

# 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.



## The Triduum of last week - experienced

Dear Parishioners and Friends of SFX & OLHC,

I have had a few days to look back and revisit the Holy Week experience from my vantage point - starting with Palm Sunday in both parishes and concluding with the largest attended Easter Sunday Mass being 10am at Eltham - standing room outside the church!

For me, as I reflect on these sacred days - the number of 'highlights' in each ceremony was truly wonderful. Given the Covid-19 restrictions that have become our new normal, we were able to adapt each celebration with a sense of creativity while holding onto the essence and meaning of the liturgy. On Palm Sunday for example - the procession of the Palms through the church to the altar was just impressive. The same was true for me with the action of the 'Fire' at each Vigil, the service of 'light' moved through the church, once the Easter Candle was lit, to settle a beautiful atmosphere while the creation readings were in play. (The sacred FIRE in the church - and it worked.) Yes, renewing your baptismal promises with a slight dash of Holy Water was important too - thank goodness the weather for these days was just perfect - so too, the clear vision of the full moon in the sky each night! The Baptism of Diako Aghae at the dawn vigil at Eltham and the Confirmations of many school students at the other Easter Masses was for me pure delight. Not forgetting the amazing music at every celebration during Holy Week and their wonderful sound and appropriate songs during these sacred days, but the highlights for me were Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

Holy Thursday was truly special with St Francis Xavier, Montmorency hosting this night while on Good Friday, the community of Our Lady Help of Christians hosted, in return, the Passion of Christ. Both Catholic Parishes came together in such numbers that made these 2 parts of the Triduum stand out for me as new and fresh. I deeply loved and felt this new energy and acceptance of our parish reality as a confirmed possibility. Two vibrant parishes with one priest.

Since Easter Sunday, some parishioners have commented, written, texted or emailed their congratulations and thoughts on this past week, and I'm indeed grateful... it was after all a community effort on the famous 3 days called the Triduum that brought us together in prayer!

*Michael*

*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 Priest**

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

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

#### **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)

## Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

### **Saturday 23**

12:00pm Baptism - Callen, Javier, Oliver Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations Montmorency

### **Sunday 24**

8:30am Mass & Confirmations Montmorency

10:00am Mass & Confirmations Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Sebastian, Thomas, Ella, Noa Montmorency

### **Monday 25 - ANZAC Day**

### **Tuesday 26**

9:30am Mass Montmorency

### **Wednesday 27**

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency

11:00am Funeral: Yvonne Christoffersen Eltham

### **Thursday 28**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

2:30pm Mass Calvary Lower Plenty Garden Views

### **Friday 29**

9:30am Mass Eltham

### **Saturday 30**

12:00pm Baptism - Sierra, Matteo Montmorency

2:00pm Kadasig AGM Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations Montmorency

### **Sunday 1 May**

8:30am Mass & Confirmations Montmorency

10:00am Mass & Confirmations Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Mia, Willow, Zayn, James Eltham

### **Monday 2**

11:00am Funeral: Zara Bucknell Eltham

### **Tuesday 3**

9:30am Mass Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry Eltham

### **Wednesday 4**

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency

1:00pm Small Church Community Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community Montmorency

### **Thursday 5**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

11:00am Funeral Mass: Rudolf Plavcak Montmorency

### **Friday 6**

9:30am Mass Eltham

### **Saturday 7**

12:00pm Baptism - Aurora, Billie, Maverick, Evelyn Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations Montmorency

### **RECONCILIATION**

available upon request

please call the Parish Office 9435 4742

### Collections: 17 April 2022

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
OLHC	\$1,192.00	\$2,093.60
SFX	\$1,713.00	\$1,864.70

**Support Montmorency Parish by giving with CDFpay**

Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can quickly and securely give to your parish.




**Support Eltham Parish by giving with CDFpay**

Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can quickly and securely give to your parish.






