

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 long Elizabethan Era has ended

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others, if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14: 7)



Pope Francis, in a telegram late Thursday, offered his condolences and prayers upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's longest-reigning monarch and the head of the Church of England. She was 96.

"Deeply saddened to learn of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I offer heartfelt condolences to Your Majesty, the Members of the Royal Family, the People of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth," the pope wrote in the Sept. 8 telegram to Britain's new monarch, King Charles III.

"I willingly join all who mourn her loss in praying for the late Queen's eternal rest, and in paying tribute to her life of unstinting service to the good of the Nation and the Commonwealth, her example of devotion to duty, her steadfast witness of faith in Jesus Christ and her firm hope in his promises."

Proverbs 31: 11-24

Who shall find a valiant woman? Who shall find a woman of strength? A pearl of great price is she. Her friends all have confidence in her, and benefit from her wise counsel. She initiates good, not evil, every day of her life. She opens her heart to the needy, she is generous with the poor. Yet she does not neglect her family needs, nor priorities of her own. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come. She often speaks with wisdom, and teaches in a kindly way. Those who are close to her praise her, her family extol her. Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all. Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting, the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her a reward for her labours, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

May Her Soul and the Souls of all the faithfully departed Rest In Peace.

This parish has a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people in our community.

For more information visit pol.org.au/eltham or pol.org.au/montmorency.

We support the recommendations of the Royal Commission into institutional abuse and pray for all the survivors.



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priest

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator
michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au

Parish Office

86 Mayona Road
 9435 4742
 Tue - Fri 9am-3pm
montmorency@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler: Parish Secretary
eltham@cam.org.au

Peter Williams: Child Safety Officer
SFX&OLHC.ChildSafety@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/montmorency
www.pol.org.au/eltham
 (pol stands for Parish OnLine)

Facebook:

[St Francis Xavier Parish Montmorency](#)
 Monty & Eltham Newsletter & Facebook items:
eltham@cam.org.au

Schools

St Francis Xavier Primary School
 Principal: Philip Cachia: 9435 8474
principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au
www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

Holy Trinity Primary School
 Principal: Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888
principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au
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Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School
 Principal: Patrick Green: 9439 7824
school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au
www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

RECONCILIATION

available upon request
 please call the Parish Office 9435 4742

Collections: 4 September 2022

	OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	\$995.15	\$1,336.00
Presbytery	\$1,116.95	\$803.65

Stewardship Offering

Month	OLHC	SFX	Total
May	\$5,768.51	\$11,421.00	\$17,189.51
June	\$6,530.13	\$10,509.05	\$17,039.18
July	\$6,285.38	\$10,092.00	\$16,377.38

Monty & Eltham Calendar of Events

Saturday 10 - Child Protection Sunday

12:00pm Baptisms: Lola, Kenzie, Luca, Leni Montmorency
 6:00pm Mass & First Eucharists Montmorency

Sunday 11 - Child Protection Sunday

8:30am Mass & First Eucharist Montmorency
 10:00am Mass Eltham
 12:00pm Baptisms: Archie Eltham

Tuesday 13

9:30am Mass (SFX Yr 3 class) Montmorency
 7:30pm Small Church Community Montmorency

Wednesday 14

6:30am Meditation Montmorency
 9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham
 10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency

Thursday 15

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 16

9:30am Mass Eltham

Saturday 17 - Social Services Sunday

12:00pm Baptisms: Tommy, Gordon, Chloe, Luke, Jaxon Montmorency
 6:00pm Mass & First Eucharists Montmorency

Sunday 18 - Social Services Sunday

8:30am Mass Montmorency
 10:00am Mass & First Eucharists Eltham

Tuesday 20

9:30am Mass Montmorency
 11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry Eltham

Wednesday 21

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 22

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

Friday 23

9:30am Mass Eltham

Saturday 24 - National Day for Migrants & Refugees

12:00pm Baptisms: Douglas, Nathan Montmorency
 6:00pm Mass & First Eucharist Montmorency

Sunday 25 - National Day for Migrants & Refugees

8:30am Mass Montmorency
 10:00am Mass & First Eucharists Eltham

Tuesday 27

9:30am Mass Montmorency
 7:30pm Small Church Community Montmorency

Wednesday 28

6:30am Meditation Montmorency
 9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham
 10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency

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Simply scan the QR code with your mobile phone and in a few easy steps you can safely 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 safely 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 those whose anniversaries are at this time:
*Frances Borg, Ivy May Caulfield,
 Andrew Lopuszynski, William Warrillow*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:
*Rita Bevanda, Kim Brisbane, Alana Foulds,
 Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert), Melanie Lam, Lita Lee,
 Frances McDonald, Andrew Pighin,
 Aguatha Spina, Melina Tenaglia*

Eltham

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:
*Rosa & Salvatore Ficarro, Rosemary Lee,
 Onofrio Saltalamacchia*

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:
*Violetta, Elisabeth Edwards, Jade McAlear,
 Fiona Rogers, Rosemary Scully, Ian Sturman,
 James Sutton, Sarah Thompson*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish Office
 9435 4742 or eltham@cam.org.au.



Congratulations to all who celebrate their sacraments this weekend:

Saturday 10 September

St Francis Xavier, 12:00 pm

Leni Grace Amuso	Baptism
Lola Jean Perez	Baptism
Kenzie Robyn Shiromi Pilapitiya	Baptism
Luca Xavier Villani	Baptism

St Francis Xavier, 6:00pm

Chloe Kathryn Ericson	First Eucharist
Lola Maree Lo Presti	First Eucharist
Emma Marcelle Meakin	First Eucharist
Olivia Claire Sullivan	First Eucharist
Samantha Joy Taylor	First Eucharist

Sunday 11 September

St Francis Xavier, 8:30am

Brady Patrick Duggan	First Eucharist
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Our Lady Help of Christians, 12:00pm

Archie Maxwell Buckingham	Baptism
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Roster for THIS WEEKEND: 10/11 Sep 2022

Boyd, Mary	PRYR
Bylsma, Zvonka & John	Hospitality
Donnellan, Denice	E10:00
Dunell, Linda	Altar Society
Furtado, Lorraine	Commentator
Goss, Marion	E10:00
Haines, Geoff	Reader
Kotz, Sharron	E10:00
Maynes, Phil	W6:00
Rough Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Saltalamacchia, Carmel	Altar Society
Scully, Greg	E10:00
Scully, Helen	E10:00
Sullivan, Frances	W8:30
Wallace, Kathryn	W6:00
Wood, Marie	W8:30

Roster for NEXT WEEKEND: 17/18 Sep 2022

Armstrong, Miranda	E10:00
Bacani, Brian	W6:00
Beckford, Peter	Reader
Costanzo, Brenda	W8:30
Cotter, Anne	W8:30
Davidson, John	PRYR
Dopheide, Marlis	E10:00
Dunnell, Linda	E10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	E10:00
Hall, Vali	Altar Society
Milwain, Gianna	Altar Society
Reardon, Kathy	E10:00
Reardon, Kathy & Peter	Hospitality
Ryan Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue
Said, Mike & Marie	ASRC
Scully, Greg	Commentator
Williams, Peter	W6:00

E10:00 = Eucharistic Minister @ 10am Mass
W8:30 = Minister of the Word @ 8:30am Mass
W6:00 = Minister of the Word @ 6pm Mass

2022 Annual Fundraising Dinner

After 3 long years, we are back fundraising for our Sponsorship Families & Livelihood Projects in Cebu. We are excited to announce that our dinner will be catered for by Elena's Paella. We can't wait to have a great night, and fill our bellies with a chicken & chorizo paella, that will be made onsite on the day (with a vegetarian option available for our veg guests).

Please support this fundraiser to help many.

The focus of our dinner will be raising money for the construction of septic toilets for as many families as possible - but you will have to attend on the night to see what fun we have in store for this theme.

Early Bird Ticket Sales open August 15 - \$50 per ticket. Ticket will include an entree grazing plate on each table, Elena's Paella and something small & sweet for dessert. After Sep 15, tickets will be full price - \$60 per ticket

For more information please contact **Glenys Gayfer** 0411 196 395 or email papel-imports@bigpond.com



Catholic sector says migration boost will help workforce crisis

Published: 05 September 2022

Catholic Health Australia has welcomed the Albanese Government's commitment to increasing Australia's migration intake, which could flow through to the health and aged care sectors battling severe workforce shortages.



(CHA/istock)

On day two of the Jobs and Skills Summit on Friday, Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neill announced that the Government would boost the annual migrant intake to 195,000, adding 35,000 spots to the previous cap of 160,000.

Immigration Minister Andrew Giles also announced the Government will commit \$36.1 million to clear visa backlogs, which CHA also said was a welcome commitment to help fix the aged care workforce crisis.

