

# Risen Christ



Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

25 & 26 July 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 13:44-52

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well, then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'



Fr Michael returns from his annual northern trek this coming week, and will be celebrating Mass at 9:30am at Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham on Friday, 31st July!



**Thanksgiving** This week I have 'attempted' to email Thank You letters for the past 6 months, since the beginning of the current Pledge Period. Please contact me on 9435 4742 or via email ([risenchrist.parish@cam.org.au](mailto:risenchrist.parish@cam.org.au)) if you did not receive an email re Thanksgiving, or if you have any questions or concerns about what you did receive. Please note: there can be several causes for the information not being as expected, including banked date not falling into the 6 month period or stopped card transactions, and these can be corrected, and updated information given to you. Thank you, Kate

*In early May, we received a donation through PACEM (online giving) from 'Jessica B' with a prayer request attached. Jessica, we have been trying to contact you! Please contact the Parish Office via email ([risenchrist.parish@cam.org.au](mailto:risenchrist.parish@cam.org.au)) or on 9435 4742 between 9am and 3pm Tuesday to Friday.*

*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: 5 & 12 July 2026

|                     |            |            |
|---------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Thanksgiving</b> | Cash       | \$1,804.00 |
|                     | Electronic | \$9,739.67 |
| <b>Presbytery</b>   | Cash       | \$1,841.00 |
|                     | Electronic | \$225.00   |

### Thanksgiving Offering

| Month | Total       |
|-------|-------------|
| April | \$23,331.17 |
| May   | \$18,752.55 |
| June  | \$22,507.82 |

## Risen Christ Parish Calendar of Events

### **Saturday 25**

6:00pm Mass & First Eucharists

Montmorency

### **Sunday 26**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass & First Eucharists

Eltham

### **Tuesday 28**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Montmorency

10:00am Rosary

Montmorency

7:00pm Jordan Small Church Community

Montmorency

### **Wednesday 29**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

### **Thursday 30**

9:00am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Montmorency

2:30pm Meditation

Eltham

### **Friday 31**

9:30am Mass

Eltham

### **Saturday 1st August**

12:00pm Baptisms: Max, Zoe, Bella, Remy

Montmorency

6:00pm Mass & First Eucharists

Montmorency

### **Sunday 2**

8:30am Mass

Montmorency

10:00am Mass

Eltham

12:00pm Baptisms: Joshua, Pia, Zoe, Sofia

Eltham

### **Monday 3**

9:00am Days for Girls

Montmorency

### **Tuesday 4**

9:30am Mass: Feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop & SFX Prep-Yr4

Montmorency

10:00am Rosary

Montmorency

10:00am Craft Group

Montmorency

11:00am Prayer Shawl Ministry

Eltham

2:00pm Bethany Small Church Community

Montmorency

### **Wednesday 5**

6:30am Meditation

Montmorency

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Eltham

1:00pm Kairos Small Church Community

Montmorency

### **Thursday 6**

9:30am Liturgy of the Word with Communion

Montmorency

10:00am ASRC Food Collection

Montmorency

2:30pm Meditation

Eltham

### **Friday 7**

9:30am Mass

Eltham

## 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:

*Baby Margot Brady, Peter, Stephen Andrew, Des Arneson, Bill Boyce,  
Penny Boyce, Maria Bredle, Vincent Cipolletta, Nora Edmond,  
Pat Hosmer, Siobhan Lappin, Georgina Lynch, Mary Luttick,  
Cindy & Ed Morrissey, Bernard Murray, Regina Roszczenko, Phil Rovtar,  
Beth Scott, Audrey Tunks, Nicholas Turnbull, Jeanne Vanderwert,  
Noel Vincent, Brian Witten*

For those who have **died** recently:

*Edwinda Bacani*

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

*Poi-Poi, Sr Sabine de Croos, Stan Gioules (30 year anniversary),  
Catherine Nelson, Mel & Yanthi Perera, Michael & Millicent Perera,  
Patrick & Ingrid Pinghe, Beryl Scott*

