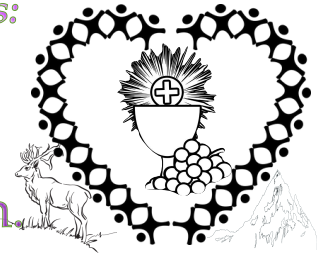


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*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).

5th/6th March 2022

Dear All,

During the last week I have been turning on the BBC news at every chance I can, but then fairly quickly turning it off again as I feel overwhelmed by the information and the scale of the disaster that is playing itself out in Ukraine. I really have been praying for the people of Ukraine and for peace in that whole region.

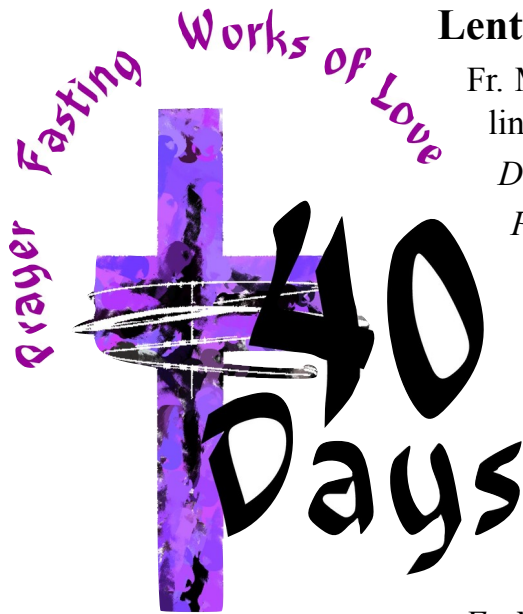
One commentator I was listening to said that either Russia is going to win and Ukraine would disappear, or Ukraine would win and this would mean that Russia as we know it today will disappear! The logic here was that if Russia does not succeed in its attempt to rid the region of democracy and freedom, then it will also lose the battle to keep democracy and freedom out of its own government system, and so the 'old' Russia we are now seeing will disappear. But the commentator also said that this end result would not come about simply by who is most successful militarily, but whatever follows the fighting will be the real battle ground for the ultimate victory. Even if the overwhelming might of the Russian army does overcome the much smaller Ukrainian forces, this will not produce a real peace, but rather a very fragile equilibrium that still has the potential of collapsing just as the former 'iron curtain' collapsed and ushered in a new time of real peace and prosperity for countries like East Germany and Poland.

I write this because I really do fear that the news from Ukraine will get worse and worse each day, and I don't want people to give way to despair; we must keep hope that God can turn even a disaster like this into God's glory.

One thought I had that did lift my spirits slightly was to ask myself how Pope John-Paul II sees these events from his place above? He saw such a long period of suffering in his home land as it was oppressed by the Soviet Union. But the time of suffering came to an end and freedom won through.



*A Sunflower – symbol of Ukrainian resistance
– with the backdrop of the Ukrainian flag,
and a heart.*



Lenten Talk Series

Fr. Mark from Britain has written to us giving us the Zoom link to the series of Lent talks. He says,

Dear Friends.

Please find attached the link for this year's Lent Series hosted by the parish of All Saints, Teignmouth, England. There are five talks this year but you are very welcome to join for as much or as little as you would like. The zoom link is below and it will be the same link for each of the five talks, becoming active at 6:45pm [British time, usually 11:45am Mountain time, but see below].

God bless you. As ever,

Fr. Mark

Mark Skelton is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

To get the link to our Lenten series of talks 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

Talk Details:

Each talk will begin at 12noon Mountain time until our clocks change, then they will be at 1pm for two weeks until the UK clocks catch up with ours, when they will revert back to 12noon. The talks will last for about 45 minutes with questions to follow. The Zoom link will be active fifteen minutes before the start of each talk.

12noon Mountain Time on:

Thursday 10th March – Fr. John Patrick Thomas, a priest from Wales.

