

# Risen Christ



Fourth Sunday of Easter - Year A

25 & 26 April 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.



## ANZAC DAY

### Gospel: John 10:1-10

Jesus said: 'I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock; the gatekeeper lets him in, the sheep hear his voice, one by one he calls his own sheep and leads them out. When he has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers.'

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant by telling it to them.

So Jesus spoke to them again:

'I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: he will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.'

### Reflection - Break Open the Word 2026

The whole of John 10 develops the theme of Christ as the good shepherd; it is divided over the A, B and C cycles in the Lectionary for the Fourth Sunday of Easter.

The shepherd is known - recognised by the gatekeeper who lets him in, and by the sheep who follow him because they know his voice. The image of the good shepherd draws us into a deeper encounter with Christ. This is wonderfully life-giving. Finish the reading with exultant emphasis on the final sentence.

Throughout, the reading builds a strong contrast with the stranger, the thief, the brigand. They are not recognised by the sheep. They undermine the protection and security provided by the shepherd.

Then there is the image of the gate, the door. It marks a threshold between inside/outside, safe/unsafe, intimate/foreign. Getting to know Christ lets us cross the threshold into something new - life, life in all its fullness.

As he was about to celebrate his 'pass-over' Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth and the life!* (Jn 14:6). This will be next week's gospel!



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](mailto:Michael.Sierakowski@cam.org.au)

#### **Parish Office**

all correspondence to:  
86 Mayona Road,  
Montmorency Vic 3094  
9435 4742

[RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au](mailto:RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au)

**Kate Kogler:**

**Parish Secretary**  
Tue-Fri 9am-3pm

**Peter Williams:**

**Safeguarding Officer**

[RisenChrist.ChildSafety@cam.org.au](mailto:RisenChrist.ChildSafety@cam.org.au)

#### **Volunteers**

**Marisa Capuana:** Various

**Kerry Mash:** Wed & Fri 10am-3pm

[www.melbcatholic.org/risenchristparish](http://www.melbcatholic.org/risenchristparish)

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

Risen Christ Parish Bulletin items:

[RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au](mailto:RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au)

#### **Schools**

**Holy Trinity Primary School**

Principal: Vince Bumpstead: 9431 0888

[principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au)

[www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au](http://www.htelthamnth.catholic.edu.au)

**Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School**

Principal: Rudy Vail: 9439 7824

[school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au](mailto:school@olhceltham.catholic.edu.au)

[www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au](http://www.olhceltham.catholic.edu.au)

**St Francis Xavier Primary School**

Principal: Jo Nolen: 9435 8474

[principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au)

[www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sfxmontmorency.catholic.edu.au)

## RECONCILIATION

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

### Collections: 12 & 19 April 2026

|                     |            |            |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Thanksgiving</b> | Cash       | \$1,592.00 |
|                     | Electronic | \$8,817.17 |
| <b>Presbytery</b>   | Cash       | \$1,479.30 |
|                     | Electronic | \$460.00   |

### Thanksgiving Offering

| Month    | Total       |
|----------|-------------|
| January  | \$20,974.17 |
| February | \$20,922.62 |
| March    | \$21,282.67 |

## Risen Christ Parish Calendar of Events

### **Saturday 25 - ANZAC Day**

6:00pm Mass Montmorency

### **Sunday 26**

8:30am Mass Montmorency

10:00am Mass Eltham

12:00pm Baptisms: Kyah, Isla, Flynn  
Bobby, Tommy Eltham

### **Monday 27**

11:00am Funeral: Frans Zylstra Eltham

7:00pm First Eucharist  
Parent Faith Formation Evening Eltham

### **Tuesday 28**

9:30am Mass Montmorency

10:00am Rosary Montmorency

11:00am Funeral: Francesco Filado Greensborough North

7:00pm Jordan Small Church Community Montmorency

### **Wednesday 29**

6:30am Meditation Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham

### **Thursday 30**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency

10:00am First Eucharist Student Retreat Day TBC

2:30pm Meditation Eltham

### **Friday 1st May**

9:30am Mass Eltham

### **Saturday 2**

12:00pm Baptisms: Winter, Sid,  
Bailey, Aysha, Pia Montmorency

6:00pm Mass Montmorency

### **Sunday 3**

8:30am Mass Montmorency



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

### **Sunday, 26th April, 2026**

*Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham, 12:00pm*

Kyah James Belvedere Baptism

Flynn William Eley Baptism

Isla Ann Eley Baptism

Bobby Michael McLennan Baptism

Tommy Charles McLennan Baptism

## Thanksgiving

Dear Parishioners,

Following is a list of ways in which you can give towards the running of our Parish (left to right):

