

# 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.

## After a time of distress... Summer is near!

The Gospel of Mark... the year of listening to many sections of this wonderful and short Gospel comes to an end this weekend with this simple apocalyptic discourse, and it could have been written for our generation. 2021 has been a 'time of distress' (Mark 13:24) for the whole world with this modern terrible pandemic. It has not been a physical war of one Nation against another, but a truly psychological war against an unseen enemy - a virus! These times have indeed tested our strength and endurance, in so many personal ways and as a community. It has been awful.

Yet, as we slowly move out into our community and rebuild, I have encountered wonderful acts of courage and forbearance from this catholic community, - patient self-control, restraint and tolerance. Our favourite 'Covid-Safety Officer' experienced all this last weekend in a job that he clearly didn't want to do, but nonetheless managed - and I have to say witnessed the marvellous honesty of all the people who came to worship.

Thank you to all who complied with these health directives and have their GREEN TICK.

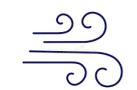
Know that He is near: (Mark 13:29) Summer is near! Yes, the heavy spring rains are all around and the rose bushes are in full bloom. The Diamond Valley is looking spectacular at present in all its colours and the rivers and creeks are flowing strong. Just maybe these natural things are more noticeable today because we are moving from this time of distress to joy!

Mark's Gospel is for 'today' and I cannot help but be drawn to its contemporary conclusions.

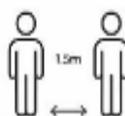
- The Archbishop of Melbourne would like you to visit the Catholic website and view his most recent letters and statements on Government policies and in particular the proposed new legislation, the Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021.

*Michael*

### Covid-Safe Child-Friendly Parishes:



- Face masks are to be worn 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
- Vaccination Status double vaccinated = 80 people in attendance; unknown/ single or zero vaccinated = 30 people in attendance
- Please use **Hand Sanitiser** provided or other personal appropriate cleaning agent
- **Natural air flow** – windows and doors open
- Please maintain **social distancing of 1 person per 4 square metres** (families not included) at all times



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For all volunteers and staff:

- **WWCC** – current working with children's check
- **Code of Conduct** – ensure you have signed the annual code of conduct  
Please note: current Covid Regulations allow for **only 80 people** in the Churches of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady Help of Christians.



*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 4742**

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)

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: 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: 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: Patrick Green: 9439 7824

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

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

#### **RECONCILIATION**

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 4742

#### **Collections: 31 October 2021 - reported next week**

| Community | Thanksgiving | Presbytery |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| OLHC      |              |            |
| SFX       |              |            |



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>

## Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

### **Saturday 13**

10:00am Child Safety Meeting

Eltham

6:00pm Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

### **Sunday 14**

8:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:00am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Frankie

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Oscar

Montmorency

### **Tuesday 16**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl

Eltham

### **Wednesday 17**

6:30am Meditation - 80 people

Montmorency

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

11:00am Small Church Community

Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

### **Thursday 18**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:30am ASRC

Montmorency

2:00pm Mass @ Garden Views

Lower Plenty

### **Friday 19**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

### **Saturday 20**

12:00pm Baptism - William & Olivia

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

### **Sunday 21 - World Youth Day**

8:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:00am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

### **Tuesday 23**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

### **Wednesday 24 - Red Wednesday**

6:30am Meditation - 80 people

Montmorency

### **Thursday 25**

10:30am ASRC

Montmorency

### **Friday 26**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

### **Saturday 27**

6:00pm Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

### **Sunday 28 - First Sunday of Advent (Year C)**

8:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:00am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