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

#### Roster for week ending 26 Jul 2026

|                      |        |
|----------------------|--------|
| Bowyer, Darrell      | ASRC   |
| Bowyer, Rosemary     | ASRC   |
| Castellanos, Rodrigo | E10:00 |
| Cotter, Anne         | CLNR   |
| Cseh, Ferenc         | E10:00 |
| Davidson, John       | PRYR   |
| Fitzgerald, Susan    | H10:00 |
| French, Jossie       | W8:30  |
| Furtado, Lorraine    | C10:00 |
| Haines, Jan-Marie    | E10:00 |
| Iliffe, Yvonne       | E10:00 |
| Kulkens, Mark        | W6:00  |
| Love, Philip         | W8:30  |
| Maynes, Phil         | W6:00  |
| Nolan, Kathleen      | H10:00 |
| Nolan, Mike          | H10:00 |
| Reardon, Kathy       | ASE    |
| Reischel, Marita     | H10:00 |
| Roy, Yvonne          | E10:00 |
| Scannell Family      | PRSE   |
| Wood, Gerard         | CLNR   |
| Zylstra, Diane       | R10:00 |

#### Roster for week ending 2 Aug 2026

|                    |        |
|--------------------|--------|
| Armstrong, Miranda | E10:00 |
| Austin, Judy       | H10:00 |
| Cseh, Nika         | C10:00 |
| Dunell, Linda      | E10:00 |
| Goodison, Pauline  | CLNR   |
| Haines, Geoff      | E10:00 |
| Hall, Vali         | ASE    |
| Heyhoe, Margaret   | R10:00 |
| Mallia, Anthony    | E10:00 |
| Maloney, Jo        | W6:00  |
| McCarthy, Bernie   | W6:00  |
| McKinley, Michael  | W8:30  |
| Ramsdale, John     | W8:30  |
| Roy, Yvonne        | CLNR   |
| Rygala, Ella       | H10:00 |
| Smith, Neil        | E10:00 |
| Stewart Family     | PRSE   |
| Williams, Anne     | PRYR   |
| Williams, Peter    | PRYR   |
| 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



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

#### Saturday, 25th July, 2026

*St Francis Xavier, Montmorency, 6:00pm*

William Bolton  
Chloe Cumberland  
Tahlia Hull  
Billie Hyatt  
Summer Millar  
Nicholas Sequenzia-Huber

First Eucharist  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist

#### Sunday, 26th July, 2026

*Our Lady Help of Christians, Eltham, 10:00am*

Siena Fleeton  
Julio Saviane  
Griffin Thompson

First Eucharist  
First Eucharist  
First Eucharist

## Children's Liturgy

### Launching Children's Liturgy of the Word!

We are thrilled to announce the official launch of our **Children's Liturgy on Sunday, 9th August at the 10:00am Mass!**

We are so looking forward to welcoming our young parishioners to this special program. During the Liturgy of the Word, children will be invited to gather together to hear the Sunday Gospel presented in an engaging, accessible, and meaningful way just for them. They will explore the teachings of Jesus through prayer, discussion, and child-friendly activities before returning to their families for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

#### What you need to know:

- **Who:** All children from Kinder plus are welcome.
- **When:** Every Sunday during school terms at the 10:00am Mass.
- **Parents:** Please take a copy and read:  
\* Code of Conduct Explanation for Children  
\* Safeguarding Rights and Responsibilities

We cannot wait to share this beautiful journey of faith with your children!

For further information and to access digital versions of the above documents, please visit our Parish Website (<https://bit.ly/3TRvcWF>).



# Young Discipleship

## INTRODUCTION

The Melbourne Synod is an invitation to our local Church to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit and to discern how we are called to proclaim the Gospel more faithfully in our time and place. The purpose of this synod is to help shape our evangelical and missionary priorities for the years ahead. This synodal journey will focus on three themes: Young Discipleship, Missionary Leadership, and Formation and Participation.

This paper has been prepared to assist with reflection on the theme of Young Discipleship. As we reflect on this theme, we are encouraged to ponder: Where is the Holy Spirit leading our Archdiocese at this time? How are we being called to accompany our young people in faith more intentionally? How might we reflect the face of Christ more clearly in our local Church?

This paper aims to foster a spirit of hope and imagination - trusting that, as we walk together, God is calling us into a future marked by faithfulness, renewal and deeper communion.

## THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

**‘Come after me and I will make you  
fishers of people.’**

**- Matthew 4:19**

The call to discipleship - to follow Jesus - is shaped by the Gospel. The Gospel invites every person to follow Jesus Christ and to share in the mission of building God’s kingdom.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ invite people of faith to encounter the living God. Jesus, through his preaching, teaching and healing, reveals God’s love and seeks to heal and restore creation. This encounter invites every person into relationship, transformation and mission.

To be a disciple, a follower of Jesus, is to keep company with Jesus, to be ‘called ... out of the darkness into his wonderful light’ (1 Peter 2:9) and to live in an intimate relationship with him (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Discipleship is a lifelong journey. It unfolds through the daily walk of lived experience in faith, in the sacramental life of the Church and with the support of a community that accompanies, nurtures and sustains. This accompaniment not only supports people in their faith journey; it also equips them to share it. Disciples are called to become missionary disciples - people who bring the Good News of God’s healing and forgiveness to the world.

At the heart of discipleship is the call to believe. Faith is more than an agreement with ideas; it is the discovery of being personally chosen and loved by God: ‘You did not choose me, but I chose you’ (John 15:16). Discipleship continually draws us back to Jesus - to learn from him, follow his example and live as he lived.

True discipleship rests on three essential pillars:

- *encounter*: meeting Jesus personally
- *engage*: a commitment to growing more deeply in faith
- *embark*: a commitment to living a life of mission.



In addressing young people prior to the local celebrations of World Youth Day in 2025, Pope Leo XIV noted that:

when Jesus tells us, ‘Be witnesses,’ he is assuring us that he considers us as his friends. He alone fully knows who we are and why we are here; young people, he knows your heart, your indignation in the face of discrimination and injustice, your desire for truth and beauty, for joy and peace. Through his friendship, he listens to you, motivates you, and guides you, calling each of you to a new life.

## ENCOUNTER: THE FOUNDATION OF DISCIPLESHIP

Encounter is the moment, or series of moments, in which a person becomes aware that God is real, present and personally involved in their life. It is the discovery of being known and loved by Christ, and the awakening of a desire to respond to that love. Often, this begins quietly - through the witness of others, through a sense of belonging or through moments of reflection and openness. It is nurtured in environments where trust, authenticity and genuine relationships are present. It can sometimes be presumed that young people have already encountered Christ when opportunities for catechesis or being sent out on mission are provided. The first step is being invited to a personal relationship with Jesus.

At its heart, encounter reveals that Jesus is not a figure of the past but one who is alive and active today. When this happens, faith shifts from abstract belief to lived experience - it becomes personal and transformative.

An experience of encounter with Jesus can be difficult to understand, and accompaniment is essential. Through accompaniment, young people can come to see how this encounter shapes their identity and story. It can lead to a response to follow him; to the ongoing assimilation of the *kerygma* into every aspect of life; to growing in knowledge and love of Jesus; and to discerning the unique call of Jesus to live a life of mission, sharing the Gospel, building the kingdom and witnessing the joy of the Good News to others.

Research<sup>1</sup> in Australia and internationally suggests that Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) is not closed to Jesus. Rather, many are waiting for authentic witnesses who can help them encounter him personally. A key discipleship challenge, therefore, is helping young people move from ‘Jesus was good’ to ‘Jesus is alive and I can know him personally.’

Effective ministry creates spaces where young people can:

- hear personal testimony
- experience meaningful prayer
- participate in beautiful and authentic worship
- encounter Scripture as a living word.

## ENGAGE: THE ONGOING DEEPENING OF FAITH

After encountering Jesus, the next step is to grow in relationship with him and to allow the message of the Gospel to shape every aspect of life. This includes:

- growing in prayer
- participating in the sacramental life of the Church
- building meaningful relationships within a community of faith.

**Many young people have come to appreciate silence and closeness to God. Groups that gather to adore the Blessed Sacrament or to pray with the word of God have also increased. We should never underestimate the ability of young people to be open to contemplative prayer. We need only find the right ways and means to help them embark on this precious experience. When it comes to worship and prayer, 'in many settings, young Catholics are asking for prayer opportunities and sacramental celebrations capable of speaking to their daily lives through a fresh, authentic and joyful liturgy.'**

- Pope Francis, *Christus vivit*, §224

(quoting *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, Final Document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 2018).

