

Risen Christ



Third Sunday of Easter - Year A

18 & 19 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.

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

Reflection - Break Open the Word 2026

Jesus' death was devastating for his followers. The two disciples, downcast, are walking away from Jerusalem. As they point out, their hopes were dashed. Even after their friends' stories of the resurrection, all the disciples can say is: 'they saw nothing'.

Once again, this story points to the utterly mysterious reality of the resurrection. There is something radically different in the risen Christ - these friends of his do not recognise him. Even when he walks with them, speaks to them and explains the scriptures to them, showing them how the Christ was to enter his glory through the path of suffering, they do not know him.

The reality of the risen Christ explodes like a blinding light in the breaking of the bread. It is then that they recall how their hearts burned as the Scriptures were opened for them. The pattern of the table fellowship is familiar and eucharistic: '*he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them*'. Ah, recognition! The story makes it clear that encountering and knowing the risen Christ is a matter of faith - the person who walked with them vanished from their sight - but they have seen and experienced a different kind of reality.

So do we when we celebrate the Eucharist. We know Christ in mystery, in word and sacrament. Like the two disciples, we too are empowered to go out and share the good news.



*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

Risen Christ Parish Calendar of Events

Saturday 18

12:00pm Baptisms: Siora, Noah,
Grace & Oliver Montmorency
2:00pm Memorial Mass - Pat Cronin Eltham
6:00pm Mass Montmorency

Sunday 19

8:30am Mass Montmorency
10:00am Mass Eltham
12:00pm Baptisms: Ollie, Axel, Lilifa,
Cooper & Mackenzie Eltham

Tuesday 21

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 22

6:30am Meditation Montmorency
9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Eltham

Thursday 23

9:00am Liturgy of the Word with Communion Montmorency
10:00am Emmaus Small Church Community Montmorency
10:30am ASRC Food Collection Montmorency
2:30pm Meditation Eltham

Friday 24

9:30am Mass Eltham
11:30am Funeral: Aileen Clarke Montmorency

Saturday 25

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

2:00pm Mass Montmorency
10:00am Rosary Montmorency

RECONCILIATION

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

Collections: 29 March & 5 April 2026

Thanksgiving	Cash	\$1,653.00
	Electronic	\$8,447.00
Presbytery	Cash	\$3,694.05
	Electronic	\$205.00

Thanksgiving Offering

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

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:

Olive Brady (Ireland), Aileen Clarke, Frans Zylstra

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

*James Michael Caulfield, Pat Cronin (10yr anniversary), Clara Doroszlay,
Greg Jackson, Wally Krolkowski, Mary Wordsworth*

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



In this season of Easter, Aid to the Church in Need (CAN) is urging all Catholics to urgently pray for and support Christians suffering in the Middle East.

The situation is especially dire for Christians in the South of Lebanon, who are among more than one million people displaced by airstrikes and facing the threat of destruction of their villages, churches, and homes.

As a Pontifical foundation, CAN International is in direct contact with the bishops, parishes, and religious communities on the ground, who report they are overwhelmed in sheltering displaced families, running emergency food kitchens, and organising emergency distribution of food and medicine.



www.rebrand.ly/EmergencyAppeal



Pat Cronin Foundation



**PAT CRONIN
FOUNDATION**

The 18th of April 2026 will be 10 years since Pat's life was taken away from him and us. This will be an emotional day for our family and for all who knew Pat.

In keeping with our intention to honour Pat we will be revealing a truly wonderful tribute to Pat at Research Park, the home of Pat's beloved **Research Junior Football Club** with the naming of the Pat Cronin Wing on the club room side of the ground. (AI generated image below.)

We welcome everyone to join us as we unveil the sign on Saturday 18th April 2026 from 1:00pm at Research Park, Research.

A huge thank you to Brad Johnson and the committee from RJFC for helping to bring this dream to life.

Following the unveiling of the sign our dear family friend, Father Michael Gallacher will be saying Mass for Pat at Our Lady Help of Christians Church (2 Henry Street, Eltham) at 2pm and you would be welcome to join us as well.

