

# 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.



*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

Tue - 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: 29 May 2022

	OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	\$357.00	\$1,700.00
Presbytery	\$820.15	\$939.90

### Stewardship Offering

Month	OLHC	SFX	Total
Jan	\$7,241.06	\$9,091.00	\$16,332.06
Feb	\$5,443.06	\$9,994.50	\$15,437.56
Mar	\$6,191.60	\$10,597.00	\$16,788.60

## Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

### **Saturday 11**

12:00pm Baptism - Jack, Elliott

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & Confirmations & First Eucharists

Montmorency

### **Sunday 12**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

### **Tuesday 14**

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

### **Wednesday 15**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

7:30pm Small Church Community

Montmorency

### **Thursday 16**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

### **Friday 17**

9:30am Mass

Eltham

### **Saturday 18**

12:00pm Baptism - Bertie

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & First Eucharists

Montmorency

### **Sunday 19**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass & First Eucharist

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Saylor

Eltham

### **Monday 20**

6:30pm Sisters & Mister Choir Rehearsal

Eltham

### **Tuesday 21**

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

### **Wednesday 22**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

### **Thursday 23**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

### **Friday 24**

9:30am Mass

Eltham

### **Saturday 25**

12:00pm Baptism - Eloise & Leo

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & First Eucharists

Montmorency

### **Sunday 26**

8:30am Mass & First Eucharists

Montmorency

10:00am Mass & First Eucharists

Eltham

12:00pm Baptism - Violet, Allira, Jonathan, James & Gia

Eltham

### **Wednesday 29**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

**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.



**To the parishioners of SFX,  
the families at SFX and HT primary schools, we would like to share with you our  
Annual Report from St Vincent de Paul (SVDP) Montmorency Conference  
for the period 1 May 2021 to 30 April 2022**

This is the 57<sup>th</sup> year of the Montmorency St Vincent de Paul (SVDP) conference. We serve the people of Lower Plenty, Montmorency, Briar Hill, St Helena and Eltham North. As a Catholic lay organization of **men and women, Our Vision** is to be recognized **as a caring Catholic organization offering a 'hands up' to people in need in our local community** irrespective of their faith, ethnicity, social background, gender or political opinions. We do this, on your behalf, by respecting their dignity and privacy, sharing our hope for them and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

The theme of this year's Winter Appeal is **"Make it Stop"**, focusing on the importance of providing safety to families and individuals fleeing domestic violence.

In the third year of the global pandemic and with the significant increase in the cost of living, families are fighting to stay in their homes and it is their children who are bearing the greatest burden of the crisis.

As Job Keeper/Seeker payments wind down, some families are at increased risk of homelessness which means that many children may be without a warm, safe place to sleep and properly fed. The challenge for all in our parish community is to ensure that our Christian and community spirit continues and helps to make the difference: from an ordinary to an extraordinary difference, to those in need in our local community.

### **Support from Schools and Parishioners**

SVDP Montmorency is most grateful and thankful to our supporters: **SFX parishioners, our two parish primary schools - Holy Trinity (HT) and St Francis Xavier (SFX) and Catholic Ladies College (CLC)**, through your support of our appeals. We are entirely dependent on the generosity of the SFX parishioners and the school communities, for, despite our advocacy, we have not been able to access any Federal, State or Council grants.

SFX and HT families donated non-perishable food on two food drives during the year. Both schools and CLC also generously donated Christmas gifts and Christmas food for adults and their children. This very much relieved the economic and social pressure on families and enabled them to celebrate Christmas as members of our community.

Over the past year, your conference assisted 157 adults and 148 children by providing support, friendship, material assistance and advice about accessing government, health and financial services. In addition, we also visited 35 families with Christmas hampers and gifts.

