

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 cam.org.au/eltham or cam.org.au/montmorency.

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



PARISH TEAM & INFORMATION

OUR PEOPLE & OUR CONTACT DETAILS



Parish Priests

Terry Kean - Pastor in Solidum

terry.kean@cam.org.au

Michael Sierakowski - Moderator

michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au

Barry Caldwell

Parish Office

86 Mayona Road

9435 2178

Mon - Fri 9am-3pm

montmorency@cam.org.au

Gina Ang:

Pastoral Worker & Caring Group Co-Ord
gina.ang@cam.org.au

Beth Krolkowski: Parish Manager & Pastoral Worker

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.sfxmonty.org
www.cam.org.au/montmorency
www.olhc.info
www.cam.org.au/eltham

Facebook:

[St Francis Xavier Parish Montmorency](#)

Monty & Eltham Newsletter & Facebook items:

eltham@cam.org.au

Schools

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: Mr Philip Cachia: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Mr Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Mr Chris Ray: 9439 7824

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

Asylum Seekers Resource Centre

Under the current circumstances the needs of the people assisted by the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre are even greater. Donations can still be made at the Parish Office.

These will be collected and delivered to the collection centre at Alphington each Thursday morning.



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

Montmorency

For the recently deceased:

Valerie Proctor & Dothethy Sloom (WA)

For those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Sebastiano Cartisano & Cath Ramsdale

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Baby Kylie, Sriyani Algama, Nikki Attwood, Justine Best, Kristina Brazaitis, Desmond Deehan, Renee Eastwood, Debbie Edgley, Julian Forrester, Gennie Hannon, Samuel Hauser (Kyabram), Colleen Hussin, Jim Hussin, Tina Inserra, Adrian Jones, Pat Longton, Erin McLindon, Hasti Momeni, Therese Moore, Patricia Mulholland, Montagna Mustica, Graham Neal, Geoffrey Nyssen, Mercy Ocon, Ron Pfeil, Susan Phelan, Andrew Pighin, Terry Said, Anthony Salvatore, Mary Salvatore, Maria Schroeders, Jeanette Steward, John Tobin, Aldo Viapiana, Sheryn Zurzolo.

Eltham

For the recently deceased;

For those whose anniversaries are at this time;

For those in need of healing, remembering especially:

Robyn Atherton, Baby Harriet Banks, Albina Croce, Jon D'Cruz, Claire Dakwar, Ruth Decker, Fay Dobson, Dennis Goddard, Rob Hutton, Diana Jackson, Jeanette Jenkins, Maureen Jenkins, Baby Finley McPartlin, Simone Owen, Jo Porter, Sally Price, Paul Rushbrook.

To include an anniversary please contact Parish House 9435 2178 or eltham@cam.org.au.

May - The month of Mary, Mother of God

Every year during the month of May, the statue of Mary is brought up to the Altar at Our Lady's in Eltham, and Barbara Bibby leads the rosary on Monday nights throughout the month. This year, sadly the church building is closed, but Barbara would like to invite all of us to join her in reciting the Rosary together at home on Monday nights at 7 pm. She will be reciting the Glorious Mystery, praying for the community. Together we can be united in prayer through the Rosary.



If you would like further clarification, please contact Gina: 0423 947 858, or Barbara: 9439 8594.

RECONCILIATION

Saturday, 10:30am Monty ~ Terry
1/2 hr prior to any mass said by Michael

Collections last weekend: 24 May 2020

Community	Thanksgiving	Presbytery
Eltham	\$315.94	\$0
Montmorency	\$2,250.00	\$195.00

Please note the above figures are monies banked & do not include visa/mastercard or direct debits.
Thank you so much for your contributions.

PENTECOST SUNDAY 2020

The doors are opening. More people are gathering even though social distancing and limits on numbers are still required. For many of us, particularly those of us who have lived these past two months or more in home isolation, it is a relief, even though we know we must be careful. We do not want to give Covid-19 a chance to spike.

The doors are opening. We hear in the Gospel on this feast of Pentecost that, 'the doors were closed' as the disciples huddled together in fear of their lives. As disciples of Jesus they feared they too would face execution if their hiding place was discovered. Yet this Feast of Pentecost is the sending of these disciples beyond the closed doors, out into the streets of life where they were to witness to the presence of the Risen Christ, and tell his story.