1pm Mountain Time on:

Thursday 17th March – Fr. Anthony O’Gorman, a priest in the Plymouth Diocese.

Thursday 24th March – Sister Bernadette Reis,
who works in Vatican Radio and Media.

12noon Mountain Time on:

Thursday 31st March – Mr. Jeremy Skelton, Religious Education Advisor
to the Plymouth Diocesan Schools.

Thursday 7th April – Prof. Anthony Towey, director of the ‘Centre for Catholic Education, Research and Religious Literacy’
at St. Mary’s University in London, England.

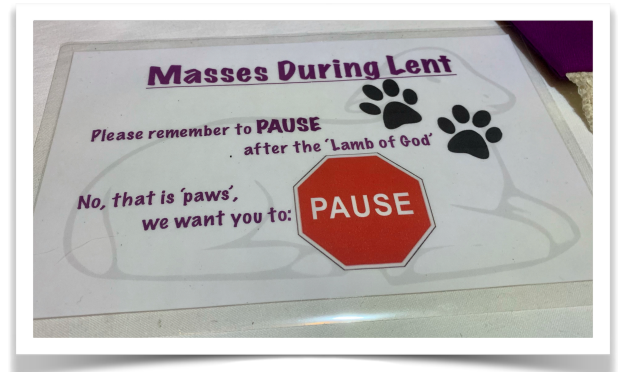
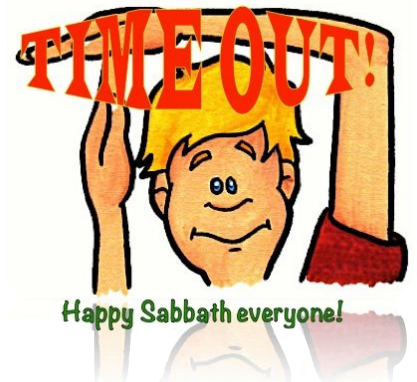
Celebrating the Gift of Lent

Over the last couple of weeks, as an appendix to this e-mail, I have added ideas that I hope might help you celebrate Lent as a time of renewal, a time of growing closer to God, and as a time of hope. Today I add my third and last thought.

But before we get to that, I have to say, the idea of ‘Sabbath’ or ‘making space for the Lord’ that I talked about last week has really taken my imagination and comes into my mind multiple times a day. So personally I am very happy to continue on with this idea and try to create many moments each day when I can push other things out and ask God to come in.

One thing I mentioned last week was about how, at Mass, I would be pausing before our reception of Communion. I did this in Sparwood on Tuesday for our Ash Wednesday service. I had had a funeral earlier that day and also an anointing of someone who is quite ill, and as I had been driving back I had been listening to the news from Ukraine, so my head was once again full! As I stopped before Communion for that minute or so, immediately all these memories came into my head and I thought, “I must pray for...” and I had to stop myself and say, “There is lots of time during Mass to pray for all these needs; what you have to do at this point is stop so that you can be in awe!” This was not easy. The next day at the two Ash Wednesday services it got easier, and by Wednesday evening I was more able to stop and simply say, “Lord, I just can’t fathom that you have chosen to come to me – I am in awe.”, and then be still for a few moments.

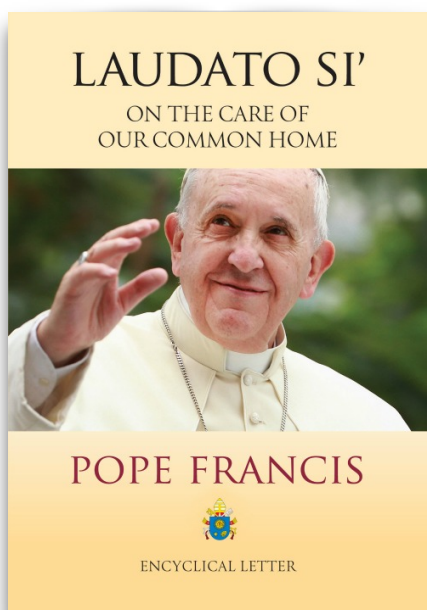
So I do hope that this short extra point of prayer will be of some use to you as well.



