

Risen Christ



Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

7 & 8 February 2026

The Catholic Communities of Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham & St Francis Xavier, Montmorency



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respect to the elders past, present and emerging.

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

Gospel Reflection

Break Open the Word 2026

This teaching of Jesus in his sermon on the mount gives two clear vivid images: salt and light. If salt does not preserve food and give it flavour, it might as well be sand for the footpath. If a light is not shining out for everyone in the house, it might as well be bric-a-brac stored under a tub. And if Christian people are not living in justice, reaching out in love for those in need, they might as well... (*how would you finish this sentence?*)

Not that our gospel actions are any credit to us; they are simply our response to the gifts of God's grace which we have already received. That is why, when people see Christian acts of care and concern, they give praise to God whose Spirit is at work in us.

To avoid exclusive language, the phrase 'by men' can simply be omitted and the words 'of men' can be read as 'of others'.



SAFEGUARDING ESSENTIALS GROUP TRAINING

Saturday 21 February 2026 – 10:00am at Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham

We are now about to hold the second of our Group Training sessions of the Safeguarding Essentials online training module for 2025/26. This session is for those who were unable to attend the first session in December 2025.

As you know the training module is required to be completed by all volunteers once every three years. As it has been three years since the last training sessions were held it is now time to undertake the training again.

The purpose of this training is to provide:

- foundational knowledge that will help us to perform our roles; and
- a clear understanding of our duty of care and of the expectations with regards to safeguarding children, young people and the vulnerable, from all forms of abuse and harm.

If you have or will be unable to attend either of these sessions you will need to complete the training online, through the Melbourne Catholic website.

Whilst this training session is designed for volunteers, we encourage all interested parishioners to attend. As you know Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Tea and Coffee will be available after the session.

Should you have any questions about the training or need further information about it please contact Peter Williams.

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

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

all correspondence to:

86 Mayona Road,

Montmorency Vic 3094

9435 4742

RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au

Kate Kogler:

Parish Secretary

Tue-Fri 9am-3pm

Peter Williams:

Safeguarding Officer

RisenChrist.ChildSafety@cam.org.au

Volunteers

Marisa Capuana: Various

Kerry Mash: Wed & Fri 10am-3pm

www.melbcatholic.org/risenchristparish

Facebook: [Risen Christ Parish](https://www.facebook.com/RisenChristParish)

Risen Christ Parish Bulletin items:

RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au

Schools

Holy Trinity Primary School

Principal: Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au

Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School

Principal: Rudy Vail: 9439 7824

school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au

St Francis Xavier Primary School

Principal: Jo Nolen: 9435 8474

principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au

RECONCILIATION

available half an hour before
any weekday or weekend Parish Mass.

Collections: 17/18 & 24/25 January 2026

Thanksgiving	Cash	\$1,286.00
	Electronic	
Presbytery	Cash	\$1,283.50
	Electronic	

Thanksgiving / Stewardship Offering

Month	OLHC	SFX	Total
September	\$6,600.67	\$11,649.50	\$18,250.17
October	\$5,901.67	\$10,143.50	\$16,045.17
November	\$6,322.39	\$7,7987.50	\$14,309.89

Risen Christ Parish Calendar of Events

Saturday 7

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 8

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

Monday 9

10:30am Funeral: Jackie Dagleish

Montmorency

7:30pm RCIA

Eltham

Tuesday 10

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Rosary

Montmorency

11:00am Funeral: Michael Clark

Montmorency

7:00pm Jordan Small Church Community

Montmorency

Wednesday 11

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

Thursday 12

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Montmorency

10:30am Emmaus Small Church Community

Montmorency

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

2:00pm Meditation

Eltham

Friday 13

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 14

12:00pm Baptisms: Riley, Christopher

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 15

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptisms: Cody, Jesse, William