#BeWisePC12 #EndtheCowardPunch #patlovedthesearchers



Roster for week ending 19 Apr 2026

Armstrong, Miranda	H10:00
Capuana, Marisa	LoW-01 Thu
Cotter, Anne	CLNR
Davidson, John	PRYR
Dopheide, Marlis	H10:00
Haines, Geoff	E10:00
Haines, Geoff	R10:00
Haines, Jan-Marie	E10:00
Hall, Vali	ASE
Kenny, Michael	W6:00
Kulkens, Mark	W6:00
Mallia, Anthony	E10:00
Scully, Greg	E10:00
Sullivan, Frances	W8:30
Taylor, Trish	C10:00
Volunteer please	H10:00
Volunteer please	H10:00
Williams, Peter	E10:00
Wood, Gerard	CLNR
Wood, Marie	W8:30
Zavadil Family	PRSE

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, Denise	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

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

Taming the monsters of modernity

In the year before his death on 21 April 2025, Pope Francis reflected deeply on what is distinctive and worth defending about human beings amid the AI revolution / **By Thomas Banchoff**

In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis memorably took aim at the confluence of technological innovation, global inequality, unchecked materialism and environmental destruction as threats to human dignity and the common good. In that defining document of his papacy, he identified the “technocratic paradigm” as the uncritical celebration of technological progress, and excoriated instrumental rationality divorced from ethics and a “throwaway culture” indifferent to the poor and the planet. In their place, he called for a “cultural revolution” centred on human dignity, integral human development and “care for our common home.”

A decade later, with AI developing at breakneck speed, no such revolution is in sight. When Large Language Models first burst on to the scene in 2022, AI ethics and safety concerns sparked calls - even among some industry leaders - for regulation or even a moratorium. Since then, however, the race for market domination and geopolitical rivalry has undercut efforts to put robust ethical guardrails in place. The drive for ever stronger AI systems, the diffusion of human-like chatbots and more capable robots, and the deployment of massive energy-intensive data centres are hurtling ahead as if there is no alternative. “The notion of a human being with no limits, whose abilities and possibilities can be infinitely expanded thanks to technology, shows how the technocratic paradigm monstrously feeds upon itself,” Francis warned in his 2023 apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum*.

AI, for Francis, was not the problem; the technocratic paradigm was. Like his predecessors, he saw technology as the fruit of God-given human

creativity. He acknowledged AI’s potential to increase economic growth and productivity, improve educational and health outcomes, and advance scientific and biomedical research. At the same time he decried what Romano Guardini, a great theological influence, called “the tendency to believe that every increase in power means an increase of progress itself, as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such”. For Francis, fascination with technology as an end in itself - what Pius XII called the “technological spirit” - posed a threat to human dignity and the common good, foundations of Catholic Social Teaching. “Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way,” Francis had insisted in *Laudato si'*, in order “to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur”.

During his final year in office, Francis discerned a hopeful way forward - a challenge to the technocratic paradigm inspired by the AI revolution itself. His core idea, elaborated in several public addresses and in *Antiqua et Nova*, the first major Vatican statement on AI, was that the rise of intelligent machines invites us to reflect anew on what it means to be human - to revitalize our commitment to human dignity in what he called our “change of epoch”. As he put it in a message for World Communications Day in 2024, we must confront “deeper questions about the nature of human beings, our distinctiveness and the future of the species *homo sapiens* in the age of artificial intelligence”.

The key question was: “How can we remain fully human and guide

this cultural transformation to serve a good purpose?” In a June 2024 address to G7 leaders, he related AI directly to the technocratic paradigm. “We cannot allow a tool as powerful and indispensable as artificial intelligence to reinforce such a paradigm,” he insisted. “Rather, we must make artificial intelligence a bulwark against its expansion”.

Francis never spelled out in detail what such a bulwark might entail. But he described the rapid rise of AI as an occasion to rethink human dignity and how to defend it. At the most basic level, he insisted, machines should not usurp the freedom of the human subject. “We would condemn humanity to a future without hope if we took away people’s ability to make decisions about themselves and their lives,” Francis told the G7. “We need to ensure and safeguard a space for proper human control over the choices made by artificial intelligence programs: human dignity itself depends on it.” At the same time, he insisted, human persons should not be reduced to the object of AI choices. Empowering a machine to reject loan or job applications without human intervention - just two of his examples - risked reducing humans to data points. “Fundamental respect for human dignity demands that we refuse to allow the uniqueness of the person to be identified with a set of data,” he emphasized in a message for the 2024 World Day of Peace.

