a terrible death. And the God he called Father would be there to sustain him, to give him courage, to love him. Jesus had not failed and he would not fail because he continued to live the way of love.

Today's Gospel is an invitation for us all to look at our experiences of failure. Many of us will think of our loss of confidence and some of us will carry such a heavy heart into the days of our lives. Others of us will think of a certain strength we have found, and a courage to keep on doing what we know is best, even if it still means rejection.

We may not go up a mountain and experience what happened to Jesus in his transfiguration, but perhaps we too can think of a transfiguration moment when we in some way heard the voice of God saying. 'You are my son, my daughter, the beloved.'

Some of us are longing to hear this voice right now for we are trying to find a way to love even though we are so wounded of heart. In living the way of love we will not fail. And we will hear the voice of God saying in some way, 'You are my son, my daughter, the Beloved.'

**Terry**

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

*For more information visit [pol.org.au/eltham](http://pol.org.au/eltham) or [pol.org.au/montmorency](http://pol.org.au/montmorency).*

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



## PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

### OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



#### **Parish Priests**

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

[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)

#### ***ASRC — Donate Food and Goods***

Our Foodbank is operating to support people seeking asylum. Most-needed food and groceries:

- Tuna in oil 400g
- Sweet or savoury biscuits
- Dishwashing liquid 1 litre
- Pasta 500g packs penne, spirals, shells
- Tinned vegetable peas, corn, carrots
- Tinned legumes chickpeas, lentils, red, black & white beans
- Full cream UHT milk 1 litre
- Soap bars
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Tinned tomatoes 400g
- Honey small bottles
- Coconut cream
- Black tea bags



**ASRC** Asylum Seeker Resource Centre



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

#### **Montmorency**

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Carmelina Alberti, Val Carrigg, Antonio Chincarini Snr, Jim Deehan, Vernon & Ena Rodrigo*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

#### **Eltham**

For the recently deceased:

*Antonia Cusinato*

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Filomena Marcucci, 1 month remembrance*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Violetta, Fr Barry Caldwell, Vicki Jordan, Lidia Marazzato, Christine Scott, Ibyszek Wojciechowski, Sylvek Zylevicz*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House 9435 2178 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au).

## Baptisms



This weekend we welcome to our **Montmorency Parish Community** on Sunday at 12 noon:

**Neve Anne Ashleigh**  
daughter of Niall & Stephanie

**Joshua Antonio Morello**  
son of Paul & Siobhan

&

**Romeo Peter Santoro**  
son of Daniel & Kristy

We pray for *Neve, Joshua & Romeo*, their parents & Godparents.

*May God keep them always in His love.*

#### **RECONCILIATION**

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 2178

#### **Collections last weekend: 21 Feb 2021**

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
Eltham	\$255.00	\$527.50
Montmorency	\$1,395.00	\$628.10

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



Please help our parish continue our important pastoral activities.

You can give an offering online today with CDFpay.

Find our parish by visiting:

<https://bit.ly/CDFpayEltham> or <https://bit.ly/CDFpayMontmorency>

# What happens when you close your eyes?

A profound and practical guide to listening out for God

Liz Dodd

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**Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone**

**James Martin SJ**

(William Collins, 288 pp)

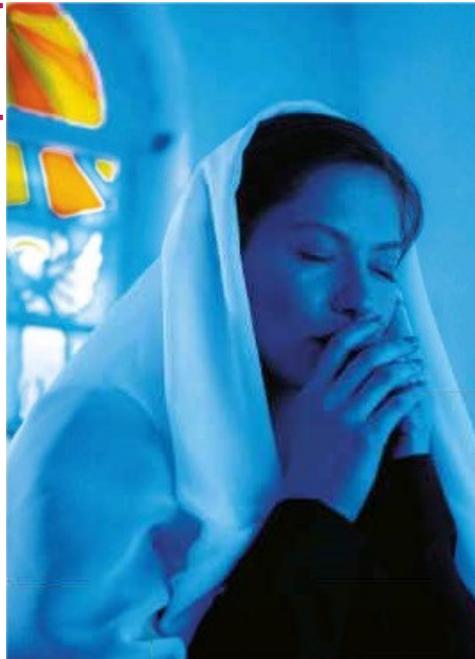
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**This book** made me want to pray. In fact, more than many of the wild mystics, saints and spiritual writers I've read, it makes prayer so attractive, sensible and dynamic that I often failed to finish chapters in one go, putting the book aside to test its premises and promises in real time.