Eltham

Monday 16

7:30pm RCIA

Eltham

Tuesday 17

9:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Rosary

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

2:00pm Bethany Small Church Community

Montmorency

Wednesday 18 - Ash Wednesday

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Mass: Ash Wednesday

Eltham

1:00pm Kairos Small Church Community

Montmorency

7:00pm Mass: Ash Wednesday

Montmorency

Thursday 19

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Montmorency

10:30am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

2:00pm Meditation

Eltham

Friday 20

9:30am Mass

Eltham

Saturday 21

6:00pm Mass

Montmorency

Sunday 22 - First Sunday of Lent

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

Monday 23

7:30pm RCIA

Eltham



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

Montmorency

For those in need of **healing**, remembering especially:

*Nora Edmond, Pat Hosmer, Siobhan Lappin, Jarrod Mizzi,
Cindy & Ed Morrissey, Regina Roszczenko (mother of Liz Gray),
Phil Rovtar, Jeanne Vanderwert, Brian Witten*

For the recently **deceased**:

Jackie Dalgleish, Michael Zann

For those whose **anniversaries** are at this time:

*Arthur Bacani, Ratko Banovic (1st anniversary), Mariano Dalla Riva,
Marika Deylen, Eileen Frawley, Verna Maloney,
Peter McBean (1st anniversary) Jan Murphy, Grace Vincent,
Richard, Eileen & Eva Zann*

Eltham

For those in need of **healing**, remembering especially:

*Stephen Andrew, Des Arneson, Bill Boyce, Penny Boyce,
Ruth Decker, Mary Luttick, Bernard Murray, Audrey Tunks*

For the recently **deceased**:

Cecilia Matheson

For those whose **anniversaries** are at this time:

Tony Belfiore

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

A word of thanks, and an invitation, from Elisha O'Dowd

Hello everyone,

For those who don't know me, I am a life-long Montmorency SFX parishioner, and this parish has truly been part of the fabric of my life. Over the years, I've been involved in many ways; through committees, music ministry, and the social life of the parish, and I have always felt deeply connected to this community.

I joined the Parish Pastoral Council at Montmorency St Francis Xavier in 2019 under Fr Terry and have since been part of the Transition Leadership Community and the Parish Pastoral Leadership Community. It has been a long, rich, and wonderful journey. Along the way, I welcomed Fr Michael, farewelled Fr Terry, witnessed the coming together of two parishes to form Risen Christ Parish, contributed my qualitative research skills to the Parish Pastoral Survey Report, and helped shape the new Parish Pastoral Plan. It has been a great privilege to share in this work and to witness the new birth of the parish I have loved all my life.

As I take on new volunteer commitments at my boys' school during their final years of schooling, I have made the difficult but right decision to step down from the Parish Pastoral Leadership Community, opening the door for another parishioner to bring their own gifts and fresh perspective to this wonderful group.

I remain very much part of this parish community, joining you at weekly Mass across both locations and continuing in the music ministry at Montmorency.

Thank you to the Parish Pastoral Leadership Community for your openness, generosity, and deep care for our parish. I will truly miss our monthly meetings, but I am so grateful for the friendships formed, the connections strengthened, and the journey we have shared together.



Meditation at OLHC

will again be held at Our Lady Help of Christians Church
at **2:30pm on Thursday 12th February**.

If you are interested in participating,
please meet in the Gathering Area.

Meditation will be at 2:30pm **every** Thursday of each month.

Roster for week ending 8 Feb 2026

Cseh, Ferenc	E10:00
Dunell, Linda	E10:00
Edwards, Elisabeth	E10:00
French, Jossie	W8:30
Haines, Geoff	C10:00
Hannon, Genni	ASRC
Hannon, Kevin	ASRC
John, Audry	H10:00
John, Des	H10:00
Love, Philip	W8:30
Lucas, Maree	CLNR
Maloney, Nigel	W6:00
Nolan, Kathleen	PRYR
Reardon, Kathy	ASE
Roy, Yvonne	E10:00
Scannell Family	PRSE
Scully, Greg	R10:00
Smith, Neil	E10:00
Stephens, Patricia	CLNR
Stone, Nan	W6:00
Taylor, Colin	H10:00
Taylor, Trish	H10:00
Wood, Marie	LoW-01 Thu