A migration intake increase was at the top of the CHA's five-point list of priorities announced ahead of the summit.

"This is a very welcome announcement to come out of the Jobs Summit. With a shortfall of tens of thousands of workers across hospitals and aged care sectors the increased migrant intake to Australia will help," said CHA chief executive Pat Garcia, who attended the summit.

"It is a wonderful investment in the future of Australia. Now the sector needs to work with the Government to make a career in aged care and nursing as attractive as possible to those people so they can come to Australia safe in the knowledge they will be paid a fair wage for the important work they do."

"The people who work in our network bring dignity to those that they care for. They in turn should expect it back from providers and from their government in the form of fair remuneration and good career prospects."

<https://cathnews.com/cathnews/45198-catholic-sector-says-migration-boost-will-help-workforce-crisis>

Caritas responds to Pakistan floods disaster

Published: 05 September 2022

Caritas Australia's partners are responding to the devastating floods in Pakistan that have left a trail of destruction across the country, claiming the lives of more than 1100 people.



A team from Caritas Pakistan conduct assessment visits in flood-ravaged Pakistan
(Caritas Pakistan)

The Pakistan Government has declared a state of emergency and the United Nations estimates that about 33 million Pakistanis – one in seven of the population – have been affected by the flooding.

Caritas Australia's partners in Pakistan are assessing communities impacted by the floods. The teams are reporting that bridges have collapsed, and community infrastructure destroyed, hampering relief efforts. Thousands have lost their homes and are sleeping without shelter.

The most urgent needs of the communities are food, tents/temporary shelter material, safe drinking water, mosquito nets and repellent, health services, hygiene supplies.

"Almost all of Balochistan and Sindh, the two worst-hit provinces, are facing an unprecedented humanitarian disaster," said Melville Fernandez, Caritas Australia's Humanitarian Emergencies Associate Director.

"Thousands of families are still stranded in Balochistan amid heavy rains and flash floods that swept away houses and inundated entire settlements. The province remained disconnected from the rest of the country with road and rail links cut off."

There are fears that the death toll will rise in coming days as monsoonal rains continue across the country. More than 495,000 houses have been damaged and more than 1300 people injured while 72 per cent of districts in Pakistan are affected by the floods.

Caritas Australia is raising funds to provide urgent assistance to communities affected by the floods through its Asia Regional Appeal. Details: [Caritas Australia's emergency appeal for Pakistan floods.](https://cathnews.com/cathnews/45193-caritas-responds-to-pakistan-floods-disaster) <https://cathnews.com/cathnews/45193-caritas-responds-to-pakistan-floods-disaster>

Religious bullying rife in government schools

Published: 05 September 2022

About a quarter of all religious students in government schools suffer verbal and physical bullying over their faith, according to a 10-year study on Special Religious Education in schools. Source: The Catholic Weekly.

Exact figures are difficult to ascertain because religious students in government schools were found to increasingly conceal their faith, but the study found that SRE classes – sometimes described as “scripture classes” – were seen by students as safe environments to disclose incidents of bullying.

Professors Zehavit Gross and Suzanne Rutland published their study on SRE in the major faiths in Australia in 2021, which, with data from McCrindle research, formed the basis of the Better Balanced Future report launched on August 29.

“We found religious bullying in government schools in Australia. Period. The question is are we going to ignore and deny it, or are we going to deal with it openly and professionally?” Professor Gross said.



(Bigstock)

Incidents of bullying ranged from exclusion and verbal bullying of Christian students who maintained Christian ethics around promiscuity, alcohol and drug use, to physical aggression towards Jewish and Muslim students whose hijabs or kippahs were physically ripped from their heads.

The authors found that SRE, combined with a program of General Religious Education (GRE) could help to “multiculturalise” schools by exposing students to a range of different beliefs and practices.

Education was vital also for teachers and administrators, some of whom believe that religiosity is “equal to primitiveness”.

<https://cathnews.com/cathnews/45199-religious-bullying-rife-in-government-schools>

Bishops support schools with guide on gender, identity

Published: 06 September 2022

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has released a guide on gender and identity to support Catholic schools in responding to the individual social and pastoral needs of students.

Created and Loved: A guide for Catholic schools on identity and gender outlines a pastoral approach shaped by the theological, medical & legislative context in which Catholic schools operate.

The bishops consulted widely with specialists in education, including principals & teachers, sought advice from parents with children facing various gender questions, heard from bioethicists and other experts in the field, and from the international Church community.