We know what happened. From being a failed group of disciples who were nowhere to be seen at Jesus' execution, except for Peter who denied Jesus, this group of disciples, including Peter, gathered more disciples and proclaimed with courage and conviction the story entrusted to them. The Spirit of God came upon them and they could not be silenced. They had to speak their truth, and they had to live this truth, even though some would die for their faith in Jesus.

This truth, and the courage and conviction of the disciples had grown within them in their time of solitude. Even though not in total isolation, for they shared a room together, they faced their fears and no doubt they talked about what had happened. They remembered their times with Jesus as they reminisced and laughed and cried together.

They recalled their hopes and aspirations and gradually they came to understand the message, the life of Jesus, in new perspectives. They came to understand that Jesus had Risen and was very much still with them, breathing the Spirit of God upon them. There came a time when they could no longer stay behind closed doors. They had to tell the world about it all.

It's not difficult for us to find ourselves somewhere in this story of Pentecost. True, the doors are not totally open and we have to follow the law on what is required of us in protecting ourselves and others from the virus.

But there's something about the solitude, something about new understandings that we have come to in this time, something that is of the Spirit of God gifting us with new insight and sending us as different people into the world of tomorrow. And when the restrictions are eased further and further, will we proclaim and live the truth that we discovered, and will this truth find its heart in the Jesus story that is our faith story?

I came across a poem from the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, early this week. She wrote it on the train home after the announcement of total lockdown in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It's not written from a faith perspective, although it could well be. It's more a poem to Mother Earth and I think it has something to say to us. Let me quote a few lines of it.

"It's time. Time to return. Time to remember. Time to listen and forgive. Time to withhold Judgment. Time to cry. Time to think about others, remove our shoes. Press grains to soil, sift grains between fingers. Time to plant. Time to wait. Time to notice to whom we belong."

Beautiful words. And hopefully as closed doors open further we will have learnt from this time of Covid-19, and in the streets of life we will sense the Spirit of God giving us voice and courage to live for what we really believe in and in this way continue to proclaim the presence of the Risen Jesus. Terry



Parish Rosters and active Volunteers moving forward

From the start, I have to say how excited I am at the prospect of getting back to some sense of NORMALCY. The availability of regular parish masses and a sense of a spiritual community gathering in prayer is so important to me and so many others!

“Where two or more are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst” (Matt 18:20). Naturally, it doesn't have to be 'mass' but all the other gatherings that flow on, is wonderful after this terrible Pandemic is controlled to our satisfaction and safety.

So, what to do ... how to start, again! Our Catholic communities are built on Rosters for a large part of the important ministries that we do and serve. And, we have the Rosters all set up with the pre Covid-19 timetable for the rest of this year!

But

Not everyone on these, let's say older rosters, are compliant with our Parish Code Of Conduct, and have a copy or more importantly SIGNED it; or have an up to date Working With Children's Check - these 2 requests are for Government & Church requirements and as we start again - this might just be a very simple way to move forward. Naturally, Peter Williams, who is in our Monty office every Monday, can help anyone with these simple requirements to make our parish comply with our Parish Plan to make our Catholic Communities Child friendly and Safe.

Not everyone on these present rosters wants to continue with their ministries post Coronavirus and this position is completely understandable! We will always be eternally grateful for your service to the local parishes of SFX and OLHC and hold your contribution with gratitude & respect.

So

Now is a marvellous time to start the Parish Rosters with new vigour and respect for the mission ahead. Please, if you wish to continue doing the wonderful things that you have done in the past, then a very big welcome back, and lets tick off the parish requirements that are now part of every day life in a modern community. Please contact Peter (9435 2178) to verify your volunteer status as we move to build our new parish rosters.

The wonderful communities of Eltham and Montmorency are very dependent upon your presence and participation - I obviously need you to Volunteer as much as you can in every way possible, that suits you!
Please, please help me to define our Parishes as ones that express inclusion for all and safety for all as not negotiable!

Michael

Malawi Support Group



Hi Everyone,

This is to confirm all necessary matters have now been finalized to close the Malawi Support Group as a registered charity inclusive of a final audit of the accounts. However, please don't overlook continuing your spiritual support for your sister parish with your prayers and thoughts just as we have since inception. Our recommendation is we continue to maintain reminders by way of the display with the crucifix and note on the Malawi board, where there will be some post cards in the box depicting a special prayer composed for the group by Malawi medical missionary Sr. Mary Noonan. The group would also ask the parish to continue with a specific prayer in the prayers of the faithful at the time of celebration of the Feast Day of St Kizito in June each year.

