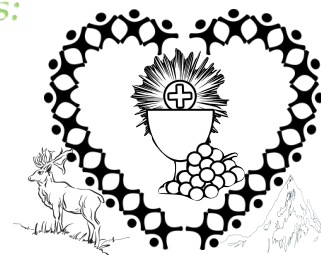


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*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).

4th/5th September

Dear All,

This week there are two main themes in this e-mail: the issue of how we as Christians see creation and the environment, and the upcoming federal election. And before you ask, this is not going to be an appeal to vote for the Green Party, or indeed, for any other party – that is your choice, but hopefully a thoughtful choice.

Our pausing and reflecting on our environment is meant to be part of a process that will change us and lead us to change our society for the better. And, of course, that is always our hope when we elect a new government, that it will build a better world, but in reality we usually get *some* improvements and *some* backward steps.

Season of Creation

Introducing the Season of Creation, Bishop Mark, Bishop of Plymouth writes:

As missionary disciples, we are invited to be part of the redeeming mission of Christ, and to approach our task with joy and gratitude remembering, “Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise.” (Popes Letter: Laudato Si’).

Nevertheless, as individuals and as a community of faith, we all know that there are serious environmental challenges. As Pope Francis reminds us, we are not ‘hearing the Cry of the Poor and the Earth’, and we “have grown indifferent to all kinds of wastefulness” (Fratelli Tutti).

Care of our common home, is not only a summons to profound ‘interior conversion’ but also a call to a ‘community conversion’. It is to be a lasting change of heart. We actively encourage individuals of all ages to take their own personal action, in solidarity with the poorest and most disadvantaged people, who experience disproportionately the negative impact of climate change and the exploitation of the earth’s resources.

So in our prayers at Mass this weekend we will be focusing particularly on our use of the gifts of the earth and our care for our environment.



Additionally, below is a link to a short talk (twenty-three minutes) by Sr. Margaret Atkins, OSA, a Canoness of St Augustine in the community at Boarbank Hall, Cumbria, England. She is a lecturer and author in theology with special interest in the ethics of the environment.

And if you want a ‘teaser’ for this talk, this is one of the quotes that she will give:

*“For the whole world gestures onward beyond itself,
it gestures towards a love that struggles to be born,
a love that it does not show but could,
it gestures towards a love that we do not show but might.”*

That is not a quotation from the Pope or any ancient theologian, but rather it was written by three modern scientists¹. The talk that Sr. Margaret gave was to the priests and parish leaders of the Plymouth diocese and so it refers specifically to the Plymouth diocesan policy on the environment, a new policy that was drawn up earlier this year. (*Link provided below.*) I have to say, it was very easy to listen to Sr. Margaret and without much effort to draw some simple thoughts out that helped me think about the environment and our relationship with creation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jB6xy-S4A4s>

Federal Election

This week I was in the offices of the Calgary Diocese and as always, my eyes were looking for any resources that might help the parish. With reference to the upcoming federal election, they were pointing people towards a Catholic website called ‘Catholic Conscience’ who have a webpage on our upcoming election:

<https://catholicconscience.org/canada/platform/>

I thought I might share this with you. On that site they list for each political party what their published views are on certain key ethical issues. As always the ‘life’ issues of abortion and euthanasia are there, but they also go beyond that to some other issues including human trafficking and bio engineering on human cells.

Hopefully this information will help you know which questions to ask each party, or at least, give you a statement to make to canvassers before you shut the door. So, for example, if someone from the Liberal party knocks on your door you could ask, “Why does your party declined to nominate candidates who oppose abortion or euthanasia?” That might be an easier question to ask than “What is your candidates views on abortion or euthanasia?” because firstly it shows that you know something about their party and secondly it puts them on the defensive rather than giving them a more open question.



¹ Andrew Briggs, Hans Halvorson, and Andrew Steane in
“It Keeps Me Seeking: The Invitation from Science, Philosophy and Religion

I have to admit that I have a notice on my door that says to political canvassers,
 “With all due respect, I don’t knock on your door and ask you about your **religion**,
 so please don’t knock on my door and ask me about my **politics**.”