Increasing rates of gender incongruence in Australian society are seen as an invitation to reflect deeply on the biblical and Christian witness to human dignity. The guide offers principles that can be used by Catholic education authorities for their own local contexts.

“The Catholic Church and our schools begin from the foundational principle that each person is created in the image and likeness of God, and is loved by God,” said Archbishop Peter A Comensoli, chair of the Bishops Commission for Life, Family and Public Engagement.

“That principle guides this document, which we offer to our schools to support them in walking compassionately alongside each student we are invited to educate.”

Archbishop Comensoli said *Created and Loved* is grounded in Christian anthropology, which values the worth and dignity of every person, and also sees each person holistically, rather than defining that person by any single characteristic.

National Catholic Education Commission executive director Jacinta Collins said the guide will be the focus of a session with hundreds of Catholic educators during the National Catholic Education Conference underway in Melbourne.

Ms Collins said Catholic school communities already capably manage students’ needs in this area, but the guide will offer further advice that draws on theological, psychological, medical and legislative knowledge.

Created and Loved can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/CreatedandLoved>.

<https://cathnews.com/cathnews/45205-bishops-support-schools-with-guide-on-gender-identity>



Safeguarding Sunday

Safeguarding Sunday was affirmed by the members of the Church’s recent Plenary Council, who in the decrees expressed “our profound sorrow that children and young people and vulnerable adults have been abused by clergy, religious and lay workers of the Catholic Church, and that religious leaders have failed to act sufficiently to prevent or respond to abuse”. That focus naturally leads to the desire to make amends to the people who were abused and to ensure that in all the relationships with children within the Church they will be safe.

Our Parish Child Safeguarding processes and protocols support that commitment to say “Never Again” to abuse. Our effectiveness in safeguarding children depends on changing deep-rooted attitudes, particularly to recognise past failures to protect children and to be attentive to the vulnerable people in our Church community.

We must make an environment in which our children, young people and the vulnerable live and grow up safe, connected and supported in their families, communities and culture. We do this by ensuring that they are listened to, are accompanied, that they are not vulnerable to predators and that protocols of conduct with children are strictly observed.

On this Safeguarding Sunday, the Gospel reminds us how attentive we should be to people in need, including those who have separated themselves from the community. It indicates, too, the level of care we ought to have for children in the Church & at home and the seriousness with which we should observe the safeguards.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son also points to our special responsibility to seek out and welcome people who have been abused as children in the Church.

You can find out more about the Church’s work in this area at:

<https://www.catholic.org.au/safeguarding-sunday>

Abuse in the Church a monstrosity: Pope

Published: 07 September 2022

Pope Francis has emphatically repeated the Church’s commitment to “zero tolerance” when it comes to priests who abuse others. Source: Vatican News.

“I want to be very clear about this: Abuse by churchmen and churchwomen – abuse of authority, abuse of power and sexual abuse – is a monstrosity, because the churchman or churchwoman, whether priest, religious man or woman, or layman or laywoman, is called to serve and to create unity, to make grow, and abuse always destroys,” the Pope said in an interview with *CNN Portugal* broadcast on Monday.



Pope Francis in his interview with CNN Portugal (CNN)

“Abuse is a tragic reality of all times, but also of our time,” he continued, noting that most abuse occurs in the family or in the neighbourhood and is found in sport, clubs, and schools. However, although only a small percentage occurs in the Church, the Pope said that even one case of abuse in the Church is a “monstrosity.”

In response to abuse, the Pope said it is necessary to recognise the reality of abuse in modern society; to ensure that abuse is other sectors, such as the family is not covered up; and for the Church to address abuse in the areas it is responsible. The Holy Father reiterated the Church’s commitment to zero tolerance of abuse, saying “a priest cannot continue to be a priest if he is an abuser. He can’t.”

The Pope’s interview was recorded on August 11 and broadcast on Monday.

<https://cathnews.com/cathnews/45237-abuse-in-the-church-a-monstrosity-pope>

Prayers of the Faithful for 11 September 2022 Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leader: We bring our prayers before God being open to his presence among us.