A) EFTPOS terminals

B) scan the QR code (<https://bit.ly/45ifhRp>) & 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





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

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

*Darby (13 years old), Peter, Stephen Andrew, Des Arneson, Bill Boyce,  
Penny Boyce, Vincent Cipolletta, Ruth Decker, Nora Edmond, Pat Hosmer,  
Siobhan Lappin, Mary Luttick, Jarrod Mizzi, Cindy & Ed Morrissey,  
Bernard Murray, Phil Rovtar, Audrey Tunks,  
Regina Roszczenko (mother of Liz Gray), Jeanne Vanderwert*

For those who have **died** recently:

*Joshua Ernest, Francesco Filado, Josephine Orlando*

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

*Giuseppe Alberti, Terry Carrigg, Bryan Gillard,  
Tania Inserra, Pauline Jones, Florence Rooney, Brian Sheehan*

To include an anniversary please contact Parish Office  
9435 4742 or [RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au](mailto:RisenChrist.Parish@cam.org.au).

### QUILT SALE – Proceeds to KADASIG

There will be a selection of hand-crafted quilts available for sale after  
Masses at St Frances Xavier church on weekend of May 2 & 3.

*These are an ideal gift for Mother's Day or any other occasion.*

Prices will be from \$60 but no more than \$100 and half the sale will  
be donated to **Kadasig**. CASH ONLY

*Greg Hayes*

Risen Christ Parish has its own Memorial...

St Francis Xavier Church in Montmorency has the below plaque in the  
church foyer, reminding us of the ultimate sacrifice of many.



### Today is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

Pope Leo tells us: *Listen to the voice of the Lord who invites you to a  
full and fruitful life, calling you to put your talents to use (cf. Mt 25:14-  
30) and to unite your limitations and weaknesses with the glorious cross  
of Christ.*



Let us pray for the young people in our community,  
and in our families and circle of friends. May our  
prayers help them to be open to the Lord's call to  
consecrated life or priesthood.

#### Roster for week ending 26 Apr 2026

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Armstrong, Miranda   | E10:00 |
| Beckford, Peter      | PRYR   |
| Bowyer, Darrell      | ASRC   |
| Bowyer, Rosemary     | ASRC   |
| Castellanos, Rodrigo | E10:00 |
| Cotter, Anne         | W8:30  |
| Cseh, Ferenc         | E10:00 |
| Cseh, Nika           | R10:00 |
| Davidson, John       | W8:30  |
| Dhanasen Family      | PRSE   |
| Donnellan, Denice    | E10:00 |
| Dunell, Linda        | H10:00 |
| Dunell, Rick         | H10:00 |
| Goodison, Pauline    | CLNR   |
| Maloney, Jo          | W6:00  |
| Maynes, Phil         | W6:00  |
| Reardon, Peter       | C10:00 |
| Reardon, Peter       | E10:00 |
| Roy, Yvonne          | CLNR   |
| Turnbull, Mark       | H10:00 |
| Turnbull, Pauline    | H10:00 |
| Wood, Marie          | CLNR   |

#### Roster for week ending 3 May 2026

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Capuana, Marisa  | CLNR       |
| French, Jossie   | W8:30      |
| Haines, Geoff    | E10:00     |
| Iliffe, Yvonne   | E10:00     |
| Leahy Family     | PRSE       |
| Love, Philip     | W8:30      |
| Maloney, Nigel   | W6:00      |
| McKenna, John    | CLNR       |
| Northrop, Greg   | E10:00     |
| Reardon, Kathy   | E10:00     |
| Reynolds, Mae    | H10:00     |
| Reynolds, Nathan | H10:00     |
| Scully, Greg     | C10:00     |
| Smith, Neil      | E10:00     |
| Stone, Nan       | W6:00      |
| Volunteer please | H10:00     |
| Volunteer please | H10:00     |
| Williams, Anne   | PRYR       |
| Williams, Peter  | PRYR       |
| Williams, Peter  | R10:00     |
| 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

