

Risen Christ



Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

1 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 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

‘How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.’



Gospel Reflection - Break Open the Word 2026

Matthew's gospel presents Jesus as a teacher. These famous beatitudes are the beginning of the first slab of his teaching in Matthew and set the tone for the rest. Jesus is beginning something new. In God's kingdom, it is not the powerful or proud who have the first place; it is the poor, the gentle, the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted.

Like so many of Jesus' parables, this teaching is not what people expected. Jesus made the heroes of his stories a poor widow, a Samaritan, a pagan centurion... He spent his time dining with tax collectors and sinners. Our honest humility leaves space in our lives for God.

Like Christ, we are called to stand with the oppressed and disadvantaged. It is from this perspective that we are able to advocate for justice and right.

The reader would best not stress "happy" at the beginning of each beatitude, but rather the second part of the line.

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
Presbytery	Cash	\$1,283.50

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 31

12:00pm Baptisms: Charlotte, Roy Montmorency

6:00pm Mass Montmorency

Sunday 1 February

8:30am Mass Montmorency

10:00am Mass Eltham

12:00pm Baptism: Miller Eltham

Monday 2

9:00am Days for Girls Montmorency

11:30am Holy Trinity School Mass Holy Trinity

2:00pm Mass St Vincent's Care

7:30pm RCIA Class Eltham

Tuesday 3

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 4

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham

1:00pm Kairos Small Church Community Montmorency

Thursday 5

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency

2:30pm Meditation Eltham

Friday 6

9:30am Mass & OLHC Beginning of
School Year Mass Eltham

Saturday 7

6:00pm Mass Montmorency

Sunday 8

8:30am Mass Montmorency

10:00am Mass Eltham

Monday 9

7:30pm RCIA Eltham

Tuesday 10

9:30am Mass Montmorency

10:00am Rosary 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

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 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),
Jeanne Vanderwert, Br Doug Walsh*

For the recently **deceased** (incl January):

*Michael Clark, Patricia Darcy (30 Dec), John Dureau (18 Dec),
Frances McDonald (21 Jan), John Mitcham (12 Jan)*

For those whose **anniversaries** are at this time (incl January):

*Alma Crimmins, Maria De Lazzer, Margaret Farrell, Annie Gatt,
Mary Gioules, Pat Heagerty, Bernie Lamers, Walter Lee, John Longton,
Francis James Mannix, Terry Moylan, Immaculata Mustica,
Christine Newton, Antonina Salvatore, John Skehill, Joan Stanhope,
Nancy Swindon, Maria & Lino Zini, Nereo Zini*

Eltham

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

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

For those whose **anniversaries** are at this time (incl January):

*Kate Boyce, Charles Burda, Luke Hawthorne-Smith,
Sheila Mullane, Gavan O'Connell*

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

Liturgy of the Word with Communion at St Francis Xavier, Montmorency

commences again on Thursday 5th February

Each Thursday morning throughout the year at 9:30am in St Francis Xavier Church, there is an opportunity to reflect and pray upon the Scriptures. This opportunity offers a sacred time of prayer and stillness. Time to connect and reflect on our relationships with God, with ourselves, with each other, in the reality of a changing world. You are more than welcome to join those who may gather there. A time to grow our Parish Vision. Look at the size of a mustard seed, see how it grows into a big tree. Big things grow from small beginnings.

Meditation at OLHC

will commence again at 2:30pm on Thursday 5th Feb.

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

Meditation will be at 2:30pm
on the first Thursday of each month.



Roster for week ending 01 Feb 2026

Cotter, Anne	W8:30
Davidson, John	W8:30
Donnellan, Denice	E10:00
Drljo, Frank	CLNR
Dunell, Linda	ASE
Heyhoe, Margaret	C10:00
Iliffe, Yvonne	E10:00
Kulkens, Mark	W6:00
Love, Kathleen	E10:00
Love, Kathleen	H10:00
Maloney, Jo	W6:00
Nolan, Kathleen	H10:00
Nolan, Mike	H10:00
Reardon, Kathy	E10:00
Ryan Family	PRSE
Stone, Nan	CLNR
Taylor, Trish	PRYR
Williams, Peter	E10:00
Zerjal, Frida	CLNR
Zylstra, Diane	R10:00

Roster for week ending 08 Feb 2026

Cseh, Ferenc	E10:00
Cseh, Nika	R10:00
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
Smith, Neil	E10:00
Stephens, Patricia	CLNR
Stone, Nan	W6:00
Taylor, Coling	H10:00
Taylor, Trish	H10:00
Wood, Marie	LoW-01 Thu

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

The Church in France is again torn - as so often in the past - between incompatible cultural visions of what it means to be both French and Catholic / **By Sam Young**

The shadow of Vichy

Shortly before Christmas, the French MEP Marion Maréchal was part of a smallish group from the far-right European Conservatives and Reformists Group in the European Parliament who met Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican.

