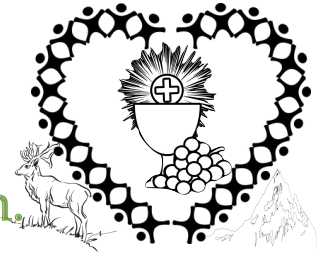


*Our Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:*

*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).*



*Fernie from up the mountain on Wednesday.*

*16th/17th July 2022*

## **Dear All,**

Summer has arrived in the Elk Valley – *at last* – with some wonderful hot weather. Indeed it is really, “let’s sit down in the shade and do nothing” weather. I have to say that with all the rain we have had and now with gorgeous sunshine, the Valley really is looking particularly green and lush. For those of you who don’t live in this area and are looking out of your windows at a parched sandy brown world, just know that here we are as green as green – or even, as green as Ireland!



## **Fr. Marian**

This week I had a meeting and saw Fr. Marian. He has now been told that he does not need to use crutches and he can start putting some weight on his injured leg. This was a significant ‘step’ on his road to full recovery. We keep him in our prayers. Fr. Marian will be back with us in three week’s time when I am off to the National Convention of the Catholic Women’s League in August.

## **Local Appreciation Days**

This week the ski hills in Fernie had “local appreciation days”, which basically meant that locals could go for a free trip up and down the ski lifts (*see right and above*).



## Synodal Journey

I attached two documents that are feedback from our ‘Synodal Journey’. The first is the ‘synthesis’ from the Nelson diocese. This is basically sixteen ‘bullet points’ of things that were said in our diocese. All but two start with the words, “There is a need for...” and so, to my reading, presents a wish list from parishioners that is quite predictable. It is good to hear these thoughts but this document does not contain any surprises.



The second document I enclose is the ‘synthesis’ from all the diocese of England and Wales. You might remember that when we started the ‘Synodal Journey’ last November the Nelson diocese hadn’t got any documents in place so we followed the documents produced by my home diocese of Plymouth and thus our feedback went via the Plymouth diocese (although I also gave some more general feedback to the Nelson diocese). This means that we were a small part of the input into this document from across the pond.

The “National Synthesis Document” from Britain is relatively long at twenty-seven pages, but please don’t be put off by that, it is interesting! If you wanted a document that describes how I see the Church, this is it. It is honest, broad and hopeful. While it gives the feedback from across England and Wales, it put it in context and reflects upon the feedback – not judging it, but commenting on its meaning. At just under 10,000 words many people will be able to read it in under an hour (unless you are dyslexic like me), and I am sure that this will be a worth while investment of time. If you have kids who are turned off by the church it might be very good to know some of the issues that the Church is looking at; if you want to know how the Church sees its path forward, it will be worth reading; if you are worried that things like the ‘Synodal Journey’ are leading the Church in the wrong direction, again hopefully this document will give you reassurance.

One big difference between the Church in England and Wales and the Church in Canada is the relationship with the Church of England (Anglicanism). Because the Anglican Church is so dominant in Britain there is much greater scrutiny of the differences between Anglicanism and Catholicism. This is particularly true in the area of ‘governance’, where the Anglican Church decides its doctrine by the reflection of the whole church not just the senior clergy, or to put this negatively, by a democratic process of deciding belief. Obviously many Catholics see our faith as a given, and thus teaching on sexuality, reproductive issues and alike do not come from the will of the ‘populous’ but from ‘tradition’. This creates a fear that ‘synodality’ might be an attempt to move from our traditional faith to some new Western European cultural set of beliefs. While this difference of approach is an big issue in the synodal process in Britain, I do wonder if it is also under the surface in Canada; the significant difference of the two approaches needs to be recognised if we are to explain to and enthuse others in the ways that our Church operates. Here is just one paragraph from the documents:

*The resistance of a portion of the clergy to the synod process is remarked on in many reports. Special mention is made of the mistrust of some former Anglican priests who cited negative experiences of synodical parliamentary-style governance of the Church of England, with its motions and votes, pressure groups and campaigns, which “are not easily forgotten”. Others expressed fear that the Catholic Church would end up going in this “Anglican” direction, despite the differences between the two synodal traditions. Many who voiced that fear claimed to see an “agenda” to change or undermine settled Church teaching and disciplines, which led them either to avoid the synod or take part primarily in order to voice those fears. (¶17)*

In paragraph 76 the document goes on to say,

*There is a felt need in the UK context of a clear account of Catholic synodality in the past and in Pope Francis’s teaching, one that shows both commonalities but also contrasts with the synodical governance in the Anglican tradition.*

I quote this to give a flavour of the level of discussion that the document includes. It is not just a list of one-liners that summarise what people have said but hopefully you will find that it is a thoughtful reflection of where we are as a Church.

I am going to pull out two more short pieces from the document, that have come from the input of the Plymouth Diocese:

*Although the reports acknowledge the progress made by the Church in addressing the issue [of abuse in the Church], they call for the Church to be honest and transparent over its mistakes and to listen better and more often to survivors. “Victims and survivors of abuse believe that listening is a flawed and pointless exercise unless transparent opportunities for dialogue are created, and difficult conversations take place”. (¶32)*

This was so close to the feedback that one of our parishioners gave that I thought I would include it, just to say that what was said here in this small mountainous corner was heard back in the ‘old country’, and will be passed on to Rome.

Finally, many clergy did not want to influence the synodal process so did not really take part in the same way as parishioners. This was picked up upon in one of the on-line clergy meetings that I had with my fellow priests in the Plymouth Diocese:

*Mostly priests were supportive, but many chose not to take part in parish conversations “for fear their presence would influence people’s freedom to speak”... While the synod roles of ordinary faithful and the bishops were clear, that of the clergy was more uncertain. “Clergy would like their own opportunities to come together to talk about their dreams for the Church.” (¶18)*

Again, it was so good to see that a discussion that I had been part of was reflected in the final document. In the end we priests did have two on-line meetings where we discussed our thoughts on the synodal journey questions, but because priests are never brief in their utterances, we really didn’t have enough time!

## ***In Summary***

Literally as I write this on Thursday I hear that the Bishop's of Western Canada have produced their synopsis; I won't have time to read this before we go to print, so I will look at it for next week.

To be completely honest, from the beginning I loved the idea of the 'Synodal Journey' but I did fear that it would go nowhere. I also knew that if it ended up as just a list of statements that *'the Church needs to...'*, then again it would be parked and forgotten. But I have to say that the paper from the Bishops of England and Wales gives me real hope that the process has value. Obviously, being able to see comments a parishioner made and a discussion I was part of reflected in the synopsis is encouraging, but more than this, the summary was serious, reflective and clearly realistic, as well as being surprisingly wide ranging and thorough. I was also very encouraged that there was a balance in the document, acknowledging people's misgivings. Another comment that came from the Plymouth diocese was:

*The process and practice of synodality have already opened the Church to the graces of the conversion that through the synod the faithful have called for. There are many testimonies to this: "Many dream of a Church which embraces this way of working as a path by which the Church can more fruitfully fulfil her mission of evangelisation in the world ... We need to walk together well, even when we disagree." ¶75*

I do commend this document to you. If you have an hour and want to do something connected with your faith, then why not give this a read.

## **Plymouth Diocesan Prayer Card**

As mentioned last week, you are invited to pray for my home diocese as Bp. Mark moves on to new pastures and as we await the appointment of a new Shepherd. At the end of this e-mail I will again include a copy of the prayer card that the Plymouth Diocese has produced.

## **And Finally...**

I was trying to get Thumper to sit and put on his happy face so I could take a photo of him, but he was distracted by a deer that keeps wandering through the garden. He can't understand why he is not allowed to play chase with this four-legged visitor!

With prayers,

*Fr. David @ Thumper*



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 Sunday Masses

### Link to Our Sunday 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](mailto:info@holyfamilyfernie.ca)

[ElkValleyRC@gmail.com](mailto: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.*

### Waiting Room:

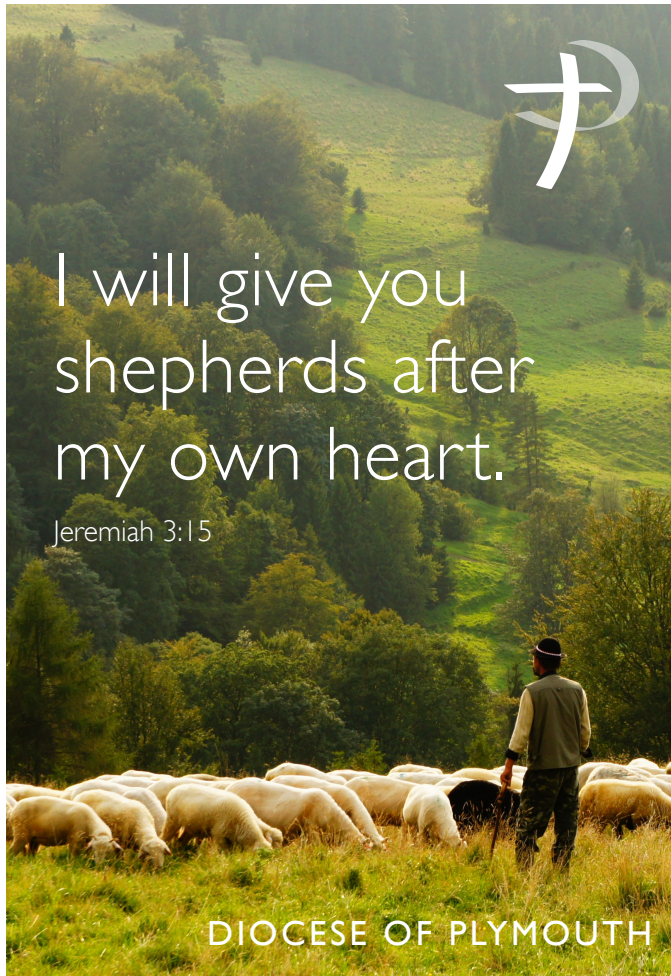
*Please note when you log on you will be put in a "waiting room". Hopefully as soon as we see you waiting we will let you in. If there is a bit of a delay, please just wait; we will be with you as quickly as we can.*

### Those who are attending church in person, be careful:

Covid is very much still about and people still have vulnerabilities. Therefore please continue to be careful when you are in church and continue to sanitise your hands; wear a mask if you wish and 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.*





*As we await our new bishop we pray...*

**for our diocese...**

Lord God, you are our eternal shepherd and guide.  
In your mercy grant to the Diocese of Plymouth  
a shepherd who will walk in your ways,  
and whose watchful care will bring us your blessing.  
We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord.

**for discernment...**

Heavenly Father, send your Spirit on the Church  
in this time of discernment for a new pastor  
for our diocese.  
May the one chosen to lead and inspire us  
in the years to come,  
be an ardent and gentle shepherd to us all.  
Grant this in the name of Christ our Lord.

**and in thanksgiving for  
Archbishop Mark's time among us...**

Loving God, we give you thanks for the years of  
ministry of Archbishop Mark among us.  
We pray that he may have abundant blessings  
in his appointment as Archbishop of Cardiff  
and Bishop of Menevia.  
We pray too for the clergy and people of those two  
dioceses as they begin the next phase of their journey  
of faith with Archbishop Mark.  
We make this prayer in the name of Jesus the Lord.