Additionally, we have some beautiful table cloths made by the parish women, given to me when I was in Malawi which we can use for morning teas. The history of the group is well documented in the booklet in our library and at our website connected to the parish website.

Although the cessation of our activities might elicit a sad note, along with the end of the mission by Fr Taylor, they end on a high note on a number of fronts. This years harvest was a record, just as it is a joy to confirm your sister parish is moving closer to self-sufficiency, in being able to cater for the poor in the outlying parishes. This has been made possible as communities have been able to acquire and mostly erect modest properties to rent out to help those most in need.

These moves have been in tandem with your generosity and the hard work of your committee in fundraising activities which has resulted in \$126,700 being remitted over the past 22 years. Undoubtedly, the funding of the new church at Ntandire, named OLHC in honour of our contribution was the highlight. For what was once just a large bit of dirt is now a thriving community centre, made up of a large church, a health clinic, a vegetable garden and nursery school - a scene now replicated in other outlining parishes and at St Kizito. Additionally, your support for educational scholarships and improved facilities has also been a more recent major benefit which will now be largely assumed by the parishioners of St Kizito.

Today I can report to you the church we funded at Ntandire is simply overflowing with hundreds who listen outside, such is the level of revival in Christian Faith in that community, so they added some additions. Prior to that the citizens had to endure the long trek on foot to the nearest church at Mt Silize.

Thanks once again for your support.

Lindsay Byrnes

Prayers of the Faithful for 31 May 2020 Pentecost Sunday - John Ramsdale

Celebrant: My sisters and brothers, let us pray to God, who is the source of life and light, for our needs and for those of the world.

On this, the feast day of Pentecost, we pray that, under the guidance of Pope Francis, we can see a renewal in our Church. We pray that the Holy Spirit will lead our bishops, clergy and laity in the way of love, truth, generosity, justice and the care of the poor and vulnerable. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for leaders in every field of endeavor, that they continue to lead, in these very difficult times, and work in the interest of all members of society. We also pray for their own health and welfare that they may continue their work. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

At a time when many parishioners are experiencing financial difficulties and uncertainties of their own, we give thanks for their sacrifices, their generosity and their care in their support of others in need through Project Compassion, the Asylum Seekers' Resource Centre and the upcoming St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all of the students who are returning to their classrooms, that they enjoy reuniting with their class-mates and continuing their learning and that they remain safe. We also give thanks for the efforts of their teachers, parents, grandparents and carers who have supported these students with their learning during the time of isolation. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are suffering from the Corona Virus and those who are caring for them. We pray especially for the welfare of those people living in less fortunate regions of the world, especially in refugee camps, who, at the best of times, have very limited access to the health care that we take for granted. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all of those who are listed on the sick list in our parish bulletin and for all others who are suffering in mind, body or spirit. We pray that they will experience the healing touch of Christ. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have died recently, including Valerie Proctor and Dothethy Sloom; we also remember Sebastiano Cartisano & Cath Ramsdale whose anniversaries occur at this time. May they rest in the peace and love of Christ. Lord, hear us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: God of all creation, you promised to be with us always and never to abandon those created in your love. Your Holy Spirit illumines our lives and warms our hearts so that all may praise and thank you. We ask that you grant our prayers on this great festival day, through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

MASS LIVE-STREAMING

Dear Friends,

Mass will be live streamed this weekend, Sunday 31st May at 8:30am from St Francis Xavier, Montmorency - **PENTECOST SUNDAY.**

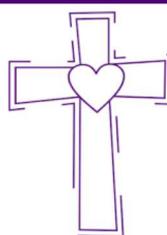
When the time came for Jesus to leave his Disciples, he promised he would not leave them orphans, but would send an Advocate to be with them, to set their hearts on fire and help them spread the Message of God's love to all. At Pentecost we celebrate the gift of the Spirit of God with us.

As we heard last week the restrictions are easing and **10 people** are now able to attend Mass. For those of us who are unable to be physically present just yet, we are able to join in from our own homes.

Click on this link <https://bit.ly/2X5R1lD> to join in the Pentecost Mass.