Maréchal often speaks of the “true France”, and of the threat to its Christian roots and tradition posed by mass immigration. Perhaps to her surprise, Leo invited the parliamentarians to follow the example of the Englishman, St Thomas More, “whose wisdom, courage and defence of conscience are a timeless inspiration for those who seek to foster the wellbeing of society”. While agreeing that “the intrinsic link between Christianity and European history should be cherished and celebrated”, Leo urged Maréchal and her colleagues never to forget the God-given dignity of all men and women and their duty to protect people on the margins of society. Do not, he told them, remain “stuck in a bygone era”.

The tension between the way Maréchal and Pope Leo see the central challenge that faces Europe reflects the conflict at the heart of modern French Catholicism. Like much of Europe and the Americas, France has experienced the rapid advance of right-wing populist nationalism over the last decade. The *Rassemblement National* (RN, formerly *Front National*), the main far-right electoral vehicle, is now the largest party in the National Assembly, giving it the ability to frustrate President Macron’s legislative projects. At present, it looks to have a solid chance of victory in next year’s presidential election.

Outside the RN, independent nationalists like Maréchal (niece of ex-RN leader Marine Le Pen) and Éric Zemmour have also built considerable political followings,



Pope Leo meets Marion Maréchal

their popularity stemming from their gleefully unrestrained rhetoric.

The far right’s vote-winning message rests on the claim that traditional French culture is under attack from a coalition of globalist liberal elites and (primarily Muslim) immigrants - a formula packaged as *islamo-gauchisme* by right-wing commentators.

Catholicism plays a useful role in this narrative. Drawing on France’s history as the “eldest daughter of the Church”, nationalists argue that Catholicism is the cultural cement of French nationhood. Zemmour, himself a non-believer of Jewish Algerian heritage, has said that France must return to an ill-defined “cultural Catholicism” to stave off liberal *wokeisme* and Islam. The RN is more restrained, wary that talk of religion risks undermining the party’s respectability. Nonetheless, RN politicians regularly campaign on symbolically Franco-Catholic issues, like the right for secular town halls to host Nativities. The party also holds an annual rally on the feast day of St Joan or Arc, combining Catholic tradition with a combative, plucky-underdog French nationalism

Inevitably, this narrowly nationalistic view of Catholicism

clashes with the Church’s commitment to universalism and humanitarianism. The papacy of Francis in particular was marked by numerous attempts by French nationalists to undermine the Church’s legitimacy. In 2017, the RN called for an extension of France’s already stringent *laïcité* laws to silence clerics who spoke in favour of welcoming refugees. Others used the Pope’s Argentinian nationality to suggest that he was unfit to comment on issues affecting the French people: in 2023, Maréchal criticised Francis’ humanitarian approach to immigration as being at odds with the realities experienced by Europeans. Zemmour called him the “enemy of Europe”.

The struggle over the role of Catholicism in French culture has a long history. For centuries, the Church held institutional power owing to close ties with the monarchy. French kings used the Church to maintain social order, a relationship that lasted - occasional tensions notwithstanding - until the revolution of 1789. Driven by Enlightenment ideals, zealous republicans seized church property on a vast scale and purged the clergy. Catholicism survived the revolution and subsequent political turmoil over the nineteenth century, but its authority was permanently dented. In 1905, republican legislators passed a law formally separating Church and state.

Although the Church had lost its institutional power, the idea that Catholicism was intrinsically linked to French national culture lingered. Between 1894 and 1906, polite society tore itself apart of the Dreyfus Affair, an early culture war centring on the trial of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army officer from Alsace accused of spying for Germany. Dreyfus was eventually found to have been innocent, but furious debate around the case

nonetheless showed the depth of the assumed cultural link between Catholicism and Frenchness.

Yet not everyone thought that the Church's future lay in nationalism. By the 1920s and 1930s, a growing number of Catholics were arguing instead that the key to the Church's survival was engagement with the international working classes. Since the Industrial revolution, the number of urban workers across the world had swollen, spooking political elites who feared their revolutionary potential. Catholic activists hoped to secure the loyalty of workers by launching new societies, trade unions and youth movements.

