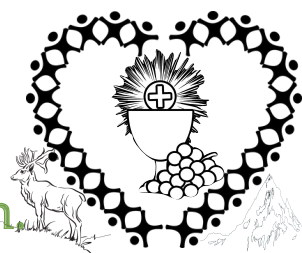


Our Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

**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).

17th/18th September 2022

Dear All,

This week I came across a lovely little poem by the English poet William Blake. Writing in 1799 to a friend, he describes how he was walking along and he saw a large thistle blocking his path, but in the poor light – *or was it due to his poor eyesight, or his over active imagination* – he mistook it for a person who looked very grey. *(Please read this poem very slowly!)*

Double Vision by William Blake

“What to others a trifle appears
fills me full of smiles or tears
For double the vision my eyes do see
And a double vision is always with me.
With my inward eye ‘tis an old Man grey
With my outward a thistle across my way.”



At what point William Blake realised his mistake we are not sure, but he was a philosopher as well as a poet, so he considered a conversation he had with this thistle, or to be more accurate, the conversation he had with what he thought was an old man with a very grey complexion.

While in itself this is nothing remarkable, the idea that sprung from it was that we all see reality in different ways and so we interrelate with the world around us in different ways. Now while, in this case, the object “across my way” was a thistle and not a person, Blake was right to observe that our minds often see one thing and then for whatever reason make us perceive it as something different. My mind does this all the time; when I am out walking Thumper late at night in the bush, out of fear my brain turns all those dark tree stumps into black bears!

Another example here might be a racist, who out of prejudice will see someone of one ethnic group and, to use Blake’s expression, will with the “inward eye” see one thing, but then they will see someone from another ethnic group and with the inward eye see something quite different, and as a result engage with the two people in markedly different ways. Or someone with extreme political views or beliefs will see an event in one light and thus react in a particular way, but someone else might see the same event and react in a completely different way exactly because they don’t see with their ‘inward eye’ what the extremist sees.

Blake was aware that what he saw with his ‘inward eye’ no one else would see, but yet at the moment he saw it, that “old Man grey” was as real to him as we are to each other. And this idea has been taken up by philosophers to argue that so often what we see with our ‘inward eye’ we think is reality, and not only that, it is the *true* reality and we try to persuade others of this single reality: “I saw a ghost, you must believe me!” “I saw lots of bears, you must believe me!” Blake knew that his ‘old Man grey’ was only a reality to himself so he didn’t try to persuade others of the existence of that man. Yet, at the same time, the conversation Blake had with his ‘inward eye’ friend was something he found interesting and enlightening, presumably because it told him something about himself. Later Blake would write, “May God us keep from single vision”, that is, just vision with the ‘outward’ eye, as this is not enough for reliable interpretation of the *meaning* of the world we see around us.

I quote this at length because it reminds me of the centrality of the Church. If all of us took what our ‘inward eye’ saw as reality all the time, then we would live in a weird world! (Not to mention a world full of black bears.) Yet so often God comes to us, not so much in an outward vision that anyone standing in that place at that time could see, but God comes to us through our inward eye. Many times I know that God has given me a nudge in a particular way, or has laughed at me, or has challenged me, or has shown love for me; yet so often I can’t share these because I know that these messages were only visible to my ‘inward eye’ and if there had been a person standing next to me they might have seen something completely different. We read in John’s gospel,

Jesus said, “Now my soul is troubled.

And what should I say, ‘Father, save me from this hour?’

No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name.”

Then a voice came from heaven,

“I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder.

Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine.” (12:27-30)

In this passage Jesus clarifies the reality of what was heard: God’s words spoken for the good of the people. People might have perceived the event in different ways, but through Christ we can be sure that the reality was ‘a voice come from heaven’. Today we look in exactly the same way to the Church to clarify our reality: the reality of God’s presence in the world, the reality of God’s love for each of us, the reality of hope in our world, the reality of the joy of the Holy Spirit, the reality of the need for us to be united in Christ’s love. The ‘outward’ eye of scientific materialism can’t see these things. St. Paul writes to the Romans:

For in hope we were saved.

Now hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what is seen?

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (8:24-25)

So of course we can be enriched by our interactions with thistles or whatever, but we should keep in mind that the “old Man grey” that Blake spoke to was not a reality, even if it might have seemed like one to him for a short time. The black bears I see that are only tree stumps are *not* a reality, but they do tell me of the fear that I have as I walk in the dark, and that fear *is* a reality. So I don’t pray that God will take away the bears that *aren’t* actually there, but I do pray that God will comfort me and care for me because of the fear that *is* there.

This relationship between the inward and outward eye is complicated, and as humans we are frail and broken – *and often fearful* – thus the need for our collective eyes! In the first Eucharistic Prayer for Reconciliation we pray,

*Be pleased to keep us always in communion of mind and heart,
together with Francis our Pope and Gregory our Bishop.
Help us to work together for the coming of your Kingdom,*

It struck me that the ‘communion of mind’ is the communion of the ‘outward eye’ and the ‘communion of heart’ in some way refers to the ‘inward eye’. As Andrea, our local Anglican minister, recently noted, “Before religion made it all about what we believe, Jesus was all about how we love”. Hopefully we can keep our outward eyes united in the one belief and our inward eyes fixed on the love of Jesus. But it is not necessarily easy; St. Paul tells us that,

*no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9)*

This must be our prayer, that we share a common reality which is the beliefs of our Christian faith, held together by a common vision of the love and goodness of God, which might express itself in different ways exactly because it is beyond what we can conceive. Then, in that communion of mind and heart with our Pope, the Bishops and all those who share our faith, we trust that the Church will find ever greater unity as it ‘works together for the coming of God’s Kingdom’.

And I would just add that I hope that within that unity, the Holy Spirit will keep within the people of God a good and healthy diversity!

Prayers for Queen Elizabeth II – Rest in Peace

On Monday – *very early in the morning our time* – the Queen’s funeral will take place in London. Here in the Elk Valley we will mark the day with the tolling of our bell in Fernie and a small gathering outside the church. (See flyer on last page.) This will be very simple. Before that at 10am we will celebrate Mass in Fernie both to mark the passing of the Queen and to pray for King Charles.

While obviously this weekend we will include these intentions in our Sunday Masses, I do feel that it would be good to celebrate a Mass where this was our main focus. As I have said before, coming together at a time of grief is part of the healing process, and we have lost something very special in the Queen, so of course we have grief and a need for a little healing, and a time to say ‘thank you’.

And Finally...

Last Sunday we had a potluck in Elkford – our first since Covid – and how nice it was to be able to gather again like this. After the potluck there was some beef



left over which was given to me. So with a Yorkshire pudding from last week, this meat diced, a creamy mushroom and garlic gravy and some horseradish sauce, I made the perfect supper (*above*).

And talking of perfection, Thumper thinks that this cooler weather is just right. When we go for a cycle ride he can run and run and run without getting over heated. Mind you, whatever the weather, if he is out for a run everything seems ‘just right’ to Thumper – how I wish I had an ‘inward eye’ that perceived the world in that way!

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

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 still about and some people still have vulnerabilities.

Please continue to be careful 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, so please be conscious that others might have health vulnerabilities that you don't know about.

Everyone still needs to be careful.



In Honour and Remembrance of the late Queen Elizabeth II

We will be marking
Monday 19th September 2022
the Day of the Queen's Funeral.



At Eleven O'Clock in the Morning,
the Bell of Holy Family Church, Fernie,
will be Rung Ninety-Six Times.

- At 10:45am The Reverend Canon Andrea L. Brennan and Fr. David will be outside Holy Family Church in Fernie.
 - At 10:57am Fr. David will welcome those assembled.
 - At 11:00am the bell of Holy Family Church will toll ninety-six times.
 - After the bell has tolled, Rev. Andrea will close our short gathering with a prayer and blessing.
 - We will sing 'God Save our King'.
- It is hoped that the whole event will only take about fifteen minutes -

*There will also be a very simple Mass in Holy Family Church from 10am to 10:30am
when we will pray for the repose of the soul of the Queen
and ask God's blessing upon King Charles as he takes up his new responsibilities.*