



*. . . from the fig tree learn its lesson . . .*

Mark 13:28

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We, the people of Boonah Catholic parish,  
acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our parish is located  
and where we conduct our mission and ministry.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders, past and present.

As a local community of faith within the Church of Brisbane,  
we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'  
unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas  
and their rich contribution to society.

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*Warm greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

## **1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.**

The **reflection** for this Sunday is offered by Julian McDonald, a Christian Brother who lives in Sydney.

Once again, context is all important in grasping the significance of today's gospel. At the beginning of Mark Chapter 13 from which today's reading comes, we hear that Jesus had foretold the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. That prompted two questions from his disciples: "Tell us, when is this going to happen? What sign will we get that things are coming to a head? (Mark 13, 4) Not surprisingly, Mark has Jesus respond to these questions in reverse order. But instead of giving the disciples dates and times and signs of impending disaster, Jesus points out that squabbles and wars will always be going on around them because that's the way of the world.

Consequently, they should turn their attention to living true to themselves instead of upsetting themselves with what is going on around them. Moreover, he adds that there is no reason for them to assume that the end of the world is just around the corner, "for the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations" (Mark 13, 10). This is also Mark's way of countering a view that was

seemingly held by some in his community. They held fast to the belief that Jesus was God's perfect and last involvement in human history. It was logical, then, that the fullness of God's kingdom would soon become a reality and, as a consequence, the world would come to an end. In this rather lengthy explanation that Jesus gives his disciples Mark attributes to him a reference to the persecution of Christians that Nero had initiated in Rome. When Nero was accused of starting the fire that destroyed the city of Rome, he scapegoated the Christians of the city, and set about having them exterminated. And so, Mark has Jesus say: "...and you will be hated by all because of my name" (Mark 13, 13). Scripture commentators point out that Christians of Mark's era were seen as losers on opposite sides of the Roman Empire. They were being blamed by Nero in Rome as arsonists (for which they were executed) and accused by Jews, who had no time for Jesus, as deserters who got out of Israel

to avoid the unpredictables of the Roman occupation.

Mark was writing for a community, at home and abroad, a community that was dealing with physical and political hostility. His Gospel includes allusions to some of the historical pressures directed at that community. In so doing, he acknowledges just how difficult it was for them to be true to their new-found faith. But he assures them that Jesus offers hope.

All this is part of a long lead-in from Jesus before he offers answers to the two questions his close disciples asked when he made his surprising prediction that the grand Temple edifice in Jerusalem would end up in ruins. Having urged them not to get upset by the wars and natural disasters going on around them, he answers their two questions (Mark 13, 4) in a way that, on the surface, looks less than satisfactory. In fact, he includes comments about the end of the world and the return of the "Son of Man" - things they had not specifically asked about. And he does so, using the symbolic language that is associated with apocalyptic writing and speaking. What's more, in referring to the upheavals in both the political and natural worlds, he uses the term "these things" so ambiguously that neither his disciples nor we quite know whether he is referring to the end times or the destruction of the Temple. I suggest that Mark deliberately tells the story this way to put the focus on the real message that Jesus wanted to give his disciples: In the long run, their knowing exactly when the Temple would fall into ruins and when the Son of Man would return in glory was trivial, in comparison with a commitment to live in hope, trusting that, no matter what happened around them, God would lead them through, even through death and persecution. Therein lies the central message of today's gospel, both for the disciples and for us: no matter what troubles, disappointments and tragedies are visited upon

us in the course of our lives, we can be sure that God, who loved us into life and who continues to love us day in and day out, will continue to walk beside us, even when those challenges don't evaporate.

There is one sentence at the very end of today's gospel-reading, that calls for attention. In reference to when the world might end, Jesus says: "As to the exact day or hour, no one knows it, neither the angels in heaven nor even the Son, but only the Father" (Mark 13, 32). This underlines the reality that in coming among us Jesus embraced the human condition in its totality. There were limits to his knowledge, just as there are limits to ours. In this context, we ought not forget that Jesus also cured many people of the illnesses and disabilities that limited them. He even restored to life people like his friend Lazarus and the son of the widow of Nain. But they all eventually died and were buried, just as he himself died and was buried. But, he has promised us the fullness of life, life that will come to us only through death.