This journey often begins in the home, long before a young person experiences Church programs, schools, ministries or pilgrimages. They first encounter love, belonging, forgiveness and the possibility of faith within the home. As Pope Francis reminds us, the family is the first place of accompaniment (*Christus vivit*, §242). He acknowledges that while families are imperfect, they remain places where young people can experience patience, reconciliation and enduring love.

Intergenerational relationships - between parents, grandparents and wider family networks - play a crucial role. In an increasingly fragmented and individualistic culture, these relationships can foster resilience, belonging and openness to God.

Deepening faith involves the whole person: heart, mind and soul. It calls for:

- intellectual formation (understanding the faith)
- spiritual growth (prayer and sacramental life)
- human and moral development.

It also requires safe spaces where young people can ask honest questions and wrestle with complexity.

Research<sup>1</sup> shows that Gen Z is drawn to authenticity and coherence. They are drawn to a faith that is lived, not simply taught and are deeply concerned with questions of identity and purpose<sup>2</sup>. Effective engagement is:

- relational rather than transactional
- dialogical rather than purely instructional
- connected to life.

In this context, mentors, leaders, teachers and peers make a profound difference when they:

- listen deeply
- offer consistent accompaniment
- foster trust

**Local Churches should encourage, sustain and accompany those who are engaged in mission in the digital environment. Christian digital communities and groups, particularly young people, are also called to reflect on how they create bonds of belonging, promoting encounter and dialogue. They need to offer formation among their peers, developing a synodal way of being Church. The internet, constituted as a web of connections, offers new opportunities to better live the synodal dimension of the Church.**

- For a Synodal Church: *Communion, Participation, Mission*, Final document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 2024, §113.

- create spaces for openness and curiosity
- build intentional relationships and build community
- encourage leadership
- model a life of prayer and missionary discipleship.

## EMBARK: THE MOVEMENT INTO MISSION

Inspired by a love of Jesus, accompanied and supported in the faith, discipleship leads outward to mission.

Jesus called the disciples to be with him, and he also sent them out to preach the Gospel and make other disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). In addition to being an invitation to come, discipleship is a call to go.

Those who have encountered Christ, cannot keep that experience to themselves. His love compels them to share it. Discipleship is incomplete unless it is lived in witness.

To embark is to step into one's calling as a missionary disciple - to live with purpose, to witness to Christ and to participate in the building of God's kingdom.

For young people, this outward dimension is especially compelling. Gen Z is strongly motivated by purpose and impact<sup>3</sup>. They want their lives to matter and are drawn to causes that contribute to the common good. When faith is presented as a lived mission - one that transforms both the individual and the world - it resonates deeply<sup>4</sup>.

Mission is not always dramatic. More often, it is lived in the ordinary rhythm of life:

- in families and friendships
- in schools and workplaces
- in service to those in need
- in everyday acts of love and integrity.

Young people respond powerfully when they are:

- trusted with responsibility
- invited into leadership
- given opportunities to contribute
- empowered to shape the life and mission of the Church.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Where are we creating opportunities for young people to encounter Christ in our parishes and organisations?
2. How could our community create environments that foster the journey in faith of our young people?
3. Looking ahead five years, what three hopes do you have for young people in relation to faith, belonging, engagement and living as missionary disciples? What could the Archdiocese do to realise these hopes?

## FURTHER READING

Pope Francis, *Christus vivit*, Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People and to the Entire People of God, 25 March 2019.

Pope Francis, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*, Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 2024. See especially §§113 and 114.



## TO WATCH

*Become who God made you to be*, Pope Leo XIV's video message for pilgrims at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival 2025.

## NEXT STEP

Please provide your feedback by scanning the QR code or visiting: <https://melbcath.org/synod-youth>

<sup>1</sup> [www.barna.com/the-open-generation](http://www.barna.com/the-open-generation)

<sup>2</sup> <https://mccrindle.com.au/resource/report/understanding-generation-z/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.deloitte.com/content/dam/assets-shared/docs/campaigns/2024/deloitte-2024-genz-millennial-survey.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20190325\\_christus-vivit.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html)

# ‘One step enough for me’

When she considered her journey from the Church of England to the Roman Catholic Church, Ann Widdecombe turned to the example of John Henry Newman / by Robert Andrews

Ann Widdecombe left the Church of England and was received into the Catholic Church following the General Synod’s decision to ordain women as priests, but her reasons were not confined to a single measure. The dispute had exposed larger questions of authority: what makes Christian doctrine binding, and, what happens when a Church alters settled teaching? Whether one agrees with her conclusions or not, she did not seek to enter the Catholic Church for comfort or convenience.

