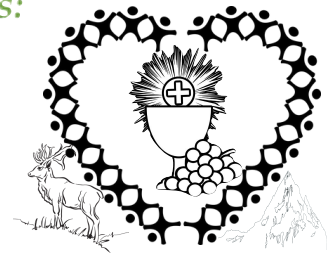


Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:

*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).

21st /22nd January 2023

Dear All,

Another busy week, but at least I have managed to get the Christmas tree down and the pine needles vacuumed up. Before Christmas I decided that, as I don't have many decorations for my tree, that it would be a good idea to put some of my Christmas cards on my tree to liven it up a bit. But I hate opening my cards too early, so I put them on the tree still sealed in their envelopes. So this week as I went to move the tree out I found a couple of Christmas cards that had fallen down behind the tree which I hadn't noticed! Thus this week I have been opening Christmas cards! So again, thank you to all those who did send me Christmas greetings; it is lovely to have them spread out over such a long period.

Mass and a Victoria Sponge Cake that was Heavenly?

When you are looking ahead to the weekend and wondering how you are going to fit in Mass, don't underestimate what is on offer: for those with open hearts there will be a taste of heaven. Let me explain!

The "Office of Readings" is part of the prayer book that all priests and many others pray each day. In the reading for this Sunday there is an extract from one of the documents of the Second Vatican Council; specifically, it is a document about the liturgy – what we do when we come together to pray. I will quote part of this document at length because I think it might be useful for reflection.

What first caught my attention in this reading was the fact that the document doesn't only encourage us to go to Church on a Sunday, it tells us *why* the Church sees this as an important value:



“In the liturgy on earth we are given a foretaste and share in the liturgy of heaven, celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, the goal of our pilgrimage, where:

- *Christ is seated at the right hand of God, as minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle;*
- *with the whole company of heaven we sing a hymn of praise to the Lord; and as we reverence the memory of the saints, we hope to have some part with them, and to share in their fellowship;*
- *we wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, who is our life, appears, and we appear with him in glory.*

By an apostolic tradition taking its origin from the very day of Christ’s resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day, the day that is rightly called the Lord’s day. On Sunday the Christian faithful ought to gather together, so that by listening to the word of God and sharing in the Eucharist they may recall the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God who has given them a new birth with a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Lord’s day is therefore the first and greatest festival, one to be set before the loving devotion of the faithful and impressed upon it, so that it may be also a day of joy and of freedom from work. Other celebrations must not take precedence over it, unless they are truly of the greatest importance, since it is the foundation and the kernel of the whole liturgical year.”

Sacrosanctum Concilium §8, 106

The reference to *“Other celebrations must not take precedence over it”* is primarily underlining a liturgical principle, namely that other liturgical celebrations like Saint’s Days or other feasts don’t replace the celebration of Sunday. But we can also read this as saying that other ‘celebrations’ outside the Church similarly shouldn’t replace the Sunday. So golf tournaments, or car rallies or even family birthdays shouldn’t replace a Sunday; rather, these events, if they occur on a Sunday, should be celebrated as part of the ‘joy and freedom’ that is celebrated when we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ.



Below are pictures from a World Youth Day Mass with St. Pope John Paul II which I attended in 2002.

I have been very blessed during my life to have celebrated Mass and other liturgies in a vast variety of different places and situations, and in different ways each of these varied liturgies have truly been “*a foretaste and share in the liturgy of heaven*”. I have been part of a number of Papal Masses where the crowds have been so big they disappeared into the distance, and I have celebrated Mass on my own; in Africa I was part of Masses that regularly lasted more than three hours, and I have celebrated Mass with a Spanish priest who could easily get through a weekday Mass in under fifteen minutes. Each of these Masses, in different ways - and other liturgies I have experienced - have all revealed “a foretaste” of heaven.

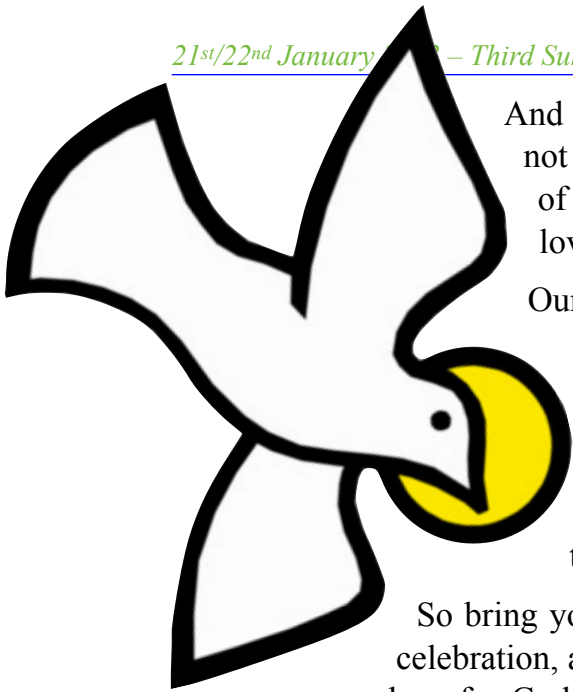
Obviously liturgy celebrated well will better reflect that eternal mystery — I don't believe that there will be ‘bad’ or ‘shoddy’ liturgy in heaven! — But we must not think that ‘perfect’ liturgy is ‘perfect’ in a worldly sense.



What a Victoria Sponge should look like!

I remember very many years ago, long before I became a priest, I knew a dear old lady called Phyllis. Phyllis had lived an extraordinary life, but now she was quite frail. One day she mentioned how she loved going into the country. So after Mass one Sunday I said that I would take her for a drive and we would visit an Abbey deep in the heart of the countryside of southern England. We made the trip and I told her that we could stop at my house on the way back and have ‘tea’.

Now as I don't eat anything sweet I was not familiar with how one makes cakes, but I had a recipe book so I decided to have a go. It was meant to be a Victoria Sponge. I don't know what I did but when I came to put the mixture in the two baking tins to make the two halves of the cake there wasn't nearly enough mixture, so I just filled one tin. To my surprise the cake rose so much that I could cut it in half and have the desired two layers. Unfortunately I didn't have any strawberry jam [jelly] to put in the middle, so I got some marmalade instead [orange preserve]. I had bought some icing sugar with which I iced the cake, but I had no colouring for decoration except some gravy browning. I made up a little icing with this and tasted it, and really it just tasted of sugar rather than gravy, so after icing the cake I decorated it with some brown patterns. It looked dreadful, so to try to redeem the situation I ran to the shop and bought some Smarties [like M&Ms] and decorated it with these to hide the brown mess. All in all I can say without a shadow of doubt that this was not a ‘perfect’ cake, but when Phyllis came into my house and I brought out this cake she started to cry... and before you ask, they were tears of joy that came from her heart. Perhaps it was the fact that the cake was so obviously homemade that moved her to tears, or was it obvious that, for me, making this wasn't exactly straightforward; yet for Phyllis, something made this cake ‘perfect’.



And this has exactly been my experience of liturgy; it is not the exactitude of keeping the rules that is a measure of perfection, but rather it is celebrating with love — love of God and love of neighbour.

Our liturgies very rarely would reach the finals of the liturgical equivalent of “Master Chef” or “The Great Canadian Bake Show”, but the good news is that they don’t depend upon these earthly judgements, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes them a foretaste of heaven. And the Holy Spirit works through all of us.

So bring yourself as a “temple of the Holy Spirit” to a Sunday celebration, and reveal the Holy Spirit within you by the power of your love for God and neighbour, and let that be for others a foretaste of the great assembly in heaven.

And Finally...

All I asked Thumper to do was to help me with some vacuuming around where the Christmas tree had been, and this is the answer I got!

With prayers, *Fr. David @ Thumper*



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



Zoom Links – To Our Heavenly Sunday Masses

Link to Our weekend Masses (*it is the same link for both of our broadcast Masses*)

Topic: **Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Date & Time: Saturday – 21st January – at 5pm Mountain time from Fernie

Sunday – 22nd January – at 9am Mountain Time from Sparwood

To get the link to watch our two weekend Masses via Zoom 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.

Chat:

Feel free to send greeting via the chat when you join our broadcast, and if you are praying for anything particular, do also share this with others.

Those who are attending church in person, be careful:

**Covid and *other viruses* are about
and many people have vulnerabilities.**

Some people might have vulnerabilities that we don't know about, and at the moment as well as Covid there are other viruses going around – *the normal winter colds* – but this year they might be slightly more problematic because many people haven't been exposed to colds and flu for a few years. So 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. This is particularly important as we move about the church before Mass, at Communion and at the end of Mass. If someone wants a bit of space, we have a lot of it in our churches, so please be respectful.

Everyone still needs to be careful.