# A time to choose

Leo's response to the attacks on him by Donald Trump has held the Gospel up to a warring, disordered world 'ravaged by a handful of tyrants', and put the spotlight on those Catholics close to the President / **by Austen Ivereigh**

**How fitting** that it should be Africa where the lion-Pope found his roar. But would it have been heard if the thin-skinned US President had not posted in the night? Did Leo XIV already plan to use his epic 11-day Africa visit to launch his peace pontificate? Or was the US-Israeli assault on Iran and Lebanon the *casus belli*?

Whatever the precise cause and effect, the timing was impeccable: within hours of Trump's broadside against Leo ("soft on crime", terrible for foreign policy") and AI fantasy of himself as a healing Jesus, Leo was calmly speaking to journalists headed with him to Algeria. He had "no fear" of Trump and would continue to speak out for peacemaking, against war: "that's what I believe I am called to do," he said, "what the Church is called to do." Now we had a fast-unravelling spat between the world's two most famous Americans, one that over the next week would crack Trump's power base, and launch Leo from quiet, gracious bridge-builder, still an incognito, to fearless conscience of humanity. I've not had so many media bids for comment since Pope Francis died this time last year.

Francis told me once that it was in the nature of a crisis to reveal what was in people's hearts, and to force us to choose. What was the internal crisis for Trump that triggered him to lash out, after he had so carefully and uncharacteristically stayed silent faced with Leo's increasingly pointed remarks on the war? Catholics were key to Trump's electoral success: he courted them with pro-life Supreme Court appointments but many of them anyway saw him as a pro-family "Christian" president. Why throw that support aside in order to go at Leo, whose teaching against war applied at least as much to Putin and Netanyahu? As the US bishops' president, Archbishop Paul Coakley of Oklahoma City, pointed out: "Pope Leo is not his rival; nor is the



ALAMY/VATICAN MEDIA, SIMONE RISOLUTI

In Cameroon on his African pilgrimage, Pope Leo warned against the 'masters of war'

Pope a politician. He is the Vicar of Christ who speaks from the truth of the Gospel and for the care of souls."

But Trump saw a personal attack on him. It is unlikely that he had noticed Leo's prayer vigil on 11 April, when the Pope spoke into St Peter's Square of the "delusion of omnipotence" destabilising the human family, and the "idolatry of self and money" behind the "madness of war". What instead triggered the presidential implosion was a TV broadcast right before Trump's Truth Social posts, in which three US cardinals (McElroy of Washington, Tobin of Newark and Cupich of Chicago) appeared on CBS' flagship *60 Minutes* show to critique in measured terms the inhumane migration policies and unjust war that have brought the US government to its lowest point in memory.

Trump can conceive of the Pope only as a CEO, and the cardinals as his branch managers. What he imagined

was an orchestrated attack, and he freaked. And what the freak-out revealed was not just Trump's mental fragility but how unable he is to cope with Leo's authority. The post treated Leo as an incumbent mayor, not a spiritual leader, claiming that he was only "put there by the Church because he was an American" and mocked him for being happy for Iran to have nukes. As he rambled derisively, telling Leo to act as a pope, not a politician, Trump showed he hasn't the first clue of what Catholics are about, let alone the Pope and his office. Drowning in category errors, caught in a mechanism he could not control, Trump's bid to delegitimise the Pope served only to highlight Leo's moral weight, as Fr Antonion Spadaro SJ pointed out. In fact, the delegitimation worked the other way: the attack on Leo served to dismantle the pseudo-morality of war itself, freeing God from implication in human violence. You could almost

see Satan falling from the sky.

As Trump doubled down (“this is the real world”, he told reporters in a vain attempt to recover ground), the revelatory mechanism continued to spin, forcing those around him to make fools of themselves. The speaker, Mike Johnson, an Evangelical, and the vice-president, J.D. Vance, a Catholic convert, both tried to tell the Pope to stick to morality and stay out of politics, as if war were not a moral matter; then confounded themselves further by claiming that Leo had ignored the Church’s own just-war tradition - by which, as the US bishops straightaway confirmed, the Trump-Netanyahu war stood condemned by all four of its *jus ad bellum* principles.