Which, according to the thoroughly Jesuitical supposition at its heart, is exactly why Fr James Martin SJ, author and editor at large of *America* magazine, wrote it. "Where does the desire to pray come from? From God... Strange as it sounds, your reading of these lines at this moment is a sign of God's call."

"Prayer is a personal relationship with God," Martin explains - more specifically, a conscious conversation with God within the context of a relationship. It's relationality that underpins the thesis of the book. Prayer isn't what you say or how you say it: it's how you are with God - longing, bored, angry, sleepy - and how God is with you. No one can teach you how to pray, any more than they can teach you how to be a daughter or a husband. But they can teach you how to spot God's invitations. Nudges, like picking up a book on prayer; whispers, like wondering where your old rosary is; and inclinations - why can't you stop thinking about that news bulletin on asylum seekers? These invitations are easy to miss - or dismiss - amid the background noise of everyday busyness and desires. It usually takes a spiritual director to help you spot them - and what Martin has written is, essentially, a pocket-sized spiritual director.

British Catholics are not very good at talking about spiritual experiences. So this book - written with the winsome pitch that belies his background in business, Jesuit logic and Martin's unforced humour - is simultaneously a challenge and a relief. What actually happens when you pray for someone? What do we mean when we say we "hear" God?



As Martin puts it, "what happens when you close your eyes?"

The answer to this last question depends in part on how you pray and, for all that this is steeped in context and relationality, Martin sketches out some helpful frameworks on which you can build your growing prayer habit. Some - like the chapters on petitionary prayer and rote prayer (like the Hail Mary) - also troubleshoot what most Christians assume "prayer" is, and mount an excellent defence against its detractors. Before you out-grow saying an Our Father in a tight spot, "have you ever wondered how many people have prayed [it] throughout history?" - from Jesus to Dorothy Day to Nelson Mandela?

Other chapters describe luminous, creative ways to be with God, rooted in Martin's Ignatian spirituality. The chapters on the Examen, a kind of review of the day in God's company, and Ignatian contemplation - picturing yourself inside a scene from the Bible - were, for me, undeniably attractive, unsilenceable, unshakable invitations to encounter God in these ways. But perhaps God will call you elsewhere, through Martin's refreshingly clear chapter on centring prayer, or nature prayer - looking for God in Creation.

**What makes** this book such a joy to read is its assurance that God will make - indeed, already is making - his desire for you known. With much thoughtfulness, Martin considers issues like spiritual dryness and dark nights of the soul, but these kinds of experiences are not the thrust of this book, so if that is where you are, so gently and thoughtfully, carrying what the first part of the book teaches about listening into its practical second half. For example, a recent bereavement has made me feel particularly spiky about petitionary prayer, and I brought that spikiness to Martin's optimistic chapter on the subject, where he points out that, in the face of life's challenges, "how could we not ask for help?"

Martin acknowledges the problem of unanswered prayer in the same way any skilled person with experience of the spiritual life would: the honest "I don't know" that can make being in a lonely spiritual place feel, initially, more lonely. But by engaging with the book, the spikiness and the loneliness had a chance to surface - or, rather, were called to the surface by God, an invitation not to be afraid of the very saddest and most frightening parts of human experience.

In the same way, and disproportionately, it was the bolts of joy and consolation and adventure that jostled to the front of my prayer life as I read this book. Reading about Martin's experience of God-in-prayer felt like hearing someone talk about a mutual friend with such warmth, confidence and enthusiasm that it made me want to rush to him, to discover for myself the multidimensional, mutli-coloured, life-giving ways his love can manifest.

This is a book to treasure and ponder, to read slowly, by yourself, listening for God. But it is also a book whose wisdom demands to be shared, and whose insights grow in the sharing - whether that's in spiritual direction, in a prayer group, with your family or with God, whose invitation to pick it up is directed precisely at this homecoming.