Roster for week ending 15 Feb 2026

Bacani, Brian	W6:00
Capuana, Marisa	W6:00
Clark, Helen	H10:00
Cseh, Nika	R10:00
Dopheide, Marlis	E10:00
Edwards, Elisabeth	C10:00
Haines, Geoff	E10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	E10:00
Hall, Vali	ASE
Iliffe, Yvonne	E10:00
Mallia, Anthony	E10:00
McKinley, Michael	W8:30
Nolan, Mike	PRYR
Ramsdale, John	W8:30
Said, Marie	ASRC
Said, Mike	ASRC
Skipper, Patsy	LoW-01 Thu
Stewart Family	PRSE
Volunteer please	H10:00
Volunteer please	H10:00
Volunteer please	H10:00
Watson, Denis	CLNR

ASE = Altar Society @ Eltham;

C = Commentator;

CLKR = PowerPoint Clicker @ SFX;

CLNR = Cleaner @ SFX; **R** = Reader;

E = Eucharistic Minister;

H = Hospitality;

LoW-01 = Liturgy of the Word with
Communion @ SFX;

PRSE = Pilgrim Rosary Statue @ Eltham;

M = Music; **W** = Minister of the Word

A still point in a turning world

As political, cultural and spiritual divides deepen, Catholic education must meet a new generation with honesty, hope and integrity / **By Mike Randall**

We live in an age of fracture - political, cultural and spiritual. Public discourse is increasingly polarised, the pace of change unrelenting and young people, in particular, are confronted with contradictions about identity, morality, purpose and truth. In such a landscape, it is easy to feel unmoored. Amid this dislocation, Catholicism offers not a retreat from reality but a way of seeing the world that is coherent, stable and purposeful. It does not deny the chaos or the pain of life, but it insists they are not the whole story.

At the heart of the Catholic vision is the conviction that life is intelligible and relational rather than random or meaningless. Catholicism teaches that faith and reason are not in opposition, but mutually illuminating; that truth is not abstract, but embodied - ultimately in the person of Christ. In a world that often feels morally and metaphysically adrift, this synthesis offers clarity without rigidity, and hope without naivety.

Catholic education seeks not merely to teach this coherence, but to make it lived and tangible. Schools shaped by the Benedictine tradition, such as Downside in Somerset, show how tradition can offer stability - not as nostalgia, but as a countercultural pathway to growth. Young people are invited into a community where academic formation is inseparable from moral and spiritual growth. The aim is not simply to prepare pupils for university or employment, but to equip them for examined, generous and purposeful lives. At its best, Catholic education forms the whole person.

The Catholic tradition is not a fragile inheritance. It has endured wars, schisms, reformations and revolutions. Its continuity arises from its rootedness in Scripture, sacrament and community. The liturgical calendar offers a counter-rhythm to the frantic immediacy of contemporary life. The sacraments mark time not with empty ceremony but with grace. In Catholic schools, this rhythm can be woven gently but unmistakably into daily life. At Downside, as in Benedictine schools worldwide, prayer, study, work and community are not compartmentalised but integrated. Pupils learn that time is not simply something to be filled or monetised, but something to be sanctified.



Downside School and Abbey

Stability - a foundational Benedictine value - is presented not as the enemy of growth but as its precondition. In a culture that prizes constant reinvention, it is countercultural to suggest that staying rooted, staying faithful and staying attentive might be the more transformative path.

Yet no Catholic institution can speak credibly about stability or truth without acknowledging the failures of the Church. The deep harm caused by some within its ranks - especially in the betrayal of children - cannot be ignored or minimised. Nor can the Church's historic entanglement with power. Catholic education must be shaped by repentance, transparency and a commitment to renewal. Schools such as Downside understand that their credibility rests not on perfection but on integrity: the willingness to confront history honestly, to learn and to change.

