

Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 9am (see below).

Dear All,

I am writing this slightly earlier than normal in the week as we have Chuck Samatte's funeral on Friday.

Total Silliness – Thoughts about a Bishop's Zucchetto or Skull Cap

Previously I might have spoken to you about Bishop Christopher in England. Firstly, as Monsignor Christopher Budd, he was the rector [principle] of the seminary where I did my priestly formation. Then, not long before I finished my studies he became the bishop of my home diocese, so he was the bishop who ordained me a priest. He retired a few years ago but still lives in our diocese back in the South-West of England.

Bp. Christopher is a wonderful and kind person, a real father figure not only to me and the other priests, but while he was bishop he was also a great shepherd for everyone in the diocese.

While I could talk endlessly about his goodness, here I want to share just one part of his life: how he knew that we are all frail humans who make mistakes, and his focus was never on retribution but rather on healing and forgiveness. While these are grand concepts, someone who lives by these values so often shows them by very small signs that show that the bigger concept of acceptance was always there.

One of the small ways that Bp. Christopher lived out his healing and reconciling ministry was by the way he celebrated Mass. I have been with bishops (and priests) who, if someone – *an altar server, a reader or musician* – does something wrong during Mass will clearly show annoyance and give a withering glance which makes it clear that they were 'displeased'! Bp. Christopher would never do this; rather he would either let it go, or if needed give assistance to get it right, which would then be followed by a warm smile that said, "Don't worry, it's okay."

This meant that those around the Bishop could be that bit more relaxed during the Mass. So I have to say, it was much easier to pray when one was on the sanctuary with Bp. Christopher than it was with a lot of bishops. And because Bp. Christopher was kindly, those around him at Mass so often wanted to do their best and reciprocate his kindness. Now this might seem small and silly, but one of the ways I wanted to show that I was trying to make Mass for Bp. Christopher as easy as possible was by taking care of his skull cap.



Pope Francis has his white 'zucchetto' or skull cap inspected by a child he took in his arms.

As a sign of their office bishops wear a violet (purple) skull cap, cardinals a scarlet (red) cap and the Pope a white one. *(These are technically called a 'zucchetto', but in English 'skull cap' describes them well.)* The skull cap is worn under their mitre [big pointy hat]. While the mitre is worn at the beginning and end of Mass; the skull cap is worn throughout the Mass except when the bishop is at the altar for the Eucharistic

Prayer. Accordingly, after offering the gifts and before starting the preface the bishop removes his skull cap, but then there is the question of where to put it. More often than not, bishops remove the cap and very unobtrusively fold it in half and place it on the corner of the altar. The bishop will next need the skull cap when he sits down after Communion, so at some point I would try to remember to move Bp. Christopher's skull cap from the altar to his chair.

Often, when I have been with a bishop, I have looked at this small violet cap. While I know that I will never become a bishop, I have wondered what it would be like to be one. And for me, you can keep the Bishop's ring, the mitre, the crozier [shepherd's staff] and the purple (or violet) cassock; it is the small skull cap that would be the item I think I would cherish most. I am not sure why, perhaps it is the idea that Jesus would have worn a Jewish version of the skull cap.

Many years ago when I was a guest at a Jewish synagogue in Britain I was given a lovely blue Jewish skull cap *(again technically called a 'kippah')* that I have treasured. I wore it extensively when I was in the Holy Land and I now keep it in my prayer corner, but I have never worn it at Mass. And I must admit that sometimes I have wondered what it would be like to wear a skull cap and to remove it when I moved to the altar. I know I would forget to take it off!

Then a few weeks ago, in these odd covid days, I put on my face mask as I went down to collect the offertory gifts from the table in front of the altar. I kept it on while presenting the gifts on the altar because the altar server was relatively close to me. But at the start of the preface I removed it. And what did I do with it? I unobtrusively folded it in half and placed it on the corner of the altar. At this point I looked down at this small bit of fabric and I got the giggles! God hasn't given me a skull cap (aka, made me a bishop) but has given me a face mask; so what is God trying to tell me?

Sometimes I do think that God looks on my silliness and gives me a quick jab in the ribs to straighten me out, and this was one of those moments.



My Jewish skull cap and my face mask, both folded in half on the corner of the altar.

Cooler Weather

Looking ahead to next weekend, ‘The Weather Network’ is predicting that by the weekend it will be cool and wet. This is good news for those being effected by the wildfires, but it also means that you should put an extra layer on when you come to church. We are still being asked to leave the doors of the church open while we celebrate Mass to allow as much movement of air as possible, so for the next few weeks the churches might seem noticeably chilly! Therefore, please be prepared for this and put on an extra layer. It is a bit miserable sitting on a hard bench **and** being cold!

Chrism Mass

On Tuesday of this week my home diocese will be having their Chrism Mass. Normally this Mass would be the week before the Easter weekend and at this Mass the Holy Oils to be used in the diocese for the anointing of the sick and for Baptism and Confirmation would be blessed. Also at this Mass the priests renew their priestly vows. I will be joining my brother priest via the internet for this Mass. So on Tuesday please do say a prayer for Bp. Mark and all the priests of the Plymouth diocese.

And Finally

As I write we are putting together a funeral service for Chuck Samatte for Friday morning in Sparwood. At this service we will obviously also be including Russell, his son. Our prayers are very much with the whole family at this time.

With many thanks, Fr. David

Link to Sunday Mass

To get the link to our 9am Sunday morning Mass please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

info@holyfamilyfernie.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Please note that in September Zoom are mandating that we use “passcodes” for our broadcasts, so that will need a Meeting ID and a Passcode to log in. Hopefully we will still be able to provide you via e-mail with a ‘clickable’ link that contains both of these.