Antiqua et Nova, published three months before Francis’ death on 21 April last year, made this concern with human dignity and uniqueness a central focus. Alongside its call to subject AI to ethical controls, the document - issued in January 2025 by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the

By highlighting what is distinctive and worth defending about human beings amid the AI revolution - our self-awareness, embodied existence and deep relationality - *Antiqua et Nova* countered the uncritical ideology of progress at the heart of the technocratic paradigm. With Francis, it insisted that AI be put “at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral”.

By seeming to blur the distinctions between human and machine intelligence, these coming developments will make it all the more important to defend and nourish what makes humans unique - our interior capacity for self-reflection and ability to relate to one another as embodied and vulnerable persons. In his last encyclical, *Dilexit nos*, published in October 2024, Francis identified those wellsprings of human dignity with the human heart - the seat of interiority, sincerity and love.

At the same time, like Francis, Leo has welcomed AI development as an opportunity to reflect on human dignity and integral human development and how to advance them. “Recognising and safeguarding what characterizes the human person and guarantees his or her balanced growth”, he told an AI conference in December 2025, “is essential for establishing an adequate framework for managing the consequences of artificial intelligence.”

“An exclusively ethical approach to the complex world of artificial intelligence is not enough,” Leo told the Pontifical Academy of Theology last September. Instead, he insisted, we need to “return to the age-old question: What is a human being?” As long as we keep that question and its implications in focus, we can look forward to our inevitable AI future with hope.

Thomas Banchoff is director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University in Washington DC.



Prayers of the Faithful for 19 April 2026 Third Sunday of Easter

Leader: With the disciples on the way to Emmaus, we celebrate the risen Christ. May we be aware of the ways we meet the risen Christ in the reality of our daily lives.

For Pope Leo and Archbishop Peter: may Christ open the eyes of our leaders to serve those who search for meaning and love. Let us pray for a renewal of our faith and the whole Church.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those returning from holiday, especially our children and teachers returning to school: may their sense of community be enlivened by the word of God and the celebration of the Eucharist.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For places of civil unrest and war: that Christ's message of peace will guide the decisions of those in power, help remove the pain of war and violence from human hearts, and allow for those suffering, to find comfort and love amidst the destruction and loss. In particular, we remember people in the Middle East, Africa and Ukraine.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our civic leaders: may their decisions and policies respect the dignity of all Australians, be designed for the good of all and not be catering to the interests of big business or election outcomes.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all touched by sorrow and tragedy this week: may they know the support of a loving community and the healing grace of God.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all the sick and especially those mentioned in our bulletin: may they know the presence of Jesus in their lives and the grace of his healing touch.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died recently, especially *Olive Brady, Aileen Clarke and Frans Zylstra* and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time including *James Michael Caulfield, Pat Cronin, Clara Doroszlay, Greg Jackson, Wally Krolkowski and Mary Wordsworth*: may the certainty of Jesus' resurrection bring hope to those who mourn their passing

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Loving Father, you open our eyes to your Son. Hear our needs and grant what will bring us closer to you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Individual / Personal Retreats at Holy Cross Centre
\$149 per night (\$125 per night BYO linen) includes meals for a warm double bedroom with ensuite. The Centre has a Chapel, small meditation room, beautiful grounds, shrine and other spiritual spaces in which to rest and pray.



hcc@passionists.com

9846 6012



Congratulations to all who celebrate their sacraments this weekend:

Saturday, 18th April, 2026

St Francis Xavier, Montmorency, 12:00pm

Siora Hope Bevilacqua

Noah Reginald Blevin

Grace Wendy Fogarty

Oliver Harwood

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

Sunday, 19th April, 2026

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

Axel Arcieri

Ollie Arcieri

Lilifa Valu-Gamma Pongi

Cooper James Stumpers

Mackenzie Jade Stumpers

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

Baptism

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



World Labyrinth Day

1pm Saturday 2nd May 2026

St Margaret's Labyrinth, 79-81 Pitt Street, Eltham

Join people from over 90 different countries around the world in this moving meditation for World Peace and to also celebrate the 18th Anniversary of World Labyrinth Day run by the Labyrinth Society. Let's walk on our own labyrinth in the meditation garden behind St Margaret's Church.

www.stmargaretseltham.org.au 9439 9238

All welcome.