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

**Montmorency**

For the recently deceased:

*Rudolf Plavcak*

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Terry Carrigg, Pauline Jones*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Mona, Rita Bevanda, Kim Brisbane, Alana Foulds, Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Kate Lagerewskij, Melanie Lam, Frances McDonald, Andrew Pighin, Aquatha Spina*

**Eltham**

For the recently deceased:

*Yvonne Christoffersen*

*Zara Bucknell*

(mum/in-law of Duncan & Natalie Bucknell, & Kate Kogler)

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Clara Doroszlay*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Violetta, Elisabeth Edwards, Fiona Rogers, Rosemary Scully, Ian Sturman, Sarah Thompson*

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



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

**Saturday 23 April**

*St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm*

Oliver Dunstan

Javier Gaspersz

Callen Smart

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

*St Francis Xavier, 6:00pm*

Ellie Lane

Livia Parker

Mya Parker

Allegra Schwef

Estelle Schwef

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

**Sunday 24 April**

*St Francis Xavier, 8:30am*

Brixton Drohan

Olivia Grawe

Kai Williams

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

*Our Lady Help of Christians, 10am*

Ellena Dal Pra

Olivia Dal Pra

Jack McIver

Skyla Ravello

First Eucharist

Confirmation

Confirmation

Confirmation

*St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm*

Ella Bartholomew

Thomas Bartholomew

Sebastian Lauretta

Noa Nuzzaco

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism



**Thank you Thank you Thank you**

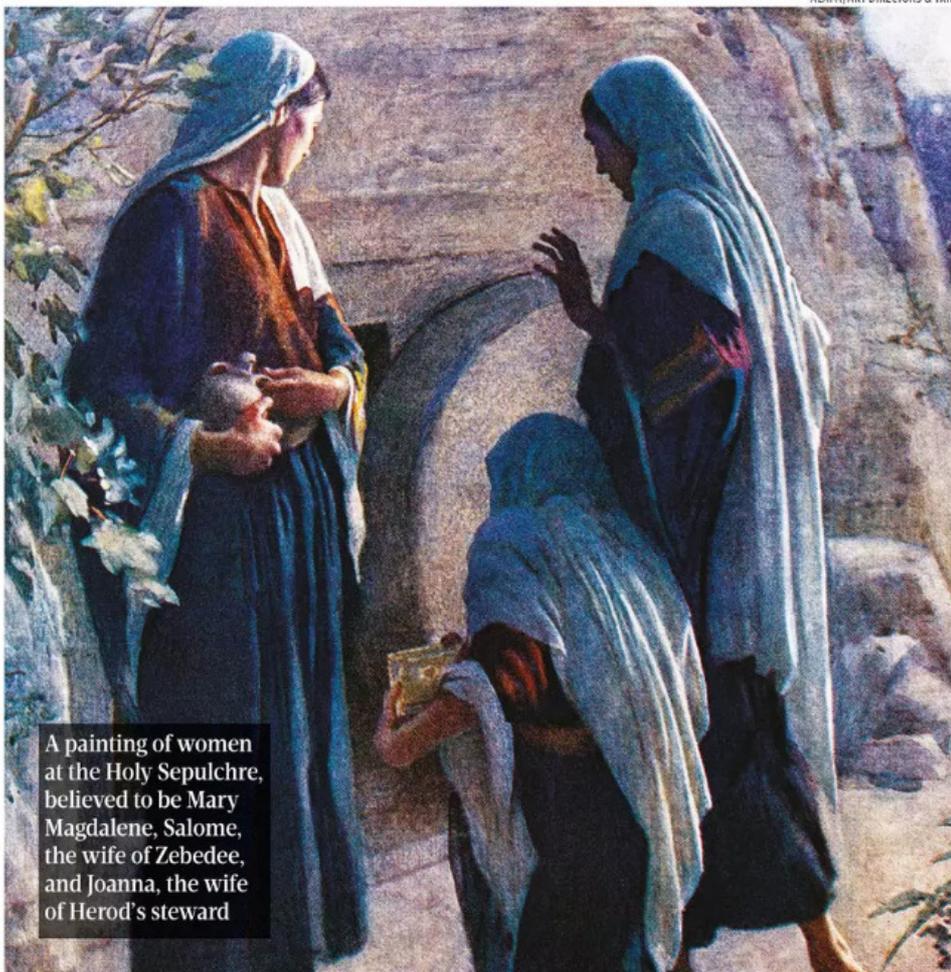
For the beautiful and inspiring Liturgies you celebrated with us over the Easter Feast we thank you Fr Michael. Your energy and enthusiasm injected such life into our six Liturgies over four days, an amazing effort, thank you.