I think I might need to change this to:

“If you knock on my door to ask me who I will be voting for,
 be prepared to clearly state your candidates views on:
 Abortion and Euthanasia.

If your candidate doesn’t recognise the sanctity of life in these two areas,
 then I don’t trust them to respect the dignity of the other stages of human life
 between conception and natural death.

Okay, not quite as pithy, but if you have a better two liner that the canvassers will read and take seriously, do let me know. Candidates do listen to the feedback they get from those who go door to door; not, ‘Oh, one person said...’ but rather, ‘I repeatedly came across people who were saying that this issue was important to them’. So it will take all of us to send a Christian message. Can you imagine if every Catholic challenged the canvassers on Pro-Life issues?

On a related note, the question that I would like to ask each candidate is what is their view on how the Provincial Government has handled the covid crisis, and very particularly, whether they thought it was necessary – *or indeed right* – to close the churches across the province while leaving pubs and other places open?

Time Away

In October I will be having some time away. I am off to the Catholic Women’s League Provincial Executive meetings, but I will also be seeing my family, particularly my Mum & Dad on their wedding anniversary, and there is a meeting on Vancouver Island I would like to attend, but I’m not sure yet. My time away is quite full but I might also be able to pop over the border to visit my Uncle Jack’s grave. And on that subject, thank you to everyone who sent messages of condolence for Jack; like so many others during Covid, I found it difficult not to be at his funeral and be with others who loved Jack to share together our grief.

For the two weekends I will be away an American priest, Fr. Marian, from Modesto, California, will be here for the weekend Masses. I will have more details in the weeks to come.

And Finally...

The question is: what is Thumper looking out for? The answer is in this week’s video (*but don’t hold your breath or get too excited!*)

With prayers, *Fr. David @ Thumper*



Season of Creation

Bishop Mark, the Bishop of Plymouth, writes:

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Later this year, from the 1st September to the 4th October, the Church celebrates the ‘Season of Creation’. It is an opportunity to review our practical and personal response in what we are doing to care for our Common Home, and to celebrate the gift of God’s beautiful Creation. It is also true that if we ignore the well-being of our planet, we assist the evils of our day which undermine the dignity of the human person - poverty, hunger, social isolation, economic deprivation, human trafficking, and modern slavery.

You will be aware that the G7 Conference was held in our Diocese in June and that the UN Climate Change Conference, COP26, will be taking place in Glasgow in November, and will be addressed by the Holy Father. This year especially then, we have become more conscious of the needs of our planet and its peoples. In addition, in April, we issued our first Diocesan Environmental Policy. So, step by step, we are seeking that conversion of heart which is so necessary to recognise more fully God as Creator of all that is, and our responsibility to exercise sensitive stewardship of the earth which the Lord has entrusted to us.

I am asking Parishes, therefore, to mark the first Sunday in the Season of Creation, the weekend of the 4th/5th September.

Thank you for your cooperation, as well as your endeavours, in this important part of our missionary discipleship.

Yours devotedly,

Rt Rev Mark O’Toole
Bishop of Plymouth

Plymouth Diocese Policy on the Environment can be read at:

<https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Diocese-of-Plymouth-Environmental-Policy-Final-Jan-2021.pdf>

Two years ago the Bishops of England and Wales wrote:

“In the light of Pope Francis’ teaching in his letter ‘Laudato Si’ and reaffirming our commitment to the principles outlined in our document “The Call of Creation, 2002”, the Bishops’ Conference recognises that humanity is in an unprecedented ecological crisis. There is a moral duty to act with urgency and enable the faithful to make informed decisions that care for creation and will assist in repairing the damage. We therefore urge the Church at all levels to continue to develop initiatives that care for our common home, and to identify individuals and groups to be advocates for this journey.”

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@holyfamillyfernie.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Audio Only

So don't forget, if you are driving on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning you can listen to Mass while you drive! (But please, if you are the driver then when you are praying don't close your eyes or try to kneel, rather show your love of God and neighbour by concentrating on the road at all times.)

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 "IA - 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 and it will remain private. I try to scan all the 'chat' at the end of Mass.

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 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.***