### **Tuesday 30**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

### **Wednesday 1 December**

6:30am Meditation - 80 people

Montmorency

11:00am Small Church Community

Montmorency

7:00pm OLHC Prep 2022 Information Evening

Eltham

### **Thursday 2**

10:30am ASRC

Montmorency

2:00pm Mass @ St Vincent's Care

Eltham

7:45pm Book Club

Montmorency

### **Friday 3**

9:30am Mass - 80 people

Eltham

### **Saturday 4**

6:00pm Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

### **Sunday 5 - Second Sunday of Advent (Year C)**

8:30am Mass - 80 people

Montmorency

10:00am Mass - 80 people & First Eucharist

Eltham

### **Monday 6**

## THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

Let me begin this second of three reflections by giving some background to my coming to St Francis Xavier Montmorency. Fr Peter Matheson knew I was finishing my term of ministry at Sacred Heart Kilda, and at St Columba's Elwood and he approached me asking if I'd be interested in applying for St Francis Xavier.

I knew he had loved this Parish and had been loved by the people and when he offered to cook me a dinner and show me around, I agreed to come and have a look.

Now Peter is a good cook and the dinner and the red wine was a very good start to our meeting. After dinner, Peter showed me around the Parish and I remember saying to him, basically these words: "Peter before I can put my hand up for coming here, is the Parish Community open to social outreach?" I told him that after 9 years at Sacred Heart Mission, St Kilda and working with the homeless and marginalised, I'd be a fish out of water if the Parish didn't have a social justice heart.

Peter responded positively and he was right. From the moment of my 'stepping foot' here, the generosity and compassion of this community has been outstanding, and it has been for a very long time.

Before telling the story of the 'social justice heart' in St Francis Xavier, it's important I acknowledge the forming of my own social justice heart and the significance of my years at Sacred Heart St Kilda. So again a story.

It was the cold of a winter night in my first weeks at Sacred Heart Parish. It was 6pm Mass with a small gathering of around 25 parishioners. The Gospel of the Good Samaritan that night told the story of the beaten up traveller and the responses of the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan. We are very familiar with the Gospel and the lack of response of the priest and the Levite and the wonderful compassion of the Samaritan.

After Mass I stayed down the back of the Church to meet a few of the folks. It became 'lock the Church time', but not before an aboriginal woman came through the doors, crying out, "I want to see the priest". Parishioners ushered her into my presence and I remember thinking, 'what am I going to do? If she wants food, I think there's some in the presbytery. If she wants money, I have some dollars in my back pocket. If she wants accommodation, I have no idea of how to help her.' If the truth be known, I really wanted to escape and that would have been the response of the priest and the Levite.

There she stood in front of me and she said the words that changed my life, "I want a hug". We shared a hug and then another and she went off into the cold of the night. I never saw her again. She wanted a hug.

You may remember in the story of the Good Samaritan, it was a lawyer who asked Jesus a question, 'who is my neighbour'? And as I reflected on what happened in the Church that 6pm Mass, I realised Jesus was teaching me as to 'who is my neighbour'. My first reaction was to clear out and my second response considered ways I might be able to assist this woman. Little did I expect that all she wanted was a hug and it was like the person of Jesus saying to me, 'Never think you know what a person is asking of you. Sure there will be times when food, dollars and accommodation are needed, but allow them to name what's happening in their lives and listen to them with warmth, welcome, compassion and respect. First of all it's about being with people'. Hopefully people from Sacred Heart Mission would say that I lived this story in my 9 years there.



So the time came for me to be at St Francis Xavier, Montmorency and I quickly learnt that the Parish had an involvement in an Edmund Rice School project in Africa, Project Kenya. John McKenna has coordinated our parish response all these years and many, many parishioners sponsor a child in education. John sends out regular newsletters and updates. It is still a project we support very generously.

Then within the first week or two, Rosemary Bowyer came to see me and talk about the Social Justice group here. I listened with great delight and recognised not only in Rosemary, but also the other members of the Group, a real energy for social outreach. This Social Justice Group have been quite extraordinary in enabling projects like support for people in the Philippines', the meals roster at Sacred Heart Mission, the collection of food for Asylum



Seekers, the raising of social awareness in seminars and meetings that have at times filled the Parish Hall with people willing to listen and learn. Many of these people have come from beyond our own community. And that's not all. There's so much more to tell in the myriad of projects and gatherings this rather small, but committed group have enabled in the deepening of our Parish social justice heart.