John Henry Newman should not be retrospectively installed as a key figure in Widdecombe’s conversion. He did, however, become one of the figures through whom she later examined conversion in public. In September 2010, during Pope Benedict XVI’s visit to Britain and Newman’s beatification, she presented a BBC documentary, *Newman: Saint or Sinner?* To some, Newman is a plaster saint; to others, a collection of clues awaiting a modern diagnosis. Widdecombe was more inquisitive than merely devotional. She allowed the claims made for Newman’s sanctity to be tested rather than merely presumed.

Newman was received into the Catholic Church in 1845 only after years of intellectual and spiritual struggle, at considerable cost to his friendships, financial security, and social standing. Even his famous poem and hymn, “Lead, Kindly Light” belongs to uncertainty rather than serene possession. Newman wrote it in 1833 while returning from Italy after a serious illness, when his ship was becalmed in the Straits of Bonifacio. The hymn asks for enough light to take the next step, not for a view of the whole road ahead.

One of the least comfortable episodes in Newman’s life was his confrontation with Giacinto Achilli, a former Dominican friar who had become a conspicuous figure in the anti-Catholic agitation intensified by the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850. To his admirers Achilli was a survivor of papal oppression. In Catholic circles he was considered a fraud. Drawing heavily on allegations already publicized anonymously by Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, in *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England* (1851) Newman accused Achilli of repeated sexual misconduct. His language was fierce: this was Victorian religious controversy, not a modern academic seminar.

When legal proceedings were begun against his publisher, Newman accepted responsibility for words he had chosen to publish. It was the beginning of an ordeal for which he was badly prepared. He had



placed his name beneath grave accusations for which he did not hold all the necessary evidence. Newman had relied heavily on Wiseman. When English law required proof, documents that Newman believed would be available were found to be missing or inaccessible. Wiseman had apparently mislaid relevant papers and was slow to secure substitutes, while Monsignor George Talbot in Rome also failed to release important material in time. At great expense, Newman’s friends and agents hurriedly searched in Italy and Malta for records and witnesses.

Newman’s letters from the period convey bewilderment, anger, and a growing sense of betrayal. He believed that he was defending the Catholic Church against a celebrated impostor, yet senior churchmen whose assurances he had trusted had not equipped him to defend the allegations in court. But he had not been abandoned. Catholic contacts helped trace evidence and witnesses, while Catholics later subscribed to meet his fine and enormous legal expenses. The contrast between failure by particular senior churchmen at a decisive moment and remarkable solidarity from the wider Catholic community was revealing. At the Court of Queen’s Bench in June 1852, Newman’s plea that his allegations were substantially true largely failed, and he was convicted of criminal libel. He was later fined £100. His legal expenses were met by international Catholic subscriptions. Achilli secured the legal victory, but the publicity did little for his reputation. He later went to the United States and became associated with the Swedenborgians. In 1860 he disappeared after leaving a not suggestive of suicidal intent, although his fate was never established.

Traditional accounts have made Newman an almost passive victim of an anti-Catholic judge and jury. But he had chosen extravagant rhetoric and to publish claims before the supporting documents were in

his own hands, relying on legal advice and the assurances of leading church figures that the evidence could readily be produced. Newman could be brave in accepting responsibility and imprudent in assuming that institutional allegations could be converted into admissible proof. He could be loyal to the Church and profoundly wounded by those who represented it. He could believe that he was defending truth while discovering that conviction did not exempt him from error, misjudgment, or consequence. These things can all be true at once.

The affair was a legal defeat and a personal ordeal, and there is no need to turn it into a devotional triumph. A saint, in the Catholic understanding, is not a person whose every prudential judgment was correct or whose public life can be made seamless after the event. A portrait of Newman that depends on acquitting him morally and intellectually at every point would be a fragile one. The more compelling figure is a saintly man who was also capable of anger, overstatement, and poor judgment, yet willing to bear consequences and to go on seeking the truth as he saw it.