We are all familiar with St Paul's encomium about love, in which he concludes: "When all is said and done, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13, 4-13). Yet, in Mark's Gospel, Jesus' very last words of encouragement to his disciples are not about love, but about



living with hope in God. In more recent times, we have seen two popes, Benedict and Francis, make strenuous efforts to encourage us to attend to the importance of living in hope.



On the importance of hope, Gustavo Gutiérrez, the great Peruvian theologian, Dominican priest and exponent of liberation theology, mirrors Popes Benedict and Francis in their call to us to live in hope. In an interview in 2003, he stated: *Hope is based on the conviction that God is at work in our lives and in the world. Hope is ultimately a gift from God given to sustain us during difficult times. Charles Péguy described hope as the 'little sister' who walks between the 'taller sisters' of faith and charity; when the taller sisters grow tired, the little one instils new life and energy into the other two. Hope never allows our faith to grow weak or our love to falter.* (Daniel Hartnett, "Remembering the Poor: An Interview with Gustavo Gutiérrez", *America Magazine*, February 3, 2003)

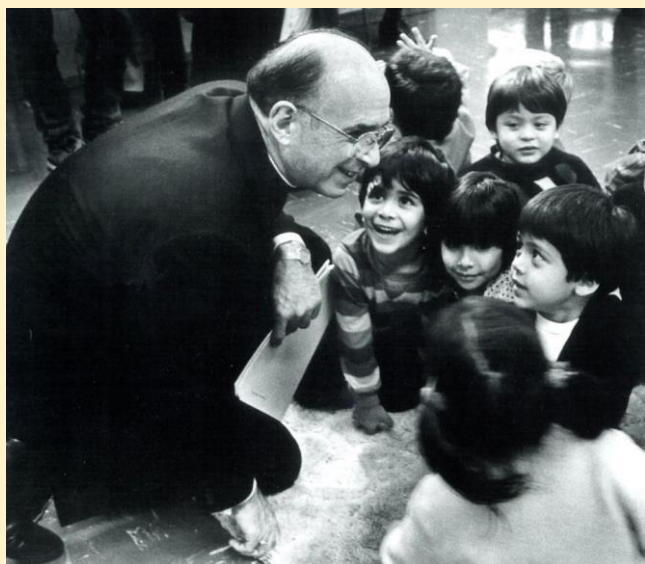
Let's not forget that hope, just like every other virtue, is not a collectible item. It is an attitude to living, to relating to God and to others, to

engaging with the events of life. It is something that we integrate into our lives with practice and over time. Moreover, it is contagious. When others see hope in us, they learn to imitate it. Our hope gives hope to those around us. As we cope with the Covid-19 pandemic that has taken our world by surprise, with the threat of global warming, with trauma and tragedy of every kind, we will not manage unless we have the conviction that God is present and to be found in everything that happens, however it turns



out. Heaven and earth will surely pass away, but the things of God, the values that Jesus lived and taught will be forever constant and life-giving.

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no matter what troubles, disappointments and tragedies  
are visited upon us in the course of our lives,  
we can be sure that God, who loved us into life  
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Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, was buried on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1996. At the time of his death, he was planning to publish a letter in 1997 on the liturgy. His *Guide for the Assembly* was published posthumously. On this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death and burial, we share some of his insights: *What does our dismissal mean? We are sent from the eucharistic table as a holy people always in mission. (The word "Mass" – in Latin Missa – means "sending" or "mission.") The spirit which fills us in the liturgy inspires us to re-create the world and in doing so to prepare ourselves for fulfilment in heaven.*

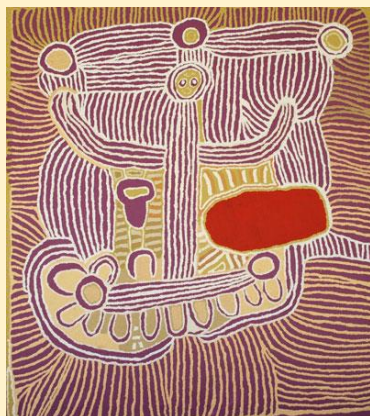
## 2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

from commands to invitations,  
from laws to ideals,  
from threats to persuasion,  
from coercion to conscience,  
from monologue to conversation,  
from ruling to serving,  
from withdrawn to integrated,  
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,  
from exclusion to inclusion,  
from hostility to friendship,  
from static to changing,  
from passive acceptance to active engagement,  
from prescriptive to principled,  
from defined to open-ended,  
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,  
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,  
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006