**One of the effects** of the Trump show-down has been catalyse the bond between the bishops and between the bishops and Rome, to the point where, observers say, they are more united now than at any time in decades. Even for the bishop closest to Trump - the founder of Word on Fire, Robert Barron, who serves on Trump’s Christian-Zionist religious liberty commission - the discomfort was palpable. Having clapped Trump’s prosperity-gospel pastor, Paula White, when she likened Trump to Jesus at an Easter event at the White House, Barron now wrote on X that Trump’s comments were “inappropriate disrespectful” and that the President owed Leo an apology. But when Trump made clear he wasn’t apologising, Barron went silent. He remains on the Trump commission, which he describes as a “singular honour”, and claims with obvious effort that no president in his lifetime had shown greater commitment to religious liberty.

For Maga, meanwhile, it has also been a time of choosing. Raymond Arroyo, the notorious EWTN network host, agreed the remarks were “disrespectful” but adopted the Trump administration critique of Leo’s interventions as “political” and that the cardinals’ *60 Minutes* appearance was some kind of provocation. Sean Hannity, the Fox News host, declared he was no longer a Catholic, asking contemptuously if Leo had ever read the Bible. But mostly the reactions went the other way, with Catholics in the Senate and Congress who had backed Trump lining up to distance themselves.

Sohrab Ahmari, interviewed recently in these pages, wrote for the UnHerd website that “many of the Catholic Republicans in my social networks appear more anxious about their relationship with the party, the White House and the conservative world in the wake of the Leo spat than they are about the honour of the Roman Pontiff”.

The spat has also revealed the great gulf that now exists between the Church under Francis-Leo and the conservative American Christianity of the Republican Party that has shaped prominent US Catholics. In the fun-up to the 2003 Iraq war, a cohort of influential “theocons” - George Weigel, Michael Novak and *First Things* founder Fr John Neuhaus - went to great pains to justify it by just-war theory, in spite of the strenuous opposition to it of Pope John Paul II and his nuncio. Indeed part of the story of that fiasco was the eclipse of the bishops - strongly divided at the time - by those prominent intellectuals who were courted by George W. Bush’s White House.

Yet this time round, beyond a clumsy attempt by the Pentagon in January to lobby the papal nuncio, the Trump administration has not bothered. As has now been revealed, the decision to go to war was taken at a small meeting on 11 February in the Situation Room of the White House, when Trump bought what Netanyahu was hard-selling: regime change in Iran and the depletion of its missile capability. “The President’s advisers could see that he had been deeply impressed by the promise of what Mr Netanyahu’s military and intelligence services could do,” *The New York Times* reported. Within two weeks, the US and Israel had launched a war beyond all measures of madness that no one seems able to contain or conclude.

The biggest revelation of all in this crisis, however, has been Leo himself. While on his four-nation tour of Africa he has embraced a new speaking style that is forceful, direct and prophetic. It is as if, after a year in the shadows, he has decided to place his cards on the table, speaking more directly even than Francis about social inequality and war, while quoting him liberally and pushing forward his “fraternity agenda”. Leo, like Francis, has found his voice in the peripheries of the centres of

power and decision-making, the peripheries where most Catholics now live, and from where the injustices of the world are seen most clearly - especially the injustice of war.

Leo’s “handful of tyrants” speech in the city of Bamenda in north-west Cameroon on 16 April - written, he told journalists on the flight from Cameroon to Angola, two weeks earlier, after the US and Israel had launched their attack on Iran but “well before the President ever commented on myself” - surely ranks among the best of any given by a pope in modern times. Leo gave voice not just to the dream of peace but exposed war’s satanic grip on a world “ravaged”, he said, “by a handful of tyrants” - think Putin, Netanyahu and Trump - yet “held together by a multitude of supportive brothers and sisters”. He deplored the pseudo-religious justification for war by Christian nationalists. “Woe to those who manipulate religion and the very name God for their own military, economic or political gain, dragging that which is sacred into darkness and filth,” he declared, adding: “The masters of war pretend not to know that it takes only a moment to destroy, yet a lifetime is often not enough to rebuild.”