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## World Day of Prayer

You are invited to this year's World Day of Prayer at *St Margaret's Anglican Church*, Pitt Street, Eltham at **10:30am this Friday, 5th March**. If you can come, please email / ring Kate at the Parish Office ([kate.kogler@cam.org.au](mailto:kate.kogler@cam.org.au) / 9435 2178)



Every week through Lent, a writer will reflect on how a time of challenge brought unexpected grace. Here, **James Martin SJ** describes how he found freedom from his need to be approved of

# Building bridges

I love being a Jesuit. And I'm never sure where to start when I describe the reasons why. Certainly my life as a priest, my ministry as a writer and Jesuit spirituality are all things for which I will never be able to thank God adequately. But the most surprising blessings of Jesuit life have been my Jesuit brothers. The Society of Jesus can't promise this in its vocational literature, but I had no idea that religious life would mean knowing so many people I consider not only friends but as close to brothers as I can imagine.

Life in a religious order, however, is not perfect - and members of those orders will be the first to tell you that. Yet even that lack of perfection has turned out to be the source of grace for me.

Many years ago, I lived in a Jesuit community (which no longer exists) where someone disliked me. Of course people in religious orders are like everyone else: they like some people but not others. And I'm not perfect by a long shot, so I don't expect everyone to cotton to me. But this was on a different level. Perhaps a better way to put it would be to say that he despised me. For several years, he refused to speak to me, answering only when I directly put a question to him; he would sigh heavily and roll his eyes whenever I spoke in community; he would often leave the dining room table when I sat down to eat; and he occasionally muttered curses when passing me in the hall.

I apologise if this is disheartening about religious life, but most people have had these experiences at least once in their life. Religious orders are not immune from human frailty and even sin, as we should know by now.

Through the years, I tried everything I could to rectify or even ameliorate the situation. I struggled to remember what I had done to anger him. (I couldn't recall anything.) I attempted to reconcile with him. (He threw me out of his room.) I spoke to my superiors, who were both sympathetic and solicitous. (They spoke to him, but nothing changed.) Eventually I learned to live with it, pray for him and, as one wise and elderly Jesuit counselled, simply be "cordial" to him. It was, however, a great penance.



A few years into this situation, I went on my annual eight-day retreat and confessed to my retreat director how difficult this was. In response, she suggested what I thought was an odd passage to pray with: the Rejection at Nazareth in the Gospel of Luke (4:14-30). In that passage, as I'm sure you know, Jesus stands up in the synagogue in his home town and, in so many words, proclaims that he is the Messiah. Initially, the townspeople praise what he says, but then, after he suggests that they will probably demand a miracle, they turn on him. While some modern-day preachers soften what happens next, we should be clear: they try to kill Jesus. "They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff." But Jesus escapes, "passing through their midst."

**When preachers** or commentators dilate on this passage, they often offer this insight: the townspeople couldn't see God, even when God was right in front of them. The spiritual takeaway is usually a question: where do we overlook God in our lives because God is too familiar? Or: what familiar person, place or thing is a carrier of God's grace that we might be ignoring? All good questions.

But in my prayer, something different happened, a shift in perspective. At the time I was writing a book on Jesus, and so I knew that Nazareth was a miniscule town of only 200 to 400 people. So

when I imagined Jesus standing up in the modest synagogue (which, many scholars surmise, was not a building but an outdoor gathering place), I imagined him speaking to a small group of people who not only knew him, but whom he knew as well.

Suddenly it dawned on me: Jesus had to speak this truth before people he knew. Thus, he must have known, or have been able to intuit, what their reaction was going to be. It was a shock to have the story turned around that way: from the perspective of the crowd to the perspective of Jesus.

In my prayer, I imagined speaking to Jesus and asking: "How were you able to do this?"

And in my prayer, I heard him say to me: "Must everyone like you?"

It was a shock, not only in the clarity with which those words came to me (not aurally but felt) and their import. At the time, I felt like saying: "Yes, they do!" After a few more prayer periods, it dawned on me that Jesus was inviting me to be free of the need to be loved, liked or approved of.

That helped immeasurably in my relationship with this other Jesuit. And so, I thought, that insight was given in prayer for that reason. But God wasn't finished.

**Five years** later, in 2017, I published a book called *Building a Bridge*, about the Church's relationship with LGBT Catholics. Though people laugh when I say this, I didn't expect the book would be a big deal. The first edition was physically very small, just 140 pages, and didn't challenge any Church teaching. Mainly, the book encouraged the institutional Church to treat LGBT Catholics with the "respect, compassion and sensitivity" called for by the Catechism and the love, mercy and compassion called for by Jesus.

Within a few weeks, it evoked astonishingly strong reactions. First came intensely emotional responses in parish lectures, where I was stunned to witness standing ovations, receive tearful hugs and see long lines of people waiting to thank me. In time I realised that simply having the conversation made people grateful.

