

Risen Christ



Second Sunday of Advent Year A

6 & 7 December 2025

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.

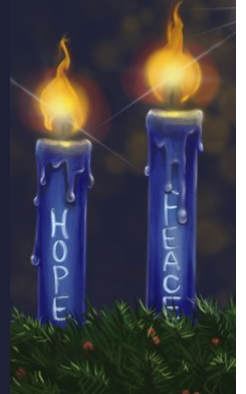
Christmas Mass Timetable

Wednesday 24 December - Christmas Eve

- 6pm Christmas Eve (Outdoor) at Holy Trinity Primary School Oval
- 8pm Christmas Eve @ Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham
- 10pm Christmas Eve @ St Francis Xavier, Montmorency

Thursday 25 December - Christmas Day

- 8:30am Christmas Day @ St Francis Xavier, Montmorency
- 10am Christmas Day @ Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham



Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand." This was the man the prophet spoke of when he said:

A voice cries in the wilderness; prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, "Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children from Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in the water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out."

Gospel Reflection

Today we meet a wild prophet crying out in the wilderness. It is John the Baptist, dressed in a camel-hair garment, eating locusts and honey, and calling people to prepare a way for the Lord. Many come to receive his baptism of repentance in the Jordan River. He acknowledges that another will follow him and will baptise them with the Holy Spirit - it is his second cousin, Jesus of Nazareth. It is worth exploring this extraordinary prophetic figure today for John is a key figure in Advent. Next week, Jesus lauds him lavishly. He reappears for the feast of the Baptism of the Lord in the Christmas season, and he is there again in mid-January at the beginning of Ordinary Time.

Safeguarding Meeting for volunteers in the month of December, will be held at **Our Lady Help of Christians**, Saturday 13th Dec at 10am - 11:30am.

All volunteers and interested parishioners are welcome to attend to upgrade your compliance requirements for Church and Government for the next three years.

Please bring a plate to share.



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.melbrcatholic.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: 16 & 23 November 2025

		OLHC	SFX
Thanksgiving	Cash	\$292.00	\$1,079.00
	Electronic	\$2,029.00	\$2,059.00
Presbytery	Cash	\$646.60	\$949.75
	Electronic	\$200.00	\$60.00

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 6

12:00pm Baptisms: Piper, Elvivo, Arlo
Kingston, Charlee & Summer Montmorency
6:00pm Mass Montmorency

Sunday 7 - Second Sunday of Advent

8:30am Mass Montmorency
10:00am Mass Eltham
12:00pm Baptisms: Alby, George & Annabelle Eltham

Monday 8

11:30am Mass: End of School Year Mass Holy Trinity
7:30pm RCIA Class Eltham

Tuesday 9

9:30am Mass: End of School Year Mass Montmorency
10:00am Rosary Montmorency
11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry Eltham
1:30pm Pastoral Visit St Vincent's Care
7:00pm Jordan Small Church Community Montmorency

Wednesday 10

6:30am Meditation Montmorency
9:15am School Second Advent Liturgy Montmorency
9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham

Thursday 11

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency
10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency
2:00pm Mass Calvary Lower Plenty Garden Views
2:30pm Meditation Eltham
6:00pm SFX Grade 6 Graduation Montmorency

Friday 12

9:30am Mass: End of School Year Mass Eltham
1:00pm Funeral: John Barnes Eltham

Saturday 13

10:00am Safeguarding Meeting Eltham
12:00pm Baptisms: Walker, Hugh, Mila & Luka Montmorency
6:00pm Mass Montmorency

Sunday 14

8:30am Mass Montmorency
10:00am Mass Eltham

Thanksgiving

Dear Parishioners,
Following is a list of ways in which you can give towards the running of our Parish (clockwise from top right):

- scan the QR code (<https://bit.ly/45ifhRp>) & you can donate to any Parish finance campaign including Thanksgiving, Presbytery Offerings, baptisms etc.
- cash/coins in the collection baskets at each church
- EFTPOS terminals
- thanksgiving envelopes
- set up payments from credit/debit cards

Thank you for your generous support,
Michael





*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, Frances McDonald,
Jarrod Mizzi, Cindy & Ed Morrissey, Michael O'Meara,
Regina Roszczenko (mother of Liz Gray),
Jeanne Vanderwert, Br Doug Walsh*

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

Eltham

For the recently **deceased**:
*John Barnes (father of Anne McCallum)
Brian Bibby (brother of Ian Bibby)*

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 those whose **anniversaries** are at this time:
Connie Lynch

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



Risen Christ Parish - Safeguarding Time

Dear Parishioners and Friends of Risen Christ Parish,
the Catholic Communities of St. Francis Xavier, Montmorency
& Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham.