Our **SUNDAY EUCHARIST** schedule is:



**Saturday**

5.00pm

**Boonah church**

**Sunday**

7.30am

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Harrisville church**

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Peak Crossing church**

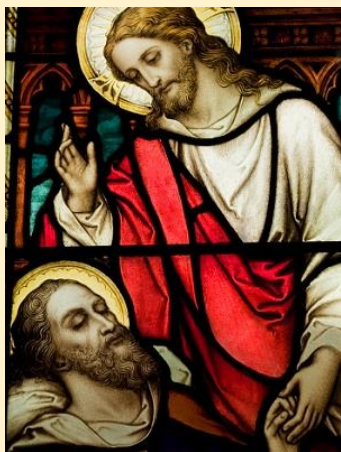
9.30am

**Boonah church**

*Desert Eucharist* Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, the 33<sup>rd</sup> week of Ordinary Time:

<b>Monday</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> November	5.30pm, <b>Boonah</b> church
<b>Tuesday</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> November	9.15am <b>Boonah</b> church <i>with parish school students</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> November	6.00pm, <b>Peak Crossing</b> church <i>followed by dinner at The Peak Pub</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> November	<i>No Mass</i>



▪ *We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond:* all across the globe infected with COVID-19; former pastor of Boonah parish Fr. Ellis Clifford, Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Max Gardiner, Bernice Lippiatt, Trish Merlehan, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon Greatrex, Neil O'Connor, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Matthew Bowden, Louisa, David Mitchell, Vince Bellett, Bill (USA) and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

▪ **EVERY SUNDAY** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some or another) at the entrances of our churches.

We are invited to bring a gift of **non-perishable food or goods** for people seeking help from our local St. Vincent de Paul.

There is a great response each Sunday from the assembly at Harrisville. *Thanks!*

There is also an emerging and positive response from the two assemblies who gather at Boonah. *Thanks!*

The local conference very much appreciates our weekly support.

▪ **THANK YOU** to all who support the weekly Sunday collection. Your gifts enable the parish to meet its expenses and to function like an everyday household. If you would like to give weekly or monthly in a planned way, please see me.

▪ **CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Rite for Reconciliation (formerly known as Confession) may be celebrated anytime. Please phone 5463 1057 to make a suitable time. Alternatively see me before Mass (if there is plenty of time) or after Mass (once the majority of people have left the church).

*I was hungry and you fed me*  
Matthew 25







- On Tuesday at Boonah we celebrated the Funeral Mass for Hedy Franz.

We offer our condolences to her sons Robert and Steve and their respective families and friends.

Hedy and her husband Lew (+ 2001) settled in the area in the late 1950s after marrying at St. Agnes' Catholic Church, Mt. Gravatt in 1957.

The family ran a dairy and vegetable farm for decades.

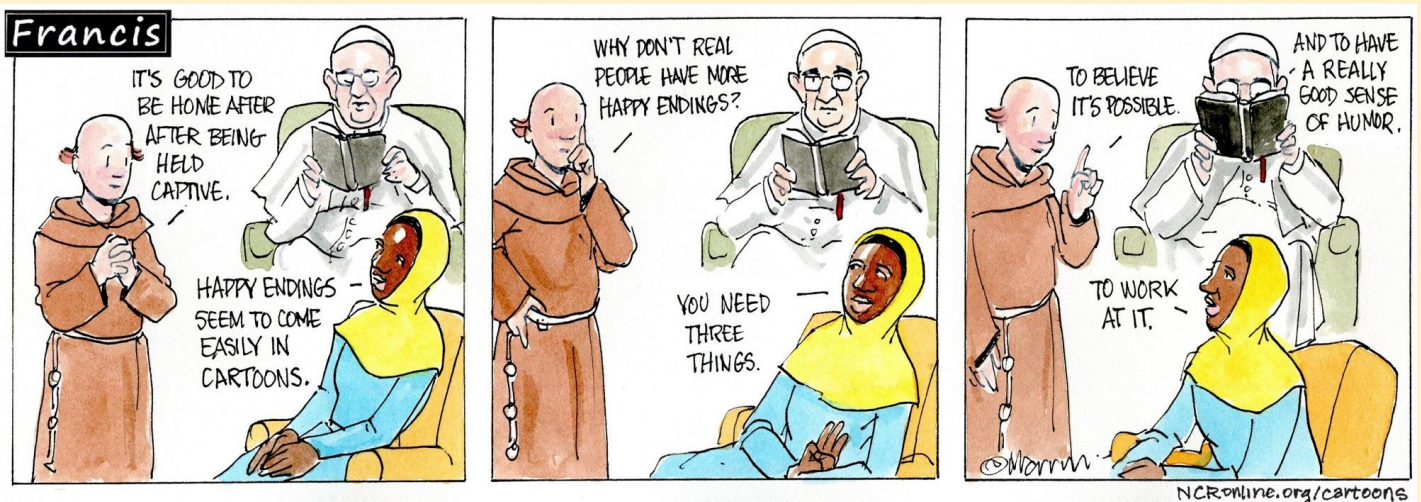
May Hedy *rest in peace*.