Although our resources are continually being stretched we were, thanks to your generosity, able to **provide assistance to the value of \$22,941 over the twelve months to April 2021**. Below is a summary of how we have provided material assistance to people in need in the Montmorency/Briar Hill/Lower Plenty/St Helena/Eltham North areas :

Supermarket vouchers & Donated food from SFX, HT and CLC Schools	\$13,125
Furniture, small household items & clothing	\$1,048
Electric/gas/telephone bills/other utilities of families	\$2,628
Clothing vouchers	\$2,500
Education	\$1,394
Transport related expenses	\$528
Other	\$1,718

(Please note: All postage, telephone, travelling expenses and any other administrative expenses associated with the services we provide to local community are borne by the members themselves. As a consequence, we can assure all parishioners that **ALL donations remain within the Montmorency conference and go entirely to help those we assist in the district.**)

### **How to donate to the SVDP Winter appeal**

**Envelopes:** SVDP envelopes are available at SFX in church pews or at the tables at the entrance doors or at the Presbytery/Church office. You are welcome to leave your donations and/or envelopes in the SVDP Donation boxes on the tables near the entrances to the church, at the Parish Office, to an SVDP member or to Mike on 0417 221 245. Receipts can be issued by simply completing name and address on the envelope.

**On Line:** [vinnies.org.au](http://vinnies.org.au). In terms of directing funds back to the Montmorency or Eltham Conferences, we request that you state **Montmorency** or **Eltham** in the **"Comments/Conference Name box"** which is just after the postal address box.

**By Phone:** by calling 13 18 12 and again stating your donation is for the **Montmorency or Eltham conference**.

**Direct Credit:** BSB 063000 Account 106 07556 **with a reference W22 and Montmorency 916**. In this way moneys will be credited to the Montmorency Conference account and stay within our community.

If you are donating **online, by phone or direct credit** could you please send an email to [msaid@netspace.net.au](mailto:msaid@netspace.net.au) with your full name and address, amount and date of deposit so that the conference can acknowledge your generosity and ensure these moneys are allocated to the **Montmorency or Eltham Conferences**.



# THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

INITIALLY THIS FEAST WASN'T CELEBRATED AFTER PENTECOST AND TOOK A FEW CENTURIES TO FIND ITS PLACE IN THE CALENDAR.

After the celebration of Pentecost, the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church continues to meditate on the great mystery of God through the feast of Trinity Sunday. The Sunday following Pentecost has been dedicated to the Holy Trinity for many centuries, but was not always celebrated by everyone in the Church.

According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, initially this Sunday was known as a *Dominica vacans*, with no specific focus or theme. At that time there was no particular feast celebrating the Holy Trinity, but soon enough there arose a need for the Church to further define her beliefs in God.

A heresy known as the *Arian heresy* began to spread in the 4th century, disputing the traditional Christian belief of one God in three divine persons. The bishops of the Church decided to compose a Mass in honour of the Trinity to reaffirm the belief, but it was not given a specific date in the calendar.

By the 8th and 9th century, however, the Church found a perfect place. The *St. Andrew Daily Missal* explains how Sunday was the most fitting day.

*Sunday is consecrated throughout the year to the Holy Trinity because God the Father began the work of creation on the "first day," the Son made man rose from the dead on a Sunday morning, and the Holy Spirit came down on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday.*

Besides celebrating the Trinity in some fashion on each Sunday, there also grew a need to fill the "vacant" Sunday after the feast of Pentecost. This need was heightened by the fact that ordinations occurred during this time and there existed no specific liturgy. As the *St. Andrew Daily Missal* explains:

*"The feast of the Holy Trinity owes its origin to the fact that the ordinations of the Ember Saturday, which took place in the evening, were prolonged to the next day, which was Sunday and had no proper Mass at that date ... [a votive Mass of the Holy Trinity] was celebrated in some places on this Sunday; and since it occupied a fixed place in the liturgical calendar, this Mass was considered as establishing this Sunday as a special feast of the Blessed Trinity."*

Celebrating Trinity Sunday after Pentecost also allows the Church to further reflect on the mystery of God after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. This helps us see the connection that if we truly want to understand the Trinity, we need to have the gift of the Holy Spirit. We can never fully understand who God is on our own and desperately need his guidance and inspiration.