Among these was the *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne* (JOC, or Young Christian Workers), which by the mid-1930s claimed at least 85,000 members in France. Inspired by the teachings of socially-minded Popes like Leo XIII and Pius XI, these "social Catholic" organisations brought a new kind of Catholicism to French society. Managed primarily by laypeople, they were explicitly concerned with social justice for workers and inherently internationalist in outlook: when the French JOC held its 10-year anniversary celebrations in Paris in July 1937, it was joined by delegates from 156 other nations.

However, while the JOC preached the universal principles of Catholic Social Teaching to factories and workshops, thousands more French Catholics were joining movements that maintained a traditionally nationalistic view of the faith, notably the million-strong *Fédération nationale catholique* (FNC). France's bishops, distrustful of social Catholicism's class-based activism (which smacked of socialism) and preference for lay leadership, offered enthusiastic support to these new nationalist formations.

War came again in 1939. Following Germany's lightning victory over France in summer 1940, a new French state was hurriedly established in the spa town of Vichy. Headed by Marshal Philippe Pétain, an octogenarian war hero, the Vichy government presented itself as a revival of traditional France, in which Church and state would work tighter again. With its motto of

"Work, Family, Fatherland", Vichy received the backing of the French bishops and Catholic nationalists, who declared Pétain "the man of Providence". He also received a cautious vote of support from the social Catholic movement - at least initially.

Vichy would prove to be catastrophic for French Catholic nationalism. Pétain's state did not maintain its Catholic veneer for long, revealing itself instead to be little more than a Nazi puppet. Social Catholics who had met Vichy with careful optimism slipped away, with many joining resistance groups and underground aid networks.

After the liberation of 1944, JOC members were closely involved in reconstruction efforts, and many later occupied key government positions. Social Catholicism became a major influence in the development of the French postwar welfare state.

The nationalist wing of French Catholicism didn't fare so well. Supporters of Pétain's ill-fated project were branded as Nazi collaborators and ostracised. Bishops, embarrassed by their association with Vichy, prudently kept out of politics, leaving space for the emergence of a moderate Christian Democratic movement that rejected episcopal interference.

The subsequent internationalist turn of the Church around the time of the Second Vatican Council, as well as the general decline of religious practice in France, took their toll on what remained of French Catholic nationalism. When the far right began its slow recover in the 1970s, it showed little interest in Catholicism: the early *Front National* counted more neo-pagans, than Christians among its membership. Catholic nationalism in France appeared to have run its course.

Or so it seemed. The last decade has witnessed a strange revival of the battle for Catholic France. Though few French nationalists are regular churchgoers, they have nonetheless set about energetically rediscovering France's Catholic past. To them, it represents a tool for crafting a vision of a France grounded in tradition, community and monoculturalism - the opposite of what they see as the

disharmony of the modern liberal Republic. Mirroring the rigid language of the *anti-Dreyfusards* and the Vichyites, they argue that Catholicism has always been an inherent, unmoving force withing French national culture.

This time, however, the nationalists can't count on the support of the Church itself. While some Catholic organisations like the traditionalist Society of St Pius X (which holds close links to the Le Pen-Maréchal dynasty) have voiced their support for far-right movements, most French bishops - and the Vatican - remain cautious of populist nationalism. The Church has changed dramatically since the end of the Second World War, embracing many of the bugbears of the far right, including internationalism and social justice. The modern Catholic Church in France is, in many ways, the Church of the JOC, rather than of the FNC.

How this tension will play out is difficult to tell. As his address last month to Maréchal and other far-right politicians indicates, the more peaceable Pope Leo seems as wary of narrow nationalism and as committed to the rights of migrants as his predecessor. This suggests that nationalist claims to Catholic heritage may continue to ring hollow. If this proves the case, expect more attempts by the likes of Zemmour and Maréchal to sow distrust of the Vatican, including by emphasising the Pope's non-European origins. If, however, French bishops were to display any hint of sympathy for populist nationalists and their apocalyptic culture-war narratives, then it could galvanise far-right movements not only in France, but across the world.

French nationalists may grumble about a "woke" papacy, but they still crave the support of the Catholic Church as an institution, steeped as it is in tradition and ceremony - two things that reactionaries adore. The Church in France is once again facing a choice between two competing visions of what it means to be both French and Catholic. France has been here before.

Sam Young is a freelance writing specialising in the history of social Catholicism in France.

Handmaids' tales

When Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem for the first time, an elderly woman recognises their infant child as the Messiah / **By Ann Wroe**

Some years ago, the Sunday school pupils at my village church in East Sussex put on a Candlemas play. It involved, of course, a doll-child and a lot of tea towels, but the prophetess Anna was a star turn: stooped, powder-pale, with a stick and in a long grey shawl. She was the colour, roughly, of the pillar she hid behind for most of the action, before emerging to croak out that this was the Awaited One, the Saviour of Israel.

It struck me then that many of her audience could have played the part with aplomb. Most of our congregation (like myself) are women past 70, with familiar afflictions of corns, arthritis, hard-veined hands and croaking voices. Like Anna, we hide behind pillars much of the time. But whenever the call comes for polishing, dusting, finding the Remembrance Day cross, making cakes or sweeping the eternal yew-tree needles by the south door, we are there. Whenever in church you glimpse rubber gloves, washing-up, a dustpan or a lump of Oasis, a modern-day Anna will be near.

Of course, we are led to believe that Anna did not do chores in the Temple; that she spent all her time praying and praising God. Yet it would be a rare woman indeed who managed this without noticing that a shelf needed dusting or a brass vessel ought to be cleaned. Menfolk, typically, are charged with the fabric, the walls, guttering, roof and drains; it is they who right gravestones and hack the ivy down. But it is women who, in smaller ways, make the house of God a proper home.

I first noticed this phenomenon when I was researching medieval controversies in Rodez, in south-west France. For my sins I was also deputy organist in the cathedral, and when the archives closed for two hours after lunch I would do my practising. From the loft I regularly observed four or five old women in black, walking slowly about, or sitting silently together in the pews. Intermittently, one would go to check on dead floors or to scrape the accumulated wax from the racks. When harassed young women dashed in to say a prayer, they would busy themselves with side-chapel work; when each visitor had left, they would often realign the fresh-lit candle, or put it in another sconce.

A detail from Rembrandt's 1639 rendering of the prophetess Anna



Prayer cards and Mass sheets would be neatly piled on the table by the door, together with medals and pictures which tourists would be urged, with a silent curved palm and a stern look, to pay for. If equivalent work was needed in the Temple, I'm sure Anna would have obliged. The most famous recent church-haunter was Cecilia Giménez, a widow of Borja in Aragon, who died at the turn of the year. She so treasured her church, the Santuario de Misericordia, that she would take a break from caring for her disabled son to do volunteer work there. As a painter in a church afflicted by salt and damp, she often touched up works of art that were crumbling, and in 2012, when she was 81, she determined to restore the painting she loved best, the *Ecce Homo* by Elías Martínez, showing Christ in his crown of thorns. The project went disastrously wrong, producing a face that was more like a monkey's, and poor Cecilia's mistake went viral, resulting in a breakdown for a time. The story ended splendidly, though, with so many tourists coming to Borja that the town boomed and Cecilia became a famous artist, selling her works for thousands of euros. Her "restoration" of the suffering Jesus, done "with all the love I could", was surely devotion as single-minded as the kind that Anna showed.

It sounds, however, as if Anna had no life other than the Temple. We are told she never left it. Perhaps, in its routine, her existence was more like that of Sashimani Devi, the last bride of the God Jagannath at his temple in Puri, in eastern India. The practice ended in the 1980s; but Sashimani had been brought to the temple at three years old to be trained as a dancer before the god and eventually, in 1930, to become his human wife.

Unlike Anna, she spent her nights in a house in the town. But almost until she died, in 2020, she would arrive at the temple while Jagannath's breakfast, coconut sweets and ripe bananas, was

being served to the jewelled stump of wood that represented him; and afterwards she would dance for him. Her meals were the leftovers from his feasts, which she had to beg for. As a woman, she was not allowed to brush his teeth, change his clothes or deck him with flowers in the sanctum, just as Anna would have been barred from the Holy of Holies. But when, every 12 years, his wooden body was replaced, she was expected to weep for him as a widow; and at 11.30 each night, when Jagannath was laid on his couch, she would sing him to sleep with the Gita Govinda, the love song of Krishna and Radha.

This went on until she was very old. Well into her eighties she sang for him, and she danced as long as she could. She was revered as someone who had willingly suppressed her five senses to keep company with the god and offer him human comfort. She made his house a home. As such, she was welcomed by the male priests, but as a servant. When not dancing she was another beggar in the shadows, scrawny as a bird. She did not vaunt herself. If she had some premonition about her lord, she would not have dreamed of uttering it.