Advent - the weeks before Christmas - is a perfect time to
review and renew our collective spirit towards Safeguarding.
As we turn our attention to the Season of Christ's Birth and
gaze upon the Child Jesus - we too should consider all children
and vulnerable people in this season.

Thus we are able to offer everyone, and in particular all
volunteers in our parish a session to update your qualifications
with regard to renewal of your Safeguarding Standards, as
required by law and renewed every 3 years. Doing this
exercise/program together is often easier and more
beneficial to our parish community than doing your online
assessment as everyone is now required to do so! This special
time together gives us a unique opportunity to share and
discuss the challenges and updated information about
Safeguarding in a friendly environment.

So, the invitation is set for **Saturday 13th December**
(10am - 11am) at the church in Eltham. Naturally everyone is
invited to attend - but certainly any Volunteers who need to
upgrade and maintain their certificates of compliance are
required to attend - otherwise, please book in online with the
Archdiocese of Melbourne Safeguarding Standards.



Roster for week ending 7 Dec 2025

Armstrong, Miranda	R10:00
Beckford, Peter	PRYR
Capuana, Marisa	CLNR
Cotter, Anne	W8:30
Cseh, Nika	C10:00
Davidson, John	W8:30
Grande, Silvana	H10:00
Haines, Geoff	E10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	E10:00
Hannon, Genni	ASRC
Hannon, Kevin	ASRC
Kulkens, Mark	W6:00
Mallia, Anthony	E10:00
Maloney, Jo	W6:00
McKenna, John	CLNR
Northrop, Greg	E10:00
Reardon, Kathy	ASE
Reardon, Kathy	E10:00
Ryan Family	PRSE
Volunteer please	H10:00
Volunteer please	H10:00
Volunteer please	H10:00
Wood, Marie	LoW-01 Thu

Roster for week ending 14 Dec 2025

Castellanos, Rodrigo	E10:00
Donnellan, Denice	E10:00
Drljo, Frank	CLNR
Dunell, Linda	H10:00
Dunell, Rick	H10:00
Edwards, Elisabeth	C10:00
Edwards, Elisabeth	E10:00
French, Jossie	W8:30
Hall, Vali	ASE
Love, Philip	W8:30
Maloney, Nigel	W6:00
Nolan, Kathleen	R10:00
Roy, Yvonne	E10:00
Said, Marie	ASRC
Said, Mike	ASRC
Scannell Family	PRSE
Skipper, Patsy	LoW-01 Thu
Smith, Neil	E10:00
Stone, Nan	CLNR
Stone, Nan	W6:00
Turnbull, Mark	H10:00
Turnbull, Pauline	H10:00
Williams, Anne	PRYR
Williams, Peter	PRYR
Zerjal, Frida	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

This week Pope Leo XIV and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, are making a joint pilgrimage to Nicaea to mark the 1,700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council and the formulation of the statement of faith shared by Christians of the Western and Eastern Churches. But what a creed is and how it should be used is often misunderstood / **By LEWIS AYRES**

What's in a creed?

This year of Nicaea's 1,700th anniversary has been one filled with conferences exploring the century in which its first "Ecumenical Council" took place, and the decades of debate and argument that followed. These conferences have reinforced some of the basic principles that have been the mainstay of scholarship over the past half-century. It took decades (and revising of its text) for the Christian community to treat Nicaea's Creed as *the* universal creed of the Church, and it took decades to come up with an agreed family of ways to interpret its sparse language. The idea that this creed was somehow imposed on the church by imperial compulsion is far too simplistic an idea to be repeated today. The idea that this creed involved a philosophical substitution for simpler, more "biblical" statements of belief similarly cannot stand.