But then came the negative backlash, which I had anticipated, but not to this degree: endless personal attacks and hateful comments, including name-calling, from even supposedly reputable Catholic commentators, websites and magazines. It went beyond disagreement into hatred.

At times it was hard to keep up. I was called (you can look it up) "heretic",



## A Time to Listen - A Time to Chat - A Time to Pray



Dear Parishioners & Friends of St Francis Xavier, Montmorency & Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham

These are sensitive days, as we continue to adjust to a CovidSafe way of life, knowing that serious changes to our daily routine might occur at any time! ( What to do? )

It is my intention to still open up the ‘**Season of Lent**’ to some opportunities for our Catholic Communities to come together to ‘Listen & Chat & Pray’ regarding any anxieties, concerns and hopes for our present & future as two vibrant local communities. These gatherings are important occasions to participate and hear from parishioners and thus continue to walk together in Faith and Love - as our future is not yet clear, given these terrible Covid19 era in which we live.

With this in mind and given our weekend timetable of Masses & Baptisms, I am going to suggest that Sundays at 1pm be our start time at SFX and OLHC.

Continuing with:

- **Second Sunday of Lent ( February 28th. ) in the Gathering Area, OLHC Church - 1pm**

These gatherings are important occasions to “Listen and Chat & Pray”.

Should we need more opportunities to consider our future and seek answers then:

- **Third Sunday of Lent ( March 7th. ) in the SFX parish Hall - 1pm**
- **Fourth Sunday of Lent ( March 14th. ) in the Gathering Area, OLHC Church - 1pm**

Beyond these important opportunities to gather in a CovidSafe way - a time to pray and symbolise these meetings could be realised as we move into Holy Week:

- **Fifth Sunday of Lent ( March 21st. ) at the SFX parish Hall - 1pm**
- **Palm Sunday ( March 28th. ) at the Foyer OLHC Church - 1pm**

So, an opportunity is now being offered to the Catholic Communities of Montmorency & Eltham to get together - some 3 times during Lent, to Listen, to Chat and to Pray in response to these Covid days and our future possibilities as we move forward.

If you are available, please consider these dates and times - warmest thanks,

*Michael*

“apostate”, “sodomite”, “homosexualist”, “false priest”, “wolf in sheep’s clothing”, as well as “pansy”, “fairy” and every homophobic slur you can imagine. The far-right website Church Militant directed their followers to “spam” my social media accounts, which led to thousands of hate-filled messages. Talks were cancelled after online campaigns. In my office at America Media, I received not only obscenity-laden phone calls but what I came to think of as Catholic death threats: none threatening outright murder but notes saying: “I hope you die soon.” Some attacks came even from a few clergy and members of the hierarchy, who often revealed their lack of knowledge of what I had written, preferring to get their intelligence from the web. One US bishop condemned the book in his weekly column but

admitted halfway through his essay that he hadn’t actually read it.

**Fortunately, I had** the support of my Jesuit superiors and, a few months later, came the pushback to the pushback, with invitations from cardinals and archbishops to speak in their dioceses, a surprise invitation to speak at the Vatican’s World Meeting of Families in Dublin in 2018 and, finally, a 30-minute audience with Pope Francis in the Apostolic Palace in September 2019, in which we discussed LGBT ministry in the Catholic Church, and after which I felt I was walking on air.

But in those intervening weeks, the personal attacks brought me back to the question that I heard in prayer: “Must everyone like you?” The answer is “No”. Not everyone liked Jesus, so why should everyone like me? The freedom

from the need to be loved, liked and approved of was a great gift, as Thomas Merton used to say, “in the order of grace”.

At this point, you might expect an “inclusion” of sorts, in which I tell you that in the end that Jesuit who detested me finally reconciled with me. That’s not what happened, however. Instead, he simply moved out of the community. But the grace that he left behind was the freedom to try to be like Jesus. To be free of the need for approval, to place myself on the side of those who find themselves on the margins, and, when attacked, to be able to say, with Jesus: “Who cares?”

**James Martin** is a Jesuit priest, editor at large of America and author of the new book *Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone*.

