

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.

13th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 2021

Little by little we seem to be emerging from another time of Corona virus lockdown. We will all tell our stories of how we have found these lockdown times. Hopefully we will find our way back to what so many of us call 'some kind of normal'.

What might this 'normal' look like? Something that I found myself thinking about as I prayed the Gospel of today, is the way Jesus met the woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years and the way he met the little girl he healed.

The woman had touched Jesus' clothes and immediately she felt she was cured. Jesus, aware that power had gone from him asked the question, who touched my clothes? And what followed was a very lovely interaction between Jesus and the woman.

She came forward, frightened and trembling and told her story of what had happened. Jesus affirmed her, 'My daughter', he said, 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint.'

As for the 12 year old girl, Jesus went to her. She had died and Jesus said to her, 'Talitha, kum' meaning, 'little girl I tell you to get up'. He took her by the hand and the little girl got up and began to walk around. Whatever is the origin of that story and whether over time it had been somewhat embellished by the Gospel writers, the words that really stay with me are those words, 'taking her by the hand.' For both the woman with the haemorrhage and the little girl, the sense of touch was such an integral part of the healing.

Take this Gospel to our Corona virus times today. After all, the Gospels are meant to be reinterpreted in the light of today's times. It would be fair to say that the sense of touch today has been discouraged, and with good reason, for the virus spreads so easily.

In our Masses we no longer give each other the sign of peace in the same way, for it involves touch. And in our meeting and greeting people, many of us are unsure of how to meet each other and whether we kiss, hug or shake hands. It's like so many of us are prepared to reach out in some way of 'touch', but we are not sure of the other person's reaction if we do this. The sense of touch is so vital in our communicating with each other.

Many times in my homilies I have talked about my visits to nursing homes over the years. Often times I'm called upon to give the sacrament of anointing, praying for the healing of a sick person. With the blessed oil of the sick I sign the cross on the forehead and the hands of the person, praying some words of healing. So often when I touch the hands of the sick person, he or she holds onto my hand and won't let it go. Gradually in time I have to gently find a way to take my hand away, but it's like that sense of touch is so integral to the healing.

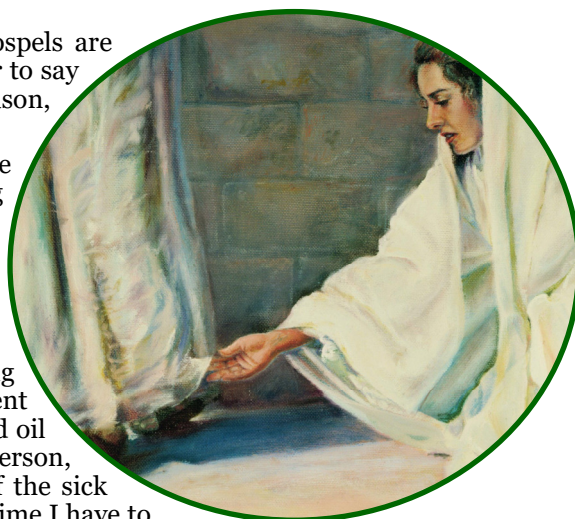
What's all this saying to us? Yes, one of the great sadnesses of these Corona virus times is our loss of the sense of touch. But let's hope and pray for restrictions and lockdowns to ease for all sorts of reasons, and one of them being our recovery of the sense of touch.

So often in the Gospels Jesus used the sense of touch is his healing of people. Maybe we are thinking of some person right now who is in a hospital or nursing home bed, longing for a visit from someone and so wanting to feel a connection, in a hug, or even a touch of the hand. Let's hold them in our prayer today.

And when we can, let's make sure we again restore 'touch' to the gift of our meeting and greeting people. It would be an awful pity if we didn't realise just how important touch is and we became so careful that we didn't meet people in this way.

And like it was for Jesus, let's know that so often our touch can be such a gift of healing to someone.