This Week's Lenten Ideas

My brain often seems to be racing and my head is full of ideas that seem to be somewhat tangential to other things in my life. Today's idea for Lent is definitely in that category: a tangential idea! But hopefully for one or two people it might present an interesting Lent path down which they want to do a little Lenten wandering!

And the subject is: how to be green for Lent! If nothing else has connected with you, and if you are still looking to take on something more during Lent, then have a read below about the issues raised by Pope Francis in his 2015 letter, *Laudato Si*, that was subtitled, “*On the Care of Our Common Home*”.



Rocky Mountain Village

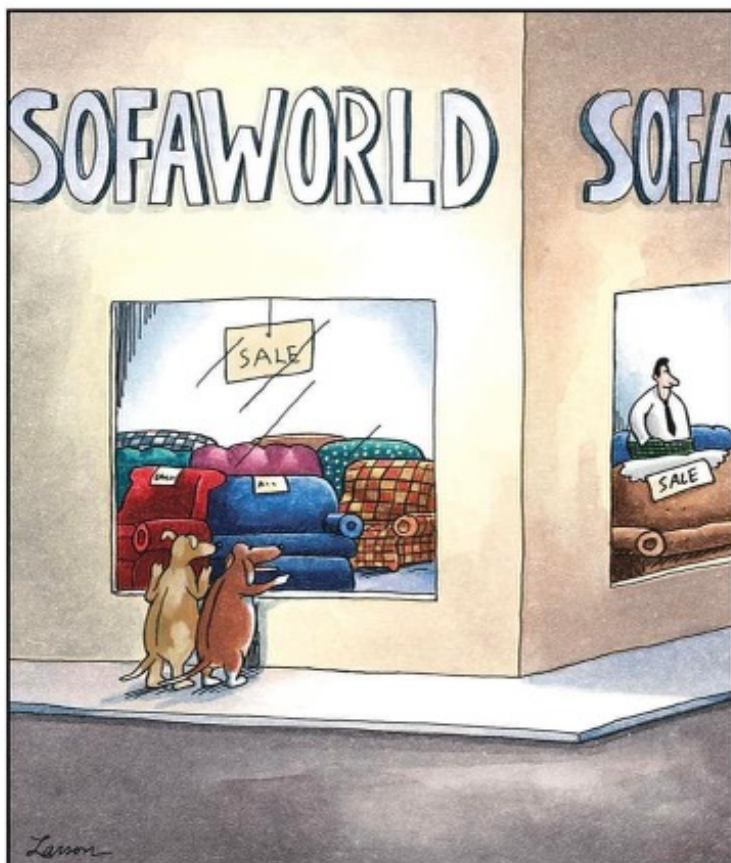
I just wanted to let people know that for a number of weeks now we have again been able to have Mass at our local care home, Rocky Mountain Village. No visitors are allowed to be part of this, it is only for residence, but this last week we had fifteen people take part, which was wonderful. It is so good to be able to celebrate Mass again with the residence.

As part of this, each week I have a Covid test so that I can go into the home. This has been interesting. The first week the nurse passed me the thing that I had to poke up my nose upside down, so after I had pushed up each nostril a couple of times, she said, “Now do that again but this time putting the right end up your nose.” The next week I was told to give the swab a good push up my nose, and of course, I pulled it out covered with blood. The joys of Covid testing.

And Finally...

Whatever you decide to do for Lent, please remember that it is not just about being strict and doing unpleasant things in the belief that somehow this is what God wants, rather the focus must be on pushing out what gets in our way of moving closer to God’s love. But there again, Fr. Mark reminded me of an old priest from our diocese of blessed memory who has now died, Fr. Pearse Bolster. He always used to say, “Have a miserable Lent.” With prayers,

Fr. David @ Thumper



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“Oo! I’d get up on that big fuzzy one!”