The Trinity is one of the most fundamental beliefs of the Catholic Church and so it is fitting that we dedicate a particular Sunday to that mystery.

## Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations

From the Center for Action and Contemplation

### The Immensity Within

*Father Richard describes the Holy Spirit as the loving immensity of God's presence within us:*

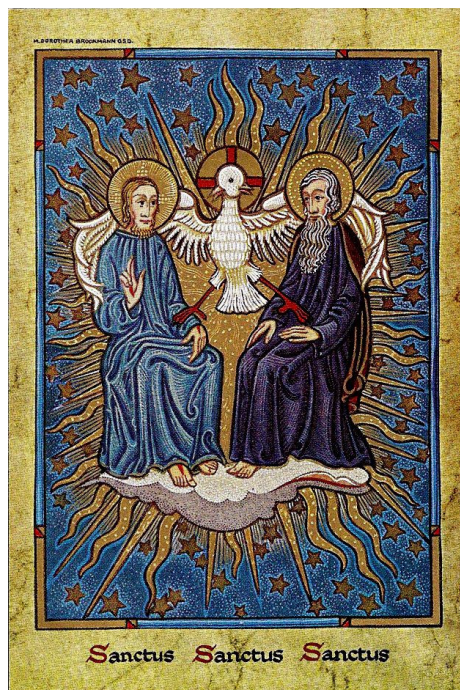
On one level, soul, consciousness, love, and the Holy Spirit can all be thought of as one and the same. Each of these point to something that is larger than the self, shared with God, and even eternal. That's what Jesus means when he speaks of "giving" us the Spirit or *sharing his consciousness with us*. One whose soul is thus awakened actually has "the mind of Christ" (see 1 Corinthians 2:10-16). That does not mean the person is psychologically or morally perfect, but such a transformed person does see things in a much more expanded and compassionate way. St Paul calls it "a spiritual revolution of the mind" (Ephesians 4:23, *Jerusalem Bible*) - and it is!

Jesus calls this implanted Spirit the "Advocate" who is "with you and in you," makes you live with the same life that he lives, and unites you to everything else (John 14:16-20). He goes on to say that this "Spirit of truth" will "teach you everything" and "remind you of all things" (John 14:26) as if you already knew this somehow. Talk about being well-equipped from a Secret Inner Source! It really is too good to believe - so we didn't believe it.

Consciousness, the soul, love, the Holy Spirit, on both the individual and shared levels, have sadly become largely *unconscious*! No wonder some call the Holy Spirit the "missing person of the Blessed Trinity." No wonder we try to fill this *radical disconnectedness* through various addictions.

There is an Inner Reminder and an Inner *Rememberer* (see John 14:26, 16:4) who holds together all the disparate and fragmented parts of our lives, who fills in all the gaps, who owns all the mistakes, who forgives all the failures - and who loves us into an ever-deeper life. This is the job description of the Holy Spirit, who is the spring that wells up within us (John 7:38-39) - and unto eternal time. This is the breath that warms and renews everything (John 20:22). These are the eyes that see beyond the tears that wash and cleanse the past (Matthew 5:4). And better yet, they are not only *our* tears but are actually the very presence and consolation of God within us (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

You must contact this Immensity! You must look back at what seems like your life from the place of this Immensity. You must know that this Immensity is already within you. The only thing separating you from such Immensity is your unwillingness to trust such an utterly free grace, such a completely unmerited gift.





There are numerous depictions of the Trinity in art, but one of the most symbolic that Christians around the world repeatedly use is that of Russian iconographer Andrei Rublev. It is one that various Orthodox churches have kept through the centuries and continue to rely on.

The symbolism of the image is complex (initially inspired by Abraham's encounter in Genesis 18) and is meant to summarize the Church's belief in the Holy Trinity. For children it is helpful to have a visual image and while the symbolism is not immediately evident, when it is explained the Trinity starts to make much more sense.

