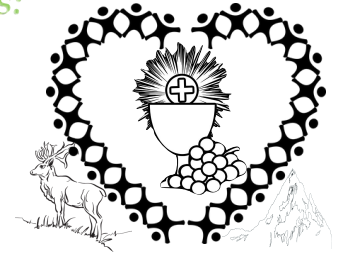


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

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



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).

7th/8th August

Dear All,

In the Elk Valley this past week we have had a lot of hot sunshine and a very much appreciated drop or two of rain. I was part of a zoom meeting with my diocese back in Britain and I was talking about the blessing of rain, and as another storm passed over them, they said, “We don’t see rain in that way!” But yes, very often rain can be a real blessing. The Old Testament prophet Joel (*one of the ‘minor’ prophets whose book is placed between Hosea and Amos*) writes:

*Rejoice in the Lord your God
for he has given you an autumn rain of righteousness
and he will send the rains down for you, autumn and spring rain as of old.
(Joel 2:23)*

So rain is not only a blessing but a symbol of righteousness! I am sure this will please those living in Ireland, parts of Britain and indeed Vancouver Island!

Saint John Vianney on Prayer

St. John Vianney, also referred to as the “Curé d’Ars” (i.e. the parish priest of Ars), is the patron saint of parish priests and his feast day was last Wednesday. As a priest I am very cheered by the fact that John Vianney was chosen to be our patron saint because his biography says,

“He was the son of a peasant farmer in France, and a slow and unpromising candidate for the priesthood; he was eventually ordained on account of his devoutness rather than any achievement or promise.”

So when I am feeling incurably “slow and unpromising” I must remember that instead of trying to be clever or impressive, I should just work on being devout!

In 1818 he was sent to be the parish priest of Ars, an isolated village some distance from Lyon, France, and remained there for the rest of his life, forty-one years. (*That was in the days when bishops didn’t keep moving their priests all the time!*)



St. Michael's in Sparwood seen in a rain puddle in the car park.

I mention him partly because of his feast day this last week, but also because he did some wonderful writings. Below I have included a passage that he wrote about prayer. This passage reminds us of a very simple idea, that of preparing for our times of prayer and particularly preparing for our times in church.

How often do we think that we should pray for a particular person or a particular situation? Perhaps it is an issue in our own life, or perhaps we have said to someone else that we will pray for them, or even, we might see something on the news that really touches us and we feel helpless, so again we turn to prayer. Now how many of these things do we remember when we come to church?

The danger *if we do this* is that we come to church with a ‘shopping list’ of items we want to ask God for; but the danger *if we don’t* is that we end up in church with our minds wondering aimlessly, and we might find ourselves thinking about our other shopping list: what we have to buy at the supermarket after Mass!

We are a ‘sacramental’ Church, that is, a Church that uses ‘material’ to convey the ‘spiritual’: bread and wine to bring Christ’s presence, oil to bring healing, the laying on of hands to confer the Holy Spirit. With this in mind I am all the time saying to people, I will write that name or that intention down on a bit of paper and put it on the altar while I am saying Mass, and often this means so much more than a simple, “I will pray for you”. The tangible is the vehicle of the intangible; the visible bit of paper points towards the invisible communication with God.

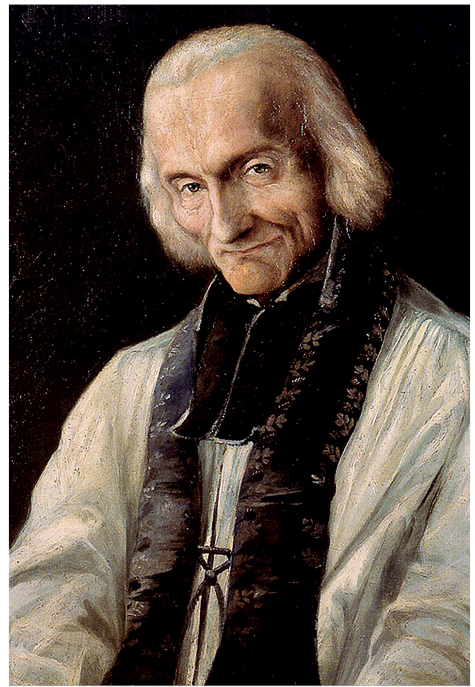
You too can say, I will write that down and hold it in my hand at Mass, or while I am saying the rosary, or I will put that bit of paper in my prayer book.

And for those for whom bits of paper are just so old hat, then do you have a ‘prayer’ category in your ‘things to do’ list on your favourite electronic device?

And if all else fails, write it on the back of your hand!¹

Catholic Women’s League of Canada

On Monday of this coming week five hundred Catholic women and guests will gather virtually for an on-line meeting – this is replacing their normal annual convention. This will be the first national coming together of the league since the start of the pandemic, and it will take as its theme, “Care for Our Common Home”.



*Portrait of
St Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney,
Curé of Ars (1786 - 1859).*

¹ **Health Warning:** *I was once told off by a receptionist when I wrote my next appointment on the back of my hand, and I got a long lecture about how the skin absorbs liquids and then a list of all the harmful ingredients in ink! So please use skin safe ink!!!*

Very sadly they will not be having the usual array of guest speakers and so many of the other things that normally happen at national conventions that make them so much fun! This meeting will be very much fulfilling what is required in terms of reporting and elections. But with these out of the way, it does clear the path for the best CWL national convention ever which will be held in Kelowna in August 2022! (*Okay, perhaps I am a bit bias on this.*) But for those of us who are involved with the league, the end of this on-line meeting will mark the beginning of the countdown to our in-person and full blown convention in Kelowna.