If you would like to view the Ascension Mass from last Sunday (24 May) please click on this link: <https://bit.ly/2Aje5Eo>



**Caring Group ...
spreading God's love
to our community.**

We practise social distancing, we can't give you a hug or shake your hands, but it doesn't stop us from caring and sending you love.

Our Caring Group spreads God's love and care to the communities of Eltham and Montmorency by preparing and dropping off meals and treats. If you know of a parishioner, a relative, a friend or a neighbour in Eltham or Montmorency, whom you think might benefit from this, please contact Gina Ang, 0423 947858 or Gina.Ang@cam.org.au.

If you would like to be part of our Caring Group of Eltham & Montmorency, or to learn more about what we do, please do contact me. Gina

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE CATHOLIC PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA

FROM THE BISHOPS OF AUSTRALIA

Dear brothers and sisters,

Grace and peace to you in these Easter days. We write to you from a plenary meeting of the Bishops Conference which is like no other. Unable to meet face-to-face as we normally do, the bishops are meeting online for a week. We are intensely conscious of our isolation – not only from each other but also from you, the people whom we serve in the name of the Risen Lord. As we think of you, we make our own the words of St Paul: “So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Australia has certainly suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but not as grievously as some other countries. For that we thank God and we congratulate public health authorities and governments on their prompt and prudent responses. Australians in general have also shown the solidarity and good sense, the generosity and kindness needed in such a time. In our healthcare workers particularly we have seen an exceptional spirit of self-sacrifice, and for that we are all grateful.

The Churches and other religious communities have played their part, which has meant the suspension of public worship and the closure of places of worship. This has been a real deprivation, and the bishops understand not only your anxiety about the virus and shutdown but more especially your deep desire to return to the sacraments and to resume public worship. There is a real hunger in this. It is something we all feel, and we long for the time when our hunger will be satisfied as together we return to the feast of the Lord.

Even when our doors are closed, our hearts are still open. The churches may not yet be fully open, but the heart of the Church, which is the heart of Christ, is wide open. The celebration of Mass has never ceased. Though we and our brother priests cannot yet offer Mass with the people, we are still offering Mass day by day for the people – for all of you who are “flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone” (cf Genesis 2:23). The Church which is the Body of Christ still glows with the life of Easter, “thought to be dying, yet we are alive...to be sorrowful, yet still rejoicing...to have nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Corinthians 6:9-10).

At the heart of the community of disciples, there is always Mary the mother of Jesus (cf Acts 1:14). In this month of May, Pope Francis has urged us to look to her to intercede for us in this time of affliction; and to Mary we will entrust our homeland later this month, looking to a mother’s unfailing love. May she who is Health of the Sick and Help of Christians pray for us now, that we may see Jesus with her eyes, the eyes of Easter, and love him with her heart, which is the heart of faith: “O Mother of the Word incarnate, despise not our petitions but in your mercy hear and answer us” (Memorare).

The experience of shutdown has stirred great energy and creativity among people and pastors; this is producing unexpected gifts which we will take with us into the future. No locked door can keep the Risen Lord out; he is everywhere, even in this time of distress. "I stand at the door and knock," he says. "If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come to you" (Revelation 3:20). We have heard his voice and opened the door to him who has come to us. That is the reason for our hope, even our rejoicing.

One important service which people of faith provide to the wider community in this time is an unceasing prayer of intercession. So we ask you all to continue praying in the power of faith for those who have died, who are sick or at risk from COVID-19, for our healthcare professionals, essential service providers and researchers, for all who are isolated and anxious, and for our civic leaders and health authorities.

In the hope born of faith we look forward to the time when the crisis will pass and we will be able to resume fully the Church's worship and mission, even in a landscape which may be quite changed. In the meantime, we are talking with the states and the federal government about the reopening of churches and the gradual relaxation of restrictions. We will work with governments and local authorities at each stage of any resumption of Church life. We commit to keeping ourselves and each other safe by observing strictly the advice regarding numbers, distancing and hygiene when the reopening of churches is permitted.

We urge people to abide by the best advice on how to keep themselves and others safe physically, emotionally and spiritually, especially the vulnerable elderly. That is why we recommend the live-streamed Masses and the many other resources offered on diocesan websites, our Catholic counselling services and the COVIDSafe App.