Let me share a few thoughts on the Philippines story. One of our wonderful parishioners, Glenys Gayfer, has a history of a very long involvement in the Philippines. With her husband Bill, she adopted three children many years ago, raising them here in Melbourne. Many times she has returned to the Philippines to be with the people there and she is a founding presence in Kadasig, a community in Cebu. Many of us in the Parish have sponsor children, where each year we give dollars for the education and well-being of a child who would not have this opportunity without our support. These children are part of Kadasig and Emelye, the social worker there, is a living saint in her work with Kadasig.



Glenys, from our Social Justice Group, came to see me in my first year or so in the Parish and in sharing her involvement in the Philippines she wondered whether our Parish would consider a social immersion visit. I responded with an enthusiastic 'yes', but then came her question. 'When are you available to come?' I remember saying, 'oh no, let's open it up to the Parish and I'm very happy to support the immersion experience, but I don't need to go.'

I quickly realised, 'You don't say this to Glenys. She responded, "Oh yes you do need to come and so when?" Well that's history now and would you believe that I have been three times to the Philippines, with people, most of them from our Parish. There have been eight social immersions in the Philippines and over the years we have also welcomed and supported the visit of some of the wonderful people like Emelye, Jeptke, Charity, Fr Shae and Val. I estimate that more than 100 people from our Parish have been on a social immersion to the Philippines and in my memory, we have all fallen in love with these people. Their simplicity, hospitality, faith, sense of community and humility are truly inspirational and when it has come time to return to Australia, so many of us realise that they have been the givers and we the receivers.



Our Parish has been most generous in supporting Kadasig and other communities in the Philippines. Our Social Justice Group has promoted this partnership and helped us respond to the Filipino people.

So to another social outreach project in our involvement in Sacred Heart Mission. I remember some parishioners saying to me in my early days here, 'why don't you ask the Parish if people are interested in volunteering for Sacred Heart Mission?' I had been sharing a few of my Mission experiences at Sunday Masses and thought it 'may well be worth a try'. So one Sunday at the notice time at Masses, I invited people to sign up for a roster of volunteers to prepare and serve the meal at Sacred Heart Mission on a Sunday. I had contacted the 'meals co-ordinator' at the Mission and suggested that maybe twenty people would sign up and that would mean we could send a team of four people every month. So, in my mind, 'volunteering' meant two or three times a year would be the deal for those who would sign up on the Parish roster.

What happened? Within two or three weeks we had 90 volunteers and I had to ring the Mission 'meals co-ordinator' and say, 'can we make that every Sunday?' Soon the group of volunteers exceeded 100 people, quite a number of them young people from our Parish families. For the past 10 or more years we have had a team of volunteers every Sunday, preparing, serving lunch and washing up at Sacred Heart Mission.



Talk about a Parish with a social justice heart. And the Social Justice Group have found a parishioner to take on the job for two years of overseeing and co-ordinating the roster. Of course Covid-19 and the restrictions and lockdowns have shut down our involvement this past two years, but it will resume in the not too distant future. We are very grateful to those co-ordinators who have done such a great job in our Sacred Heart Mission involvement.

In writing about the Asylum Seekers Resource project at West Melbourne, for many years now we have collected non-perishable food and groceries and placed them in baskets in the foyer of our Church. We have had several parishioners regularly pick up the food and drive it to West Melbourne. It's extraordinary how much food we deliver from our parish and we were told at one time that we were the largest single supplier of food for these Asylum Seekers.

Without attracting notice or attention so many parishioners purchase food and place it in those baskets in the Church. It is yet another indicator of the social justice heart that lives in this parish as people remember those less fortunate, thinking of them in the everyday experience of shopping at the supermarket.