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 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

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

terry.kean@cam.org.au

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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Barry Caldwell

Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

9435 4742

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

montmorency@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

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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: Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Acting Principal: Therese Stewart: 9439 7824

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au



*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:

John Amato, Marie Boyd, Kevin Mannix

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Estelle Levy

Eltham

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Charles Doroszlay

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Violetta, Denice Donnellan, Geoff Haines,
Lidia Marazzato, Tom Nolan, Christine Scott,
Ibyszek Wojciechowski, Sylvek Zylevicz*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House

9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.

RECONCILIATION

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 2178

Collections: 20 June 2021

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
OLHC	\$435.00	\$431.95
SFX	\$912.00	\$452.60



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>

A big **thank you** to our three Primary Schools who have handed over to St. Vincent de Paul lots of wonderful groceries for the poor in our area on Friday, before starting their 2 week holiday break.



Hopefully First Holy Communions can start back in the month of July till October. Naturally we will welcome students in grade 5 and their families for these special celebrations. We are deeply sorry for the ongoing changes that have disrupted these arrangements due to the coronavirus.

Michael

Roster for WEEKEND 3/4 July

<i>Montmorency</i>	
Brincat, Victor	CLNR
Capuana, Marisa	W6:00
Davidson, John	PRYR
Emslie, Maureen	W6:00
French, Jossie	W8:30
Hannon, Kevin & Genni	ASRC
Kulkens, Mark	W8:30
<i>Eltham</i>	
Armstrong, Miranda	Eucharistic Minister
Frediani, Gabriella	Altar Society
Furtado, Lorraine	Commentator
Reardon, Kathy	Eucharistic Minister
Scannell Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Scully, Greg	Reader

Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

Saturday 26

6:00pm Mass (120 people) *Montmorency*

Sunday 27

8:30am Mass (120 people) *Montmorency*

10:00am Mass (120 people) *Eltham*

Tuesday 29

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Montmorency*

10:00am Craft Group *Montmorency*

Wednesday 30

6:30am Meditation *Montmorency*

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Eltham*

Thursday 1 July

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Montmorency*

10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery *Montmorency*

7:45pm Book Club *Montmorency*

Friday 2

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Eltham*

Saturday 3

11:00am Baptism: Owen & Isabelle *Eltham*

6:00pm Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist *Montmorency*

Sunday 4

8:30am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist *Montmorency*

10:00am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist *Eltham*

12:00pm Baptisms: Jordan, Isabel & Eilish *Eltham*

Tuesday 6

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Montmorency*

10:00am Craft Group *Montmorency*

11:00am Prayer Shawl *Eltham*

Wednesday 7

6:30am Meditation *Montmorency*

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Eltham*

Thursday 8

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Montmorency*

10:30am ASRC food collection & delivery *Montmorency*

Friday 9

9:30am Mass (120 people) *Eltham*

Saturday 10

6:00pm Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist *Montmorency*

Sunday 11

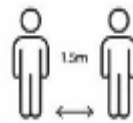
8:30am Mass (120 people) & First Eucharist *Montmorency*

CovidSafety

during Mass:



- Face masks are to be worn indoors (during Mass) unless you have personal health directives;



- Please maintain **social distancing of 1 person per 4 square metres** (families not included) at all times;



- Please **record your presence** via: QR Code on your phone, this is essential for Record Keeping and if necessary, tracing and numbers;



- Please use **Hand Sanitiser** provided or other personal appropriate cleaning agent.

Please note:

*current Covid Regulations allow for only **120** people in the Churches of St. Francis Xavier and Our Lady Help of Christians.*

The Chinese Communist Party is about to celebrate its hundredth birthday. The stakes in preventing its authoritarianism corroding the politics of the twenty-first century are high. Hong Kong's last British governor sees trouble ahead - but liberal democracies are facing their own crisis / **By Chris Patten**

Trust is a two-way street

The First National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held in July 1921 in what used to be the French concession in Shanghai, in rooms now turned into a museum near the Huangpi Road station of the city's metro. Its first leader, Chen Duxiu, was subsequently expelled from the party as a "right opportunist" (a description that might occasionally be appropriate these days in British politics). Chen died a believer in Western-style democracy. China's Communist Party - the oldest governing Communist Party left in the world - will be celebrating its centenary on 1 July. I doubt there will be the traditional birthday message from Her Majesty the Queen, but maybe the Vatican will oblige instead. Spoiler alert: when the Vatican begins to flirt with "realpolitik", recent history suggests that the Catholic faithful should look the other way lest their simple faith comes under uncomfortable strain.