The season of Lent may be behind us, but this time of shutdown has been a kind of long Lent. Now, we pray, Easter is dawning as our country recovers from the pandemic and looks to build the future. There is no room for complacency but there is certainly room for the hope that Easter brings to birth, the hope that "after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10-11). Looking to the God of all grace, we send to you our blessing of peace and all consolation.

From,

The Catholic Bishops of Australia

14 May 2020

Pentecost teaches about community, mission and unity

By Donna Orsuto

Rome - An important annual tradition, since The Lay Centre's founding in 1986, is the Pentecost Novena prayed for the intention of our benefactors and friends, for the unity of all Christians, for a greater sense of dialogue among all believers in God, and for the past, present and future members of The Lay Centre. This year, we will include a special intention for those who have been affected by the pandemic and we extend an invitation to all to join us in prayer, each evening, starting May 22.

During this season in the Church, it is edifying to contemplate along with our Orthodox friends the Icon of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. Icons are windows into the divine, and this icon can help us reflect on how we can be open to the coming of the Holy Spirit, especially during this time of pandemic. Today, we need to stand together with Mary and with the whole Church to implore the Father to send us again the gift of the Holy Spirit. As St Bonaventure says, "The Holy Spirit," goes "to where He is loved, where He is invited, where He is awaited."^[1] It is important to remember that we are gathered in the cenacle, not just to enjoy one another's company, but to be sent on mission.



Getting too comfortable in the upper room, or anywhere, is one of the biggest obstacles for communicating our faith to others. In another context, St. John Henry Newman warns about the dangers of getting too comfortable: "Nothing is so likely to corrupt our hearts, and to seduce us from God, as to surround ourselves with comforts — to have things our own way — to be the centre of a sort of world, whether of things animate or inanimate, which minister to us."^[2]

The task before us is challenging and, without the Holy Spirit, we cannot go on. With Mary, our Mother, teaching us docility to God's call, and the help of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to share the Good News with others, also in these days that are paradoxically both difficult and full of hope.

Gather in Community

The icon reminds us that, first of all, we need Christian community: the Holy Spirit comes when the disciples are gathered in prayer. Notice in this icon how the disciples are not chatting with one another; they are together in community and they are all listening. "Community is first of all a gift of the Spirit. It is not built upon mutual compatibility, shared affection or common interest, but upon having received the same divine breath, having been given a heart set aflame by the same divine fire and having been embraced by the same divine love."^[3] It is God who brings us together in community and who makes us one.

Encourage Unity

The icon emphasizes a second point: that unity does not require uniformity. We can thank God for the diverse ways of living the Christian life. This is depicted beautifully in this icon by the unique manner and gestures of the gathered Apostles — their diverse clothing, hair, eyes, posture. You see their individual characteristics. Notice also the beautiful harmony. No colour dominates, yet each figure is distinct. We need to create spaces that allow the gifts of each person to flourish, but where unity always prevails.^[4]

Share the Good News

We know from tradition that the Holy Spirit at Pentecost descended not only on the twelve, but on all who were there. This is emphasized by the openness at the bottom of the row of Apostles. As Léonid Ouspensky notes, “The Church is not restricted either by the apostolic circle, or by the apostleship in general, or by the hierarchy.... The unclosed structure of the icon at the top and bottom is this very openness of the Church: at the top, the communion with the Uncreated Trinitarian Being through the Holy Spirit, and on the bottom, the communion with the whole world through us. We continue those rows of apostles and shall continue them until the end of the ages.”[5]

This community of love is not fashioned to sit around and enjoy one another’s company. There is a mission involved. When the Spirit draws people into community, he sends them out into the world to bring the Good News of God’s love to all.

Invoke the Holy Spirit

This Pentecost, let’s have the courage to wait together in the cenacle, after the pattern of Mary and the Apostles. Let’s trust that the Holy Spirit will come, with all the graces that we need right now in this moment of pandemic, giving us the courage to face the future without fear.

Novena Prayer

Blessed Spirit of WISDOM, help us to seek God as the centre of our lives and order our lives according to his will, so that love and harmony may reign in our hearts.

Blessed Spirit of UNDERSTANDING, enlighten our minds, that we may know and love the truths of faith and make them truly our own.

Blessed Spirit of COUNSEL, enlighten and guide us in all our ways that we might always know and do Your holy will. Make us prudent and courageous.

Blessed Spirit of FORTITUDE, uphold us in every time of trouble or adversity. Make us loyal and confident.