The list can go on and on and I could talk about the way our parish primary Schools, Holy Trinity and St Francis Xavier, have supported the Philippines and other social outreach projects. Or the generosity of parishioners every time there is a collection for some outreach request. For most of my years here we have put aside 5% of our Thanksgiving Collection money for social outreach and with the help of the Social Justice Group we have worked out how we best donate the money.

We have a fantastic St Vincent de Paul Group who regularly visit and assist people who are 'doing it hard' in our own neighbourhood. Every 6 months, when the report of their activities is produced, I simply marvel at the numbers of visits

and the amount of assistance given. And it's because of a committed team of volunteer men and women, and also the generosity of the parishioners in making the donations.

So you can see why I would say this Parish has a social justice heart and why Peter Matheson was right when he said yes to my question, 'is the Parish open to social outreach?' And in my view, this is the 'jewel in the crown' in this wonderful parish.

Yes we have much to celebrate in our community, but at its heart is the living of the Gospel in our outreach to the people who are the poor and vulnerable in our world, our country and our neighbourhood. The Social Justice Group have been very instrumental in facilitating and enabling our responses of generosity. Yet this same Group has never taken over or dominated our ways of response, but encouraged and provided opportunities for us to come together.



We are in a time of immense change. Who knows how our Parishes will regather when lockdowns and restrictions are over. We know it will not be a return to 'business as usual' and we wonder how many people will be back at Church and part of the life of the many Groups that have thrived in our Parish.

We are also becoming more aware of a plan that is being presented by our Archbishop, Peter Comensoli, for the reorganisation of the 208 Parishes of this Archdiocese into 50-60 Mission Centres. The plan is called 'Take the Way of the Gospel'. How this will develop in the years to come is uncertain, but we know it will be a time of immense change.

And who knows how the Plenary Council of this year and next year will help us in being a Church of the future.



Whatever of the future, it is my hope that social outreach will be the way forward for us as a Church. It is my belief that the 'Way of the Gospel' is to be 'out there' in the world of many organisations, religious faiths and communities, making a positive difference to the poor and marginalised and taking up social issues like the care of the earth.

I am very thankful that our parish of St Francis Xavier, Montmorency has lived a social justice way and I hope that I have encouraged this way in being priest among you for 15 years. And whatever the future, hopefully we will still live this way.

*Terry*



### 33<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 2021

When will be the end of the world? Who knows? Will it be in some nuclear holocaust, something we feared many years ago and still fear? We are very much aware of those who seek power and domination over others and have nuclear power at their disposal?

Will the world collapse because we overuse its resources and fail to protect the environment? Will the signs of global warming we now experience escalate into the future? We think of the recent 'World Climate Change Summit' where leaders of nations gathered in Glasgow, Scotland to work out what decisions need to be made to ensure the health of this planet.

Thinking about these matters, we look to today's Gospel and reflect on those words attributed to Jesus, "in those days after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven, and the powers in the heaven will be shaken". This seems to be 'end of the world' language.

Many a preacher over the years has put the fear of God into us speaking on today's Gospel. How many of us who are the 'oldies' of our generation remember those fire and brimstone sermons at Missions where we came home terrified by the 'end of the world language'? We were told we were such sinners and we were to fear the terrible punishments God would inflict on us when we died. We had to change our ways if God were to forgive us.

Is this how we are to interpret that Gospel today? Some would say 'yes'. There are prophets of doom today who preach this language in such a literal and narrow way, where God is the 'God of fear'.

Is this what Jesus preached, the God of fear? Did he not speak of a God as a lover God, a God of hope and life, a God who cares about every single one of us? Isn't Jesus himself the gift of God being one of us, living in love with us, even dying in love and coming to life as risen among us?

We must remember this as we listen to the Gospel today. For however the world might end, and when it might end, there's another story, the story of life beyond death, the story of God's love overcoming all fear.

