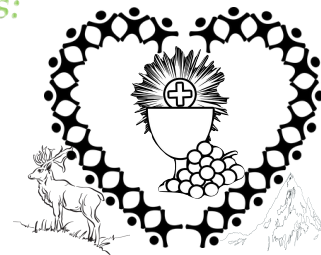


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*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).

25th/26th September

Dear All,

Phew! The Canadian federal election is over, and I wonder if we should call it a good election because everyone seems to be claiming success? Meanwhile, as the politicians ‘spin’ the results as victory for their party – *which ever party they belong to* – life goes on for the rest of us. My week was particularly busy with trying to get everything organised before I go away.

My Time Away

I am really quite excited about my time away. While I am gone Fr. Marian, an American priest, will be here with us.

I will leave after the Mass at Rocky Mountain Village on Wednesday. I am driving down to Maple Ridge for our ‘fall’ [that is, ‘autumn’] B.C. & Yukon Catholic Women’s League executive meetings.

While away I will be touching base with a few CWL members and some clergy, and my travels will take me to Victoria as well as the Lower Mainland. But I am really pleased because, if all goes well, I will be able to be with my parents for their wedding anniversary.

While I am away I do expect to have a few days when I won’t have any Church commitments, so I hope to have time with my family. The problem is that in the new reality we are living in where so much of what we do is done on-line, going away doesn’t make a lot of difference; here-or-far one is still expected to be available for meetings! So there is one day while I am away when I have three on-line meetings or webinars or whatever that are all parish or diocesan events; so not so much ‘home-from-home’ but ‘office-from-office’¹!



Thumper says that he can’t wait to go over to Vancouver Island because he has never been abroad before.

¹ Do you say ‘home-from-home’ in Canada? The Webster’s dictionary says: British expression meaning a place that is as pleasant and comfortable as one’s own home.

Weekend Zoom Masses

While I am away I will still be ‘zooming’ Masses at the weekend at the usual times. My plan is to do something slightly different for these Masses. I am still working on this and I have a long way to go, but here are my initial thoughts.

The celebration of Mass is so central to our weekly pattern of prayer that I feel it is worth pausing for a moment to revisit this; particularly what is at the heart of the Mass and what makes it a celebration that touches, and perhaps changes, our week.

Before the pandemic I think I had celebrated Mass on my own once or at the most twice in almost thirty years. And if you had asked me, I would have said that Mass was fundamentally a communal activity and so I didn’t understand how it could be celebrated by one person alone except as a matter of absolute necessity. Then during the pandemic celebrating Mass on my own became a regular event, and when I was in Elkford there wasn’t even anyone joining me by Zoom, so I was completely on my lonesome; I do look back on these Masses with great affection.

Perhaps I am revealing too much of my inner self, but I do wonder if sometimes at Mass I try just a little bit too hard? I somehow think that it depends upon me so I must put my whole self into it. And I do love Mass and I so much want others to have a good experience of Mass so I do seem to expend a tremendous amount of nervous energy in its celebration! At Elkford, alone in the church, I could let go of all of that and just be there with the liturgy. I did still try to make it as good as I could, not rushing or missing bits out; no, I tried to make it prayerful and as dignified as any other Mass, indeed without the need to be self conscious or to have to lead I could focus my efforts more clearly on trying to make it prayerful.

Don’t get me wrong, I love having a congregation with me at Mass; indeed, one of the things that really upsets me is when I am celebrating Mass and the congregation isn’t responding and isn’t seeming to engage in an obvious way. And what is more, there have been occasions when, but for the congregation, I wouldn’t have got through Mass! For example, when I was chaplain to a hospital that had a very busy Accident and Emergency unit, often I would turn up for the convent Mass with the nuns at 6:30am not having had any sleep all night. I remember once I was so tired that I had a total mind-blank, but the Mother Superior very gently, and in a kindly way, prompted me with whatever I needed to say through the Mass. So I don’t want in any way to down play the communal aspect of Mass; ‘communion’ with one another is there at its heart.

All these experiences have taught me that it is together that we celebrate the Mass, and yet at the same time, the focus of the Mass is always on Christ not on us. Mass, like all times of prayer, is a gift, and I believe that shared times of prayer are an even greater gift. So that is my starting point for the Zoom Masses while I am away, recognising that our ‘communion’ is both with God and with one another, but seeing that it is pure gift from God.

As I say, I am not yet sure exactly how I will make these Masses different; I will make it simple but beyond that I don’t know. I am working on this so stay tuned!

Rocky Mountain Village

These last two weeks we have had a lovely turnout at Rocky Mountain Village having a good number of residence attending. Sadly, due to the rules they have in the home, no visitors are allowed in to events for residents, so we cannot invite parishioners to be part of this weekly Mass.

Season of Creation

We have one more week left with the ‘season of creation’. It will draw to a close on Monday 4th October, that is, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. On that day, to mark the end of the season, I will be doing some sort of nature walk on Vancouver Island with the Victoria Diocesan Spiritual Advisor to the CWL.



During these five weeks I certainly have let myself be slightly more aware of the beautiful world around me, and not just the great outdoors - *which I always love* - but the idea that creation is a fragile gift that we don't just take, but we hold carefully and tenderly with loving hands, and then we thank God for this gift.

And Finally...

Thumper has had a good week. Pictured below left is Thumper with the Sparwood mountains as the backdrop, and below right is Thumper with Fernie and surrounding peaks as his backdrop. And while both of these were good runs, there is nothing quite like a run through the bush at night.... With prayers,

Fr. David @ Thumper



Our churches are still open *without* a limit on numbers.
But Covid is 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 away from the parish trying to get some down-time or some precious time with the family, you can still listen to Mass while you are on your travels! (You might think you are getting away from it all but now, thanks to Zoom, the parish goes with you wherever you run to!)

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 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.***