This year has also seen a host of liturgical events, at which Nicaea has been celebrated as a foundation for the development of greater Christian unity. This is especially so between the Catholic Churches and the Eastern Orthodox Churches; we all confess Nicaea's Creed as providential, and to its declarations on the dating of Easter we might plausibly return in the hopes of finding a common celebration. To understand why Nicaea's Creed became so important, I want to think briefly about the creed within a development that lasted many centuries.

MY MOST important observation is this; we misunderstand creeds when we think of them as isolated texts, rather than as texts that are intended to be interpreted within networks of theological commitments, and networks of scriptural texts. The Nicene Creed certainly offered a set of propositions; the Son and Spirit come from the Father in eternity as distinct but not separate realities, in ways that show God to be eternally loving and generative community; God is not a thing in the world to be thought of in spatial and temporal terms. But even



Emperor Constantine presiding at the First Council of Nicaea depicted on a Byzantine fresco

this last observation - which would have been taken as read by all of Nicaea's defenders - is not stated clearly in the Creed itself. And thus, the Nicene Creed quickly came to serve as a cipher for many things it does not - *could not* - explicitly state. In this sense, I suggest, we might think of Nicaea's Creed as the most fundamental exercise in the structuring and crystallising of the Christian imaginative universe.

That is a complex sentence that requires a little explanation. The earliest Christians thought about the world using the language of the Judaism of their time, many of them also influenced by a Judaism deeply infused with much of classical Greek culture. When they reflected on who was in Christ and what had happened, they turned to the language of Israel's Scriptures, using its language, metaphors and narratives. You only have to look at Peter's speech at the beginning of Acts, or Paul's summary of what has happened in 1 Corinthians 15, to see this sort of thing. These passages which reinterpret terminology and imagery from Second Temple Judaism (the term scholars use for the Judaism that developed after the Temple in Jerusalem was

rebuilt in the 500s BC) very often contain an expressed or implicit narrative which places Christ as the centre of history, and as its end and beginning, and thus providing a basic structure to the Christian use of Israel's Scriptures and imagery.

In the last decades of the 100s AD we see emerging various versions of the "rule of faith". These "rules" summarize those earlier narratives and, using the same imagery, draw out basic principles in the context of controversies besetting the Christian community. They insist, for example that God is the Creator of *all* things, whereas in the New Testament texts that belief is more implicit. These "rules" aren't simply, though, readings of Scripture; they are also summaries of the earliest preaching handed down over generations. And that preaching was the context in which the Scriptures were read. One simple truth of all these rules is that, once again, history is narrated with Christ at its beginning middle and end. During the period between the late 100s and the early 300s, we see the gradual emergency of local statements of faith used in catechesis and baptism, local creeds, that look very similar although their wording

differs a little. But how do these creeds function? Well, we have a number of surviving sermons in which bishops interpret these creeds for the catechumens who are to be baptized. In these sermons, phrases from the creeds are used, explained by referring to constellations of scriptural texts that have long been linked together to explain, for example, who was in Christ. Often the sparse words of the creeds highlight a key fact to be drawn from those scriptural texts - that, for example, texts about Creating should all be understood as talking about the Father as the Creator of *all things*. These creeds are thus ciphers, in the sense that they contain terms that stand in for fuller explanations, reminders of broader, deeper theological explanations.

During the fourth century, as Christians came gradually to treat Nicaea's Creed as a providentially given universal creed, we find it used in very similar ways. The great figures of the century after 325 - Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers, Ambrose and Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria - all saw Nicaea's Creed as a cipher for a family of interrelated principles, discussions and exegeses that constituted what they often term, "the faith of Nicaea". Nicaea was the one text that they found suitable to point to what was truly central in Christian belief: that the Father eternally gave rise to the Son and the Spirit, showing God to be an eternally generative, loving communion, and that the one who walked in Galilee was that eternal Son or Word in his flesh. Nicene theology, then, developed beside and underneath the creed, and the growth of the idea that Nicaea should serve as a universal declarative statement of faith is in part of the growth of the idea that only this statement can serve as a cipher for developing "Nicene" theology. One might think that a universal creed simply restricts diversity of belief. But while there is certainly a restriction in that subordinationist theologies are certainly and intentionally excluded - under that sparse umbrella the creed serves as a cipher for many interrelated theologies, and becomes deeply generative over the next few centuries.