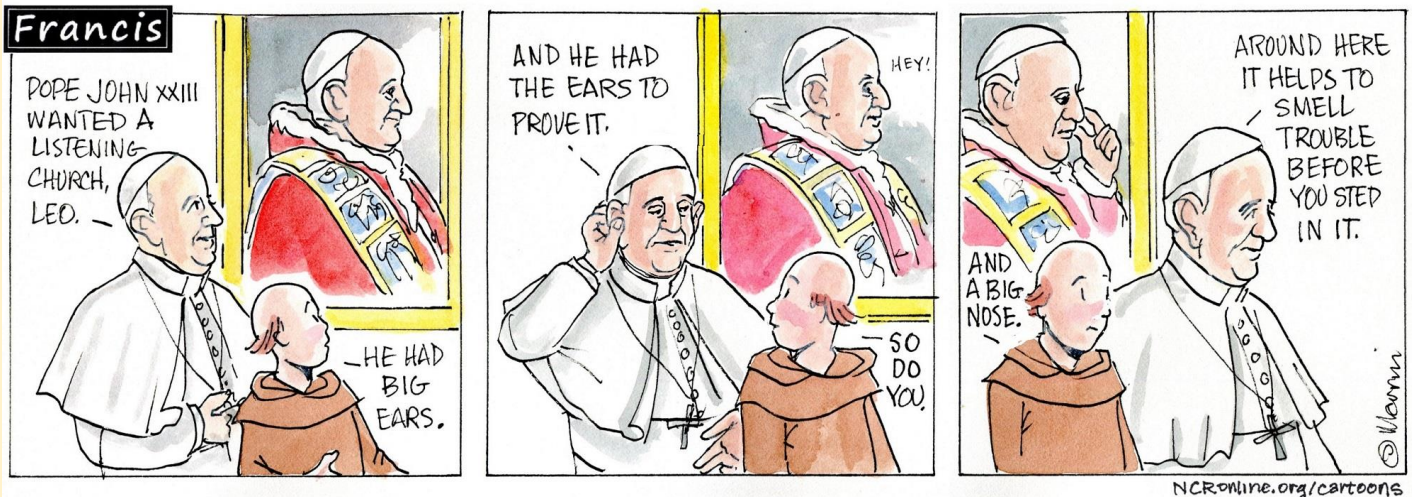
- The South Country Deanery met last Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November with pastors and members from the parishes of Ipswich Catholic Community, Esk, Gatton-Laidley, Boonah, Booval and Springfield.

A working party produced a discussion paper on leadership and formation opportunities in the parishes and across the parishes.

I thank David Judge, chairperson of our parish pastoral council, for being part of the group.

This group will gather next in the new year of 2022 to further plan and discuss what we may be able to do together. Some of the ideas were directed to whole of parish formation opportunities and others imagined how we might do formation and education of liturgical ministers, sacramental preparation teams, and lay leaders of liturgy in the absence of Eucharist on Sundays.





11<sup>th</sup> November 2021

- During this week, Pope Francis appointed Fr. Tim Norton, a Divine Word Missionary priest as auxiliary bishop of the Church of Brisbane.



## THE ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE

11 November 2021

### NEW AUXILIARY BISHOP OF BRISBANE

At this time of great change and challenge, it is a joy for the Church in Brisbane and Australia to welcome the appointment of Fr Tim Norton SVD as Auxiliary Bishop of Brisbane. In some ways it is a surprising appointment, but Fr Tim brings to the ministry of bishop many gifts and experiences required now more than ever as the whole Church seeks to become more missionary.