I hope to be joining some members of the CWL executive in connection with this.

John's Gospel

As we return again to chapter six of John's gospel it is worth remembering that this whole scene is set at the time of Passover. John-the-Evangelist uses the different festivals of the Jewish people, as well as key symbols in Judaism, as part of his teaching. At Cana Jesus turns water, a the symbol of the life-giving Law, into the wine of the messianic wedding feast and the disciples see his glory (2:1–11). In the Temple the Jews cannot accept that his body, risen after three days, will replace the Temple (2:13–22). On a Sabbath, at the Pool of Bethesda he makes the Sabbath his own by working the cure of the sick man (5:1–18). Here in this passage which is set at the Passover Jesus shows that he, not the manna which Moses gave to their fathers in the desert, is the true bread from heaven (6:4–33). At the feast of Tabernacles, the festival of water, Jesus claims that his Spirit is the water which quenches all thirst (7:1–38). At the winter festival of Light Jesus claims to be the light of the world (8:12). Finally Jesus dies on the cross at the moment the lambs were being slaughtered for Passover (19:14).

So we should keep in mind that John is showing us how Jesus fulfils and supersedes the beliefs of Judaism and gives them a new and fuller meaning.

And Finally...

Thumper loves going out into the bush, he also loves sitting on my lap – which is getting increasingly difficult as he grows. But when he achieves both he is very grateful. And while I hate getting a big wet kiss, I know he is only showing his gratitude in his own way. So my hope for you this coming week is that someone you love will give you a kiss as big and as wet as the one I got!

With prayers,

Fr. David @ Thumper



Prayer by St John Vianney

My children, consider, a Christian's treasure is not on earth, it is in heaven. Well then, our thoughts should turn to where our treasure is. We have a noble task: that of prayer and love. To pray and to love, that is the happiness of us on earth.

Prayer is nothing else than union with God. When the heart is pure and united with God it is consoled and filled with sweetness; it is dazzled by a marvellous light. In this intimate union God and the soul are like two pieces of wax moulded into one; they cannot any more be separated. It is a very wonderful thing, this union of God with his insignificant creature, a happiness passing all understanding.

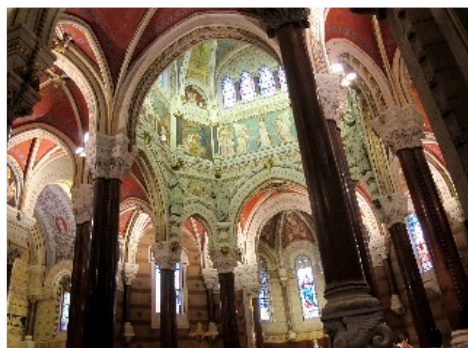
We had deserved to be left incapable of praying; but God in his goodness has permitted us to speak to him. Our prayer is an incense that is delightful to God.

My children, your hearts are small, but prayer enlarges them and renders them capable of loving God. Prayer is a foretaste of heaven, an overflowing of heaven. It never leaves us without sweetness; it is like honey, it descends into the soul and sweetens everything. In a prayer well made, troubles vanish like snow under the rays of the sun.

Prayer makes time seem to pass quickly, and so pleasantly that one fails to notice how long it is. When I was parish priest of Bresse, once almost all my colleagues were ill, and as I made long journeys I used to pray to God, and, I assure you, the time did not seem long to me. There are those who lose themselves in prayer, like a fish in water, because they are absorbed in God. There is no division in their hearts. How I love those noble souls! Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Colette saw our Lord and spoke to him as we speak to one another.

As for ourselves, how often do we come to church without thinking what we are going to do or for what we are going to ask [or for what we are going to thank and praise God!]. And yet, when we go to call upon someone, we have no difficulty in remembering why it was we came. Some appear [in church] as if they were about to say to God: 'I am just going to say a couple of words, so I can get away quickly.' I often think that when we come to adore our Lord we should get all we ask if we asked for it with a lively faith and a pure heart.

Left: Map of France showing Ars; Centre and Right: The inside and outside of the Basilica at Ars



Our churches are now open *without* a limit on numbers.
But Covid is still in the population – so caution is needed!



Zoom Links

Link to Weekend Masses

To get the link to our two weekend Masses 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

Audio Only

So don't forget, if you are off camping and your data plan does not allow you to watch Sunday Mass on Zoom without using up all of your month's data in one go, then you can always call in and listen. Again, e-mail the office for the link for this.

Chat:

Feel free to greet people via the chat when you join our broadcast, and if you are praying for anything particular, do share this with others on the Chat.

Hopefully our "1A - Chat (Co-Host)" will pick this up and pass it on to me.

If you don't want everyone to see your message you can send your message directly to "1A - Chat" and it will remain private.

Waiting Room:

Please note when you log on you will be put in a "waiting room".

Hopefully as soon as we see you waiting we will let you in.

If there is a bit of a delay, please just wait;

the co-host or myself will be with you as quickly as we can.

And for those who are with us in person, be careful:

Please continue to be careful when you are in church. Please sanctify – or do I mean sanitise – your hands, wear a mask when moving about the church as you might come within a 'breath distance' of others, and be conscious that others might have health vulnerabilities that you don't know about. ***Everyone still needs to be careful.***