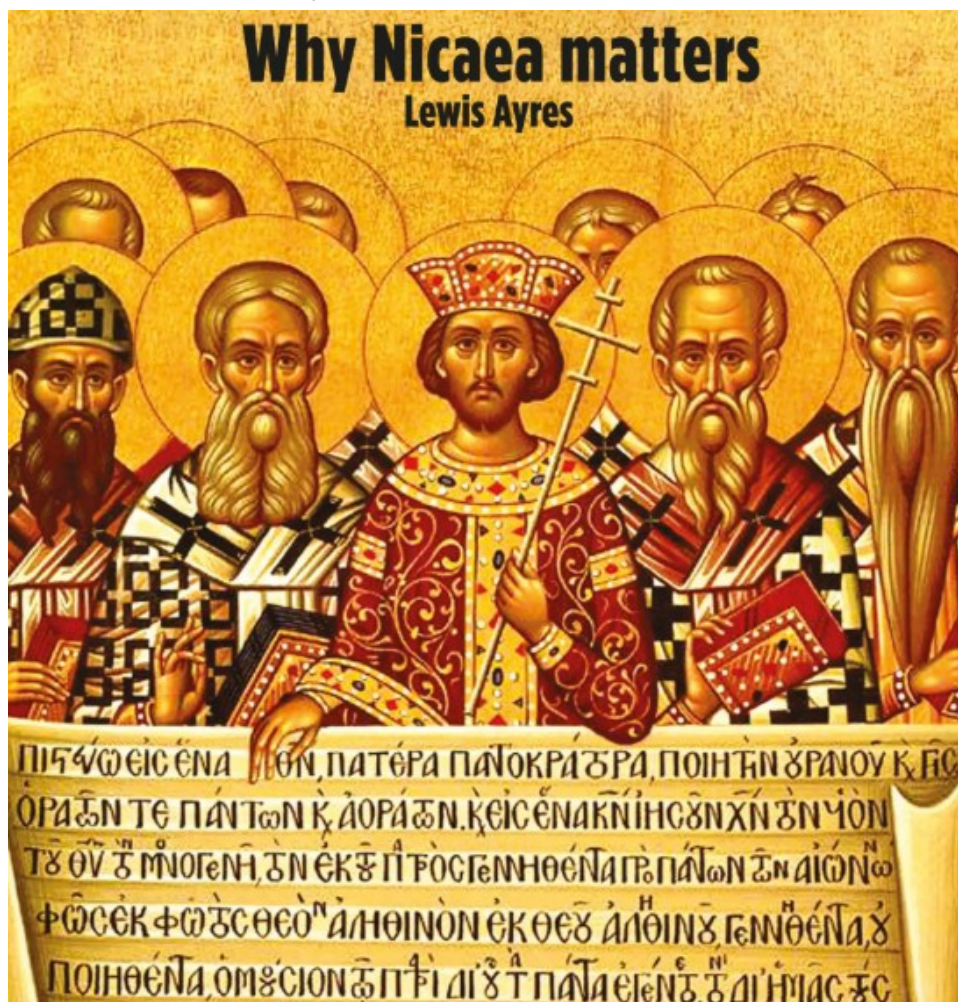
ONE OF THE ways in which it is easiest to see how the creed actually shaped debate is to think about the controversies that occupied so much energy in the period between 400 and 700 concerning the person of Christ. These controversies concerned how

we should think about the person of Jesus Christ; put simply, if you had run into Christ in a first century bakery in Jerusalem, would you have been speaking to two persons - the human Jesus with a divine person hiding inside - or would you have been speaking to the Word of God, the Son of God with his flesh (and soul)? It is this second option that became Christian orthodoxy, and Nicaea's Creed played an important role in that journey. Cyril of Alexandria in the early 400s and those who followed him in the centuries that followed kept emphasizing that Nicaea's terse phrasing told a story with one central actor, the Son of God who took flesh and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. This emphasis is something that one finds in some key summary passages of the New Testament and in the early 'rules of faith'. Cyril and his followers treated this emphasis as a cipher for their own far more developed theologies of Christ's personhood, and once again the "Nicene faith" could be seen as the faith to which the creed points.