Rosters:	Week ending 7 March 2021
<i>Montmorency</i>	
Hannon, Kevin & Genni	ASRC
<i>Eltham</i>	
Hall, Vali	Altar Society
Milwain, Gianna	Altar Society
Ryan Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue

### Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

#### **Saturday 27th**

6:00pm Mass (160 people) Montmorency

#### **Sunday 28th - Second Sunday of Lent**

8:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:00am Mass (160 people) Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Joshua, Romeo & Neve Montmorency

1:00pm Listen & Chat & Pray Eltham

#### **Monday 1st March**

9:30am Days for Girls Montmorency

11:00am Funeral: Antonia Cusinato Eltham

#### **Tuesday 2nd**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group Montmorency

11:00am Funeral: Gwynneth Hannasky Montmorency

#### **Wednesday 3rd**

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Mass (160 people) Eltham

#### **Thursday 4th**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery Montmorency

10:30am Mass at Garden Views Lower Plenty

#### **Friday 5th - World Day of Prayer**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Eltham

10:30am World Day of Prayer St Margaret's, Pitt Street

#### **Saturday 6th**

2:00pm Kadasig Aid & Development AGM Montmorency

6:00pm Mass (160 people) Montmorency

#### **Sunday 7th - Third Sunday of Lent**

8:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:00am Mass (160 people) Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Charlie & Sophie Montmorency

1:00pm Listen & Chat & Pray Montmorency

#### **Tuesday 9th**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

#### **Wednesday 10th**

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Mass (160 people) Eltham

#### **Thursday 11th**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery Montmorency

#### **Friday 12th**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Eltham

#### **Saturday 13th**

10:00am Baptism: Lucas Eltham

6:00pm Mass (160 people) Montmorency

#### **Sunday 14th - Fourth Sunday of Lent**

8:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:00am Mass (160 people) Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Emerson, Verity, Saige & Frankie Montmorency

1:00pm Listen & Chat & Pray Eltham

#### **Tuesday 16th**

9:30am Mass (160 people) Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group Montmorency

7:00pm Reconciliation Celebration Montmorency

## *Our Lady Help of Christians* Holy Week Liturgies

The sign up sheets for all the roles for Holy Week are in the Gathering Area after Mass today.

Please consider helping with one or more of the many tasks required for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday (11am Stations and 3pm Liturgy), the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday morning.

We need lots of support to make the liturgies meaningful community celebrations of the most significant period within the Church calendar.

Please remember that you must have a WWC Check to be able to participate in any of the roles. If you are in the process of obtaining the Check put your name down for a task and let me know that you have the matter in hand.

There is a person overseeing each of the liturgies and that person will contact you in relation to your specific role if it is deemed necessary.

Thank you

Kathleen Nolan  
(0432 391 105)

## Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Primary School

# OPEN DAY

## Thursday 18th March

Tours throughout  
the day

'EVERY DAY IS OPEN DAY'

Please call the school office and  
arrange a convenient time!



Educating Since 1928

1-13 Henry Street  
Eltham 3095

Phone (03) 9439 7824

email school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au



## Daily Reflections for Lent - Not By Bread Alone 2021



**Reflection:** Although we may have those rare moments when we are in the midst of chaos and God's light manages to break through and touch us, it's more likely than not that we see God's light when we are in the quiet, listening for the still, small voice. It's no surprise that Jesus takes the three apostles away from the busyness of their daily lives to a deserted mountain for the Transfiguration. Would they have been able to see so clearly had they been among the throngs who were seeking signs? Jesus knew that in order for Peter, James, and John to see him for who he really was, he had to bring them to a place of peace, a place apart, where God's voice could be heard without danger of the daily din drowning it out.

And so it is for us in our daily lives. We cannot see Jesus right there in front of us if our eyes are glued to our smartphones 24/7. We will not hear God speaking to our hearts if the chatter of the world - both real and virtual - is on an endless loop in our homes, in our ears, in our minds. It requires a place apart, even if that place is just a quiet corner of our own home. St. John of the Cross, the great sixteenth-century mystic, wrote: "Silence is God's first language." The late Trappist monk Thomas Keating added to that: "Everything else is a poor translation." What is getting lost in translation in our conversation with God?

**Meditation:** Find a place apart - either completely alone or with one or two people who are close to you spiritually - and just sit in God's presence. Perhaps you can go out in nature, as in today's gospel, or maybe the weather requires you to stay indoors. Maybe an adoration chapel is available or, if not, a quiet room where you can light a candle, sit with Scripture, and wait for the Lord to speak. And he will. We just have to listen, as St. Benedict wrote in the prologue to his famous Rule, with the "ear of our heart."

