



# 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.

**FRANCIS AND  
THE LAITY**

## THE TRUE PURPOSE OF SYNOD

What is Pope Francis hoping to achieve with his synodal reform of the way the Catholic Church operates? One possible answer is that he is trying, ever so subtly, to correct some of the distortions that he felt Catholicism had acquired from the 27 years of John Paul II's papacy. It was on the watch of this rapidly sainted pope - too rapidly, maybe - that the sexual abuse of children became a serious epidemic, something he appeared unable to deal with effectively. In what ways did John Paul II's leadership style contribute to that? The Church is still searching for answers - or rather, parts of it are, while other parts look the other way.

The synodal process is essentially about involving the laity in church governance, while learning from the experiences of the Anglican Communion and Orthodox Churches. What Francis is after is not exactly democracy, but there will have to be machinery of participation of some sort. He apparently sees the laity as less influenced by the priorities of John Paul II than many of the clergy and, especially, the bishops. He is in this sense appealing over their heads - but the irony is that it is only through them that he will be able to do so. Francis has not directly referenced Newman's work on "consulting the laity", but it is relevant. During the fourth century Arian heresy it was the laity which maintained the orthodox doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which was being denied by priests and bishops. In the twenty-first century the besetting error is clericalism, or what might be termed "clerical supremacy", which downgrades "the priesthood of all believers" to a mere

footnote. It has never been entirely absent from Catholic theory, though it has often been neglected in practice. It means, among other things, that when the Holy Spirit inspires the People of God this may be through the beliefs and actions of ordinary believers, as well as, or even exceptionally rather than, the anointed Church hierarchy.

Pope Francis is true to the traditions of social teaching matured by and passed on by John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and he has expanded the categories to which they apply to include the environment (*Laudato Si'*) and personal relations (*Fratelli Tutti*). But on issues touching gender and sexual morality he is more inclined to start from messy human reality than from the clinical text book idealism of his predecessors. Gay people exist and cannot be airbrushed out because they do not fit the theory. The same with the divorced and remarried. A more fundamental issue is the ontological status of women. Are they essentially different from men? And does that make them inferior in clerical hierarchy terms? However respectfully or even reverentially expressed, John Paul II's implicit answer was Yes. Clericalism inevitably tends towards misogyny. The clerical abuse scandal was about power - expressed through the Catholic episcopacy and priesthood - rather than sexual sin.

The synodal process has started, and many bishops seem wary of its subversive potential. Some will try to thwart it. But they do not own it and should not stop it. It has a holy wind in its sails, "which bloweth where it listeth".

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.





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:  
*Pat Heagerty, Walter Lee*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:  
*Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert)*

**Eltham**

For the recently deceased:

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:  
*Luke Hawthorne-Smith*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House  
9435 4742 or [eltham@cam.org.au](mailto:eltham@cam.org.au).

**Rosters - 15 & 16 January 2022**

**Eltham**

Foxley, David	Reader
Frediani, Gabriella	Altar Society
Furtado, Lorraine	Commentator
Goss, Marian	Eucharistic Minister
Leahy Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Reardon, Kathy	Eucharistic Minister

**Montmorency**

Said, Mike & Marie	ASRC
--------------------	------

**Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events**

**Saturday 8th**

12:00pm Baptism - Thomas, Amelia & Zachariah  
Montmorency  
6:00pm Mass & First Eucharist  
Montmorency

**Sunday 9th**

8:30am Mass & First Eucharist  
Montmorency  
10:00am Mass  
Eltham  
12:00pm Baptism - Mia  
Eltham

**Tuesday 11th**

9:30am Mass  
Montmorency  
10:00am Craft Group  
Montmorency

**Wednesday 12th**

6:30am Meditation  
Montmorency  
9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion  
Eltham

**Thursday 13th**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion  
Montmorency  
10:30am ASRC Food Collection  
Montmorency

**Friday 14th**

9:30am Mass  
Eltham

**Saturday 15th**

12:00pm Baptism - Casper  
Montmorency  
6:00pm Mass  
Montmorency

**Sunday 16th**

8:30am Mass & Baptism  
Montmorency  
10:00am Mass & Baptism  
Eltham  
12:00pm Baptism - Elliott  
Montmorency

**Tuesday 18th**

9:30am Mass  
Montmorency

**Gospel: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22**

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'



**Reflection**

For all the brevity of the gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism, they have a wealth of associations in both New and Old Testaments. Those familiar with the Old Testament will be reminded of the spirit's role in creation, of the dove that signalled the end of Noah's flood, of the spirit-guided judges of Israel, of God's chosen servant in the songs of Isaiah, and of the kings anointed to rule on God's behalf.

New Testament readers will recall the heavenly voice that spoke on the mount of transfiguration and of Jesus' intense prayer there and in the Garden of Olives. The descent of the Spirit on Jesus will prompt reflection on the epochal event of Pentecost and subsequent bestowals of the Spirit in the early life of the Church. One characteristic feature of Luke's account is his focus on the prayer of Jesus. Jesus' practice of prayer and his teaching on prayer form a luminous thread through the fabric of Luke's gospel.

Fittingly, this gospel concludes the Christmas season on the same wonderful note as the gospel for Christmas Day. The last verse of John's prologue reads: "No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest the Father's heart, who has made him known" (1:18). It is into this intimate divine relationship that we ourselves have been baptised.

**Break Open the Word 2022**



**Congratulations to all who celebrate their sacraments this weekend:**

**Saturday 8 January**

St Francis Xavier, 12pm  
Thomas Dlugosz  
Amelia Galanis  
Zachariah Galanis  
Baptism  
Baptism  
Baptism

**St Francis Xavier, 6pm**

Georgia Williams  
Claudia White  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist

**Sunday 9 January**

Our Lady Help of Christians, 12pm  
Mia Abielias  
Baptism