We should take one more step. During the fourth and early fifth century; Nicaea's Creed does not seem to have been used liturgically. That seems to have begun towards the end of the fifth century and at the

beginning of the sixth and different contexts. Now, when the creed is said or sung in a liturgical context and even ended with "amen", have its words taken on a new significance? I'd like to suggest that the answer is, "not necessarily" ... but a new dimension of this credal language now appears. One of the most fascinating themes found in Nicaea's defenders is the balance they think vital between seeing credal language and embodying propositions to which we must hold, and recognizing that this language speaks in spatial and temporal terms of the God who is transcendent mystery. To confess this language in the liturgy is, perhaps, to recognize the creed as hymn, and in so doing finally give the creed its true place. Because Nicaea's Creed could, through providence, be all these things - a cipher for Nicene theologies of the Trinity, an embodiment of the Church's most basic Christological confession and concise hymn to the transcendent diving communities - it endures.

Lewis Ayres holds the McDonald Agape Distinguished Chair in Early Christian Theology at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas, Rome.



Prayers of the Faithful for 7th December 2025 Second Sunday of Advent

Leader: The letter to the Romans assures us that our Heavenly Father stands with us in our distress. Let us turn to Him in confidence and offer Him our prayers and intentions.

For the Church: We pray, as we prepare the way of the Lord, that the Church will be saved from everything that threatens its mission. Where it is persecuted, keep it faithful. Where it is pridefully seduced by affluence and ceremony, rebuke it. Where it is poor and weak, less it with joy, peace and strength. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our parish community: We pray that our parish will look forward in gladness as we remember the birth of Jesus. Grant that we will receive him as Redeemer, serve him as Lord and love him as brother and friend, now and forever. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the world: We pray for the coming of a time of peace and love to riven world, for the healing of harms by true repentance, for settlement of conflicts by humility and courage, for reconciliation between nations in wisdom and acceptance of differences. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the faithful: We pray your people suffering under persecution for their faith in Nigeria, Sudan, and other place around the world will be sustained by the ever-renewed message of the coming of the Kingdom in these times of trial. Lord, we pray you will always be with them in the journey to your Holy Mountain. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the sick: We pray for those who are sick, for those facing anxiety, loneliness and distress. We pray especially for those named in our bulletin, and for our loved ones near and far away. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the dead: We pray for the souls of those who have died recently, especially *John Barnes and Brian Bibby*; and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time and whom we love and remember, including *Suashini Jeyakumar and Connie Lynch*. May perpetual light shine upon them as they gaze on the face of the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: God our Father, you who hear our cries, grant our petitions.

All: Amen



**Congratulations to all who celebrate
their sacraments this weekend:**

Saturday, 6th December, 2025

St Francis Xavier, Montmorency, 12:00pm	
Piper Louise Buissink	Baptism
Elivio Logiusto	Baptism
Arlo Nicolas Patatsos	Baptism
Kingston Carter Rowe	Baptism
Charlee May Smith	Baptism
Summer Emily Smith	Baptism

Sunday, 7th December, 2025

Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham, 12:00pm	
Alby McNamara	Baptism
Annabelle Elizabeth Powell	Baptism
George Adil Tosis	Baptism



Top Shelf - OLHC Eltham Library

From award-winning novelist and journalist, Omar El Akkad, an urgent and necessary reckoning with what it means to live in the west today.

This is a book for our time: *One Day Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This*. (2025).

We are reaching out to ensure every family and colleague has the support they need for food this Christmas and New Year.

HELP US COLOUR IN THE CHRISTMAS TREE ALL THE WAY TO THE STAR!

Make a huge difference to a family this Christmas with a hamper

for only

\$45

GOAL

30

Kadasig
AID AND DEVELOPMENT

MARY AND THE POWER OF YES - Responding to God's Yes

Richard Rohr envisions our yeses as a response to God's first yes to us.

We have in Mary's story what some call the second creation story in the Bible. It's a creation seemingly "out of nothing". Mary is the one quite willing to be "nothing". God doesn't need worthiness ahead of time; God creates worthiness by the choice itself. As I've often said, God doesn't love us because we are good; we are good because God loves us. It seems God will not come into the world unreceived or uninvited. God does not come into the world unless we want God. God offers the Divine Presence, "the banquet," but presence itself is a reciprocal concept. God is the eternal "I" waiting for those willing to be a "Thou".