To our wonderful singers and musicians, our readers, commentators, narrators, the bearers of light. and the prayer writers. The cleaners who made our churches sparkle ready for new light and life. For those who were Confirmed or made their First Communion you give us hope for the future. For the many who contributed and worked behind the scenes, and there were many, these celebrations could not happen without you. Thank you ALL.

For all who came along, Eltham and Monty folk together giving us a beautiful sense of oneness and unity. All was prayerful and full of hope. Everyone played their part and gave of their best which enabled us all to participate fully in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, our Lord. We have risen with him and now shine the light of our Risen Lord as we move out into the world.

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

ALAMY/ART DIRECTORS & TRIP



A painting of women at the Holy Sepulchre, believed to be Mary Magdalene, Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward

# The Jesus jigsaw

Feminist biblical scholarship has transformed what we know of women's roles in the early church.

New evidence indicates men and women followed Christ in the same way / **by Joanna Moorhead**

**When academics** Helen Bond and Joan Taylor made a Channel 4 documentary on the women of the New Testament, they were unprepared for the fallout. *Jesus' Female Disciples: The New Evidence*, first aired four years ago, garnered an audience of 1.4 million and received more press coverage than any other religious programme since Jeremy Bowen's 2001 BBC1 blockbuster *Son of God*. But it wasn't just the audience figures. The pair were "inundated", Bond tells me when we meet in Edinburgh, with letters from people

fascinated by what they had discovered, who wanted to know more. "They were asking, Will there be a book?" Bond remembers.

This month that book is in the shops, bringing a new depth to the forensic work Bond - professor of Christian origins and head of the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh - and Taylor, professor of Christian origins and Second Temple Judaism at King's College London, have done on the neglected story of the women of the gospels. "the TV documentary only really covered four women (the

Virgin Mary; Mary Magdalene; Joanna, who was the wife of Herod's steward; and Salome, who appears in Mark's gospel at the Crucifixion), and it was based on the women who surrounded Jesus. But the book takes the story on, to St Paul and the Early Church - in fact we look at the Church through to the fourth century. Pretty much all the women named in the gospels are included, and a lot of the unnamed ones as well," says Bond.

This will be welcome news to those who felt the documentary was something of a dumbing down. The book is entitled *Women Remembered: Jesus' Female Disciples*. It's an attempt at that holy grail of academic writing, an introduction to a subject that will engage non-specialist readers, with enough new insights to intrigue those who are already au fait with women's part in the history of the Early Church. Bond says she's aware of that annoying dichotomy that always dogs this sort of topic: the tension between the feeling inside academia that "it's all been done already" (in this case, by feminist theologians and Bible scholars, particularly in the 1990s), and the plentiful evidence that out there in the "real world" a majority of people still believe that Jesus functioned as a kind of male CEO who surrounded himself with a top team of 12 other men, while women played an extremely limited role in the first communities of Christians.

Not so, says Bond. It is now well established that the women of the gospels were far from the meek and mild and second-rung characters that history had handed down to us

until recently. Some were wealthy women who funded Jesus and his work - and of course, a woman was the first witness to the most important moment of all in the Christian story, the Resurrection of Jesus. Early on in the life of the Church, Bond argues, men realised that it would help with the credibility of the movement if it wasn't assigning radical roles to women. What's more, the gospel writers were male; and Bible scholars through history until recent decades have been overwhelmingly male. "The way the story was told, it was Jesus and then Peter and Paul, and then more and more men. There's hardly any mention of the women, apart from the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene. So if people knew anything about the women who were near Christ, it would be these two."



Joan Taylor, left, and Helen Bond

**From** a feminist perspective, there have long been big questions around how these two limited caricatures of womanhood in the New Testament - the perpetual virgin and the whore (as Mary Magdalene was for centuries falsely alleged to be) - came to symbolise all women. "But the movement was taking place in a deeply patriarchal society - a society where the entire focus was on the men," says Bond. "And there was this feeling as well, at the time Christianity was coming into being, that it would reflect badly on it if it had too many women in prominent positions. Any kind of cult that seemed to attract

women would be seen to be 'bad'". So the women were airbrushed out to increase Christianity's credibility.