Ann Widdecombe’s documentary suggests she believed Newman’s actions could withstand scrutiny. The two conversions were of course very different, but her conversion also turned on questions of conscience, authority and disappointment with an institution she had inherited, and there were to be disappointments too with the institution she joined. The best way to remember Ann Widdecombe is not to turn her death into a parable before the sequence of events that led to it has been established, nor to reduce her to a list of religious, political and social positions. We should take seriously the commitments she took seriously, and remind ourselves that she made them knowing they were likely to have costs. Following that thread leads to Newman, and Newman leads not only to Littlemore and the cardinal’s red hat, but to a courtroom: a runaway friar, missing papers, vulnerable witnesses, and a convert finding that senior figures in the Church he defended could fail him.

Neither John Henry Newman nor Ann Widdecombe was a plaster saint nor merely a scandal waiting to be decoded. They were human beings whose convictions cost them, whose judgments could sometimes be imperfect, and whose fidelity to the Church brought both peace and disappointment. Like Newman, Widdecombe understood that religious seriousness is rarely neat. In an age that alternates too readily between instant canonization and total denunciation, that may be the most useful thing her life can teach us.

Robert Andrews is senior lecturer at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, Australia, a member institute of the University of Notre Dame Australia.



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE

## Melbourne Catholic Digest Fr Brian Glasheen reflects on more than 50 years in ministry

### Quite a ride



Next month, the Archbishop's Campaign will once again draw our attention to some of the many ways we can support the work of the Archdiocese, including by supporting our retired priests, men like Fr Brian Glasheen. This week, Fr Brian shares his story with us. From his family background in harness racing to the joys and challenges of parish ministry and youth welfare chaplaincy, his more than five decades in ministry have been quite a ride.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/repaid-a-thousandfold-fr-brian-glasheen-on-the-people-who-formed-him>



Have you ever wondered what makes a good Bible translation? Biblical scholar Fr Trevor Tibbertsma talks us through some of the principles guiding the translation of Scripture, explaining that the most literal translation is not always the best.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/the-best-bible-translation-is-the-one-you-read>



And we share the news that two key appointments have recently been made in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Please pray for Fr Luciano Toldo CS as he prepares to take up the position of Episcopal Vicar for the Northern Region, and for Mgr Chrls Portelli, who will replace Bishop-elect Stuart Hall as Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/archbishop-announces-two-key-appointments-for-melbourne-archdiocese>



**New children's hub in Wallan smoothes the journey from kindergarten to school -**

On 16 July, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli visited Wallan, a rapidly growing community to the north of Melbourne, to bless the Our Lady of the Way Children's Hub, one of nine new children's hubs opened by MACSEYE this year.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/new-childrens-hub-in-wallan-smoothes-the-journey-from-kindergarten-to-school>



**CLC Australia celebrates 50 years of Ignatian-inspired life and love -** Christian Life Community (CLC) Australia has celebrated 50 years of Ignatian spirituality, community growth and mission. Their 17-19 July national gathering reflected on discernment and synodality, and discussed their new 'Ignite the Way' project, focusing on formation, creation care and walking with the marginalised.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/clc-australia-celebrates-50-years-of-ignatian-inspired-life-and-love>



**Nobel laureates call Pope's encyclical a 'clarion call' for prevention of AI-driven nuclear warfare -**

Nobel laureates called Pope Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica humanitas* a 'clarion call' and 'a giant step forward' for the prevention of AI-driven nuclear warfare as they gathered in Rome on 16 July to sign a declaration urging a global treaty banning artificial intelligence from nuclear launch systems.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/nobel-laureates-call-popes-encyclical-a-clarion-call-for-prevention-of-ai-driven-nuclear-warfare>



**Discernment retreat for permanent diaconate highlights Christ's way of service and humility -**

Recently, six men preparing for the permanent diaconate gathered for a two-day discernment retreat at St Paul's Retreat Centre in Wantirna - a grace-filled opportunity to step away from the demands of everyday life and enter more deeply into prayer, silence and attentive listening to the voice of God. Guiding them through the moving story of Jesus washing the feet of his apostles, Mgr Charles Portelli reminded them that a deacon is called not simply to perform ministries but to become an icon of Christ the Servant.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/discernment-retreat-for-permanent-diaconate-highlights-christs-way-of-service-and-humility>



**Hospitality, hubris and Homer: Christopher Nolan brings *The Odyssey* to life -**

Place one of Western civilization's foundational texts in the hands of one of the entertainment industry's greatest living auteurs and the results are likely to be impressive. And so it proves with *The Odyssey* (Universal), writer-director Christopher Nolan's lavish and absorbing adaptation of Homer's epic poem.