As an example, the three angels in the icon are identical in appearance, representing the single substance of the three Persons. However, each angel is wearing a different garment, representing how each Person remains distinct from the other. The fact that Rublev depicts the Trinity using angels is also a reminder of the nature of God, who is pure spirit. The angels are shown from left to right in the order that we profess our faith in the Creed: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There are many other symbols present in the icon and a more complete explanation can be found in the article, "The Russian Icon that Reveals the Mystery of the Trinity." <https://aleteia.org/2016/05/21/the-russian-icon-that-reveals-the-mystery-of-the-trinity/>



## Trinity Sunday: Celebrating the mystery of God's love

Andrew Hamilton SJ

[www.melbournecatholic.org/news/trinity-Sunday-much-more-than-divine-mathematics](http://www.melbournecatholic.org/news/trinity-Sunday-much-more-than-divine-mathematics)

On Sunday 12 June, we celebrate the feast of Trinity Sunday. This feast was celebrated throughout the whole Catholic Church only quite late – in the 14th century. In earlier times, every Sunday was dedicated to the Holy Trinity. This was evident in the frequent reference to the Father, Son and Spirit as one God in the prayers of the liturgy. No special feast was needed.

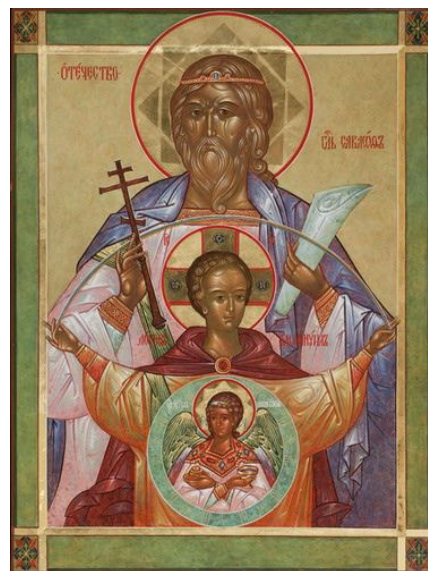
The prayers and the focus of the Feast are very theological. That is to say they express the Church teaching about the Trinity rather than exploring the place that Father, Son and Spirit have in the life of Christians and of the Church.

The emphasis on teaching about the Trinity can be traced back to one of the greatest challenges to Christian faith that took place in the fourth century. Christians became divided by the way in which they thought of God. Previously, they had all prayed to the Father and to Christ and had recognised the work of the Spirit in their Christian lives. At the same time, they had insisted that the Christian God is one, in contrast to the many Gods of the pagans. Few were concerned how these convictions fitted together. In the fourth century, however, there was fierce debate in which the foundations of faith were at stake.

The crisis began when some Christians questioned the relationship between Jesus, the Son of God, and God the Father. They asserted that Jesus was central to Christian faith and was the special ambassador of God, but was a lesser being than God the Father. This belief was eventually seen to threaten the heart of the Gospel, which saw that God was personally involved in Jesus' life and death. Jesus was not just God's messenger but God's Son. He is Son of God in the deepest sense, and through him God's stake in humanity is God's own self. The conviction that the stories and actions of Jesus are actions of God underlies the feast of the Trinity.

The Christians who believed that Jesus was lesser than the Father then forced their opponents to address another central question. If Jesus, the Son of God, the Father and the Spirit are all God, how can they be the One God to whom Abraham and Jesus prayed, and not two or three gods. The Church called to resolve the disputes did not explain how God is three and one, but used the language of one God in three Persons to assert both that God is one being and that Father, Son and Spirit share fully in divinity. The prayers and sermons on the feast of the Trinity make that point again and again. It is not an explanation but a way of speaking that respects the full mystery of God's love for us.

