

Risen Christ



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

25 & 26 January 2025 - Year C

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



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respect to the elders past, present and emerging.

Gospel: Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

Reflection - Break Open the Word 2025:

Today's gospel begins with Luke's prologue (1:1-4).

It is one very long and complex sentence which will require study and careful phraseology if its sense is to be communicate. A significant pause should follow.

The main part of the gospel is the launch of Jesus' prophetic mission (4:1-21). It takes place in his hometown. There is a nice tension in the story as Jesus goes to the synagogue and then as he rolls up the scroll and begins to speak.

The power of the Spirit is in him and this is exactly how his citation from Isaiah begins.

He presents a glorious vision of the reign of God which he is inaugurating in word and action. These lines provide something which we can aim for and pray for in Australia today - lifting up the oppressed, drawing in those on the margins, working for recognition and justice for all.



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

Montmorency

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

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

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

Immaculata Mustica, John Skehill, Joan Stanhope

Eltham

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

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

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

Gavan O'Connell

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

*This parish has a commitment to ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable people in our community.
We support the recommendations of the Royal Commission into institutional abuse and pray for all the survivors.*





ART AND CONTEMPLATION

The Sacred in the Concrete

Father Richard describes how reading poetry contemplatively can be a sacred practice:

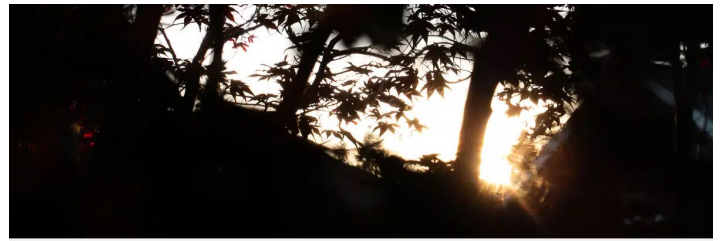
Great art and great myth try to evoke an epiphany in us. They want to give us an inherent and original sense of the holy. They make us want to kneel and kiss the ground. Robert Frost said, “A poem begins with a lump in the throat; a home-sickness or a love-sickness”. If a poem doesn’t give us a lump in the throat, is it really great poetry? My final theological conclusion is that there’s only one world and that it’s all sacred. However, we have to be prepared to know what we’re saying when we say that. If we say too glibly that the trees are sacred, along with our dog, a friend, and the roses, then we don’t really believe it. We first need to experience “a lump in the throat” to have encountered the sacred. The sacred is something that inspires awe and wonder, something that makes us cry, something that gives us the lump in the throat. We must first encounter the sacred in the concrete and kneel before it there, because we can’t start with the universal.

Poets are masters of the concrete. They first pull us into a single similarity between an animal, an object in nature, or an event, before they shock us with the dissimilarity. Then, they leave us there to make the connection between the concrete and the universal. When we make that connection, there’s suddenly a great leap of meaning, an understanding that it’s one world. The very word “metaphor”, which comes from two Greek words, means to “carry across”. A good metaphor carries us across, and we don’t even know how it’s occurred. Here are a few lines from Mary Oliver’s poem “Have You Ever Tried to Enter the Long Black Branches”:

Have you ever tried to enter the long black branches
of other lives
tried to imagine what the crisp fringes, full of
honey, hanging
from the branches of the young locust trees, in early
summer, feel like? ...
Who can open the door who does not reach for the
latch?
Who can travel the miles who does not put one foot
in front of the other, all attentive to what presents
itself continually?
Who will behold the inner chamber who has not
observed
with admiration, even with rapture, the outer
stone?
Well, there is time left -
fields everywhere invite you into them.

When reading poetry like this, we have to release ourselves and we have to have time to do it. If we’re reading a poem too quickly, between two urgent meetings or other hurried spaces, we probably won’t get it, because we don’t have time to release ourselves. We need quiet, solitude, and open space to read poetry at greater depth. Then and only then do poems work their magic.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/the-sacred-in-the-concrete/>



A RESURRECTION FAITH

A Universal Pattern

Richard Rohr identifies death and resurrection as the universal pattern of Reality:

Christianity - as well as Buddhism, other religions, and nature-based systems - suggests that *the* pattern of transformation, *the* pattern that connects, *the* life that Reality offers us is not death avoided, but always *death transformed*. In other words, the only trustworthy pattern of spiritual transformation is death *and* resurrection. Christians learn to submit to trials because Jesus told us that we must “carry the cross” with him (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 14:27). Buddhists do it because the Buddha very directly said that “life is suffering”. Buddhism teaches us how to skilfully discern the source of suffering, detach from our expectations and resentments, and let go of illusion.

Death and life are two sides of the same coin; we cannot have one without the other. Each time we choose to surrender, each time we trust the dying, our faith is led to a deeper level, and we discover a Larger Self underneath. We decide not to push to the front of the line, and something much better happens in the back of the line. We let go of narcissistic anger, and we find that we start feeling much happier. We surrender our need to control our partner, and finally the relationship blossoms. Yet each time it is a choice - and each time it is a kind of dying. It seems we only know what life is when we know what death is.

The mystics and great saints were those who had learned to trust and allow this patter, and often said in effect, “What did I ever lose by dying?” Or try Paul’s famous one-liner: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). Now even scientific studies reveal the same universal pattern. Things change and grow by dying to their present state, but each time it is a risk. We always wonder, “Will it work this time?” So many academic disciplines are coming together, each in its own way, to say there’s a constant movement of loss and renewal at work in this world at every level. It seems to be the pattern in every atom, every human relationship, and in every galaxy. Indigenous peoples, Hindu gurus, Buddha, Moses, Muhammad, and Jesus all saw it clearly in human history and named it as a kind of “necessary dying”.

If this pattern is true, it has been true all the time and everywhere. Such seeing did not just start two thousand years ago. All of us have to learn to let go of something smaller so something bigger can happen. But that’s not a religion - it’s highly visible truth. It is the Way Reality Works.

<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/a-universal-pattern->