China's Communists, originally Marxists but today Leninists, emerged after a bleak century in their country. The nineteenth century, under the increasingly enfeebled Qing dynasty, saw China treated by the imperial powers of the day as a hulk to be carved up at will. Britain's share of the spoils was an archipelago in the south of China, below the Tropic of Cancer and close to the Pearl River, its adjoining islands and its "fragrant Harbour". Hong Kong was in time to become a great international trading city, with citizens who were in the most part refugees from the China created by the Communist Party.

But before the Communist takeover in 1949, there were the experiments with democracy under Sun Yat-sen, the conflicts between warlords, the invasion by Japan, and the war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communist Party itself. With the help of the Soviet Union, the ambivalence of the United States and the leadership of Mao Zedong of what became a largely peasant movement, the Communists eventually defeated



the Kuomintang, who retreated to Taiwan. Mainland China was branded with Mao's personality cult, the murderous brutalities that have characterized every totalitarian movement, and the hopeless ideologically driven economic management that saw China remain poor while other Asian countries rose like rockets from the ashes of the Second World War.

At the beginning of the century of Qing humiliation, a time, as the Chinese assert, of "unequal treaties", China was responsible for over 30 per cent of the world's economic output. Mao's rule continued the impoverishing policies of the Qing era and the years after the fall of the dynasty in 1912. What turned things round was the death of Mao in 1976 and the rehabilitation and leadership of Deng Xiaoping from 1978. Opening China to the world, or perhaps more accurately, encouraging the world to open to China, the Chinese economy fizzed back to life. The supply of abundant surplus labour and the resultant domestic savings in a society with low consumer spending helped China to develop a powerful exporting economy.

Within a few years of rapid growth - sometimes as high as an annual 10 per cent - China's economy became the second largest in the world (by some measures, the biggest of all). It was the world's largest energy consumer and the largest exporter of merchandise, with the largest foreign exchange reserves, the highest number of millionaires and billionaires and the largest holder of American global debt. Growth reduced poverty. In 30 years, World Bank figures suggest that about 650 million people were lifted above the international poverty line, though social inequity in the country seems to be even greater than in the US. China has also seen the rapid growth of a middle class, thought now to total more than 700 million.

Hence, the attractions of the Chinese market for so many carmakers and manufacturers of luxury goods. Vast sums have been spent on infrastructure - roads, airports, railways and new cities. Investment in high-tech has given China the potential to play a significant role in some of the industrial sectors that will shape the century ahead, though it is worth noting that China still

depends on imports of semiconductors, largely from Taiwanese companies. It imports \$350 billion of chips a year, \$150 billion more than it spends on importing oil.

How was this achieved? Partly of course by the energy and initiative unlocked by state capitalism and (more important) access to international markets. To the benefit of its own people, and to some extent the people of other countries as well, China took advantage on a bigger scale of the opportunities already seized by so many Asian countries when developed markets were steadily opened to the sale of their goods.

In one 15-year period, China's exports to the United States alone went up by 1,600 per cent. When China was allowed to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), its exports accelerated as fast or even faster. In 2001, for example, China's trade surplus with the US was \$83 billion; by 2018 it was over \$400 billion. Similar surpluses were stacked up elsewhere. Admittedly, trade went up in the other direction too, but in most cases not by as much or as rapidly. For example, from 1980 to 2019, Britain's exports to China increased on average by 3.7 per cent a year in real terms; in the same period, China's exports to Britain went up by over 9 per cent a year. The argument that our exports to China reflect a generous acknowledgement by Beijing of our acceptance of whatever is its prevailing political narrative has always been and remains demeaning and absurd. The Chinese buy what they want from other people at the best price they can get, while of course very often seeing whether they can make it themselves, quite often with the help of intellectual property theft.

One thing which does not apply to Chinese trade or investment is reciprocity. China's markets are more likely to be closed to our goods than our markets are to their own. It is easier for China to invest in an open developed economy than it is for such an economy to invest in China. Nor do the Chinese invest in Britain or elsewhere out of charitable sentiment. They invest in order to make money and very often in order to establish a foothold in an important economic sector. We should take the occasional guff about a golden age in our economic relations with China with several warehouses of salt. There is also much evidence that the Chinese abuse the WTO rules which they signed up to implement. They

discriminate against foreign multinationals, subsidise home-grown industries, press for transfer of technology and steal intellectual property. The "unequal treaties" of the nineteenth century are reversed today.

The world has generally and quite properly welcomed China's rejuvenation. But Western policy has often been infused also with self-delusion to the Chinese Communist Party's great benefit. We have convinced ourselves that the opening up of China's economy along with technological development would inevitably lead to an opening-up of politics as well. It was, if you like, an application of Marxist historical prediction - economics would have political consequences sooner or later. Students were killed by the hundreds (at the very least) in and around Tiananmen Square in 1989, but despite this bloody evidence to the contrary, post-Berlin wall hubris convinced us that this was only a blip in the great arc of history. China's entry into the WTO in 2001 turbocharged these sentiments. Tony Blair confidently predicted that there was in China an "unstoppable momentum to democracy". So what happened? What stopped things?

The momentum may, of course, always have been illusory. But such momentum as there might have been was halted in its tracks by the present leader of the Chinese Communist Party and subject of its latest personality cult, Xi Jinping. He took over in 2012, at a time when the Chinese leadership had been badly spooked by the attempts of the aggressive and talented Bo Xilai to elbow his way to the top of the party. But leaders were even more worried by the threats to their ability to hold on to power posed by globalization, with its economic consequences; by urbanization, with the flood of rural workers into the cities; and by the development of the internet. Their conclusion was that the party must tighten its grip on every aspect of national life, not least education, the engineer of the soul.

In 2013, Xi Jinping ordered part and government officials to recognise that they needed to conduct an "intense struggle" against liberal democracy. The existential threat, the enemy, was itemized: Western constitutional democracy; the allegation that human rights were universally applicable and valid; civil society; the Western idea of journalism; and open historical enquiry. A crackdown began across society that has encompassed concentration camps, forced

abortions and sterilization in Xinjiang, the incarceration of those defending Hong Kong's freedoms, the locking-up of dissidents, attacks on faith groups including Muslims, Buddhists and Christians, closing down swathes of civil society and the stamping out of free enquiry at universities. And all this repression has been ushered in by the development of a high-tech authoritarian surveillance state.

How much will the Chinese Communist Party simply enhance its global competitiveness and how much will it become a serious global threat? Four things are central to its future. First, Beijing has shown that it is always prepared to break its word if that is what best suits its own interest. It has done this with Hong Kong, in breach of an international treaty lodged at the UN. It has done this with the militarization of islands and atolls in the South China Sea against promises made to President Barack Obama by Xi Jinping. Whether or not the Chinese Communist Party has kept its promises to the Vatican over the appointment of bishops, we simply do not know, since we have been kept in the dark about what those promises and undertakings were. It is interesting how often any diplomacy with China is obliged to treat transparency as a dirty word. To be a serious and pre-eminent stakeholder in the international system, other countries do need to be able to trust you.

Second, we are dealing today with what the former British diplomat Charles Parton calls "peak China". The Chinese Communist Party will not be able for much longer to throw its weight around, bullying and coercing other countries without much in the way of response. Time is running out for "wolf warrior diplomacy". Beijing is facing deep problems of demography, with a declining and ageing population and with the number of young men considerably larger than the number of young women, for reasons that are both clear and deeply disagreeable. It also has to cope with debts which amount to more than 300 per cent of the country's output, a mountain of indebtedness which helps to explain the debt diplomacy underpinning China's faltering "one belt, one road" initiative. China has also, like the rest of us, to deal with global environmental and health challenges. Drought in China is a massive problem and antimicrobial resistance creates difficulties, affecting agriculture and public health. These are issues on which, whatever our disagreements elsewhere, we need to

work with China. But China will not be doing us any favours by cooperating. We are not supplicants when it comes to something like climate change. To put the point rather crudely, we are all in this together - with some (including China) facing bigger problems than others.

Third, China has persuaded too many of its own people, with mirror-image consequences for the attitudes of foreigners, that to love China you must love the Communist Party. It is, I suppose, a Leninist example of political consubstantiality. But it is not true. Many of us could never praise sufficiently highly the brave Chinese doctors and other medical workers who tried to blow the whistle about the outbreak of the coronavirus. They were stamped on by the party security apparatus. Why, by the way, if the pandemic was so clearly the result of bats flying for many miles to a wet market in Wuhan, have the Chinese authorities worked so hard to block any information on what was happening at the same time in the laboratories of the Wuhan Institute of Virology? It may well be that those distinguished scientists who think that it is perfectly plausible that the coronavirus is linked with the work in that institute are wholly mistaken. But why, in that case the secrecy and the assaults on the integrity of anyone who demands a proper and open enquiry? At the very least at the outbreak of the pandemic, Beijing was in breach of the International Health Regulations, which it had signed after the Sars epidemic 15 years ago and which oblige signatories to report on any new health emergencies in "a timely fashion".

Fourth, China benefited from an international climate dominated by President Trump's nativist and mercantilist megalomania. If China is to be prevented from threatening open democratic societies and the values we purport to represent, and sometimes actually do represent, then we need a reinvigoration of international cooperation by the world's liberal democracies and indeed by all who believe in an agreed and rule-based international order.

This is not a call for a return to the Cold War. We should not want to build a wall of containment around

China. But in regard to the Chinese Communist Party, we need to recognise the truth of what George Kennan said in his famous long telegram in 1946 about the Soviet Union: "Our respective views of reality are simply incompatible." Our views of the treatment of Muslims in Xinjiang and of Buddhists in Tibet are simply incompatible with those of Beijing's leaders. Our views on the trade in body parts are simply incompatible. Our views on forced labour are simply incompatible. Our views on freedom of religion are simply incompatible. Our views on military threats to Taiwan and even to India are incompatible. Our views on Hong Kong are incompatible. The list goes on and on.

We've seen this week that President Joe Biden offers the world's democracies a new approach. We should work with China when we share a common global citizenship, for example in responding to issues like climate change or the threats posed today and in the future by the incontinent use of antibiotics. We should work with others who share our values to regain the moral purpose of UN bodies which have been neglected and disparaged by Washington in recent years - a paradox since the United States was the principal creator of many of them. We should work together to help those poorer countries which have been saddled with too much debt by China in pursuing unsound and often environmentally unsustainable projects, often as a consequence of underlying political and strategic



motivations. We should stand up for each another when China tries to pick us off one by one, as it has done with Australia, Canada, South Korea, Norway and many others. It should not be our aim to contain China but rather to constrain China when it behaves badly, and to raise the price that it has to pay when it does so.

Above all, while China's model of surveillance authoritarianism does not offer an attractive prospect of governance, we have to look at ourselves and ask with an open mind why it so often seems to outside critics that the claims made by liberal democracy are so shabby. To win the arguments ahead to persuade others to follow our example, we have to show that democracy under the rule of law really does work in the interests of citizens in individual countries and of humanity as a whole. The present behavior of the Republican Party in the United States, in thrall to a defeated and malign Donald Trump, threatens to make that important enterprise far more difficult.

This is an issue which I hope Catholic leaders, not simply President Biden, in America have to confront, given not least how many Catholics voted for Trump and presumably in some cases still deny that he lost the election. We should certainly expect America's Catholic hierarchy to criticize loudly and often the attempts being made by so many Republicans today to turn their party into an explicitly anti-migrant and white nativist movement that seeks to hold on to power in the future by denying the vote to the poor the black and the brown, or at least to make it more difficult for them to register their democratic opinions. The stakes in preventing authoritarianism from distorting and corroding the politics of the twenty-first century are high. The struggle begins in our own open societies - less open, less equal, less fair than they should be. We should be faithful to what we claim to believe in as citizens, not least as Christian citizens, and do our duty diligently and with honour.

Chris Patten (Baron Patten of Barnes) is chancellor of the University of Oxford. He was the last British governor of Hong Kong and is a former EU commissioner for external affairs and chairman of the Conservative Party.



THE POLITICS
OF COMMUNION

**BISHOPS
MUST
NOT BAR
BIDEN**

The bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States have embarked upon a course which is gravely damaging to the universal Church, to the interests of all its members and to the common good. By a majority of 168 to 55, they have set out to draw up a policy statement that is intended, despite any protestations to the contrary, to ban Joe Biden, the President of the United States, from receiving Holy Communion. They

want Mr Biden, a practicing Catholic, to commit to the repeal of federal laws that allow women access to legal abortion, which he has said he will not do, though he is personally opposed to abortion. The pressure they hope to apply to him by denying his access to Communion is a brazen infringement of the separation of Church and State, guaranteed by the Constitution of the US.

Under canon law, only the local bishop can bar someone from Communion. Cardinal Wilton Gregory, the Archbishop of Washington, has made clear that Mr Biden will continue to be permitted to receive it in the archdiocese, regardless of what the majority of bishops decide. That does not diminish the significance of a policy document that is intended to have universal application. In May, the Vatican effectively warned them to desist, pointing out that such a document “could become a source of discord rather than unity” within the Church. The US bishops are declaring that they know better than the Pope where the truth lies in the delicate balance between religious faith and civic order - between God and Caesar.

Framing the laws by which society is to live calls for prudent judgement. It was because Americans considered Mr Biden a man with a judicious and prudent mind that he was elected Last November. The bishops are in effect demanding that he should disregard his judgement and instead obey their instructions. Their goal is the criminalization of all abortion from conception to birth, regardless of circumstances or consequences. Making their case to the American people is, of course, their right. But to bar Catholics in public life from Communion because their judgement differs in a usurpation by senior churchmen of the rights and duties of a political leader.

Behind all this lies a fundamental misconception. The US, like the United Kingdom and Ireland but unlike most countries in the European Unions, is a common law country. Under English common law, from which these legal systems are derived, people are free to do whatever they like except what is expressly forbidden by the letter of the law. The totality of forbidden actions constitutes the criminal law, under which the exceptions, definitions and penalties under such a system are set out. It does not make moral judgements but practical ones - do *this*, and the consequences will be *that*. It does not say what actions are right and wrong - only what is lawful or unlawful.

Mr Biden is entitled to point out that the Catholic teaching the bishops claim to be upholding is based on a different philosophy of law from the common law tradition. Canon law and the Napoleonic Code both reach back to the codification of Roman law by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century. Under

codified law, in contrast to common law, nothing is permitted except what is explicitly allowed. In code-based systems, therefore, the onus is on lawmakers to identify and prohibit every evil, and to bear the blame if there are some they still allow. If they allow abortion, they are no better than an abortionist; if they allow adultery, they are no better than an adulterer. This is the legal and philosophical universe in which Pope John Paul II was operating in his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. His statement - “In the case of an intrinsically unjust law, such as a law permitting abortion or euthanasia, it is therefore never licit to obey it, or to take part in a propaganda campaign in favour of such a law, or vote for it” - implied a direct connection between “permitting” and “causing” abortion.

No such connection can be assumed or implied under a common law system. If the common law stays silent on a matter it is neither giving nor withholding permission. Such a law has no pretensions itself to be a moral code, though it reflects the moral assumptions of society, past and present. Even those countries heavily influenced by the Napoleonic Code follow in practice a pragmatic and prudential approach similar to common law. The reason is simple: democratic politics would become impossible otherwise.

In *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II argued that the law of the land and the moral law - as the Church’s Magisterium interprets it - must be in alignment. But the effect would be to appoint the Holy See, arbiter of the moral law, as the universal lawmaker. Catholic politicians would have to legislate on the basis of the Church’s moral teachings, even when the majority of citizens do not agree with them. That is not democracy; it is closer to the near-theocracies of Saudi Arabia and Iran.

St John’s gospel tells the story of the woman taken in adultery, the *periscope adulterae*, who, under the Law of Moses, should have been stoned to death. Jesus’ famous reply, “Let the one who is without sin throw the first stone”, saved her. Jesus was in effect saying that those who insisted that the criminal law must always strictly apply the precepts of the moral law were hypocrites, as they were no better than she was. The early Church was never entirely comfortable with this passage, partly because of a suspicion it favoured laxity. Not until the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century was it formally made part of the authentic canon.

Joe Biden is entitled to follow the logic of the *periscope*. In insisting that Catholics in public life should ignore the will of the people and ensure the law follows church teaching, the bishops of the US are not only breaching the separation of Church and State, but also misrepresenting the function of law in a common law system. Like the scribes and Pharisees, they are open to a charge of hypocrisy: the bishops are by no means without sin, and their handling of the clerical child abuse scandals was shameful. Yet if they had their way, Catholic politicians everywhere would face an impossible choice: either to support an absolute ban on abortion even if they knew the public would never vote for them because of it, or risk being barred from Holy Communion.

Gospel - Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered round him and he stayed by the lakeside. Then one of the synagogue officials came up, Jairus by name, and seeing him, fell at his feet and pleaded with him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and lay your hands on her to make her better and save her life.' Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him.

Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years; after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any the better for it, in fact, she was getting worse. She had heard about Jesus, and she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his cloak. 'If I can touch even his clothes,' she had told herself 'I will be well again.' And the source of the bleeding dried up instantly, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint. Immediately aware that power had gone out from him, Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' His disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is pressing round you and yet you say, "Who touched me?"' But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. 'My daughter,' he said 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint.'

While he was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the synagogue official to say, 'Your daughter is dead: why put the Master to any further trouble?' But Jesus had overheard this remark of theirs and he said to the official, 'Do not be afraid; only have faith.' And he allowed no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So they came to the official's house and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping and wailing unrestrainedly. He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep.' But they laughed at him. So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and mother and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay. And taking the child by the hand he said to her, 'Talitha, kum!' which means, 'little girl, I tell you to get up.' The little girl got up at once and began to walk about, for she was twelve years old. At his they were overcome with astonishment, and he ordered them strictly not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.



Prayers of the Faithful for 27 June 2021 - Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant: Lord, as we gather in prayer today, we place our trust in you.

We are all created in the image of God, but our human weakness causes frailty, doubt and anxiety. In today's uncertain world we remember all who feel overwhelmed with this anxiety who struggle to find optimism and direction. We pray for the ability to be at peace and to trust in the Lord's loving presence.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We give thanks for the security and joy of family and friends, for the gift of our natural environment. We remember those separated from family or forced from their homeland or community through violence and economic circumstance.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We remember all those who have been so affected by recent storms. May they receive the necessary support and assistance to re-establish themselves in their communities.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our world so troubled and divided with the health, economic and societal devastation caused by Covid. May the Lord's love kindle a spirit of understanding, healing and outreach amongst nations.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Four our national and state leaders. May they be protected, informed and inspired. May they be granted the spirit of wisdom, outreach and co-operation so necessary to help our nation through the devastation of the current pandemic.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For Pope Francis, Archbishop Comensoli and our church leaders. May they too be protected, informed and inspired to act with that same spirit of humility, wisdom and outreach. May the healing power of Jesus provide dynamism and vitality and guide our church towards a future of reconciliation, inclusion and community.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the sick, their families and carers. May the Lord's loving presence bring peace and comfort and healing.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died, and those whose anniversaries occur around this time, including John Amato, Marie Boyd, Charles Doroszlay and Kevin Mannix. May they rest in the peace and love of the Lord.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Be with us, Lord, on our journey. We place our trust in you.

All: Amen