We pray for hearts that are willing to withhold speedy judgement, hearts which take time to pause, reflect and reconsider. May our political leaders govern together with integrity, intelligence and a willingness to listen to others.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We remember those celebrating sacraments this weekend. We pray for them and their families. We all pray for the stillness and space that allows the gentle presence of God to enter our life, bringing peace, simplicity and guidance.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We remember and pray for all those who struggle to find peace in their lives, who are anxious about the future, estranged from loved ones and family or seeking asylum in our country.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For patience and kindness. We ask for the strength to be patient, understanding and respectful in our dealings with others. We give thanks and pray for parents, teachers, health professionals and all who extend empathy, care and compassion in their professions and daily lives.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sick, their families and carers. May God's presence bring peace and comfort.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We remember the people of Pakistan as they begin to recover and rebuild after recent devastating floods. We think of all countries suffering natural and man-made disasters and pray that governments work together to protect and sustain our fragile natural environment.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We remember those who have died recently, and those whose anniversaries occur around this time, *Frances Borg, Ivy May Caulfield, Rosa & Salvatore Ficarro, Rosemary Lee, Andrew Lopuszynski, Onofrio Saltalamacchia & William Warrillow.* May they rest in the peace and love of Christ.
Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: May we rejoice in the joy and good fortune of others and give thanks for all the treasures in our own lives. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

FEATURES / Mother Teresa of Kolkata

The saint of the gutters

Mother Teresa died 25 years ago, on 5 September 1997. The first saint of the media age, whose image is firmly imprinted in the popular imagination, she remains an enigma/By **JON M. SWEENEY**

MOST HUMAN beings living in the last quarter of the twentieth century knew her by name and appearance. Most people could identify her as the saint of the gutters of Kolkata. She was regularly named as one of the most recognised and influential people in the world. In the United States, two years after her death, she topped a CNN/USA Today Gallup poll as "the most admired person of the century" ahead of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, President John F. Kennedy, Albert Einstein and Helen Keller.

So what is there left for her latest biographer to say about her? Quite a bit, as it turns out. The stories of both her public and private lives remain little known. And we are still grappling with the extraordinary

things she did, as well as the way that she interpreted the vocation of a Christian. Mother Teresa's striking physical appearance remains vivid in my memory. It always included the sari – the traditional outer garment of women of the Indian subcontinent – that she chose as the religious uniform of the congregation she founded in 1950: simple white cotton bordered with three blue stripes. She apparently purchased the first ones "off the rack" at a Calcutta market, the blue edges suggesting to her the Virgin Mary. She was small in stature, but fiercely strong. Do an internet search and you will not find a single photograph of her appearing weary, winded or (outside moments of prayer) at rest. Yet when we saw her face or watched her at work with children and the dying – which was easy to do, since she was the first great saint in the era of ubiquitous television – we had no idea of the things going on within her.

She first appeared on the international stage in 1969, when the English journalist, presenter and recent convert to Christianity,



'Mother': her mission was to help the poor, starving and suffering of Kolkata

Malcolm Muggeridge, took a film crew to Kolkata to interview her. He then became Mother's most ardent supporter. The documentary that Muggeridge produced, **Something Beautiful for God**, changed everything for her work in India and throughout the world.

THE TABLET | 3 SEPTEMBER 2022

For more features, news, analysis and comment, visit www.thetablet.co.uk

Gospel: Luke 5:1-32

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," he would say "I have found my sheep that was lost." In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance.

'Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? "Rejoice with me," she would say "I have found the drachma I lost." In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.'

He also said, 'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experience a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant, "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property - he and his women - you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

Reflection:



After the severity of last Sunday's reading on the demands of discipleship, today's parables of mercy and forgiveness come as a welcome relief. That may be a good reason to choose the longer option with all three stories, even if that of the prodigal son is very familiar and has been heard during Lent. Furthermore, that's where the psalm response comes from.

The story of the woman searching for her lost coin is peculiar to Luke and also typical of his concern to bring women into focus in his gospel. Matthew has a version of the lost sheep story but it's never heard on Sunday. The parable of the prodigal son (arguably not well named given the crucial roles played by the forgiving father and the aggrieved brother) is also found in Luke alone, though it has an affinity with Matthew's story of a father with two sons (21:28-32).

The setting of the parables - a meal with "tax collectors and sinners" whom Jesus is accused of welcoming - draws attention to the eucharist as a sacrament of forgiveness. The words spoken over the cup always testify that the blood of Jesus was poured out "for the forgiveness of sins." The stories Jesus tells are enacted in the table-fellowship of the eucharistic liturgy.

The full gospel thus consists of four parts - an introduction and three stories. The cherished place these parables have in the Christian mind should be reflected in a lively and loving proclamation.

Break Open the Word 2022