We must also remember that when it comes our own time to leave this planet, God promises life and love. We don't know how this might unfold, but in the meantime we are to try and live our lives as best we can, in our own loving and compassion. We are to trust the God of unconditional love in our dying.

We think also of those who have gone before us in death. November is traditionally the month of the Holy Souls. We remember our own loved ones and place them once more in God's loving care.

On a day like today we let their memory fill us even though we may feel tender and sad. We look however to our faith story, believing that their death is not the end, but an opening into a fullness of life with God. We hope we can be with them when the 'end times' come for us. In the meantime we let their memory fill us with hope, and blessing. They are today, and always will be, such an integral part of our lives.

There's a beautiful quote from St John Chrysostom that is good for us to remember:

*"The ones whom we love and lose is no longer where they were before. They are now wherever we are."*

*Terry*



## Gospel - Mark 13:24-32

Jesus said to his disciples: 'In those days, after the time of distress, the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will come falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory; then too he will send the angels to gather his chosen from the four winds, from the ends of the world to the ends of heaven.

'Take the fig tree as a parable: as soon as its twigs grow supple and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. So with you, when you see these things happening: know that he is near, at the very gates. I tell you solemnly, before this generation has passed away all these things will have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.'

### Reflection

This final extract from Mark's gospel is a key section of the apocalyptic discourse in Chapter 13. God's ultimate triumph is the focus of today's reading.

The fearsome shaking of the heavens is described in language drawn from prophets. This cataclysmic event heralds the ultimate end of the world and the coming of the Son of Man (see Daniel 7:13-14), so it represents good news. The cosmic imagery is complemented by the homely parable of the fig tree coming into full bloom.

There is certainty in the assurance that in the end divine power will prevail, but what remains uncertain is when all this will come to pass. The effect of the reading is to both warn and encourage the Christian community to live with resilient faith.

**Break Open the Word 2021**



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

### Montmorency

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:  
*Cliff Bredle, Joseph McCudden, Gwen Radcliffe*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:  
*Damian Brasier Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert),  
Terry Flannery (father of Elisha O'Dowd)  
Kate Lagerewskij*

### Eltham

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:  
*Matthew Bibby*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:  
*Violetta, Ryan Bennett, Lucy Bibby,  
Tom Nolan, Paul O'Dell, Les Robertson,  
Christine Scott, Rosemary Scully,  
Barbara Snopkowski, Ibysek Wojciechowski,  
Sylvek Zyleviczcz*

To include an anniversary in the bulletin, please contact  
Parish Office: 9435 4742 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au)



Aid to the  
Church in Need

**A message from Aid to the  
Church in Need Australia:**

ACN AUSTRALIA  
'That Catholic Shop' stocks a great supply of Christmas items to decorate your house or to gift to family and friends. The proceeds of your purchases go to support persecuted and suffering Christians throughout the world!  
Visit: [www.thatcatholicshop.com/christmas](http://www.thatcatholicshop.com/christmas).

*You are invited to join us in celebrating a Healing Mass (with Sacrament of Anointing) on Thursday 18th Nov at St Thomas the Apostle Church, 251 Diamond Ck Rd, Nth Greensborough. The evening will commence at 7.30pm with Praise & Worship, followed by Mass.*

*Please book your attendance via the following  
Trybooking link:*

<https://www.trybooking.com/BVHSU>

*For further details, please contact  
Emilia 0418120902 or Rose 0411650339.*



Our Lady's church choir is seeking a pianist to play at Christmas Eve Mass (24 Dec 2021—time to be confirmed). The choir would also need a rehearsal with the piano. The pianist would need to be proficient (as an accompanist) in playing the usual Christmas hymns and parts of the Mass. Enquiries can be made to the Parish on: 9435 4742



This Christmas, you can help transform the lives of others simply by doing your shopping at our [Gifts for Change](https://bit.ly/3EZeEiS) shop. <https://bit.ly/3EZeEiS>