

Risen Christ



Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

18 & 19 January 2025 - Year C

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: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. When they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the wedding was all finished, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews; each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. 'Draw some out now' he told them, 'and take it to the steward.' They did this; the steward tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from - only the servants who had drawn the water knew - the steward called the bridegroom and said, 'People generally serve the best wine first, and keep the cheaper sort till the guests have had plenty to drink, but you have kept the best wine till now.'

This was the first of the signs given by Jesus: it was given at Cana in Galilee. He let his glory be seen, and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection - Break Open the Word 2025:

This story is not about excessive amounts of wine and drinking to excess. Certainly, there is human interest in Mary and Jesus' care for the married couple in their embarrassment. There is a lesson in the intercession of the Virgin Mary before her son. But there is something greater here.

In the gospel of John, signs are a revelation of who Jesus is and what his mission is. In word and action, he has come to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God. Often represented in terms of a wedding banquet, the messianic feast is characterized by abundant fine wine. Thus this 'sign' points to the kingdom of heaven and Christ's role in bringing it about. It is this that leads to the disciples' response of faith.

Jesus as the Christ has come to inaugurate a new covenant accomplished in his death and resurrection. The wine of the new covenant replaces the water of purification which represents the old covenant. As John wrote in the prologue to his gospel: *though the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.*



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:

*Terry Kean, Debbie Edgley (nee Vanderwert),
Leon Gray, Siobhan Lappin,
Graeme Layton, Frances McDonald,
Cindy & Ed Morrissey, Pauline Murphy,
Regina Roszczenko (mother of Liz Gray)
Jeanette Steward, Skye Stojanov*

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

*Alma Crimmins, Christine Newton,
Maria & Lino Zini, Nereo Zini*

Eltham

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

*Penny Boyce, Maurice Brosnan, Ruth Decker,
Shannon Donahoo, Mary Luttick,
Rosemary Scully, Bill Slattery (UK)*

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

Charles Burda (10 year anniversary)

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

*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.*



SYRIA / 'We hope HTS will keep their promises,' says nuncio Cardinal Mario Zenari

Rebels who ousted Assad reassure Syrian Christians

Andreja Bogdanovski and Abigail Frymann Rouch

Rebel leaders offered assurances to Syrian Christians and other minorities after the sudden collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the leader of the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Organisation for the Liberation of the Levant, which seized Damascus last weekend, had earlier told Christians in central Syria that his forces would "ensure your protection and safeguard your property".

Other rebel leaders held a meeting with local bishops in Aleppo and told them they would "respect the various religious denominations and Christians", according to the apostolic nuncio to Syria, Cardinal Mario Zenari.

"We hope they will keep this promise and move towards reconciliation," he told Vatican News on Sunday, warning that "the road ahead remains very difficult". Earlier in the week Zenari had said Syrians' hope was "dead, dying or in some cases already buried" after the fall of Aleppo. Many church leaders voiced alarm at the rebels' advance, warning of the jihadist origins of HTS. Archbishop Ieronymos II of Athens and all Greece, the primate of the Orthodox Church in Greece, warned of the "looming danger



Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, leader of the Islamist HTS

of the complete eradication and disappearance" of Christianity from Syria.

Jolani, however, seemed eager to counter such fears. "Aleppo has always been a meeting point for civilisations and cultures, and it will remain so, with a long history of cultural and religious diversity," he said in a statement after the

city fell to his forces.

The Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo, Boutros Marayati, urged his congregation to be hopeful in a homily last week. "continue living normally, and everything will remain as before, even better," he said.

In a message to the charity Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (Face), the Latin parish of St Francis of Assisi in Aleppo reported that the new regime was "trying to normalise life by inviting all employees to return to their jobs", and promised "that no one will touch our freedom of worship and expression".

It continued: "However, all this is still not enough to dispel the fear that has dwelt in the hearts of Christians who ... will have to deal with a different government, in a pluralistic society, but which in recent years has also been a breeding ground for extremist groups." In Homs, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus told Face on Monday that the situation had improved since the fall of Assad, as civilians returned to the city. Archimandrite Shafiq Abouzayd, a Lebanese priest ministering to Greek Melkite Catholics in London, told *The Tablet* his congregation's families in Syria were "worried, they don't know what will happen next".



Resilience and Growth - Essential Conversion

Richard Rohr describes how psychology and spirituality affirm the direction of growth.

In the various schemas of development, psychology and spirituality come together beautifully to show us that our growth is going somewhere. The trajectory is toward union: union with God/Reality, with the self (mind, heart, and body), with others, and with the cosmos. All seem to agree that the beginning levels of our consciousness are dualistic, while the later or deeper levels are non-dual and unitive. The only way to move from stage to stage is basically by some form of wounding, failure, or darkness. All seem to agree that we have to go through a period of unknowing (which sounds like faith to me) to know at a more mature level.

But when we listen to the news or look around and within our own hearts, doesn't it seem as if we might be going nowhere? Everyone is on their own to find and create their own personal meaning. It seems we're all condemned to start at zero, with no shoulders to stand on, which makes the human task quite difficult in our relatively short lifetime. It basically doesn't work, especially when we're young and just getting started. In

our postmodern age, we have rejected any strong sense of the common good or any Great Tradition. Thus, we are addictively repeating the same patterns that produce trauma, violence, suffering, emotional immaturity, low self-esteem, and far-too-premature deaths.

For our spirituality to be authentic, we must experience thigs from the inside out instead of just the outside in. In the materialistic and highly overstimulated culture in which so many of us live, we tend to let others define us instead of drawing from our own deep well. (Please do not hear that in an individualistic way; it is finally the exact opposite - which is truly a paradox.) Indeed, the goal of mature religion is to help us die before we die: die to our small or passing self so we can discover our Big Self. All major religions describe this in one way or another: A false and largely self-constructed identity must be surrendered before the True Self can stand radiant and revealed. Jesus said, "Whoever would save their life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose their life for my sake will save it" (Luke 9:24), and "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain, but if it dies, it shall yield a rich harvest" (John 12:24). This is basic and essential conversion. Good religion and good psychology agree.

Our contemplative practice is a "laboratory" in which we learn to die to our passing identities, emotions, and thoughts so we can receive the always-permanent and perfect mirroring of the Divine gaze. The rest of our life becomes the field in which we live out this participation in Love, bouncing back the gaze of grace to the Other and then having plenty left over for all others besides.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/essential-conversion/>