Paradoxically, the failures of the Church highlight rather than undermine its essential message. The Christian story is not one of moral superiority but of grace amid sin, healing amid harm. Catholic education must teach young people to hold this tension: to aspire to holiness while acknowledging human fallibility; to love the Church while calling it to justice; to believe in redemption without denying the need for accountability. This, too, is formation. Catholicism offers not only structure but meaning. It teaches that human beings are not consumers or cogs but persons made in the image of God and made for love. This anthropology has profound implications for pedagogy. Education becomes not a narrow exercise in credential acquisition but a formation in wisdom, conscience and courage. What young people become is as important as what they know.

This formation takes many forms. It happens in classrooms, of course, but also in chapel, on playing fields, through music and service and in the friendships and failures that shape character. Downside's emphasis on hospitality, discipline and community is not nostalgic. It responds to a world in which young people are too often rushed, reduced or overlooked. To be known, accompanied and valued is not a luxury but a necessity.

The poet T. S. Eliot wrote of "the still point of the turning world". Catholicism, when lived faithfully, becomes that still point - not by withdrawing from the world's confusion, but by inhabiting it differently. A Catholic school can be a place where young people glimpse a different kind of life: rooted in tradition yet open to the future, anchored in faith yet attentive to reason, nourished by community yet respectful of individuality.

Downside, nestled in the Somerset countryside yet connected to the questions of contemporary society, seeks to embody this vision. As a co-educational day and boarding school welcoming pupils of all faiths and none, it offers an environment where every child is known, supported and encouraged to flourish. Strong academic results, extensive pastoral care and a rich co-curricular life sit alongside the deeper Benedictine commitment to forming discerning, resilient, compassionate young people. Scholarships and means-tested bursaries reinforce the school's inclusive ethos and enrich the community.

What sets Downside apart - what sets any strong Catholic school apart - is not heritage or academic success alone, but *belonging*. Pupils and parents consistently speak of the warmth and attentiveness that define the school community. To belong to such a place is to be accompanied into adulthood by people who care not just about achievement but about vocation, character and joy.

In an unsettled age, the challenge and the gift of Catholic education is not to shield young people from the world, but to prepare them to meet it with clarity, compassion and courage. Schools like Downside strive to do precisely that: to offer a still point, a steady foundation and a hopeful vision for the next generation.

Mike Randall is the interim head of Downside School.

CAN THE END EVER JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

When is it permissible to break international law to achieve some desirable end? In the case of Venezuela, the end may be the freeing of the 30 million citizens of that benighted country from poverty and oppression, and the interruption of a deadly trade in narcotics that kills thousands, possibly millions, with the purported aim of undermining the United States economy and way of life.

The law in question is Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State..." There can be little doubt that the United States is in breach of it, and that its declared intention to "rule" Venezuela until such time as a legitimate government could be installed is a further even more serious breach. But could such breaches ever be justified? The purest moral and legal answer is that contained in the reported dialogue between Thomas More and his son-in-law William Roper, which is described in *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt.

Roper says he would if necessary "cut down every law in England" to pursue the Devil, to which More replies: "Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you, where would you hide, roper, the laws all being flat? And if you cut them down ... d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?" Roper accuses More of making the law into a "golden calf" to be worshipped.

More's statue stands just outside the Chamber of the House of Commons, whose Speaker he was. His exchange with Roper was highly relevant to the briefing the foreign secretary, Yvette Cooper, gave to the Commons on the repercussions of the United States raid on Caracas, capital of Venezuela, to capture Nicolás Maduro. He was serving as its president though his legitimacy is widely questioned, including by the United States and the United Kingdom. Indeed, it is hard to describe Venezuela as a state at all, given that the machinery of government including the army and police are all part of the industrial-scale trafficking in cocaine which is directed, so the US alleges, by Maduro. It originates from Colombia and is shipped abroad, including to Europe.