Born in Sydney in 1958, Tim entered the Divine Word Missionaries in 1984 and was ordained priest in 1991. He then served in Mexico for seven years before undertaking studies in spiritual direction to prepare for formation work in Melbourne preparing men to serve as Divine Word Missionaries. He was then elected Provincial of the Australian Province, and in that role he had close contact with the Archdiocese of Brisbane where the SVD have been and still are an important presence. Since completing his term as Provincial, Tim has been the Director of the *Ad Gentes* course of renewal based at the SVD house in Nemi near Rome.

All of this will equip Tim well for what awaits him in the episcopal ministry in this time and in this place. He will make a real contribution not only locally in Brisbane and Queensland but also nationally and internationally. He comes to us as God's gift and we give thanks to the giver of all gifts. We also welcome Tim as a brother in faith and in mission.

Details of the ordination will follow, and in the meantime we pray for Tim, asking the Lord to breathe into him in a new and deeper way the Holy Spirit who enables us to hear God's Word and speak it to others.

Archbishop of Brisbane



3. Pope Francis delivered his weekly address on Wednesday last week, 10th November. It was the conclusion of a series of talks on Paul's Letter to the Galatians. It was titled: *Let us not grow weary*.

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

We have reached the end of the catecheses on the *Letter to the Galatians*. We could have reflected on so much other content found in this writing of Saint Paul! The Word of God is an inexhaustible font. And in this Letter, the Apostle spoke to us as an evangeliser, as a theologian and as a pastor.

The holy bishop Ignatius of Antioch used a beautiful expression when he wrote: *There is then one Teacher, who spoke and it was done; while even those things which He did in silence are worthy of the Father. He who possesses the word of Jesus, is truly able to hear even His very silence* (Epistle to the Ephesians, 15, 1-2). We can say that the Apostle Paul was capable of giving voice to this silence of God. His most original intuitions help us discover the astounding newness contained in the revelation of Jesus Christ. He was a true theologian who contemplated the mystery of Christ and transmitted it with his creative intelligence. And he was also capable of exercising his pastoral mission towards a lost and confused community. He did this with different methods: from time to time he used irony, firmness, gentleness... He revealed his own authority as an apostle, but at the same time he did not hide the weaknesses of his character. The strength of the Spirit had truly entered his heart: his meeting with the Risen Christ conquered and transformed his whole life, and he spent it entirely at the service of the Gospel.



Paul never thought of Christianity in irenic terms, lacking edge and energy — on the contrary. He defended the freedom Christ brought with such passion that it still moves us today, especially if we think of the suffering and loneliness he must have endured. He was convinced that he had received a call to which he alone could respond; and he wanted to explain to the Galatians that they too were called to that freedom which liberated them from every form of slavery because it made them heirs of the ancient promise and, in Christ, children of God. And aware of the risks that this concept of freedom brought, he never minimised the consequences. He was aware of the risks that Christian freedom brought. But he did not minimise the consequences. With *parrhesia*, that is, courageously, he repeated to the believers that freedom is in no way equal to libertinism, nor does it lead to forms of presumptuous self-sufficiency. Rather, Paul placed freedom in love's shadow and based its consistent exercise on the service of charity. This entire vision was set within the horizon of a life according to the Holy Spirit that brings to fulfilment the Law given by God to Israel and prevents from falling back into the slavery of sin. The temptation is always to go backward. One definition of Christians found in the Scripture says that *we Christians are not the type of people who go backward*, who turn back. This is a beautiful definition. And the temptation is to turn back to be more secure; to turn back to the Law, disregarding the new life of the Spirit. This is what Paul teaches us: the fulfilment of the true Law is found in this life of the Spirit that Jesus gave us. And this life of the Spirit can only be lived in freedom; Christian freedom. And this is one of the most beautiful things.