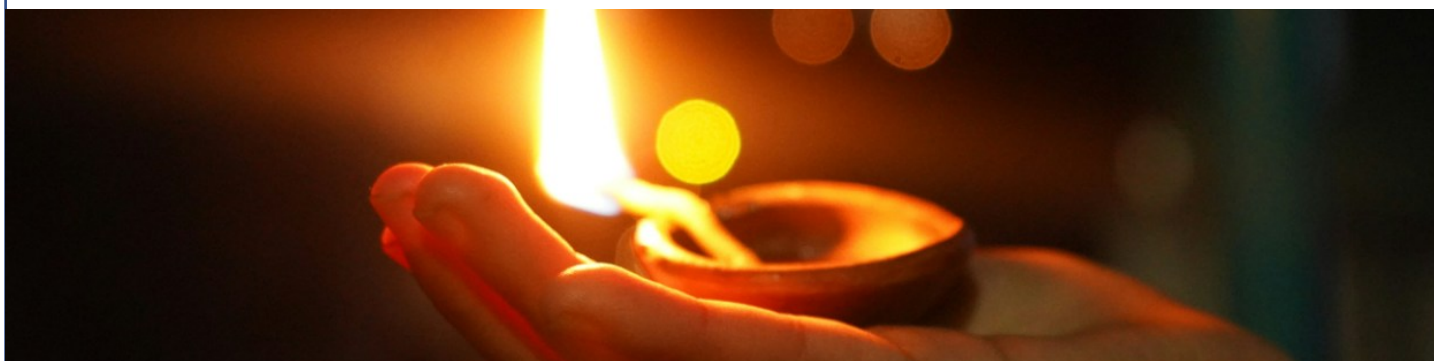
It's no surprise that Mary became the icon of prayer for so many in Orthodox and Catholic Christianity, and in many religious orders, even though the Bible never once mentions her "praying". The closest is that lovely line in Luke: "She treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19, 51). Why? Because every time we pray, it's God in us telling us to pray. We wouldn't even desire to pray except for God in us. It's God in us that loves God, that desires God, that seeks God (see Romans 8:14-27). Every time we choose God on some level, God has in the previous nanosecond just chosen us, and we have somehow allowed ourselves to be chosen - and responded back (John 15:16).

We don't know how to say yes by ourselves. We just "second the motion"! *There is a part of us, the Holy Spirit within, that has always said yes to God.* God first says "yes" inside of us, and we say, "Oh yeah," thinking it comes from us. In other words, God rewards us for letting God reward us. That is worth noticing, maybe even for the rest of our lives.

Are we ever completely ready to echo God's "yes"? Probably not, but I am convinced that the struggle is good and even necessary. Struggle carves out the space within us for deep desire. God both creates the desire and fulfills it. Our job is to be the desiring. For God to work in our lives, our *fiat*, like Mary's "Let it be done unto me, according to your word" (Luke 1:38), is still essential.

We all find ourselves with this surprising ability to love God and to desire love from God, often for no reason in particular. That doesn't happen every day, truly, but hopefully arises more often as we learn to trust and rest in life. Moments of unconditional love sort of slip out of us and no one is more surprised when they happen. But when they do, we always know we are living inside of a Large Life than our own. We know, henceforth, that our life is not about us, but we are about God.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/responding-to-gods-yes/>



MARY AND THE POWER OF YES - A Grace-Filled Yes

Father Richard describes Mary as a model of faith:

In the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and throughout the Epistles, a whole new dimension of faith becomes available to those who accept it. It's a way of living in the Spirit, which some of the Hebrew prophets anticipate. The prophet Joel speaks of this most clearly:

In the days that follow, I will pour out my spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. In those days I will pour out my spirit even on your servants and your handmaids (Joel 3:1-2).

We see the Spirit descending upon Jesus after his baptism in the Jordan, and we see the Spirit again filling the apostles with power on the day of Pentecost. But the very first person who incarnates this new faith was Mary of Nazareth, who said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me" (Luke 1:38). It was Mary who responded with an unconditional *yes* to the angel's announcement that she was to give birth to the Messiah. Mary is the model of faith to which God calls all of us: *a total and unreserved yes to God's request to be present in and to the world through us.*

God desires to love others unconditionally in and through us. Those who live with such a faith can truly be called God's instruments. God wants light to shine through us, and so our first response to this call is simply to heed it and remain open to divine grace, so that God might shine. Mary understood this completely. She said her yest to God, and God was able to become incarnate in her. She gave birth to Jesus by being so totally open to God's Spirit that the Christ child could be born.