Blessed Spirit of KNOWLEDGE, help us to know good from evil. Teach us to do what is right in the sight of God. Give us clear vision and firmness in decision.

Blessed Spirit of PIETY, possess our hearts, incline them to a true faith in You, to a holy love of You, our God, that with our whole being we may seek You, and find You, our best, our truest joy.

Blessed Spirit of HOLY FEAR, penetrate our inmost heart that we may ever be mindful of Your presence. Make us flee from sin, and give us intense reverence for God and for our brothers and sisters who are made in God’s image. Amen.

Regina Caeli, laetare, Alleluia.

Quia quem meruisti portare, Alleluia.

Resurrexit, sicut dixit, Alleluia.

Ora pro nobis Deum, Alleluia.

Footnotes:

[1] St. Bonaventure, Sermon for the IV Sunday after Easter, 2. This quote was mentioned in Father Raniero Cantalamessa’s Third Advent Meditation for the Papal Household on 16 December 2011. For an English translation, see <https://zenit.org/articles/father-cantalamessa-s-3rd-advent-sermon-3/>

[2] John Henry Newman, “The Duty of Self-Denial”, in Parochial and Plain Sermons, volume VII, sermon 7 in <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/parochial/volume7/sermon7.html>

[3] Henri Nouwen, Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2007, Revised Edition), p. 98.

[4] Ibid., pp. 87-107.

[5] Léonid Ouspensky, “Iconography of the Descent of the Holy Spirit”, St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 31 (1987), pp. 330-331.

Photo: Wikimedia: A large 18th-century Russian icon depicting Pentecost. Egg tempera on wood panel.

The world has been dealt an almighty jolt. To mark the feast of Pentecost, the papal preacher reflects that only the Holy Spirit can transform the chaos and injustice that the pandemic has exposed into something more beautiful, more peaceful and more just / **By Raniero Cantalamessa**

A moment of change

I am living these days of isolation in a hermitage with some cloistered nuns. This is where I have been based for several years when I am not travelling. After preaching at the Good Friday service in St Peter's Basilica on 10 April I immediately returned here.

I feel privileged compared with the many people who have been confined within the four walls of a house or apartment. I am able to take more time with prayer (though still less than I should!), there is more time to read and, now that the heat is coming, I can take short walks around the hermitage garden.

I have been picking up books that enriched me when I first read them many years ago and discovering how good it is to reread them at a different moment in life. This might also be an opportunity to do some of the things we've always wanted to do but has never before been possible. Just being together as a family. Talking and playing with our children, listening to grandparents tell us about their experiences and memories. Above all, discovering the immense grace to be found in praying together as a family, even if it is done very simply and quickly. Many tensions can be resolved in this way.

Watching a religious programme on television can also be a way of praying together. In Italy millions of people have been following Pope Francis' Mass transmitted every morning, enjoying the celebration and the homily as perhaps they had never done before in their lives.

Many Catholics were upset when they were not able to enter churches, attend Mass and receive the Sacraments. A journalist from *La Repubblica* asked a bishop: "Can we live without the Eucharist?" The bishop, who had just recovered from a Covid-19 infection that had brought him one step away from death, replied: "I believe that this epidemic can be a *kairos*, a moment of change to be grasped in the way things are done pastorally. Why not insist on the need to relearn faith in homes? Mass can also be a parenthesis in the daily vacuum. The faithful do not live by Mass alone."

In normal times and situations, real (not just virtual) participation in the Mass is essential for the Eucharist to be truly "Eucharist" and for the Church to be truly "Church", *ecclesia*, that is, an assembled community. But the grace of God is



Detail of Pentecost from Fra Angelico's Corsini Triptych, about 1447-1448, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in the Palazzo Corsini, Rome

multifaceted, as St Peter says (1 Peter 4:10). It can act in ways other than the ordinary. We must remember that the Eucharist is not just a banquet and communion; it is also "sacrifice", that is, it is the same and only sacrifice of Christ that is "represented" (St Paul VI's term), in the sense of "made present again", on the altar.

Every Mass, even those celebrated these days privately or with a few people, offered by the whole Church and for the whole Church. It is only in celebrating the Eucharist during the lockdown that I have fully understood this. At the moment when I pour the few drops of water into the wine glass, I think of the tears being shed, the sufferings, of all humanity.