At the end of this catechetical journey, it seems to me that a twofold attitude could arise within us. On the one hand, the Apostle's teaching generates *enthusiasm* in us; we feel drawn to follow immediately the way of freedom, to "walk by the Spirit", to always walk by the Spirit: it makes us free. On the other hand, we are aware of our limitations because we experience first-hand every day how difficult it is to be docile to the Spirit, to facilitate his beneficial action. Then the *tiredness that dampens enthusiasm*, can set in. We feel discouraged, weak, sometimes marginalised with respect to a worldly life-style. Saint Augustine, referring to the Gospel episode of the storm on the lake, suggests how to react in this situation. This is what he says: *The faith of Christ in your heart is like Christ in the boat. You hear insults, you wear yourself out, you are upset, and Christ sleeps. Wake Christ up, rouse your faith! Even in tribulation you can do something. Rouse your faith. Christ awakes and speaks to you... Therefore, wake Christ up... Believe what has been said to you, and there will be tremendous calm in your heart* (cf. Sermon 63). In difficult moments, as Saint Augustine says here, we are like in the boat at the moment of the storm. And what did the apostles do? They woke Christ up who was sleeping during the storm; but he was present. The only thing we can do in terrible moments is to wake up Christ who is within us, but "sleeps" like [he did] in the boat. It is exactly like this. We must wake up Christ in our hearts and only then will we be able to contemplate things with his eyes for he sees beyond the storm. Through that serene gaze, we can see a panorama that we cannot even glimpse on our own.

In this challenging but captivating journey, the Apostle reminds us that we cannot allow ourselves any tiredness when it comes to doing good. Do not grow tired of doing good. We have to trust that the Spirit always comes to assist us in our weakness and grants us the support we need. Let us, therefore, learn to invoke the Holy Spirit more often! Some might say: "how is the Holy Spirit invoked? I know how to pray to the Father with the Our Father; I know how to pray to Our Lady with the Hail Mary, I know how to pray to Jesus with the Prayer to His Holy Wounds. But to the Spirit? What is the prayer to the Holy Spirit"? The prayer to the Holy Spirit is spontaneous: it has to

come from your heart. In moments of difficulty, you have to say: “Come, Holy Spirit”. This is the key word: *Come*. But you have to say it yourself in your own style, in your own words. *Come*, because I find myself in difficulty. *Come*, because I am in obscurity, in the dark. *Come*, because I do not know what to do. *Come*, because I am about to fall. *Come. Come*. This is the Holy Spirit’s word to call upon the Spirit. Let us learn to invoke the Holy Spirit often. We can do this with simple words at various moments during the day. And we can carry with us, perhaps inside the Gospel in our pocket, the beautiful prayer the Church recites on Pentecost:

*Come, come Holy Spirit,  
and from your celestial home  
shed a ray of light divine!  
Come, come, Father of the poor!  
Come, Source of all our store!  
Come, within our bosoms shine!  
You, of comforters the best;  
You the soul’s most welcome Guest;  
Sweet refreshment . . . ”*

Come. And so it continues, it is a very beautiful prayer. The core of the prayer is “come”, as Our Lady and the Apostles prayed after Jesus had ascended into Heaven. They were alone in the Upper Room and invoked the Spirit. It will be good for us to often pray: Come, Holy Spirit. And with the presence of the Spirit, we will protect our freedom. We will be free, free Christians, not attached to the past in the bad sense of the word, not chained to practices, but free with the Christian freedom, the kind that makes us grow. This prayer will help us walk in the Spirit, in freedom and in joy because when the Holy Spirit comes, joy, true joy comes.

May the Lord bless you. *Thank you.*

4. Fr. Thomas Rausch SJ has written a new article in *America*: “What do Catholics mean when we say the Eucharist is ‘the true body and blood’ of Christ?”

Catholicism has been sometimes described as a very materialistic religion. Why? Because Catholics take created reality seriously. Karl Rahner, S.J., once called Christians “the most sublime of materialists” because they “neither can nor should conceive of any ultimate fullness of the spirit and of reality without thinking too of matter enduring as well in a state of final perfection.” Far from being concerned with a narrow, spiritualized understanding of salvation, about “getting saved,” Catholics see grace everywhere, disclosed in nature, symbols, stories and persons.

The Rev. Andrew Greeley described this vision as the Catholic sacramental imagination. He argued that “the classic works of Catholic theologians and artists tend to emphasize the presence of God in the world, while the classic works of Protestant theologians tend to emphasize the absence of God from the world.” Catholics tend to stress the immanence of God, Protestants God’s transcendence.

Created reality is itself sacramental, revealing the presence of God, hinted at in a forest of metaphors and lurking in human love. Even if somewhat nervous about sexuality,



Catholicism sees the body as holy. It honours the sacred heart of Jesus, his virgin mother Mary, her chaste spouse Joseph and even Jesus' grandparents, Joachim and Anna, who have their own feast day, notwithstanding the origin of their names in one of the apocryphal gospels.