**Prayer:** You gave us your Son, dear Lord, so that we might have life and have it more fully. Give us ears to hear the words you speak to us in the silence and hearts willing to accept your message.

Dear Parishioners

This week I have been solo trekking the Great Ocean Walk intending to cover the 100 km distance (or nearly all of it) in five days from Apollo Bay to the cliffs at Port Campbell. I am pledged to give a sum of money to [Aid to Church in Need](http://www.aidtochurch.org) (see [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)) for each completed day. The walk involves basic camping and carrying all supplies into Parks Victoria sites that are not accessible by road. Thankfully the weather was forecast to be relatively cool.

If you would like to support this cause, any donation however small to add to my offering is very welcome! By the time you read this I *should* have completed the walk.

Blessings, Peter Beckford



## Have a Look!



Next time you are walking to church, have a look at the garden!

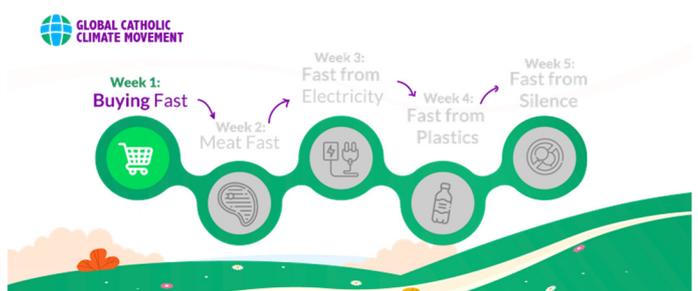
Last weekend, five of us got together to tidy up the Presbytery garden.

Phil and Cathy Maynes, Virginia Jackson and Marisa Capuana came together to do some serious gardening.

Luckily, opposite the church lives a man with a trailer — Martin loaded the trailer on his own and took the garden waste to the tip.

We had plenty of encouragement from passers-by and we had plenty of Tim-Tams left over.

What a fun morning!



The Catholic climate movement is commencing the Lenten calendar with a fast on buying.

Did you know? The world produces more than two billion tonnes of waste a year. In many Western countries, more than 99 percent of material harvested, mined, processed and transported is rubbish within six months.

In his Lenten message, Pope Francis described how fasting draws us closer to God. "Fasting, experienced as a form of self-denial, helps those who undertake it in simplicity of heart to rediscover God's gift and to recognise that, created in his image and likeness, we find our fulfilment in him." [Find out more.](#)

## Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.



## Reflection

The story of the transfiguration is one of the richest in the gospel. It has links to some of the great figures and events of the Jewish tradition, especially Moses and Elijah and all they signified. It echoes the accounts of God revealing himself on holy mountains and in natural phenomena such as thunder and lightning and storm. It connects with the foundational story of the exodus when the Israelites dwelt in tents and were led by cloud and fire.

The narrative of the transfiguration also has important associations with other gospel stories. The words spoken from the cloud - "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him" - parallel those spoken on the occasion of Jesus' baptism. And the naming of Peter, James and John reminds us of other occasions when they are Jesus' chosen companions, especially at his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Every one of these associations invites exploration.

Yet for all these allusions to people and events in the Old Testament and the gospels, the story of the transfiguration is suffused with mystery. To mine its riches we need to enter into it with imagination rather than a critical scientific mind-set. It invites prolonged meditation if we are to grasp what is being revealed to us about Jesus and our discipleship of him. In the end the challenge is to come down from the mountain with Jesus and journey with him to Jerusalem.

**Break Open the Word 2021**



Second Sunday of Lent  
28th February 2021



Margret, 39, is a teacher at a vocational school for deaf students in the Solomon Islands. She was born deaf, so she knows the challenges it poses to education and employment.

The school faced water shortages that often left staff and students without safe water for drinking, cooking, washing and growing vegetables.

Then Tropical Cyclone Harold damaged the school and its vegetable garden as the threat of COVID-19 loomed. With Caritas Australia's support, the school installed water tanks, provided cyclone-proof building materials, and helped to implement COVID-19 prevention measures.

Margret's school now has enough water for its students and the capacity to cater for more, and is now planning to boost food security through increased agricultural production.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 and help people living with disabilities in the Solomon Islands gain access to education and clean water, empowering them with skills to protect our common home.**

You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.