Anna did so, in that one moment in Luke, and then slipped back to the shadows. She never reappears. But we know that, after being widowed young, she did not leave the Temple environs. And I do wonder whether, in the dark, in the silent Temple, filled with an anchorite's ecstasy, she ever danced?

Ann Wroe is the obituaries editor of *The Economist*.

Prayers of the Faithful for 1st February 2026 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leader: Lord, you are the One we lean into with our troublesome sorrows. You are the One we turn to, resting securely in your love. You are the One who cherishes us and are closer than we can imagine.

In giving us the Beatitudes, Lord, you have given us a road map for life. Give us the ears to hear and a heart to follow your directions. *Let us pray to the Lord.* **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We are challenged daily by a culture that is at war with itself and we have witnessed a breakdown in understanding that we all belong: we are one family in God. Teach us discernment, bless us with wisdom and open our hearts and minds to speak only of love.

Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer**

Like Christ, we are called to stand with the oppressed and disadvantaged, advocating for justice in the best way we are able.

Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

God has chosen what is weak in human reckoning. The human race has nothing to boast about. Scripture says: If anyone wants to boast let them boast about the Lord.

Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Lord, you beckon, you invite, you entice, you insist that we come to your waiting embrace and set aside our burdens, and accept your peace that surpasses all understanding.

Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those in our Parish communities who are ill, especially Bezar, and for those who support and care for them. May they be strengthened by Christ who is with them always.

Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for those who have died recently, especially *Michael Clark, Patricia Darcy, John Dureau, Frances McDonald and John Mitcham* and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including *Kate Boyce, Charles Burda, Alma Crimmins, Maria De Lazzer, Margaret Farrell, Annie Gatt, Mary Gioules, Luke Hawthorne-Smith, Pat Heagerty, Bernie Lamers, Walter Lee, John Longton, Francis Mannix, Terry Moylan, Sheila Mullane, Immaculata Mustica, Christine Newton, Gavan O'Connell, Antonina Salvatore, John Skehill, Joan Stanhope, Nancy Swindon and Maria, Lino & Nereo Zini.* May they rest in your eternal embrace.

Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, conscious of our need for the strength and comfort of your presence in our lives, we offer you our prayers today.

All: **Amen**

Thanksgiving

Dear Parishioners,

Following is a list of ways in which you can give towards the running of our Parish (anti-clockwise from top left):

A) EFTPOS terminals

B) scan the QR code (<https://bit.ly/45ifhRp>) & you can donate to any Parish finance campaign including Thanksgiving, Presbytery Offerings, baptisms etc

C) cash/coins in the collection baskets at each church

D) thanksgiving envelopes

E) set up payments from credit/debit cards/bank account

Thank you for your generous support,
Michael



Risen Christ

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

~ Reconciliation 2026 Year 4 Students ~

Holy Trinity (HT), Our Lady Help of Christians (OLHC) and St Francis Xavier (SFX),
Students in government schools and all interested parishioners.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to 2026! This year your Year 4 child will experience God's beautiful gift of forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. You and your child are invited to attend the **'Reconciliation Faith Formation Evening'** on Monday 9th February, commencing at 7:00 pm at St Francis Xavier Church, 88 Mayona Road Montmorency.

On the night, you and your child will be introduced to the Sacramental team, and the process of preparing your child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be explained. Emphasis will be placed on preparing your child in partnership as a *'Parent Initiated, School Supported and Parish Based Program'*. Fr Michael will highlight the historical perspective of Reconciliation and parents will be informed of the resource *'Becoming Catholic Reconciliation - A practical guide for families'* by Kathy Horan. The aim of this book is to assist parents in helping to prepare their child at home, as well as building their own faith formation, in a partnership with conversations that will also be taking place at school. On the night students will partake in an activity from the book with staff, to begin their preparation for Reconciliation. Students are requested to please bring a pencil case with pencils to complete the activity.

Risen Christ Parish will celebrate Reconciliation as a *Communal Rite of Forgiveness* on two nights, as explained below:

Monday, 23rd March, 7pm at Our Lady Help of Christians Church, 2 Henry Street, Eltham
(for Our Lady Help of Christians and Holy Trinity school students and their families,
students in government schools and all interested parishioners.)

Tuesday, 24th March, 7pm at St Francis Xavier Church, 88 Mayona Road, Montmorency
(for St Francis Xavier school students and their families,
students in government schools and all interested parishioners.)

*Children from the parish who do not attend our parish schools
are welcome to attend either night.*

Blessings to all.

Michael F. Sierakowski
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