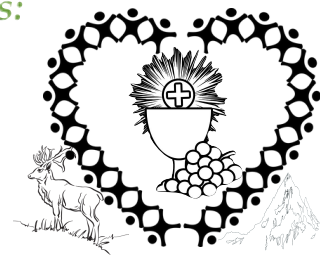


*Our Current Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:*

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).*

11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## Dear All,

I think this will be short, but there again, I always think my sermons are going to be short!



*The sprinkling of salt  
as an act of love!*

## What Wasn't in Last Week's Sermon

Hopefully those who joined us for Mass last week will remember this, but in the sermon I tried to pick up on three images that Christ gave to us in the Gospel, that is, salt, light and a city built on a hilltop.

The point I was making was that both salt and light have the common characteristic that they don't draw attention to themselves, but rather they draw attention to something else. So normally when one adds salt in cooking it is not to make something taste salty, but rather to bring out the full flavour of the food. Similarly, if you shine a light on something, you do it to highlight that thing and not to highlight the light itself. So if one breaks down at night in the dark and you need to lift the hood\* of the vehicle to look at the engine, and then you get out a flashlight\*\*, you don't do it to show off the flashlight but to illuminate the engine of the vehicle. So in both these cases, it is 'the other' that is important.

This teaching on salt and light was given at the very beginning of a long sequence of teachings by Jesus called the 'Sermon on the Mount' when Jesus outlines the heart of his 'new law of love'. This teaching boils down to "Love God and love neighbour", but we are not to love to draw attention to ourselves, but as it said at the end of the passage, so that others "may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (*Matthew 5:16*).

This idea can then be expanded and explored, challenging ourselves about whether we do charitable acts or get involved with religious devotions, not only because these are good things to do that give glory to God, but also because we want others to know about how holy we are or how good we are. Matthew takes this theme up in a few verses time, which we will hear as the gospel on Ash Wednesday,

*\*'bonnet' for those who speak my mother tongue!  
\*\*'torch' for those following this in proper English.*



*We shine a light on the world that come from  
beyond ourselves.*

*“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you,  
as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets,  
so that they may be praised by others.*

*Truly I tell you, they have received their reward...*

*And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites;*

*for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners,  
so that they may be seen by others.*

*Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.” (Matthew 6:2, 5)*

In my sermon I went on to say that in the text was one line that was really important, but in some ways it almost felt like it was referring to something different. It was, “A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. (Matthew 5:14) And I said that I thought that this might have been inserted to balance another potential problem.

Matthew was writing for an audience that was very familiar with the ways and traditions of Judaism, and if you said to any Jewish person “a city built on a hill” they would immediately think of Jerusalem. And in turn, Jerusalem was the place that people went up to worship God, the place to meet God, and this idea was carried on in



Christianity in the image of the “New Jerusalem” from the book of Revelation; and this New Jerusalem represented the Church in a particular way.

So the danger of being salt and light in a way that gives glory to God and leaves oneself as almost invisible, is that people will then respond by thinking God is wonderful but be totally unaware of the role of the Church in that process of giving glory to God, thus they might – as so many do – say that they believe in God but not see the need to be part of the Church that Christ established, and worse, they might journey towards a private religion that is just between themselves and God, which isn’t Christianity! If we are to be salt and light, part of that must be to show that our “good works” don’t come from ourselves, but are given by God and enabled by the Church. And similarly, the way we respond and “give glory to your Father in heaven” is together through the Church.

So there you go, a full recap of last week’s sermon! But I give it to explain what happened after one of the Masses. Someone came up to me and said (something like), “Lovely sermon, Father. I particularly liked the way that you showed that we don’t have to be perfect; that if we don’t get it totally right then that doesn’t matter as the focus is not on ourselves.” When I heard this my first thought was, ‘I don’t remember saying that!’, and my second thought was, ‘That is what I should have said!’ I just loved the idea that if we are not the focus of what we are trying to achieve, then our imperfections are not so important. If we are shining a light upon ourselves, then obviously we need to be as perfect as we can be, but if all that we do is focused upon the glory of God, then our frailties won’t be in the limelight and will more easily be overlooked.

I have to say, I do love it when people feedback what they heard in a sermon, even if it is something that I don't remember saying. It makes me think that perhaps the Holy Spirit is in there somewhere as part of the process of breaking open the Word!

And for those looking ahead in the readings, you will know that not this weekend but next weekend we will hear Jesus say, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (*Matthew 5:48*). But thankfully, Deacon Stephen will be with us to explain how we can be both frail, broken and out of the limelight, and at the same time be perfect as our "Heavenly Father is perfect"!

## The Run Up to Easter

This weekend we will be praying particularly for our youngsters who are progressing through the Sacraments. In Fernie, Brooke Sundquist will publicly mark the start of her final stage of preparation for First Holy Communion which she will make with us in Fernie in April. And in Sparwood we will hold in prayer those preparing for Confirmation in May.

Next weekend is another 'long weekend' in British Columbia, with 'Family Day'. So we look forward to welcoming many of our visitors from Alberta who visit us when they get the chance. Be sure that we still have lots of snow.

The week after that will be the beginning of Lent — Ash Wednesday being 22<sup>nd</sup> February. We are still planning what we might do to mark Lent. We are looking again at some on-line talks from Britain, perhaps related to the Stations of the Cross, and some special times of prayer during Lent.

Then Good Friday is 7<sup>th</sup> April and Easter Sunday is 9<sup>th</sup> April. And hopefully by then it will be camping season!

## And Finally...

Thumper's 'Kong-on-a-String' is now more 'Kong' than 'on-a-String', but he doesn't care. As long as we are out and about, that is the most important thing to Thumper.

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 ‘You have heard it said’ Sunday Masses

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

**Topic:** **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Date & Time:** Saturday – 11<sup>th</sup> February – at 5pm Mountain time from Fernie

Sunday – 12<sup>th</sup> February – 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](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.*

### **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.***