The soul does not proceed by contraction but by expansion. It moves forward, not by exclusion, but by inclusion. It sees things deeply and broadly, not by saying no, but by saying yes, at least on some level, to whatever comes its way. If we are paying attention, we can feel those two very different movements within ourselves. Don't take my word for it; we must experience it for and within ourselves, or we will never be able to move beyond it.

Mary's kind of yes doesn't come easily to us. It always requires that we let down some of our ego boundaries, and none of us likes to do that. Mary's kind of yes, as it is presented in the Gospel, is an assent utterly unprepared for, with no preconditions of worthiness required, that is calmly, wonderfully trustful that someone else is in charge. All she asks is one, simple, clarifying question (Luke 1:34). It's a yes that is pure in motivation, open-ended in intent, and calm in confidence. Only grace can achieve such freedom in the soul, heart, or mind.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/a-grace-filled-yes/>



SVdP Eltham

Christmas Cards are available at the piety stall and one Columban calendar is available!

A box is under our Christmas tree at the front of the church for donations of Christmas delights and non perishable food.

Please note: *out of date goods cannot be distributed.*

Female and male toiletries are always welcome. Also please note, we do not collect children's items of any kind.

Thank you for your ongoing support which enables us to help people in need in our Community.

Wishing everyone a safe, happy and holy Christmas and wonderful 2026. Thank you, Mary O'Connor

SVdP Montmorency

Christmas Hampers

St Vincent de Paul Society, Montmorency Conference would greatly appreciate donations towards their Christmas Hampers which are distributed to the needy in our local area.

Items that are needed include:

- Small gifts for children (0-14 years old)
- Toiletries for teenagers and adults
- Any non-perishable food items
- General groceries and or Christmas goodies.



Collection box will be in the SFX Church until **14 December**. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Any questions please call the Parish Office (9435 4742).

Again, we will be selling Christmas cards outside the Church each weekend. We hope that you enjoy the selection. Please feel free to browse all the pamphlets. A gold coin donation in the poor boxes located at the front and side entrances will help defray costs.

Christmas Cards and Decorations

Thank you to all parishioners who bought cards and/or decorations from our stall outside SFX church over the past three weeks. Due to unprecedented demand, we have only 8 packets of cards left and no decorations and we will be selling the remaining cards on Sunday only. We look forward to next year where there maybe some new designs.

SVdP Montmorency Christmas Appeal 2025

We once again ask for your support for our annual Christmas Appeal which helps families in need within our local communities of Lower Plenty, Montmorency, Briar Hill, Eltham North and St Helena who find Christmas a struggle both emotionally and financially. One of the five themes of the parish pastoral plan 2025 - 2030 relates to "active service to others & love of God goes hand in hand with love of neighbour". Your local conference(s) assist marginalised groups, including the elderly, disadvantaged & homeless and actively engage in outreach efforts to these peoples.

This Christmas, more people are experiencing poverty and struggling with the rapidly rising cost of living.

As we know from previous economic crises, it is always the most vulnerable and marginalised who are the most acutely affected. What makes this point in history different is that we are seeing the effects of inflation more pronounced on the price of necessities like housing, food, and energy.

As Christmas should be a special time for everyone, we will be providing hampers to the families in need based on the makeup of each family, hoping to be able to lift their spirits and brighten their Christmas day.

As is the custom of SVDP Montmorency, all monies raised by the appeal are used exclusively within the local community and will go toward sharing the spirit of Christmas with those for whom daily life is a struggle. There are no administration costs associated with the preparation and distribution of the hampers.

The St Vincent de Paul Montmorency's conference wishes to thank all parishioners for their continued support of our work and wish all parishioners and their families every blessing and happiness for Christmas and a very happy and safe New Year.

How to donate to the SVDP Christmas appeal

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

Direct Credit: BSB 063003 Account 1008 1787 with Montmorency 916 in the reference box. In this way monies will be credited to the Montmorency Conference account and stay within our community.

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

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

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

Assistance is always promptly available to the community
by contacting 1800 305 330 between 10am and 3pm weekdays.