I believe there is a grace in the current situation: that of the Eucharist being removed from its worst enemy, which is it being turned into just a routine habit, into something we take for granted, or reduced to no more than a pious practice. In his last apostolic letter of 2005 on the Eucharist, St John Paul II spoke of the need to rediscover "Eucharistic amazement". I believe this is the time to

do it. And our current "Eucharistic fast" can fulfil another ecclesial task: that of letting us experience personally what the brothers and sisters of the Amazon have tried in vain to shout to the rest of the Church during the recent Synod, that is, what it means to be deprived of the Eucharist, and not for a few months only ...

In my Good Friday homily, I shared an anecdote I had read somewhere about the painter, Sir James Thornhill. At one point, while he was painting frescoes in St Paul's Cathedral in London, he became so enthusiastic about his fresco that he stepped back to see it better, not noticing that he was about to fall over the edge of the scaffolding into the void. A horrified assistant understood that crying out to him would only accelerate the disaster. Without thinking twice, he dipped a brush in paint and hurled it at the middle of the fresco. The master, flabbergasted, leapt forward. His work was damaged, but he was safe.

God does this with us sometimes: he disrupts our projects and our calm to save us from the abyss we don't see. I believe that with the coronavirus, God has acted like that assistant. He did not throw the brush on the beautiful fresco of our technologically advanced society, but he used a natural event to achieve the same effect. The "speciality" of God, says St Augustine, is to be able to turn everything to good, even evil, even sin.

On 27 March in a surreal scenario - standing alone in an empty and rainy St Peter's Square to give an extraordinary *Urbi et Orbi* - Pope Francis offered his diagnosis of the situation: "In a sick world we thought we could stay healthy ..." the pandemic has pulled us out of this illusion. It took the tragedy of the last world war for Europe, frightened, to forge its unity. Today, in a globalised world, the horizon is even wider than the need to bring Europe together. We must create and strengthen structures of unity across the planet. Not only so that the world can avoid wars and environmental disasters, but to address the imbalance between those who have everything and those who are deprived of everything.

What will the pandemic mean for the Church? We did not have to wait for the coronavirus to resume and accelerate the programme of the Second Vatican

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

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Council, to become a poor Church on the side of the poor, alienated from worldly pomp in terms of titles, clothes, houses and administrative apparatus. Pope Francis has pointed this out since the beginning of his pontificate, in his words and, even more, with his gestures and in the choices he has made.

In the week-long retreat I directed for the bishops of the United States in Chicago in January last year, I made more than one hair stand on end (they were caught in the middle of the clerical abuse scandals) when I said that compared to the past - except the first three or four centuries - the Church is experiencing a golden age today, as far as its clergy and even more its bishops and popes are concerned. (Four popes declared saints in the last century, and two “on the waiting list”, as Pope Francis once joked.) If we imagine otherwise, it’s because we do not know church history.

Karl Marx said that “violence is the midwife of history”. Christians say that the Holy Spirit is the midwife of history. Not of economic history, but of spiritual history, on which economic history partly depends. Speaking of the evolution of the social order, the Second Vatican Council declares that “God’s Spirit, who with a marvellous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the Earth, is not absent from this development” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 26).

The Fathers of the Church made an interesting observation about Creation. In the beginning, they said, God created Heaven and Earth. But the Earth was empty, darkness, abyss. It was chaos. Only when the Spirit of God began to hover over it was chaos transformed into a cosmos, that is, into something harmonious, orderly and beautiful: light separated from darkness and the waters from the dry land, allowing the world to emerge as a cosmos.

Evolution did not literally happen in seven days, as the story in Genesis symbolically says, but over billions of years, but this does not change the substance of things. The process is still ongoing: the world is always being created and God is always in the act of creation. Creation groans in labour pains, as St Paul says (Romans 8:22).

And so today the Holy spirit sent by Christ is the only one who can transform the chaos of the world into a cosmos: into something more beautiful, more peaceful and more just. The miracle of Pentecost, when the scattered languages of Babel were turned into a “symphony of praise to God” (St Irenaeus), was a sign of this. For this the Church at Pentecost prays: “Send your Spirit and everything will be created and renew the face of the Earth.”