Despite this, says Bond, the evidence of women's prominent role in the early Christian communities clearly exists. As a younger academic, she distanced herself from feminist theology, not wanting to end up being pigeon-holed. "When I did eventually read it, I realised how much material there is. I thought, how have I not been looking at all this?" She cites, for example, evidence in Paul's Letter to the Romans (ch. 16) that women are acting as apostles and missionaries. "Paul sends a letter with Phoebe, and it's quite clear she isn't just dropping the letter off. In fact, Phoebe is the first biblical interpreter of Paul's writing."

Once she started reading the gospels and looking for them, says Bond, she realised "they are full of clues about the role of women - you realise there's so much more than the writers actually say. Mark, for example, leaves it right to the end of his gospel before he suddenly tells us there were all these women and they travelled with him and helped him."

The strong likelihood is that the women who were close to Christ had roles that were revolutionary for females at the time, and have remained revolutionary ever since. "There's plenty of evidence that women were following Christ in exactly the same way as the men, and playing exactly the same roles in the Early Church," says Bond. "In the Acts of the Apostles we're told that men and women went out as missionaries. There's no reason to think women were secondary to men at that point, in the work they were doing." It's as clear as can be, Bond says, confirming much recent scholarly work into the history

of the Early Church, that women were once deacons; and she argues that it's quite possible that women enjoyed a parity as disciples of Christ that they've never enjoyed since the Church became institutionalised - and certainly not in the current Catholic Church's structures.

The fact that the gatekeepers were almost always male, and that they weren't looking out for the missing stories of the women, continued to shape the narrative until relatively recently. Much of what is in the book has been known by academics for several decades, but by paying attention to non-biblical traditions that have survived in cultural memory - such as contemporary legends and hymns, the representation of these women in art, inscriptions and archaeological sites connected with women disciples of Jesus - Bond and Taylor hope they've added to the understanding of the story of female involvement in Christ's life and in the Early Church beyond what is written down, to provide a more accurate and rounded picture of what was happening to the women whose participation went largely unrecorded. It matters, today as much as ever: and what's more, says Bond, it matters even to those who aren't believers or who aren't part of an organised Christian Church. "the story of Jesus has shaped everything in our society, and the place of women in that story has had enormous significance for the place of women in society," she says. Putting the missing pieces into the jigsaw has huge implications not only inside the Church, but outside it as well.

**Joanna Moorhead** is The Tablet's arts editor. *Women Remembered: Jesus' Female Disciples* by Helen Bond and Joan Taylor is published by Hodder & Stoughton.



**Caritas Australia** would like to **THANK YOU** for supporting Project Compassion 2022. If you still have your Project Compassion box or set of envelopes at home, please bring them back next week or visit [lent.caritas.org.au](http://lent.caritas.org.au) and donate online.

**Your generosity will empower the world's most vulnerable communities to grow stronger and lift themselves out of poverty.**

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **For All Future Generations**. You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your Parish, by visiting [lent.caritas.org.au](http://lent.caritas.org.au), or by calling 1800 024 413.



## Prayer Diary

### Saturday 23

Prison Fellowship International is a global ministry with ministries in 116 countries and more than 33,000 volunteers. Today please pray for the ministry of Prison Fellowship: Republic of Korea (South Korea) and for the team serving the prisons, inmates and families. PFSK visit in prisons and also regularly run the Sycamore Tree Project in prisons. In 2018, Richard was able to visit South Korea for a PFI conference and visited a private prison which is run by a Christian organisation on Christian principles and including Christian programs.

### Sunday 24

Please pray for Ian Whitehill as he speaks today at St John's Presbyterian Church in Bendigo. Pray also for his safety as he travels there and back.

### Monday 25

Join with people from across Victoria this morning as we pray together in support of this ministry of hope for so many people living in need of real hope.

**Theme:** Pray for access to be opened for our volunteers.

**Zoom Meeting ID:** 861 5107 6709.

**Passcode:** 458560.

### Tuesday 26

Thank God for the Easter Biscuit Bake program this year and the blessings it brings to people in prison, people contributing and staff in prisons. We really appreciate all the effort people have made to make this possible. Praise God for this practical expression of love.

### Wednesday 27

Pray that people in prisons across Victoria will discover that Jesus' resurrection guarantees that we can be restored to full relationship with God and that we have a confident hope for a future with God, restored to right relationship with Him.

### Thursday 28

This week please pray for the inmates and staff at the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre. This centre provides a supervised pathway back into society for selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence. It is named after Judy Lazarus, a prominent advocate for people returning to society after being in prison.

### Friday 29

Over the last few weeks, Laura & Richard have had good contact with several key people in prisons as they prepare for a return to volunteering. What they're hearing is that people in prison are keen to see our volunteers again. Prison staff also recognise the value that our volunteers add to the prisons in terms of providing positive interaction which is of a non-custodial nature. Give thanks for this positive reputation and pray for our patient volunteers who have been keen to return to volunteering for some time now.



## 'Pondering Grief'

**Saturday 30 April 2022, 10am-3.30pm.**

Facilitated by qualified Counsellor/ Supervisor/ Educator Linda Espie, this reflection day offers an invitation to reflect on and honour our inner life of change and transition. With creativity, space and gentle guiding support, this workshop offers a sacred place for the breadth of human experiencing and spirit to guide individual exploration.

Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation, Rear 41 Stanhope St, Malvern.

Cost \$80 (Materials provided, BYO lunch).

Book and pay via [www.heartoflife.melbourne](http://www.heartoflife.melbourne), or email [info@heartoflife.melbourne](mailto:info@heartoflife.melbourne) or tel 9890 1101.

## Food Drive for the ASRC Foodbank

Thank you for making a difference to people seeking asylum by providing one of the most basic human rights: food. ASRC Foodbank currently provides free groceries to around 1000 people every week, most of whom have no income and no work rights. EVERY donation makes a difference.



### TOP 10 MOST NEEDED ITEMS

1. tuna in oil 400g
2. tinned tomatoes 400g
3. raw, unsalted nuts
4. honey small bottles
5. spices turmeric, cumin, chilli
6. dried fruit
7. disposable razors
8. dishwashing liquid 500/750ml
9. shampoo +conditioner 350/400ml
10. laundry powder 1kg max



inquiries (03)9326 6066  
email [donatefood@asrc.org.au](mailto:donatefood@asrc.org.au)

Please note that the ASRC does not need baked beans, tinned soup or tinned spaghetti.

## Prayers of the Faithful for 24 April 2022 - Second Sunday of Easter

**Leader:** Bathed in the glory of the risen Lord, let us pray for the whole of creation to be made anew.

For the Church: that the Spirit will empower us to engage in prayer, participate more fully in community and generously share our resources. *Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all the newly baptised and confirmed: may they know Christ is present with them along life's journey. May they be inspired to give witness to Christ by their words and deeds.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the grace to forgive: may the Spirit of God strengthen us to be instruments of forgiveness in our families and communities.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the gift of the Spirit upon the world: that God will breathe the Spirit upon the chaos of our society and its financial and political structures so that the dignity of each person may blossom.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are suffering: that God will heal the sick, comfort the grieving, guide refugees to safety, and open resources to those who lack food and medicine. *Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For peace in all the troubled areas of the world, particularly in Ukraine: that Christ's victory over death may bring an end to war, genocide, and inhumane treatment of people.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all those who have died, including *Zara Bucknell, Yvonne Christoffersen & Rudolf Plavcak*; and those whose anniversaries occur at this time, *Terry Carrigg, Clara Doroszlay & Pauline Jones*, may their life of faith and trust in Jesus bring them eternal life.

*Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** God of new life, hear the prayers we have spoken and those held deep within our hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen



Super Typhoon Odette: The effect of this typhoon on the Visayas and Mindanao areas has certainly been a total focus since it hit on December 15, 2021. The devastation has been shocking. Amazingly all of our families were given their Bundles of Joy just prior to the storm hitting. As detailed in our Special Newsletter post typhoon, 98% of our families and staff were affected in one way or another.

Working to rebuild houses: Due to the various needs of families - where they are situated, slope of land etc will indicate what type of house that can be reconstructed, we have been working with Emely and staff along with Terry, our builder friend, to work out what is the best for each family. Terry was involved in the building of the clinic in Patupat along with the 3 classrooms in Patupat and San Rafael as well as other small jobs. These classrooms had minimal destruction from the typhoon.