Yet only an estimated eight per cent, at most, of the cocaine illegally imported into the US comes via Venezuela. Most enters through Mexico, so there is some other political motivation behind Maduro's capture. Many of the facts of this scenario are disputed and, while corruptions is certainly widespread, some doubt whether the tightly organised crime gang Maduro is supposed to lead, *Cartel de los Soles*, actually exists; and, even if there is such a group, whether it has any political purpose, or operates simply to enrich Venezuela's military officer class.

The consensus in the House was that the overthrow of Maduro was a good thing, but that the means - an armed attack on a sovereign state - were deplorable. The reluctance of the British government to say so, with spokespersons from the prime minister down merely repeating its general policy to support international law,

drew much anger from most sides of the House. The consensus was the Thomas More, even though the US's government's position was Roper's - sometimes, the ends justify the means. All this took on a more negative flavour when President Trump declared that he wants the US oil industry to take over oil production in Venezuela. This moves the operation on from law enforcement - detaining the head of a drug-trafficking syndicate - to plain colonial plunder.

Britain may have repented of its imperial past, or at least the worst aspects of it, but the US under Trump clearly wants to embark on an imperial future. It claims the whole of the Western Hemisphere should be brought under its sway. Targets for the expansion of US dominance now include Colombia, Cuba and Mexico; Trump also wants to extend US sovereignty to Canada and Greenland. Canada seems safe for the time being, not least because King Charles III is its head of state and Trump is in awe of him. But Greenland is in peril, despite being part of the sovereign territory of Denmark, a member of both Nato and the European Union.

What protects Greenland is Article 2 (4) of the United Nations Charter: in other words, international law. Disregarding international law with respect to Venezuela opens the door to disregarding it with regard to Greenland. As More said to Roper: "And when the last law as down, and the Devil turned round on you, where would you hide, the laws all being flat?"

This is highly relevant to the Ukraine conflict, in two respects. If the US can take over Venezuela (or Greenland), what is to stop Russia taking over Ukraine? If the US's excuse in Venezuela is that it is not a real country with sovereignty that has to be respected but a lawless bandit camp bent on doing harm to its neighbours, what is to stop Vladimir Putin labelling Ukraine as a similar case, and moving in to extinguish that supposed threat? International law is not a golden calf to be idolised, but the very guarantee of peace between nations. And national sovereignty belongs to the citizens of that country, not to its governments, which may come and go.

The second way Ukraine is relevant is in the context of the current peace proposals being hammered out between itself, its European allies and the United States. A viable peace between Ukraine and Russia needs external security guarantees, not only from European countries but also from the US. Britain has taken a leading role in soothing and smoothing President Trump to the point where he may add his weight to peace proposals that are designed to be presented to President Putin as an "offer he can't refuse" - because of American military backing for them.

Denouncing the US' actions in Venezuela on television or in Parliament would be a principled stand in defence of international law. In any other circumstances that would be the right thing to do. But it might be argued that this could be the worst possible moment to annoy Trump. Could this be a moment to concede that, sadly, sometimes the end may indeed justify the means?

ABRHAM AND BEZAR – the BACK and FORWARD Story

Abrham is an Ethiopian Tigrean man who was imprisoned and persecuted in his own country because he protested against government treatment of the Ethiopian Oromo people. In jail he was tortured and the head injuries he sustained led to his present day deafness.

As Ethiopia is tribal country, and he had chosen a woman from a different tribe as his fiancé, they could not be safely married in Ethiopia. In 2014 they welcomed their twins – a son and daughter. Once released from jail, life was too dangerous for Abrham to remain in Ethiopia, so in 2016 he travelled to China (a country sympathetic to Ethiopians) to study for his PhD in Agricultural Science. With only his oral defence remaining, he was invited to present his research at a prestigious Science Conference in Australia. Realising that once he completed his PhD he would be returned to Ethiopia, he instead sought asylum in Australia.