**Like Francis**, Leo has not rejected just-war doctrine, but knowing how it is endlessly manipulated - as it was in 2003 - to justify warmongering, he has kept the focus on non-violence to secure political change. Speaking to the Bamenda community of peacemakers, he told them: “Those who rob your land of its resources generally invest much of the profit in weapons, thus perpetuating an endless cycle of destabilisation and death. It is a world turned upside down, an exploitation of God’s Creation that must be denounced and rejected by every honest conscience.”

Leo’s peace mission, launched from Africa, has held the Gospel up to a warring, dis-ordered world, and called on ordinary people to rise up against the masters of war. He has picked a fight with no one, yet the demons, stung, have sallied forth in accusation and confusion. The curtain has risen. The stage is set. The pontificate has begun with a roar.

**Austen Ivereigh** is a papal biographer.

# Cafod head bemoans silence on 'largest humanitarian crisis'

**AILI WINSTANLEY CHANNER**

**Director of** Cafod Christine Allen has warned that there is a gap in public awareness of the huge scale of suffering caused by the civil war in Sudan.

"Sudan is the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, but many would not have heard about it at all," she said. "this is despite over 33 million people in need and more than 150,000 lives lost."

Allen joined the other aid agencies that make up the #KeepEyesOnSudan Coalition and Anneliese Dodds MP to deliver a petition with more than 44,000 signatures to 10 Downing Street, demanding that the government urgently scale up its diplomatic efforts to protect civilians and support a regional response to the crisis.

"As chair for the war-torn country at the UN Security Council, Britain is in a unique position to advocate on Sudan's

behalf," Allen explained.

"Given our government has this privilege, it's atrocious that British military equipment has been found in Sudanese battlefields. We're meant to be brokering peace rather than prolonging suffering.

"News reports last year highlighted the horrors of this conflict, with bloodshed so extensive it could be viewed from space via satellite. We cannot be complicit."

Allen quoted Pope Leo XIV's words on the futility of violence: "God does not bless any conflict. Anyone who is a disciple of Christ, the Prince of Peace, is never on the side of those who once wielded the sword and today drop bombs.

"Military action will not create space for freedom or times of peace, which comes only from the patient promotion of coexistence and dialogue among peoples."

A conference of international leaders was held in Berlin on 15 April with the aim of bringing Sudan back into focus on the diplomatic agenda, three years after the war broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

The conference aimed to strengthen humanitarian support, call for a ceasefire and give a voice to Sudanese civilian actors who want a civilian-led transition.

Bishop of Lancaster Paul Swarbrick also urged Catholics in England and Wales to pray for peace and to "call on the UK government not to lose sight of this ongoing crisis".

He echoed Pope Leo's call for nonviolence and said: "The people of Sudan are owed peace. Let us not forget them. Let us continue to pray, to speak out and to act in solidarity, so that hope may prevail over suffering."

## Prayers of the Faithful for 26 April 2026 - Fourth Sunday of Easter

**Leader:** On this Good Shepherd Sunday which is also the 63rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, may we trust in the Father to hear our cries for assistance.

For the Church: we give thanks for the wise and courageous leadership of Pope Leo in international relationships, and for the blessing of the ancient and true teaching and example of the great doctors and saints of the Church. Let us also pray for those called to vocational service to the faithful as the future shepherds of Christ's flock.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our parish community: in this Easter time, grant us as a community the blessing of peaceful and faithful reflection on our encounter with the glory of the resurrected body of our Lord and Saviour. May he lead us to lay down by quiet waters.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the world: we pray for deliverance from all trouble and strife, especially for those living under the shadow of war, famine, persecution and injustice. We recall that those dwelling in the house of the Lord need fear no evil.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the faithful: the presence with us of the risen Christ assures us that by his wounds on the Cross, we have been healed and freed from sins. Like the straying sheep, we have been called to our home pastures. Let us continue to recognise His voice. Let us not lose Him from our sight.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For remembrance this ANZAC weekend: let us remember in fidelity those men and women who have given their lives for our nation in war. We remember also the families and friends of those killed and wounded in the service of Australia. Let us not forget the practical and urgent needs of those who have served who have returned home injured in body or mind or spirit. Comfort them Lord in the midst of their need.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For the sick: Dear Lord, we pray for all those who are sick, especially those named in our bulletin. We give thanks for those who comfort and bear them up through suffering and distress.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who have died: we remember the faithful departed who have died, especially *Joshua Ernest, Francesco Filado and Josephine Orlando* and those whose anniversaries we recall today, including *Giuseppe Alberti, Terry Carrigg, Bryan Gillard, Tania Inserra, Pauline Jones, Florence Rooney and Brian Sheehan*. May they be carried to the heavenly city to live in the light of God's face. May they rest in peace.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** God our Father, you who listen to the cries of the sheep separated by war, exclusion and injustice, deign to grant our petitions, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**All:** **Amen**