All this snow made the roads very difficult yesterday, but today Thumper seems happy with a bit more winter.

Our churches are open to those *without* any Covid symptoms.
But Covid is still a real threat – thus caution is needed!



Zoom Links – To Our Weekend Masses

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

Don't forget, if you don't have the internet but have a phone you can still listen to Mass via a phone call to our Zoom link.

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.

Normally there is "1A - Chat (Co-Host)" who watches the chat for any problems or prayer intentions. If you don't want everyone to see your message you can send your message directly 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; we will be with you as quickly as we can.

And for those who are attending church in person, be careful:

Please continue to be careful when you are in church. Please sanitise your hands, wear a mask at all times, always think of the good of others. As you move about in church 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.



Looking Forward to the Gift of Lent

If Lent has started and as yet you haven't thought of anything meaningful to do as a Lenten discipline, then here is a slightly 'off the wall' idea.

Moving Towards Greenness for Lent?

I don't want you to think that silence or stillness is what we all have to do, perhaps this has no attraction for you. There are so many other things we could do during Lent. Just one that I want to mention is the idea of being more conscious of the environment. Again, lots of scope here. It is just that in Pope Francis' encyclical letter, "*Laudato Si – Pope Francis on Care for Our Common Home*" the Pope writes,

"Laudato si', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord". In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs".

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

And going on from this my home diocese of Plymouth, England, has made the following commitment:



- To measure and reduce our environmental footprint to achieve year-on-year reductions in emissions and examine what would be required to reach net zero emissions by 2030

Can you imagine what a commitment this is when the majority of your property is either very large old stone buildings, or other high-ceiling buildings made of wood with very little insulation! This is a massive task. But if you were to ask Bp. Mark or any of his team, they would say that the question is, if Britain as a country can make a commitment to move to net zero emissions by a particular date, and if Canada and other countries can make this commitment, and if individuals are making this commitment, then why would the Church not want to also make this same commitment?



Of course, the ‘Church’ is not just our buildings, it is all of us. Thus we need to ask not only how can we make our buildings (and perhaps the travel of our priests) more environmentally sustainable, but also how can we as a whole community respect our planet – Mother Earth – by stopping our “plunder” of her. So perhaps if some people within the Church got below ‘net’ zero emissions, then that would be a balance for the heat we need to put into some of our very old and precious buildings that are so difficult to insulate and even more difficult to keep warm.

I am just trying to stir up some ideas here, perhaps you will have some better ones.

I am not an environmental expert, and priestly ordination does not give me an insight into these highly technical issues. So I am not going to talk about turning one’s thermostat down or about driving more economically; that is the realm that others know about much better than I do. So just talking generally, and taking myself as the example, I have done some simple sums that might help us understand the scale of the issue that we are looking at.

The Figures I Got from Natural Resources Canada

The Canadian Government’s website, under the section provided by ‘Natural Resources Canada’, gives us the following:

Driving

The average “light duty vehicle” in Canada produces on average 3.26 metric tons of CO2 emissions per year.

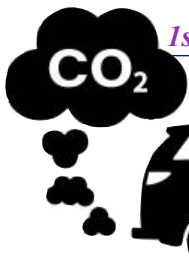


Homes

In Canada on average about 4.3 metric tons of CO2 emissions are produced by each household each year.