In 2019 I received a call from the Brigadine Sisters asking if Marlis and I could accommodate an Ethiopian man. We were already housing 2 Ethiopian Oromo men and an Afghan Hazara man, but Lyn and Neil Smith from our parish “adopted” Abrham and he remained with them for 4 years. China rescinded his degree in retaliation for him remaining in Australia. But never to be defeated, Abrham worked 3 jobs; was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to complete a Masters in Environmental Science and was hired as the Wetlands Technical Manager for Wyndham Council. Once he became a permanent Australian resident he bought a house in Hoppers Crossing and waited for his family to join him.

Abrham and Bezar were separated when their babies were 18 months of age but in October 2023 they were reunited in Melbourne. It had been a long seven years. In December 2023 Bezar was diagnosed with stage 3 Ovarian Cancer. She began chemo immediately and in sympathy, they both shaved their heads. In October 2024 the couple were married in Our Lady Help of Christian Church. By January 2025 Bezar was suffering stage 4 Ovarian cancer. Throughout her treatment Bezar remained the strong, faith-filled woman we know her to be. She worked at a volunteer job 2 mornings a week, studied English 2 other days; learnt to drive and contributed to the establishment of a local Christian Ethiopian Church.

Last week doctors at Peter MacCallum Cancer Hospital informed the family that they would be ceasing all treatment and moving Bezar to palliative care at home. On Saturday 31st January she returned home, and on Sunday 1st February the twins turned 12 years of age. Bezar and Abrham have always believed she will get better, and although they are now facing the reality of what is ahead, they have not lost hope. Bezar wants to be buried in Werribee Cemetery and to have farewell prayers said for her in the Ethiopian Church.

Marlis and I are assisting Abrham with the “business” side of death and as you will be aware, it is an expensive exercise. Our first priority is to consider burial options and costs which are quite considerable. Unlike the Oromo Community, which is huge in Melbourne, the Tigrean people are small in number and the family have few friends. If you would like to contribute toward Bezar’s farewell, please contact me and I will provide bank details.

This beautiful family are an amazing example of faith and hope and they are nourished by your prayers. God bless them.

Miranda Armstrong

0426 766 155

thomasinemiranda52@gmail.com

Acc Name: Miranda Armstrong; BSB: 633 000;

Acc #: 210 647 517; Ref: Refugees



Prayers of the Faithful for 8th February 2026 - Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leader: We trust in our Father in heaven, the Giver of Light to our world, and we pray to Him for all peoples in our world.

We pray for the Church which has received the mission to care for all humankind and to proclaim the mercy of the Father. May the Holy Spirit inspire the Church to remain true to the Gospel.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those in government and authority that they act for the common good of all.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer

We pray for all those living in countries where there is conflict, especially those in Iran, the Middle East, Sudan, Somalia and Ukraine. May God bring the light of peace to their darkness.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are preparing for Baptism or their First Eucharist, and for those who are to be received into the Church at Easter time. May they receive the Light of Christ and His strength to live out their faith.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for those in our communities who are suffering with health, mental or physical challenges, especially Bezar and her family. May the light of the Good News offer them a new pathway to hope.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

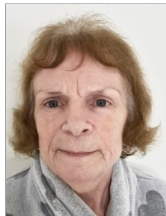
We pray for those who have died recently, especially Jackie Dalglish, Cecilia Matheson and Michael Zann, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Arthur Bacani, Ratko Banovic, Tony Belfiore, Mariano Dalla Riva, Marika Deylen, Eileen Frawley, Verna Maloney, Peter McBean, Jan Murphy, Grace Vincent and Richard, Eileen & Eva Zann. May they rest forever in the eternal light of Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: All-loving Father, you who bring light to those who are in darkness, please listen to our prayers and deign to grant our petitions. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen



Elisabeth Edwards, we wish you well in your new home and community, and thank you for your many years of commitment, and care and help in our community, especially in the Prayer Shawl Ministry, as a Commentator, Reader and helping in the Kitchen.