Most of all, the church draws life from the body and blood of Jesus, present in the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Eucharist has long been the centre of Catholic life, uniting his disciples as his body for the world (1 Cor 10:17). As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said, "The Church is the celebration of the Eucharist; the Eucharist is the Church; they do not simply stand side by side; they are one and the same."

This reverence for the body, the eucharistic body of Jesus and his body the church, indeed the bodies of all those with whom Jesus identifies – not just the unborn, but the poor, the marginal, the immigrant, the hungry child, the abused woman, those who suffer from racial or sexual discrimination, those disenfranchised or denied their rights by the state, the prisoner on death row – each and every one of these grounds the Catholic concern for honouring bodily life.

Thus arises the concern of a number of Catholics regarding what appears to be the efforts of some bishops in the United States to exclude some Catholics in government from receiving the Eucharist on the basis of what is referred to as "eucharistic coherence." Yet when questioned on this recently, Pope Francis replied, "I have never denied Communion to anyone," adding that bishops should be "pastors," not politicians.

Pope Francis has repeatedly made clear that abortion is not the only sin against the body of Christ. If we have learned anything from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is how closely we are

related to each other and how devastating any refusal to care for one another by taking proper precautions, such as wearing masks and getting vaccinated, can be. It is not just "my body."

*But what is the body of Christ that we receive?* The bishops are rightly concerned about a diminished understanding of Christ's eucharistic presence, and about a reduced participation in the sacramental celebration. But the survey questions in the 2019 Pew Research Center survey most often referenced in discussions of belief in the real presence are less than adequately formulated. Its statements are ambiguous and can be differently understood.

As Nathan Mitchell has said so well,  
"The body of Christ offered to Christians  
in consecrated bread and wine is not *something*  
but *someone*."

For example, the Pew study reports that 69 percent of Catholics surveyed say they believe that the bread and wine used in the Mass "are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." That is not necessarily incorrect. But if they mean that they are mere symbols, without Christ's real presence, that would replicate the mistake of the 11th-century theologian Berengarius (d. 1088) who seems to have taught that Christ was present in the bread and wine only as a sign, an approach that was seen as merely symbolic.

In response, the Council of Rome (1059) required him to confess that the bread and wine placed on the altar after consecration are "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the senses not only sacramentally but in truth are taken and broken by the hands of the priests and crushed by the teeth of the faithful." Most of us would not use such literalist language. As David

Power said, “Who today would care to state that communicants chew on the body of Christ?” Interestingly, Martin Luther used similar language. Rahner speaks of sacraments as “real symbols,” symbols that mediate or make present the reality they symbolize.

The Pew Forum survey also reports that 31 percent of Catholics say that they believe that “the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus.” But this also can be misinterpreted. It could represent an overly literal understanding of Christ’s presence. The eucharistic bread is not “literally” or “physically” Christ’s body, and the consecrated wine is not literally or physically his blood, as we so often read in articles about the controversy. When I ask students: When you receive only the eucharistic bread, are you receiving only the body of Christ? Many answer yes. This, of course, is incorrect.

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) adopted the term transubstantiation to affirm that the substance of the bread and wine are changed in the Eucharist into the substance of Christ’s body and blood, while the appearances of the bread and wine remain the same. That term was then adopted after the Reformation by the 16th-century Council of Trent as an “appropriate” (*aptissime*) way of talking about what happens at the consecration of the Eucharist. But more to the point, the Council affirmed that in the Eucharist the whole Christ was present, “body and blood, soul and divinity.” In other words, what is present is not discrete flesh and blood, but the risen Jesus himself in his glorified humanity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church adopts this more appropriate language of Trent: In the Eucharist “the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained” (No. 1374).

*It is not sufficient for contemporary Catholics simply to repeat the formulas of the past.*

But “transubstantiation” is not the best place to start. It is a philosophical term, very different from the language of the New Testament that speaks of encountering the risen Jesus in the meal, in the bread and wine. Paul tells us that the cup of blessings in the Eucharist gives us a participation or communion (*koinōnia*) in the blood of Christ, and the bread broken gives us a participation or communion in the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16). Luke speaks of the first disciples recognizing the risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread (Lk 24:31, 35). John’s language is more literal: Jesus says, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you” (Jn 6:53), but the reference is still to a meal.

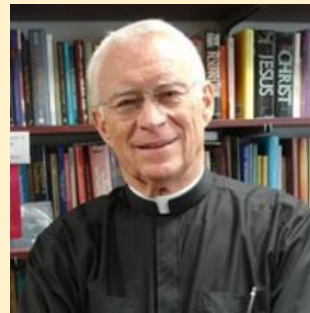
*Does the risen Jesus literally have flesh and blood? How do we understand the nature of the risen body?* It remains a mystery, one that fascinated many of the church fathers and medieval theologians. Tertullian (d. ca. 220) had a physical or material understanding of the resurrection; he taught that nothing would be lost, “neither genitals, nor intestines, nor eyelashes, nor toes,” while Gregory of Nyssa (d. ca. 394) said the body would rise without age or sex. Augustine held that men would have beards because he felt that beauty was a property of the risen body. In his famous *Sentences*, Peter Lombard (d. 1160) pondered the age, height and sex of those raised, whether they would have fingernails and hair, and how the bodies of those in hell could burn without being consumed.

St. Paul struggled to understand Christ’s glorified humanity in 1 Corinthians, but his language breaks down when he tries to describe it. He calls it a spiritual body, speaking of the risen Jesus — “the last Adam” — as a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). Perhaps the

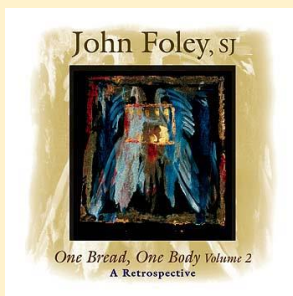
later development of the doctrine of the Trinity might provide insight here. The doctrine of the Trinity is an articulation of what is revealed of God: Father, Son/Word and Spirit. On that basis, reflection turns to what is often thought of as the “inner” or eternal life of God: three persons, diverse in mission, one in being. When we receive the Eucharist, the risen Christ, Son and Word of the Father, no longer bound by space and time, comes to dwell in us, uniting us with himself and with one another in his body, the church. It is not sufficient for contemporary Catholics simply to repeat the formulas of the past.

In receiving holy Communion, we truly encounter the risen Christ, who gives himself to us as food and drink, his “body and blood.”

As Nathan Mitchell has said so well, “The body of Christ offered to Christians in consecrated bread and wine is not something but someone.”



Thomas P. Rausch, S.J. is the Emeritus T. Marie Chilton Chair of Catholic Theology. His latest book is *Global Catholicism: Profiles and Polarities* (Orbis Books).



5. You might enjoy listening to this setting of Psalm 16 by John Foley SJ:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRMw4gE7tw>

6. Fr. Trevor Trotter is a Columban and the Regional Director of Oceania. In the Columbans e-bulletin for November 2021, Trevor asks: *what do we think we are doing?*

I have been thinking that to be human means to be missionary. What do we think our lives are about? What does it mean to be human? What is my identity?

Take discipleship. What do disciples do? They follow Jesus. Sometimes they sit down and eat and talk with him, but you need to follow to be a disciple. You need to move with Jesus as the focus. We, as individual Catholics, as disciples of Jesus, follow him. Yes, follow his teaching and follow him as he eats, sleeps, and prays to know him. We become like him. In this way, we get to know the best way to be human.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we find the Christians being called followers of “the way”. Again, another movement word. Do we think of ourselves as being on a way? When we say we do things the Christian way, does this sit comfortably with us? What does it mean to say we do things the Christian way? I suppose it means we try to live as Jesus told us. Some of his teachings about what it means to be human are quite difficult to take on board. “Love your enemies” is the Christian way, but this is not so easy.

**The final movement metaphor is synodal. I did not imagine that my life could be described as synodal, but it seems to me that this is what Pope Francis is proposing. His talk about synodality is not just about how we do church “stuff”. He is saying this is the way that all humans can live together and move forward together. Again, notice the movement words. Life is about moving, like a missionary.**

Our Christian tradition says that life is about moving by following Jesus and developing a way of living with people who go forward through synodal decision making. Where are we moving to? God! God started us on the way. God is always with us, and God is where we finally come to. Amen





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Gates open at 3pm

**Saturday 27 November**

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Our *thanks* to Helena Lagas for repainting the parish Easter Candle for our 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

The original was accidentally knocked over at Peak Crossing church when a baptism was being celebrated.

I am grateful to Helena for being willing to fix this up.

Have a great week ahead!

*John*  
pastor, Boonah Catholic community.



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