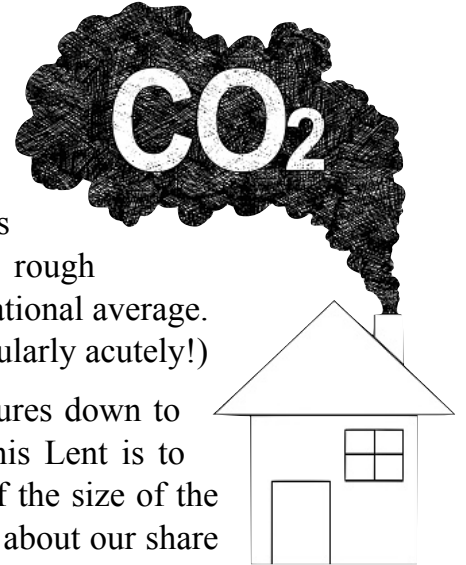


I tried to calculate my emissions, and because I did over 28,000km in 2021, my average was a bit higher than the norm at about 5 metric tons of CO2 that year, despite the fact that I drive a reasonably economical Volkswagen Golf.

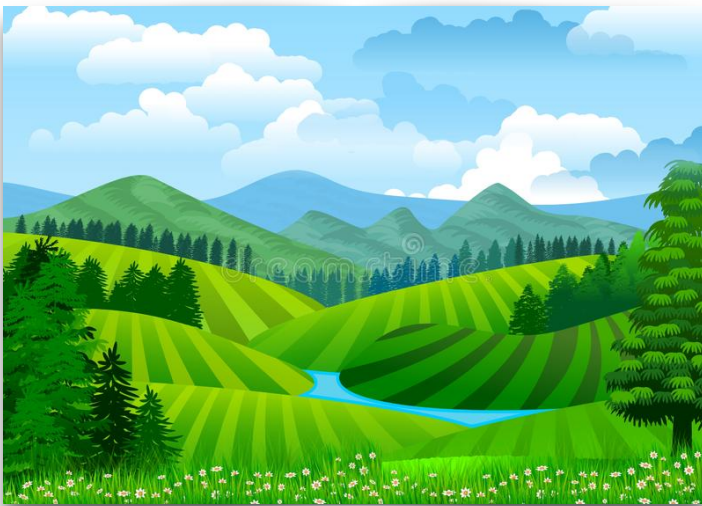


In non-Covid years when I have had diocesan meetings in Kelowna and regular deanery meetings around the East Kootenay, plus more CWL commitments and with more movement in the parish, my average distance driven has been over 40,000km a year. In 2019 I use more than 3,150 litres of fuel, which means I put about 7.4 metric tons of CO₂ into the environment from my exhaust pipes, and that does not count the emissions caused by drilling the oil, refining it and transporting it to me.

When it came to house emissions I did a little better. Although the house in Sparwood has quite a poor level of insulation, it is smaller than many houses and I keep the thermostat at 19°C when I am at home and 16°C when I am away, and it goes down to 14.5°C at night, and this really helps reduce our energy use. So on a very rough calculation my emissions seemed to come out below the national average. (But as you might have noticed, I don't feel the cold particularly acutely!)



Now in Lent we are obviously not going to get these figures down to anything near zero, but a first step that we could take this Lent is to become aware of the issues. And as we become aware of the size of the issue for our homes and our travel, then we can also think about our share of the emissions that are produced from our church buildings, from our hospitals, the supermarkets, the hockey arena and all the other facilities we use!



The danger is that we start looking and get to the point of despair and thinking, “The problem is so big there is nothing I can do”. But if you think that, remember Simon-Peter when he first realised he was in the presence of the Christ, the Son of God; he felt totally overwhelmed by the impossibility of his broken life being compatible with the love of God made manifest in Jesus. And if what we are doing is not just a secular exercise in upping our green credentials, but rather is an attempt to say to God that we

recognise the beauty of this world which God has gifted to us, and we recognise our connectedness with our brothers and sisters in developing countries who will be hardest hit by global pollution, then we must turn to the Holy Spirit and ask for strength to live this area of our faith along with all the other areas that we need to work on. So this Lent your aim might not be to solve this issue but to simply become more aware of it.

If none of that appeals to you, then why not go out and buy a Tesla! And if you do, please take me with you when you go to pick it up so I too can have a play!