Much love and blessings, Risen Christ Parish

THE EPSTEIN CASE

THE EXPOSURE OF A SHAMELESS WORLD

The release of a massive quantity of files in the case of Jeffrey Epstein draws back the curtain on a world of wealth and privilege, entitlement and immunity that will disgust ordinary mortals with any sense of honour and decency. Epstein, the paedophile American financier who committed suicide in prison in 2019, ran a system of unbridled debauchery which saw many victims, mainly young women below 18, trafficked, groomed, casually used for sex by men who were older and vastly richer and more powerful, and then discarded.

As the circumstances surrounding the involvement of Peter Mandelson are exposed, it is becoming clear that sexual abuse was not the whole of this grisly network. It was a financial racket as well, in which Mandelson is just one of dozens, possibly hundreds, of politicians, bankers, tycoons and lawyers who took advantage of the favours Epstein had to offer and who have so far escaped justice. Indeed, the media's focus on Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the former Duke of York, was obscured the fact that he was probably doing what many others were doing. Most of those involved appear to be American businessmen, with a few British and European as well, who have made (or in some cases inherited) gigantic fortunes as entrepreneurs and investors. Donald Trump appears to have been at least on the fringes of it, which is why the American media has been so fascinated by the case. He has never been known for his refined sense of sexual propriety.

It is a culture which is not so much immoral as amoral.

It raises serious questions about how these enormous fortunes were made. Did these individuals abandon moral standards once they had become rich, or was it the absence of morality that got them there in the first place? In Mandelson's case, passing on confidential information to Epstein was equivalent to insider trading, helping rich people to get richer by playing the market and manipulating share prices. The abuse of public office for private gain is the essence of corruption; the facts coming to light suggest it was widespread. And also illegal.

This is where the challenge lies for public prosecutors. Very rich men habitually buy their way out of legal trouble, hiring the canniest defence lawyers or bribing, silencing or intimidating those with evidence of wrongdoing. The case of Mohamed Al-Fayed, who exercised something like a *droit du seigneur* over young female employees at Harrods, shows how difficult it can be to bring a successful prosecution against powerful and unscrupulous men. And, as that venerable French expression suggests, wealth has always bought power, and power, sex. Don Giovanni was not unique. But he knew what rules he was breaking, and what the penalties were.

In the past there has always been a sense that moral norms exist even when they were disregarded. What marks the Epstein case as distinctly modern is the shamelessness of the men in today's world of wealth and entitlement, and the absence of any sense of norms or moral codes whatsoever.

Risen Christ Parish - Sacramental Program 2026

Sacrament of Reconciliation

- *Reconciliation Parent Faith Formation Evening*
will be held at 7pm on Monday 9th February
at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church (88 Mayona Road, Montmorency)

Communal Rite of Forgiveness

will be held at
7pm on Monday 23rd March
at Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church (2 Henry Street, Eltham)
for HT students, OLHC students and parishioners
and
7pm on Tuesday 24th March
at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church (88 Mayona Road, Montmorency)
for SFX students and parishioners



Sacrament of First Eucharist

- *First Eucharist Parent Faith Formation Evening*
will be held at 7pm on Monday 27th April
at Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church (2 Henry Street, Eltham)

First Eucharist Student Retreat Day

Thursday 30th April
more information to follow.

The Sacrament of First Eucharist is offered to candidates at each of the 3
weekend Masses
(6pm Sat SFX, 8:30am Sun SFX, 10am Sun OLHC)
from Saturday 6th June until Sunday 11th October
The Booking Process will be discussed at the First Eucharist Parent Faith
Formation evening.



Sacrament of Confirmation

- *Confirmation Parent Faith Formation Evening*
will be held at 7pm on Monday 10th August
at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church (88 Mayona Road, Montmorency)

Confirmation Rehearsal
will be held from 10am to 2pm
at Catholic Ladies College Hall (19 Diamond Street, Eltham)

Confirmation
will be held at 2:30pm
at Catholic Ladies College Hall (19 Diamond Street, Eltham)



Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this process, please contact Fr Michael at the Parish office on 9435 4742, otherwise questions will be answered at the Faith Formation Evenings. We look forward to working with and supporting you as you lead your child more fully into their faith journey in our parish community.
Blessings to all.

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