# Ecology is the new name for peace

Pope Francis reorientated the Church in a more outward-facing direction: towards care for the environment and the hopes of humanity for justice. His successor is determined to embed this vision in Catholic life / **By Lorna Gold**

**On the first** anniversary of the death of Pope Francis, the question is no longer *whether* his legacy will endure, but *how*, it is already unfolding. It is becoming harder to draw a clear line between the end of his pontificate and the beginning of that of Pope Leo XIV. The continuity is striking - and intentional.

For me, one defining moment made that unmistakable. On 1 October last year, opening the “Raising Hope” conference in Castel Gandolfo marking the tenth anniversary of Francis’ encyclical *Laudato si’*, Pope Leo touched and blessed a block of melting glacier ice. It was a simple but powerful gesture - profoundly Francis - signalling that the trajectory set by his predecessor on climate justice and care for Creation would not be diluted, but deepened.

The image provoked predictable controversy. Yet it spoke clearly to a wider world: the Church stands with science, with justice and with those seeking a future grounded in ecological balance and human dignity. Pope Leo did not merely echo his predecessor - he claimed the legacy and began to shape it.

If Francis’ environmental legacy can be distilled into one idea, it is *integral ecology*: the inseparable link between care for the Earth and care for the poor; between environmental and social justice; between outer action and inner conversion. This is inseparable from synodality - the process of creating a more listening, participatory Church. He reorientated the Church towards the struggles and hopes of humanity, including climate justice.

At “Raising Hope”, that vision came alive. Scientists, political leaders, business figures, Indigenous representatives and people of all faiths and none stood side by side. Figures such as Mary Robinson and Arnold Schwarzenegger shared space with grassroots activists and church leaders. This was synodality in action: a Church listening,

dialoguing and acting for our common home.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the changing leadership of the global Church, particularly in the global south. In the lead-up to COP30 in Brazil, influential cardinals appointed by Francis, from India, Brazil and DR Congo, ensured that the voices of those most affected by climate change would not be marginalised. The Church’s presence at COP30 signalled a shift: no longer content to comment from the sidelines, it is seeking to shape the global conversation. How institutions in the global north respond to this call remains an open question.

**Perhaps the most** enduring aspect of Pope Francis’ legacy is at the grassroots. The *Laudato Si’* Movement has grown from a small initiative into a network reaching parishes, dioceses, schools and communities across the globe. Tens of thousands have trained as *Laudato Si’* Animators - ordinary people equipped to bring ecological conversion into local contexts. Alongside this, the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform has engaged thousands of Catholic institutions in concrete ecological transition. Nearly 6,000 universities, religious orders, dioceses and schools are now implementing plans - from decarbonisation to reforestation and pastoral integration.

The transformation is far from complete. Pope Leo has introduced a Mass for Creation; but although Francis proclaimed 1 September as the World Day of Prayer for Creation, the Catholic Church does not yet formally celebrate a Feast of Creation on that day together with the Orthodox and other Christian Churches. Even as voices against fossil fuels grow stronger, key institutions such as the Vatican Bank have not publicly divested. Ecological conversion has yet to become fully embedded in ordinary church life, especially in Europe and North America. Too often, the themes of *Laudato si’* remain

marginal - rarely preached, inconsistently integrated: the unfinished work of the Francis legacy.