Unless we know a little about the history behind the words we use to describe God as Trinity, it is easy to dismiss the belief as concerned with divine mathematics. It really celebrates something much deeper: the depth of God's involvement with us in the salvation that Jesus brought us. It insists that when Jesus spoke to us, God speaks, when Jesus dies on the cross, God dies in him, that when Jesus rises and ascends to God he takes us with him, and that when the Spirit works within our lives and Church, God works within us. The feast of the Trinity says that our world is not God's colony under colonial management but is God's home. It is about the intimacy of God's presence to us in our world and in the Church through Jesus.



## Prayers of the Faithful for 12 June 2022 - The Most Holy Trinity

**Leader:** Loving Father, Son and Spirit, trusting in your divine love we humbly offer these prayers to you.

For the Church: that we will spread the Good News that the Trinitarian God of love is always with us.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our parish communities: that we continue to be open to the Holy Spirit to work together to create a new and exciting entity.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who are experiencing violence of any kind - war, domestic violence or civil unrest: that the power of the love of the Holy Trinity will overcome the hatred and enmity in the world.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who work to assist the poor and homeless, especially the St Vincent de Paul Society: that they are given the strength through the Spirit to continue their essential work.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those children receiving the sacraments of Baptism, First Eucharist & Confirmation this week: that they will be supported in their faith throughout their lives by their family and the parish community.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who are experiencing ill health - be it mental, physical or emotional: that they are comforted in the knowledge that they are loved by God and that God is always with them in their difficulties.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who have died recently, especially *Maurice Kerwin, Faye Pickett, Maureen Purser & Faye Tapley*, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including *Moira Anderson, Giuseppe Barca, Rose de Zilva, Frances Dooley, Terry Hollyoak, Edna McCudden, Fr James Murtagh, Giuseppina Pace & Russell Rodrigo*. May they rest in the loving arms of Jesus throughout all eternity.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** Most Holy Trinity, hear and answer these prayers and those we offer personally. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen



**St Vincent de Paul Society**  
*good works*

**SVdP Eltham are in need of:**

Soups	Baked Beans (tin)
Tinned Stew	Fruit (tin)
Pasta	Breakfast Cereal
Pasta sauce	Long Life Milk
Spaghetti (tin)	

### Christian Book Club

Are you interested in reading good Christian books? Reading the great classics of our faith? Engaging with others to discuss and deepen your faith and understanding?

If you are interested in gathering regularly to discuss faith building literature, then please contact Marisa (0437 744 343).

We look forward to reading great books, enjoying in-depth faith discussions and building friendships with you.

Blessings, Marisa



### 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.**





For the recently deceased:

*Faye Pickett*

*Faye Tapley*

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Moirá Anderson, Giuseppe Barca (1 year anniversary)  
Rose de Silva, Frances Dooley, Terry Hollyoak,  
Edna McCudden, Fr James Murtagh, Giuseppina Pace,  
Russell Rodrigo*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Rita Bevanda, Kim Brisbane, Alana Foulds,  
Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Melanie Lam,  
Frances McDonald, Andrew Pighin, Aguatha Spina,  
Melina Tenaqlia*

For the recently deceased:

*Maureen Purser*  
daughter of the late Francis & David Scott

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

*Terry Hollyoak.*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

*Violetta, Elisabeth Edwards, Jade McAlear,  
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:**

*St Francis Xavier, 12:00pm*

Jack Karabatsos  
Elliott Torres

Baptism  
Baptism

*St Francis Xavier, 6:00pm*

Benjamin Hanvin  
Jessica Hanvin  
William Hanvin

Confirmation  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist &  
Confirmation  
First Eucharist  
Confirmation  
First Eucharist  
Confirmation

Annabelle Harford  
Lucas Kamvissis  
Brooke Suckling  
Tyler Suckling

A stylized flame logo in red and orange, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

## A Charismatic Mass

will be celebrated on

Thursday 16th June

at St Thomas the Apostle Church,  
251 Diamond Creek Road,  
North Greensborough.

The evening will commence at 7:30pm with Praise & Worship, followed by Mass and supper.

For further details, please contact  
Rose 0411 650 339 or Emilia 0418 120 902

## Gospel: John 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: All he tells you will be taken from what is mine.'



### Reflection:

As John presents it, Jesus' farewell discourse or final testament is not a systematic instruction. It's reflective, meditative and repetitive. Jesus opens his heart, as it were, in the presence of his disciples and God his Father. He had already spoken at length of the Spirit, the Advocate, in chapter 14, and now returns to the subject two chapters later. Mindful of his impending departure, he assures his disciples that his role as Teacher and Master will be continued by the Spirit of truth. Just as Jesus only speaks what the Father tells him (eg 14:29), so all that the Spirit says "will be taken from what is mine." This encompasses both teaching already given and "the things to come."

As was the case with the text from Romans, the ingredients of a Trinitarian theology are here, with the additional naming of God as Father. We have a thumbnail sketch of the intimate inter-communion of the divine person.

This reading is a small but precious fragment of the farewell discourse. It calls for respectful and prayerful delivery.

**Break Open the Word 2022**

## FEATURES / Our Ukrainian family

### Welcome home

■ BY SUE GAISFORD

**Olena** had been worried about recognising us, but Rob, my resourceful husband, said he'd wear his Panama hat. Unsurprisingly, it was the only one to be seen in grubby old Luton airport, late on a chilly Saturday night. When, at last, we spotted her small, neat figure, we felt a strong wave of pure relief. She fell into our arms, beaming and laughing, and it was, honestly, like welcoming home a long-lost child. She introduced us to her son Yuri (not her daughter Yulia, as I wrote here several weeks ago - my mistake) who is a terrific little chap of eight, with a smile as wide as his mother's, and we brought them wearily home, not long before dawn.

The next morning was a challenge. Our daughter came with her Iraqi husband and two riotous little boys, followed by several welcoming neighbours

bearing gifts: one couple produced a cottage pie and everything needed for a magnificent cream tea; a dear friend came with her prize-winning "merry marmalade" - one pot made with tequila, the other with vodka - and we all enjoyed a rare visit from Pete the Pond, a marvellously cheerful man with a generous supply of white whiskers, a beaten-up wooden leg and a parrot named Lottie. Theoretically, he'd come to tell us how to clean up our pond, but he settled in for a couple of hours, Lottie squawking as shared his tea, to the great delight of little Yuri (I'm not making this up). A photo of Yuri with Lottie on his shoulder was sent back to his father immediately. It was all a far cry from Donetsk, but they seemed to relish it.

On Monday we registered them at the surgery and then it was off to the village

school to meet the head teacher, a sensitive woman who recognised Yuri's shrinking shyness, and assured us he'd be fine. And so he proved to be, thanks to several motherly little girls in his class. Back home, he decided that all he really wanted was Rob. He is content just to sit in his study and watch him work, although he is happier when they water the garden together. In Ukraine, his mother says, this devotion is called becoming someone's "pony-tail" - firmly attached and following him everywhere. He's never played ping-pong before, so Rob can still beat him, a situation sure to be reversed soon.

We are lucky here to have both a terrific group of volunteers to lead us through the morass of needlessly complicated bureaucracy, and an increasing number of Ukrainians in the village, mostly young mothers like Olena, who are fast becoming her friends. They seem to be settling into rural Sussex life more comfortably every day, Yuri more than most: "My

name is George", he says, "I am English boy."

So, on the surface at least, it is all going very well. But of course, it's not that simple. Olena returned from an evening meeting with other refugees, barely able to contain her tears. They had all been sharing their stories, of course: one young woman had left Mariupol under fire, and had driven alone across Europe to get here, leaving all her extended family behind.

Ukraine is very close to them all. Every morning, Olena gives us the latest news, of the country and of her family. Sometimes she wants to say more about it: more often she smiles and waves it away, only to return to it later, when the need to talk becomes too pressing to resist. One day, we tell her, the war will be over and her handsome husband will come to take them home. I hope to God that is no fairytale.

**Sue Gaisford** is a former literary editor of The Tablet. The names of the Ukrainian family have been changed.