Bolocboloc land development: Further clearing of the land has taken place. Emely has decided that houses will be constructed two or three at a time. Sponsors of the children have kindly contributed financially along with other donations. Also on the piece of land is the bean sprout project which is important, very productive & giving an income to the participants. This was on hold post typhoon as there was no electricity - all good now!

Barangay Guntung: The families in this barangay have taken on the making of 'sticky rice' - 'calamay' in Cebuano, as another way of earning an income. Many of us have enjoyed this delicacy when visiting. We are encouraging these ladies to continue this project. The early stages are proving positive.

Update on Val & Mona Smith-Orr: As many KAID members & supports know we support our dear friend, Val Smith-Orr, an Australian volunteer nurse living in Zambales, Philippines with medical supplies, clothing for all ages, toys to entertain children being treated & some Aussie bits & pieces. Val is a specialised nurse in burns along with cleft lip/palate surgery and wound care. Val & her staff have travelled to our communities in Cebu to give seminars on management of these medical conditions & to treat young burns victims. For the past 2 years Val has needed a bilateral hip replacement & her Filipina daughter, Monalisa, is in urgent need of hard palate surgery. Mona has had 7 surgeries already for her cleft lip/palate & this is her final one. They arrived in Australia late November. Val had her surgery just prior to Christmas and now Mona is having her very specialised surgery on March 26 through the wonderful organisation, Children First Foundation. Mulgrave Private Hospital is donating the hospital stay & surgery is by Profs James Leong & P Low along with the wonderful nurses who volunteered also. What wonderful human beings! Their time here has been challenging. Two weeks in Tasmania with KAID friends gave them the time to prepare for Mona's surgery. As we send this Mona has had her intricate surgery and is doing very well. On April 2nd she had her first pureed meal! Please keep Mona in your thoughts and prayers.

Val's organisation, Triple B Care Projects, has been visited by quite a number of groups when in the Philippines, so many of us are well aware of her amazing work and we were all delighted when Val was recognised with her 'Order of Australia' for her international work in nursing in the Philippines.

We are always happy to speak with you, if you have any queries contact:  
Glenys Gayfer [glenysgayfer71@gmail.com](mailto:glenysgayfer71@gmail.com) or 0411 196 395

## Gospel: John 20:19-31

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.'

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.



### Reflection:

By way of exception, the Lectionary provides only the one gospel text for this Sunday in the three-year cycle, presumably because of its perceived importance in the tradition. It takes us from the evening of Easter Day to John's concluding statement about his gospel-writing purpose.

The reading falls into three parts, each of which provides much food for thought. Part one is John's account of the risen Lord's appearance to his fearful disciples and his giving them the Spirit and their mission of mercy. Part two is the story of Thomas the apostle's dramatic conversion from scepticism to full-blooded faith. . Part three is John's sign-off.

Notable points along the way are Jesus' repeated greeting of peace, his re-creating gift of the Spirit, the apostolic commission he gives to the disciples, the conclusion to Thomas' confession of faith - "Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe" - and the evangelist's hope that his work will bring readers to faith and life. It is striking how the horizons of time and space expand as the reading progresses. It begins at night in a closed room, it proceeds with a mission for the apostles in their time, it envisages future generations coming to believe, and it finishes with a hint of eternity.

This rich gospel deserves to be proclaimed with the faith and love it embodies.

**Break Open the Word 2022**

## Thank you and Farewell to Fr Terry

Covid restrictions have limited our opportunities to farewell and thank Fr Terry for the 15 years that he spent with us and for him to thank us. Two events are now able to be booked through the TryBooking system:

**Saturday 21 May**

7pm in the SFX Parish Hall

[www.trybooking.com/BZBIR](http://www.trybooking.com/BZBIR)

**Sunday 22 May**

12:30pm at the Monty-Eltham RSL

[www.trybooking.com/BZBJF](http://www.trybooking.com/BZBJF)

Any concerns please call:

Noel (0421 1016 105),

Patsy (0429 439 675) or

Vinka (0418 345 954)