Pope Francis was clear that care for Creation was integral to Christian discipleship. The challenge now is to move from being a Church with a “green fringe” to a Church where ecological responsibility is simply normal. This requires change in how dioceses steward resources, how parishes celebrate Creation, how seminaries form leaders and how the faithful understand their relationship with the Earth. In many places, this is already happening. And where it is, it is renewing the Church - drawing people back through shared care for our common home.

What is now emerging under Pope Leo is a reorientation of this ecological vision towards dialogue and peace. Francis’ vision was never only environmental; it was relational - between humanity, Creation and God. The degradation of the Earth, exploitation of resources and dependence on fossil fuels are deeply intertwined with global conflict and instability. To hear the “cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor” is therefore to work for peace. As Pope Paul VI wrote, “development is the new name for peace”; today we might say, “integral ecology is the new name for peace”.

One year after his death, Pope Francis’ environmental legacy is being carried forward by Pope Leo XIV, by church leaders and by communities across the globe. The image of a Pope’s hand resting on melting ice may, in time, come to symbolise this transition: a moment when the torch was clearly passed and the path ahead reaffirmed. The question is not what Pope Francis has left behind. It is what the Church will choose to do with what he has begun.

**Lorna Gold** is the executive director of the global *Laudato Si’* Movement.



## 26. Synodality and the Holy Spirit

At the heart of synodality is trust in the Holy Spirit. Without prayer, synodality becomes mere strategy. With prayer, it becomes a path of grace.

## 27. Synodality and Scripture

From Abraham's journey to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Scripture is full of stories of God walking with His people. Synodality places us within that biblical story.

## 28. Why participation matters

Participation helps people move from being passive recipients to active disciples. This deepens faith and strengthens mission.

## 29. Synodality is not uniformity

Different cultures, communities, and parishes will live synodality in different ways. Unity does not require sameness.

## 30. Synodality and hope

A synodal Church believes that renewal is possible, even in difficult times. Hope is not naïve optimism - it is trust in God's faithfulness.

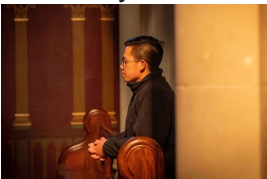


CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE

## Melbourne Catholic Digest On learning to want what God wants

### Going all in

There are times when we might find ourselves drifting through life without a clear sense of purpose or meaning, but God always remains close by, patiently calling us, challenging us to go deeper - to go all in.



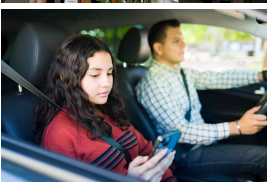
As we approach Good Shepherd Sunday this weekend, we speak with second-year seminarian Liam Bui about the experiences that have formed his faith and shaped his journey towards the priesthood. He says that coming to the realization that 'either I'm all in or I'm not' was the first step on a vocational journey in which he is learning each day to want what God wants.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/seminarian-liam-bui-on-learning-to-want-what-god-wants>



Whittlesea couple Josey and Jasleen and their three children are among the more than 500 people in our Archdiocese who went 'all in' this Easter, with the whole family being initiated into the Catholic Church on Easter Sunday. We hear about their different paths to baptism, and the joy and support they have found in the close-knit community at St Mary's Whittlesea.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/neophyte-story-2-whole-family-in-whittlesea-title-tbc>



In an age of social media influencers and rapid technological advancement, parents can often feel adrift and out of their depth. But Kristen Roe from Christian-based organization Real Talk encourages parents to throw themselves into the important task of accompanying their kids in a digital age, reminding them that 'as Christians, we're just called to love and be witnesses of Christ's love.'

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/raising-kids-with-confidence-in-a-digital-age>



**Remembering Pope Francis:** Remembering the joyful and humble Pope Francis, one year after his death. The anniversary of the death of Pope Francis is a time to recall a pontificate that began with humility, and continued that way for 12 years. When he first stepped onto the balcony of St Peter's Basilica on 13 March 2013, the newly elected Pope invited the Church, and the world, to join together.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/remembering-the-joyful-and-humble-pope-francis-one-year-after-his-death>

<https://melbournecatholic.org/events>

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