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/hospitality-hubris-and-homer-nolan-brings-the-odyssey-to-life>

<https://melbournecatholic.org/events>

For more information: [www.melbournecatholic.org](http://www.melbournecatholic.org) or [www.facebook.com/CatholicArchdioceseofMelbourne](https://www.facebook.com/CatholicArchdioceseofMelbourne)

## Melbourne Synod 2026



### *Why a Synod for the Archdiocese of Melbourne?*

A Synod has a canonical purpose: Canon Law (canons 460-468) and is called by the bishop to assist him in governing the diocese. It's a formal consultative body that helps shape pastoral priorities and policies. The process is based on a synodal spirituality of listening and discernment.

One of the commitments of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference emerging from the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia was that each Diocese conduct a Diocesan Synod within five years of the closing session of the Plenary Council (*Decree Seven: At the Service of Communion, Participation and Mission: Governance*). In addition, the universal Church has been called to implement new

practices and structures to strengthen the life of the Church and to ensure our practices are more synodal. This work builds upon the more recent global Synod (2021-2024). <https://melbournecatholic.org/synod2026>

### Foundations of Faith

From its beginnings, St Patrick's has been built on faith and generosity. Migrant communities raised its walls and enriched it through their presence. Today, that same foundation calls us forward. Light into the City renews the Cathedral as a mother church for Melbourne's many cultures, a place where diverse communities and faith converge in mutual respect and shared spirituality. Here, the light of Christ shines through every language, tradition and generation. <https://lightintothecity.org.au/vision/>



Light into  
the City



## Reflection - Break Open the Word 2026

What price a new creation? How do we begin to put a value on respect and love, peace and justice? Where are our priorities? Jesus, speaking of the kingdom of heaven, proposes that it is worth more than anything else we can have. Sell everything you own, and you will be happy if you are part of the reign of God.

Jesus' images of the treasure in a field or the pearl of great price give us a picture to hold in our imagination. It is a good way to teach.

The parable of the dragnet is more in the line of last week's parable of the weeds and the wheat. Good and bad coexist. As we pray, *Thy kingdom come*, we need to be tolerant of others and patient. All will be achieved by God at the end. But a warning: we need to embrace the work of the kingdom as a disciple if we are to avoid the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

A significant pause between each of the three parables and the concluding remark will help the assembly to receive the message.

## Prayers of the Faithful for 26 July 2026 - Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Leader:** Let us join our prayers with all the faithful as we ask for peace, wisdom and the grace to be true prophets and messengers of love.

For the Church: that we may have the courage to risk everything in seeking the reign of God.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are seeking, wandering, or fleeing: that God will open new doors for them where they can find meaning, purpose, and acceptance.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For each of us: that we will search for the kingdom of heaven as a valuable treasure, a priceless pearl and share in the abundant harvest of God's grace, mercy, justice and peace.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those making their first communion this weekend: may this sacrament bring them to the fullness of life.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all parents: that God's wisdom and understanding assist them in nurturing and guiding the children entrusted to their care.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those countries throughout the world suffering terrible conflicts: may they become places of peace again where suffering is ended.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For a new spirit of leadership: that the choices of our leaders may be founded on wisdom and distinguished by true discernment and an abiding respect for all whose lives they affect.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those who have died recently, especially *Edwinda Bacani*, and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including *Poi-Poi, Sr Sabine de Croos, Stan Gioules, Catherine Nelson, Mel & Yanthi Perera, Michael & Millicent Perera, Patrick & Ingrid Pinghe and Beryl Scott*: may they rejoice in the Kingdom of God.

*Let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** Lord, let your love console all who suffer, and your word be a light for all who search, so that hope is regenerated in the hearts of the oppressed. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen**