# Risen Christ

All Saints - Year A

31 October & 1 November 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 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

> 'How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

## Reflection: Break Open the Word 2026

Jesus' teaching in the famous beatitudes would have been surprising for the crowd of disciples on the hillside. It is a reversal of expectation.

It is a revelation for us today on the solemn feast of All Saints. Yes, some of the saints are great heroes, martyrs and others who did extraordinary deeds. But mostly the kingdom of heaven is peopled with the poor, the gentle, those who mourn or who hunger and thirst for justice; there we find the merciful, the pure in heart and peacemakers.

To become saints, we do not need to change the world or be famous; we do not need to be powerful or brilliant. This gives us hope for all those who have gone before us and helps us to shape our priorities.

The gospel and the feast day are given to us to encourage us and to put hope in our hearts. This is the spirit in which the words are to be read.

*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

### *Parish Priest*

*Michael F. Sierakowski* - **Moderator**
michael.sierakowski@cam.org.au

***Parish Office*** *- all correspondence to:*
Risen Christ Parish Office
86 Mayona Road, Montmorency Vic 3094
(03) 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 Hours
*Kerry Mash* - Wed & Fri 10am-3pm

website: www.melbcatholic.org/risenchristparish

Please send bulletin items to: 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

**RECONCILIATION**
available half an hour before
any weekday or weekend Parish Mass

| Collections: 11 & 18 October 2026 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Thanksgiving** | Cash<br>Electronic | $1,377.00<br>$8,781.17 |
| **Presbytery** | Cash<br>Electronic | $1,524.25<br>$230.00 |
| ***Catholic Mission*** | | $1,000.00 |

| Thanksgiving Offering | |
|---|---|
| **Month** | **Total** |
| July | $19,824.17 |
| August | $21,312.57 |
| September | $19,589.17 |

## Risen Christ Parish Calendar of Events

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Saturday** | **31st** | |
| *6:00pm* | *Mass* | *Montmorency* |
| **Sunday** | **1st November - All Saints** | |
| *8:30am* | *Mass* | *Montmorency* |
| *10:00am* | *Mass* | *Eltham* |
| 12:00pm | Baptisms: Sophia & Amelia | Eltham |
| **Monday** | **2nd** | |
| *2:00pm* | *Mass* | *St Vincent's Care, Eltham* |
| 7:00pm | RCIA Class | Eltham |
| **Tuesday** | **3rd** | |
| *9:30am* | *Mass* | *Montmorency* |
| 10:00am | Rosary | Montmorency |
| 10:00am | Craft Group | Montmorency |
| 2:00pm | Bethany Small Church Community | Montmorency |
| **Wednesday** | **4th** | |
| 6:30am | Meditation | Montmorency |
| 9:30am | Liturgy of the Word with Communion | Eltham |
| 1:00pm | Kairos Small Church Community | Montmorency |
| **Thursday** | **5th** | |
| 9:30am | Liturgy of the Word with Communion | Montmorency |
| 10:30am | ASRC Food Collection | Montmorency |
| 2:30pm | Meditation | Eltham |
| **Friday** | **6th** | |
| *9:30am* | *Mass* | *Eltham* |
| **Saturday** | **7th** | |
| *6:00pm* | *Mass* | *Montmorency* |

## *Thanksgiving*

Dear Parishioners,

Following is a list of ways in which you can give towards the running of our Parish:

- A) EFTPOS terminals
- B) scan the QR code (https://bit.ly/45ifhRp) and 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 Liam & Natalia Park, Baby Margot Brady, Chiara Sansonsetti (7 years old), Kiera Taylor (9 years old), Peter, Stephen Andrew, Des Arneson, Bill Boyce, Penny Boyce, Maria Bredle, Vincent Cipolletta, Nora Edmond, Monivic Fanlo, Michelle Hogan, Pat Hosmer, Siobhan Lappin, Georgina Lynch, Mary Luttick, Cindy & Ed Morrissey, Bernard Murray, Beth Scott, Audrey Tunks, Nicholas Turnbull, Jeanne Vanderwert, Noel Vincent*

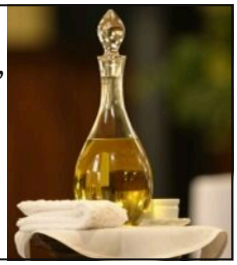
For those whose **anniversaries** are at this time:

*Carlo Bergamo, Kevern Billings, Antonio Chincarini (jnr), Bernard Edmond, David Engebretson, Philip Ferrarotto, Bill Gayfer, Rudolf Jakubik, Betty Lord, Frank Paoli* (10 yr anniversary), *Valeria Perosin*

**To include an anniversary, please contact the Parish Office on 9435 4742 or risenchrist.parish@cam.org.au**



Dear Parishioners,
from next weekend, all November Masses,
weekday & weekend,
the Sacrament of Anointing
will be offered to everyone
at the conclusion of our
Parish Celebrations of the Eucharist.



## *November Remembrances ...*

Ryszard, Teresa & Zbigniew Cichaki; Anthony & Elizabeth Corera; Maria, Janina & Vladyslaw Rygala; Janina Wrzeszcz



## Purchase a Caritas Australia Global Gift this Christmas

With Caritas Australia's Global Gifts, you can give a meaningful Christmas card that helps create lasting change for vulnerable communities around the world. Whether you're shopping for family, friends or colleagues, you'll find a gift that continues to make a real difference long after Christmas Day.

Each Global Gift card you buy helps make the world a little better every day. Your gift can change lives by putting food on a family's table or helping a young girl stay in school. Give a gift this Christmas that reflects the true spirit of giving and makes a lasting impact.

Browse the full range of Global Gifts: https://www.caritas.org.au/global-gifts




| Roster for week ending 1 Nov 2026 | |
|---|---|
| Clark, Helen | H10:00 |
| Cotter, Anne | CLNR |
| Cseh, Ferenc | E10:00 |
| Dunell, Linda | ASE |
| Dunell, Linda | E10:00 |
| Kenny, Michael | W6:00 |
| Kulkens, Mark | W6:00 |
| Mallia, Anthony | E10:00 |
| Reardon, Kathy | E10:00 |
| Reardon, Peter | C10:00 |
| Reardon, Peter | E10:00 |
| Rough Family | PRSE |
| Rygala, Ella | H10:00 |
| Sullivan, Frances | W8:30 |
| Volunteer please | H10:00 |
| Volunteer please | H1000 |
| Williams, Anne | PRYR |
| Williams, Peter | PRYR |
| Wood, Gerard | CLNR |
| Wood, Marie | W8:30 |
| Zylstra, Diane | R10:00 |

| Roster for week ending 8 Nov 2026 | |
|---|---|
| Beckford, Peter | PRYR |
| Cotter, Anne | W8:30 |
| Donnellan, Denice | E10:00 |
| Furtado, Lorraine | C10:00 |
| Goodison, Pauline | CLNR |
| Haines, Geoff | E10:00 |
| Haines, Jan-Marie | E10:00 |
| Hannon, Genni | ASRC |
| Hannon, Kevin | ASRC |
| Love, Philip | W8:30 |
| Maloney, Jo | W6:00 |
| McCarthy, Bernie | W6:00 |
| Reardon, Kathy | ASE |
| Reardon, Kathy | H10:00 |
| Reardon, Peter | H10:00 |
| Roy, Yvonne | CLNR |
| Roy, Yvonne | E10:00 |
| Ryan Family | PRSE |
| Scully, Greg | H10:00 |
| Scully, Greg | R10:00 |
| Scully, Helen | H10:00 |
| Smith, Neil | E10:00 |
| Wood, Marie | CLNR |

ASE=Altar Society, Eltham; C=Commentator; CLNR=Cleaner; R=Reader; E=Eucharistic Minister; H=Hospitality; PRSE=Pilgrim Rosary Statue, Eltham; W=Minister of the Word

# Am I being fully myself?

In the third of our series, a permanent deacon and father of three wonders whether he might one day be ordained a priest / **by Simon Tierney**

**In 2018**, one of my daughters said: "You don't know you need to go to Lourdes until you've been to Lourdes. We should go to Lourdes as a family." So, we went. My daughters, Hannah, Rebekah and Keziah, had been diocesan pilgrimage helpers since secondary school. While in Lourdes, there was no "falling off a horse on the road to Damascus" but, travelling home, I wondered what paperwork was involved in offering to serve as a permanent deacon.

When I told my wife, Anne, what I was thinking, her response was: "What took you so long?" She'd seen it coming. That same day my daughters returned from a Lourdes reunion and asked: "Daddy, have you thought about becoming a deacon?" Strange! So, I filled in the paperwork, met the diocesan director for diaconal formation, and it was as if I had put on a new pair of shoes. I've never yet found a good reason to take them off.

I was born, an only child, into a typical Irish Catholic family. I went to Catholic schools but was passive about religion growing up. I'd have described myself as a slightly academic agnostic, with no concept of a relational God. While studying computer science at university, I looked at other religions and faiths, different branches of Christianity and Islam from an academic perspective.

Then I had a "born-again" experience. Jesus appeared to a 70-year-old version of me in a dream. I was carrying regret, shame and guilt, and I said to him: "All my life I've been carrying baggage from my early years, and you are supposed to be merciful, but you've never taken these things away from me." Jesus said: "Did you ever ask me to?"

So, I asked him to, and my life changed. Prayer was different. Reading the Bible was different. Jesus was real and relational. It was like going from black-and-white television to colour with surround sound.

I started looking into monastic life and later spent three months with the Jesuits in Zimbabwe. Eventually, I went to the English College in Rome, training for the priesthood. After two years, I sensed I was not called to be a priest, or not yet.

I returned to England, began a career in software and met Anne. We married



Simon Tierney: 'I love every aspect of being a deacon ... especially spiritual accompaniment'

had three incredible daughters and a blessed life. My family have been wonderfully supportive of my diaconal journey. Anne came to my university lectures throughout my three years of formation, read all my essays and continues to be the first critical listener to my homilies. Her only concern was that she shouldn't become a stereotypical "vicar's wife", so we've been careful not to turn outselves into a double act.

I love every aspect of being a deacon, from baptisms to weddings, cremations and preaching to hospital chaplaincy. But perhaps I especially value spiritual accompaniment, journeying and praying with individuals and recognising the image and likeness of God in them.

During my diaconal formation, a role came up as Catholic chaplain at a high-security psychiatric hospital. The men I accompanied, some through a screen for safety, weren't generally interested in intellectual theology. They wanted to share their stories, and I needed to enter their realities.

One patient believed he was Jesus. He pointed to his hands and said: "Can you see where the nail marks are?" Rather than say "there are no nail marks", I said: "How do those nail marks make you feel?" Another patient said: "Could we pray for my brother?" I asked: "Is there anything in particular you'd like to pray about for him?" He replied: "Well, I killed him." So I said: "We can still pray for him."

Those encounters taught me that people do not always need answers. Often, they simply need someone willing to stay, listen and pray with them.

I was recently asked about my opinions on women becoming deacons. I asked several parishioners too, and their viewpoints were varied. Speaking personally, I'd have no problem with women living that vocation, but I understand there are differing perspectives that the Church needs to discern.

**A related issue** is how parish communities will be sustained going forward. In my deanery we have four parish communities, four parish priests, two supplementary religious priests from abroad, three deacons and seven church buildings, covering 65 square miles. In 10 years time, if nothing substantially changes, excluding the supplementary priests, we will have just one priest and one deacon under 75. It feels to me that we are heading for a cliff edge.

We need to pray for priestly vocations and be open to clerical help from countries with more priests. But supposing deacons and lay people were encouraged to do more, could that help?

Practically, perhaps, one Sunday a community might have Mass and the following Sunday a Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion service led by a deacon or an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Instead of reducing services proportionally to the number of priests, parish communities could retain continuity of Sunday worship with both forms of celebration.

I would further suggest that permanent deacons could be ideal candidates to become "sacramental" priests. They could celebrate the Eucharist, hear Confessions and anoint the sick, while continuing to minister in ways similar to their existing diaconal roles rather than necessarily taking on the full administration of a parish. I believe many parishioners have the professional skills suited to administering a parish. We also know that the Church can ordain married former Anglican clergy as priests, so I wonder whether someone like me might be ordained as a priest in the future, continuing principally in hospital chaplaincy and spiritual accompaniment. I suggest priests and deacons focus on what only they can do sacramentally and empower laity to support them. Again, something for the Church to discern.

In the meantime, two years after ordination, I do my best to minister to the people the Holy Spirit places in front of me. I don't ask: "Have I done the right thing becoming a deacon?" I ask: "Am I being fully myself?"

*As told to Maggie Fergusson.*

# A Church on the path of healing

The bishops, priests and lay people who gathered recently for the climax to a five-year process of consultation believe the beleaguered Irish Church has reached a turning point / **by Sarah Mac Donald**

**As the dust begins** to settle following the unprecedented National Synodal Assembly, Gerry O'Hanlon SJ is clear that what took place in Gormanston, Co. Meath last week will come to be seen as "a milestone" in the renewal of the Irish Church.

A measured reformist voice in the Irish Church over several decades, Fr O'Hanlon told me that the assembly, which drew together 300 delegates from across the island of Ireland, is not an endpoint. "It was a significant step forward on the journey towards the sort of Church that God expects in the third millennium." He was "particularly heartened" by the endorsement of the assembly by Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Mario Grech. "Our bishops have regained a lot of credibility through this whole synodal process. They have offered very good leadership," O'Hanlon said.

The bishops, priests and lay people who gathered on 17 October represented all aspects of the cross-border Church. They were there to consider and vote on 35 proposals set out under the Five Pathways for Renewal outlined in the document "Is Not This What God Asks of You?" (Micah 6:8), published in September. The outcomes, voted on via an electronic voting system, were the culmination of a five-year journey of consultation and discernment.

During a break in the closed-door proceedings, Archbishop Martin told me that Cardinal Grech, who addressed the delegates by a pre-recorded video message, had acknowledged that the Irish Church was doing "something very special". Martin pointed out that "most people are not aware that there are 26 bishops present. They are no more visible than any of the lay people."

Janet Forbes, the youth director for the archdiocese of Armagh and a member of the national synodal pathway team, studied the ecclesiology of Pope Francis and synodal reform under Venezuelan theologian Dr Rafael Luciani at Boston College. She told me that the vision of Church she saw emerging in Gormanston chimed with what was heard along the journey since 2021. "The question today is, what is God asking of the Church in Ireland? This is a process of testing if this is definitely what God has said to us. If it is, then the next question becomes: how do we go about realising this vision?"

It now falls to the bishops, with the priests and the lay people, to take the process forward. "The bishops must receive this and do our own discernment," Archbishop Martin explained. "We are going to need help from our own agencies, councils and commissions to see what is new and what affirms what is already happening in our parishes and dioceses, and what are the new things we could help with. But the bishops can't do this on their own. The people have the charisms and gifts - it is they who are going to help us reach families, reach women, reach the excluded, the victims and survivors of abuse."

While some dimiss the Irish synodal pathway as "much ado about nothing", O'Hanlon insists this is "a transformative moment" for the Irish Church. "The working document made the point that the Irish Church has been too inward-looking; it needs to look outwards," he told me. "Pope Francis talked about a 'missionary impulse'; the first propsal passed at the assembly was about building communion with those who struggle to see the relevance of the Church." One of the proposals receiving the most support was "to engage with Irish society in discerning the common good", including addressing issues such as economic inequality, poverty, the treatment of migrants and care for the Earth.

**At the core** of the thrust for renewal is the emphasis on baptism as the primary sacrament, coming before any distinction of office, role or hierarchy. One of the recommendations to receive the most support was that healing and reconciliation in the wake of abuse revelations should be a priority. This was "highly recommended" by 67 per cent of the delegates & "recommended" by 22 per cent. For Fr O'Hanlon, this was "heartening". It was about more than just the healing of the survivors and their families. "It's arguably the even greater healing needed in the Church itself, which has been deeply traumatised by the truth-telling of victims and survivors ... This is a wound we will carry with us indefinitely. The fact that that is built into the renewal gives me hope."

There was some surprise at the mixed levels of support some proposals in relation to women in the Church received. Only 12 per cent of delegates "highly recommended" the establishment of a national office for women to foster greater inclusion. Many interpreted this as a lack of support for women, but, as O'Hanlon explained, "there was a fear that by setting up a national office for women it would mean the issue would be sidelined rather than mainstreaming it in all church activities, documents and statements". A member of the group behind the proposal stressed that this had not been their intention and the proposal was "effectively withdrawn".

O'Hanlon was surprised that other proposals concerning the role women should play in the Church "scraped by with rather tenuous majorities". While 42 per cent of delegates highly recommended that there should be ongoing exploration of women's ministry, including the diaconate, 27 per cent did not recommend it. "That's telling us something very important about the Church," he told me. "I was struck by the number of women who voted against these proposals ... A real shift of the imagination is required."

He suggested that Proposal 9 on women's ministry was well worth reading because of its use of the term "advocacy". "It's not that we are just looking into this; we are arguing for ongoing exploration [and wider] ecclesial discernment - in other words, this should be brought to Rome and to other Churches. Although the proposal explicitly says 'women's ministry, including the diaconate', the body of the text refers to women's ordination and discerning what may be possible: there is a real opening there to ordination."

**Sarah Mac Donald** writes about the Church in Ireland for The Tablet.

## Prayers of the Faithful for 1st November 2026 - All Saints

**Leader:** On this Feast of All Saints, we remember those who have gone before us in faith and who now share in the joy of God's kingdom. Inspired by the Beatitudes, let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

May the Church through the prayers of the saints, be faithful to the teaching of Jesus so that the church may always reflect His likeness and proclaim the holiness of God in their words and actions.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

For our parish community: inspired by the lives of the saints, may we strive to live the Beatitudes in our daily lives, treating everyone with love and respect.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

Let us pray for all students undergoing examinations: Lord, pour out your spirit of wisdom on these students. Help them to remain calm, to attend carefully to the questions asked, to think clearly, to remember accurately, and to express themselves well. May your love be upon them, O Lord, as they place their trust in you.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

We pray for peace on earth, that those in authority may follow the example of the saints who worked for peace and love. Let not the needy be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

In this month of November, we hold close to us the memory of those who have died and those who are listed in our Book of Remembrance. May they enjoy the fullness of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

Lord embrace and support all who are experiencing illness and those who care for them, especially those in our parish community. We ask that you bring them your healing, comfort and peace.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

For those who have died recently, for those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including *Carlo Bergamo*, *Kevern Billings*, *Antonio Chincarini (jnr)*, *Bernard Edmond*, *David Engebretson*, *Philip Ferrarotto*, *Bill Gayfer*, *Rudolf Jakubik*, *Betty Lord*, *Frank Paoli & Valeria Perosin*, and for those who have no one else to pray for them, that they may all be welcomed into God's eternal home.
*Let us pray to the Lord.* ***Lord, hear our prayer.***

**Leader:** Heavenly Father, on this feast of all saints, help us to follow their example of faith, hope and love. May we live according to the Beatitudes and one day share with the saints the fullness of joy in your heavenly kingdom. In the name of Christ our Lord.

**All:** ***Amen***

St Vincent de Paul Society VICTORIA *good works*

**CASH CASH CASH** Yes, as they say, 'cash is king'. From this weekend until all sold, our St Vincent de Paul members at Montmorency will be selling packs of Christmas Cards and handmade Christmas decorations and Christmas tree ornaments for very reasonable prices (mostly $5 or some at $10) before and after Masses at Monty. So, **bring along your cash** as we have no credit card machine. Many thanks to Lorraine Gioules for once again making such high quality items for sale to benefit those in need in our local community.

### Save the Date!

On Sunday 6 December we will be holding an Advent coffee catch up at SFX Monty after the 8:30am Mass. We would love for as many Parishioners as possible to hang around and enjoy meeting others in our wonderful community.

We are in need of one more coffee machine to borrow on the day and the owner willing to make coffees. (Under the supervision of Lenny!)

We are also planning on providing Christmas treats for all to enjoy. We would appreciate any offers to bring a plate of your favourite Christmas treat to share. For catering purposes, please let us know if you plan to contribute.

Any questions please contact:
Robyn 0409 254 611
Paul 0421 818 061
Kathleen 0417 617 044



# Children's Liturgy

**Draw a line from the first half of each beatitude to its correct ending.**



| | |
|---|---|
| Blessed are those who grieve... | ...they will be treated with mercy. |
| Blessed are the merciful... | ...they will be called God's children. |
| Blessed are those who make peace... | ...they will see God. |
| Blessed are those with pure hearts... | ...they will find comfort. |



## 40 years after St John Paul II's landmark gathering, religious leaders meet to pray for peace in Assisi

https://melbournecatholic.org/news/40-years-after-st-john-paul-iis-landmark-gathering-religious-leaders-meet-to-pray-for-peace-in-assisi



Today, 40 years after St John Paul II first gathered leaders of the world's religions in Assisi for a landmark day of prayer for peace, the World Day of Prayer for Peace is again being observed in the historic Italian city, marking the closing day of an international and interreligious peace gathering.

This year's annual meeting, which runs from 25 to 27 October, is the 40th in a series initiated by St John Paul II when, for the first time in history, representatives of all world religions were invited by the Pope to pray together for peace.

Among those inspired by that meeting was the Community of Sant'Egidio, a Catholic lay organisation, which since then has continued to promote what is known as the 'Spirit of Assisi' every year across Europe and beyond, including by organising the annual peace gathering in Assisi.

Marco Impagliazzo, president of the Community of Sant'Egidio, said during a press conference on 6 October at the Vatican that in Assisi, 'a new and creative perspective for interreligious dialogue was born. Over the past 40 years, that spirit has become a necessity in a globalised world.'

Today, Impagliazzo said, the world is 'very frightened, fearful and torn apart, prey to nationalism and racism - a world that needs to be reunited once again.'

'But', he continued, 'if there is no spiritual unification of the world - and this is the message of Assisi and of all religions - it will be difficult for men and women to unite and to think of themselves as "brothers and sisters to all", as Pope Francis would say.'

The title of the Assisi 2026 meeting - 'Disarmed and Disarming Peace' - comes from Pope Leo XIV's own words and the title of his recent book, *Disarmed and Disarming: Peace Is a Gift*, published by the Vatican Publishing House.

A total of 384 representatives of religions, culture and institutions from 53 countries are taking part in the event, with 155 speakers participating in 24 thematic forums, addressing subjects including peace and conflicts, prayer and economy, but also topics such as children and young people, the media, migration, Christian unity and contemporary martyrs.

While Pope Leo had originally been scheduled to attend the closing day of the gathering, the Vatican announced on 23 October that the Pope's trip to Assisi had been cancelled, following his doctor's advice, as he recovers from recent surgery for lung cancer.

During the visit, the Pope was slated to join Christian leaders in the Lower Basilica of St Francis for a prayer service alongside Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople.

Although he cannot travel, the Vatican said Pope Leo would send a message 'to the organisers, leaders and representatives of Christian denominations and religions', as well as to those attending the meeting.

The Pope's message will emphasise his conviction that 'the "Spirit of Assisi", dialogue and the search for words and gestures of peace are precious resources in an age of conflict,' the Vatican said. *(article continued on the above link)*

## Melbourne Synod 2026

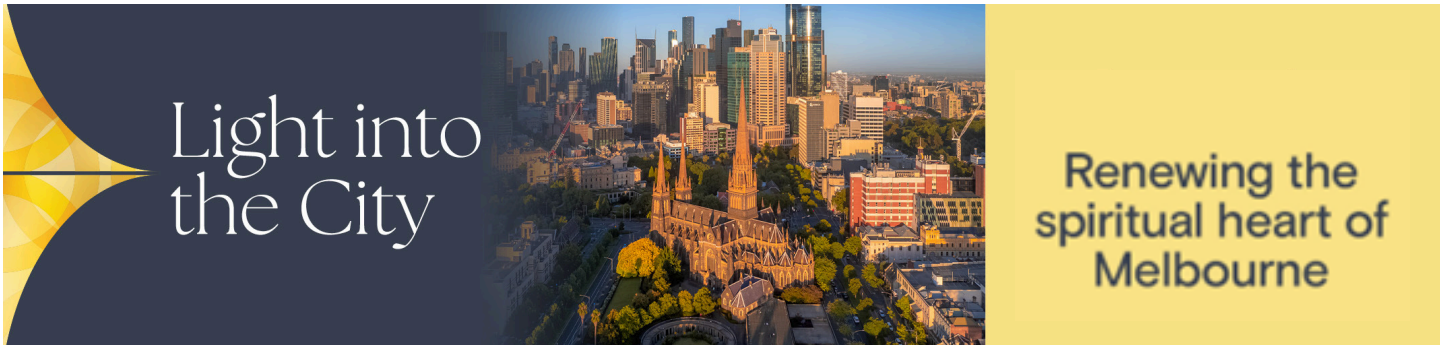
***What is the link between Vatican II and Synodality?***

***3. Dialogue as a Way of Being Church***

*Texts such as* Gaudium et Spes *emphasise dialogue - within the Church, with other Christians, and with the world. The Council called the Church to read the "signs of the times" and discern the Spirit's activity through attentive listening.*

Synodal link:

- *Synodality is a structured practice of listening, dialogue, and discernment.*
- *Conversations in the Spirit reflect* Gaudium et Spes' *vision of an engaged, listening Church.*




CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

## Melbourne Catholic Digest

### An invitation to surrender

***All of us***

God wants all of us. He invites us to surrender every part of our lives - the mundane, the messy and the marvellous - so that he might use all of it for his gracious purposes, even when we struggle to see how that might be possible.



On Thursday, founder of ICON Ministry Fr Rob Galea spoke at the final (and largest) Melbourne Catholic Professionals luncheon for 2026, sharing how God used him in his most vulnerable moment, transforming an experience of burnout and emptiness into one of renewal and inspiration.
https://melbournecatholic.org/news/spend-time-with-him-fr-rob-galea-on-burnout-renewal-and-building-for-eternity



This week, the bishops of Victoria have released a statement on the upcoming Victorian election. *Faith in Action: An election guide* invites Catholic voters to approach their choices at the polling booth from the perspective of their faith.
https://melbournecatholic.org/stateelection2026



As we prepare for nine ordinations next month - two to the priesthood and seven to the diaconate - we hear from two of the ordinands about what it means, and how it feels, to dedicate their lives to serving God in this way.
https://melbournecatholic.org/news/nine-to-be-ordained-this-november



And as we celebrate the 129th anniversary of the consecration of our own St Patrick's Cathedral, we revisit the remarkable story of how the modest contributions of thousands of ordinary Catholics helped to create one of Melbourne's most enduring and inspiring landmarks. Happy birthday St Pat's!
https://melbournecatholic.org/news/looking-up-at-st-pats-the-cathedral-on-the-hill-celebrates-125-years



**God isn't finished with you: World Teachers' Day 2026** World Teacher's Day is celebrated in Australia this Friday. Michael McGirr reflects on his sometimes challenging experiences as a Religious Education teacher and the lessons he learnt along the way, including that 'school starts something but does not necessarily finish it', and that 'when it comes to education in faith, there is no one size that fits all'.
https://melbournecatholic.org/news/god-isnt-finished-with-you-world-teachers-day-2026



**Pope invites youth to bring wounds, dreams to Seoul as WYD registration opens** Next year's World Youth Day is not a sightseeing excursion but an opportunity for Catholic youth to deepen and renew their faith, Pope Leo XIV said.
https://melbournecatholic.org/news/pope-invites-youth-to-bring-wounds-dreams-to-seoul-as-wyd-registration-opens

https://melbournecatholic.org/news