Raniero Cantalamessa OFMCap has served as the Preacher to the Papal Household since 1980, under Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

The following Guidelines are approved by Most Rev Peter A Comensoli, Archbishop of Melbourne, to assist Clergy and Faithful with questions pertaining to specific areas of liturgy and ministry in the Archdiocese of Melbourne during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[READ: Latest guidelines \(27 May 2020\)](#)

In relation to the latest directives announced by Government (Sunday 24 May 2020), there are THREE KEY POINTS that directly affect churches, places of worship and liturgical celebrations and ceremonies held within.

From **11:59pm on 31 May 2020** restrictions on gatherings at places of worship and ceremonies will be eased:

- Places of worship can open for private worship or small religious ceremonies for up to 20 people in a single undivided indoor space, subject to the four square metre rule plus the minimum number of people reasonably required to perform the service or ceremony.
- 20 people in addition to the celebrant and couple being married can attend a wedding. If a wedding is held in a home, a maximum of 20 people is allowed, including the celebrant and the couple.
- 50 people can attend a funeral in addition to the officiant and funeral staff, subject to the four square metre rule. If a funeral is held in a home, a maximum of 20 people can be present (including the officiant and funeral staff).

In general, conditions require:

- Clear signage around service schedules, social distancing and hygiene requirements;
- Availability of sanitiser and disinfectant wipes, and safe disposal sites;
- Churches to be cleaned after a scheduled service or opening;
- Maintenance of 1.5m of separation and planned entry and exit pathways;
- Building capacity rules must apply – 1 person per 4 square metres;
- All attendees to provide contact details.

It is important that you please take the time to [read the DHHS Vic guidelines](#).

DO NOT COME INTO THIS BUILDING IF YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:



FEVER



COUGH



FATIGUE



SORE THROAT



SHORTNESS
OF BREATH

Gospel: John 20:19-23

In the evening of 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.'



Reflection

The gospel for today consists in the first part of the gospel that we heard on the Second Sunday of Easter. This shorter passage describes the appearance of the risen Lord to the assembled disciples on the first Easter Day. As already noted, in contrast to the account in Luke's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, John presents Jesus' resurrection, his giving the Spirit and the commissioning of the disciples in a single unified sequence. This momentous ensemble of events is conveyed in just a few short verses; they must not be hurried through.

The text falls into two parts. First, Jesus appears to the fear-filled disciples and greets them with peace, not just once but twice. This twofold greeting should be given strong emphasis. There is no reproach from Jesus, no word of condemnation for the disciples' capitulation to their fear. There is only the double greeting of peace, followed by a reassuring demonstration that he is indeed the crucified and risen One.

Second, Jesus commissions the disciples and breathes out his Spirit upon them. As they themselves have been forgiven, so are they sent out as missionaries of mercy.

This deceptively brief text serves to bring the Easter season to a close on a wonderfully affirmative note.

Break Open the Word 2020

Rosters - 7 & 8 June	
<i>Montmorency</i>	
Giddens, Matt	GRDN
Sullivan, Michael	CLNR
Watson, Denis	CLNR
Williams, Anne	PRYR
Williams, Peter	PRYR
<i>Eltham</i>	
Frediani, Gabriella	Altar Society
Scannell Family	Pilgrim Rosary Statue

Calendar of Events		
<i>Saturday, 30 May</i>		
6:00pm	Montmorency	Mass
<i>Sunday, 31 May</i>		
8:30am	Montmorency	Mass - live streamed (https://bit.ly/2X5R11D)
10:00am	Eltham	Mass
<i>Tuesday, 2 June</i>		
9:30am	Montmorency	Mass
<i>Wednesday, 3 June</i>		
9:30am	Eltham	Mass
<i>Thursday, 4 June</i>		
9:30am	Montmorency	Mass
<i>Friday, 5 June</i>		
9:30am	Eltham	Mass
<i>Saturday, 6 June</i>		
6:00pm	Montmorency	Mass
<i>Sunday, 7 June</i>		
8:30am	Montmorency	Mass
10:00am	Eltham	Mass

Meditation, Wellbeing and More

<https://www.wccm.org/content/meditation-wellbeing-and-more-online-course-jim-green>

has been designed to help you explore a range of concepts associated with health, wellbeing, human development and personal growth, alongside the practice of meditation. Meditation has long been recognised as something that can support personal wellbeing.

The course encourages you to reflect on what we might mean by wellbeing, and to take up – or continue – meditation. Engaging with the course will open the possibility of discovering that there is much more for us to know about ourselves and about the world (only now in a quite different way) – and much more for us to let go of.

The World Community for Christian meditation