Next Sunday we celebrate Good Shepherd Sunday - the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. During this coming week, perhaps you may like to make a prayer each day for more vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. Perhaps there is a young person you may know to pray for by name this week.



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. ~ Pope Leo XIV

POPE LEO SPEAKS FOR THE WORLD

What the world needed when Israel and the United States attacked Iran was a principled condemnation from someone who refused to be intimidated by Donald Trump. That voice belonged to Pope Leo XIV. It was a case where the independence of the Holy See from national political interests made perfect sense. The Pope was able to express what many leaders felt but could only hint at in public. He must be listened to. He has a serious message, not just of disapproval but offering a credible way forward. That is no doubt why his message is having such resonance far beyond the Catholic Church, and across all forms of mass and social media. The one western leader who has come close is the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, who greeted news of a temporary ceasefire by saying, “The government of Spain will not applaud those who set the world on fire just because they show up with a bucket.”

What he and Pope Leo agreed on was the need for negotiation and diplomacy in place of bombing in the vain hope of inflicting “regime change from the air”. It is increasingly clear there is no realist alternative to a negotiated settlement. Israel’s ambitions for the campaign appear to include the weakening of Iran to the point where it becomes a “failed state” - one where a country is so damaged and devastated that it ceases to function as an organised entity. That aim includes, but is not confined to, the withdrawal of Iranian backing for Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. Iran’s aim in supporting these three groups is to inflict an equivalent failed statehood on Israel, so that its Jewish population packs up and leaves for somewhere safer.

None of these objectives is achievable, on either side. Indeed, the pursuit of them only has the opposite effect. Recent history proves this. Despite bombing Gaza almost “back to the stone age”, to borrow General Curtis LeMay’s chilling remark regarding North Vietnam, Hamas is still there. Despite Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon from 1982-90, Hezbollah is still there. Despite repeated American and Saudi bombing, the Houthis are undefeated in Yemen. Less recent history teaches the same lesson. The eight months of the Blitz did not bring Britain to its knees, despite 40,000 deaths, 30,000 of them in London. Nor did the mass bombing of German cities, killing more than half a million civilians, force Germany’s surrender. The effectiveness of aerial bombardment is a military myth. It suits the barbaric human instinct for retaliation and revenge. It is often just a cover story for blood lust and war crimes.

The truth is that all wars end in negotiation of some sort. A failure to keep a keen eye on “day two” - what happens after the fighting stops - is at the root of many postwar disasters. What would a “failed state” in Iran look like, even if it were achievable? A seed bed for terrorism, civil war, and out-of-control armed militias; civilian life almost unbearable, mass refugee displacement and yet another humanitarian catastrophe. That cannot be called a solution. Yet the Israeli objection to a return to the status quo has to be taken seriously. The defenders of the war on Iran argue that its alleged governing ideology - the obliteration of Israel (“wiping it from the map”) - leaves no choice but

to engage Iran in a them-or-us fight to the death.

In Israeli eyes, talk of negotiation is just evasion of reality, probably tinged with antisemitism. This is where Pope Leo’s call for diplomacy kicks in. In any proper peace talks, Iran has to be asked what it really wants. That raises the question, what does “wiping Israel from the map” actually mean? The phrase is usually attributed to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who served as the president of Iran from 2005 to 2013 and was later excluded from political activity by the ayatollahs. Though a Holocaust denier and outrageously antisemitic, Ahmedinejad never used those words - an English idiom untranslatable in Farsi - but he clearly wanted to see the end of a Jewish state in the Middle East. Initially he wanted the Jews to leave, to find somewhere else to live. He never advocated genocide.

Ahmadinejad later came to envisage the Jews remaining as citizens of a secular state, alongside Arabs with equal rights. He never explained how the persistent lobbing of rockets into Israeli territory from Gaza or southern Lebanon was supposed to achieve that aim. It remains a very good question to put to the Iranians now. Vast national resources have been put into the obviously fruitless campaigns waged by Iran’s proxies, thereby depriving ordinary Iranians of the benefit of the funds diverted to murderous and futile attacks on Israeli citizens. This has become a major cause of dissatisfaction in the civilian population.

But even so, Ahmadinejad does not speak for the Iranian state, if he ever did. The only conceivable alternative to a secular state shared by Arabs and Jews with equal political rights and duties is the so-called two-state solution, two nations side by side each defined by a particular ethnicity. Leaving aside the right-wing religious Zionist case for a “Greater Israel”, the principal Israeli objection to a two-state solution is that it would threaten Israeli security by allowing hostile forces a place to operate from, to pursue the supposed Iranian “wiping from the map” policy - in many Jewish minds, not far different from what Hitler tried to do. But what if that is not Iranian policy, if it ever was? What if Iran accepted the principle of the two-state solution, and if necessary imposed acceptance of it on its proxy clients? What if the “wiping from the map” scenario was a propaganda invention, easy for Israelis to believe in given recent Jewish history, but maintained on the grounds that it kept the conflict alive for ulterior political purposes?

Iran is a civilised country with uncivilised rulers, who have to accept that their traditional hostility to Israel’s existence leads nowhere. Before the ayatollahs took control, Israel and Iran were firm friends, a promising partnership that was a beacon of hope for the whole region. It was not that relationship which undermined the Shah’s regime, but corruption and repression, and a sense that Pahlavi rule had been imposed by the Americans and the British on Iranians to suit their selfish oil interests. All these factors need to be on the table if Pope Leo’s indisputable call for a negotiated settlement is to be heeded. It is not impossible. It is worth praying for. The alternative is too ghastly to imagine.



21. Why the Church is embracing synodality now

The call to synodality is a response to the signs of the times. In a fragmented world, God calls the Church to witness communion, dialogue, and hope.

22. Synodality is a conversion

True synodality requires conversion of hearts, attitudes, and sometimes structures. It asks us to let go of habits that no longer serve the mission.

23. Synodality and leadership

Leadership in a synodal Church is not about control but about service. Leaders create spaces where gifts can emerge and flourish.

24. Synodality and trust

Trust grows when people know their voices matter. Synodality helps rebuild trust within the Church and between the Church and society.

25. Synodality is demanding

Walking together takes patience, time, and effort. But the Gospel has never promised an easy path - only a fruitful one.



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

Melbourne Catholic Digest

Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ: 'God does not choose the perfect'

The next step



Neophytes warmly welcomed home at St Luke the Evangelist and St Timothy's

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/neophytes-warmly-welcomed-home-at-parish-of-st-luke-the-evangelist-st-timothy>

The Archdiocese of Melbourne has witnessed a significant surge in those seeking the sacraments of initiation this year, as have dioceses worldwide. Around 550 people entered the Catholic Church this Easter, representing a 57 per cent increase from 2025. This 'real hunger for God' is being felt in many local parishes, from Geelong to Mansfield to Mornington.



Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ appointed ninth bishop of Sandhurst

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/bishop-rene-ramirez-appointed-ninth-bishop-of-sandhurst>

Pope Leo XIV has appointed Melbourne's Auxiliary Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ as the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Sandhurst.

Bishop Ramirez was born in 1969 in Gapan, Nueva Ecija, a city located 90km north of Manila in the Philippines. In 1985 he joined the Congregation of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus and after 13 years of formation was ordained a priest in 1998. His first assignment as a priest was as the vocation director for his congregation in the Philippines.

From 1999 until early 2003, he later served as administrator, treasurer, and vice rector at Rogationist College in Cavite City while pursuing a Master's in Educational Management at De La Salle University in Dasmariñas City. He then moved to Rome in 2003 to complete his licentiate studies in spirituality and earn a diploma in social communications from the Pontifical Gregorian University. Upon returning to the Philippines in 2006, he was appointed director of social communications and spiritual director for the seminary students of philosophy at Rogationist Seminary College in Parañaque City, where he also taught. From 2009 to 2015, he served as the superior of St Hannibal Rogate Centre, which included the communications office, the provincial house, and the house for Rogationist late vocation seminarians.

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