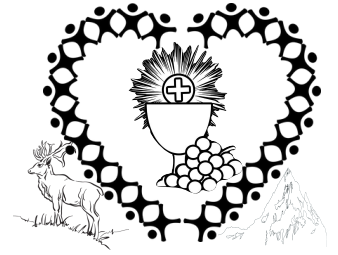


*Our Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:
Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



The Sunday Mass is broadcast via Zoom from Fernie & Sparwood (see below).

For the weekend of 1st/2nd April 2023

Dear All,

Holy Week is coming down the road at great speed! So the whole of this e-mail will be devoted to explaining Holy Week and the celebrations that mark this great week.

Whether you are in the parish or not, and whether you can attend these services or not, hopefully reading through the following will assist you in your celebration of Holy Week wherever you are and in whatever way you are able to pray.

*The
Season
of
Lent*



Services of Holy Week & Easter Weekend

The three main services of Holy Week

*– the Maundy Mass, the Good Friday service and the First Easter Mass –
together express what is at the heart of our faith.*

*The Church invites all its members to open their hearts to these celebrations,
to reflect anew on our faith, and actively join in these important liturgies.*

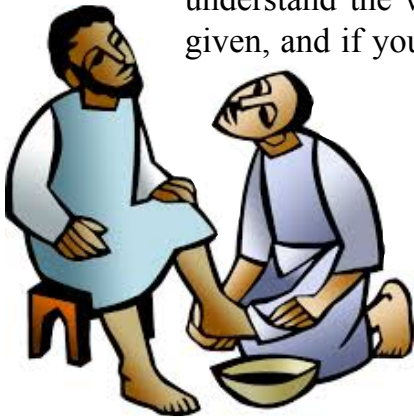
I am writing this on Thursday having just heard the last in our series of Lenten talks from Britain; Fr. Jonathan reflected upon the death of Christ on the cross as portrayed in art. It was a fascinating talk and after it I just wanted to go and look at more images of the cross or to look at the crucifixes that I have around the house, and reflect upon what I saw. But, of course, in our busy world I am sure that many of us have this resolve, but then the other necessities of life push their way in front of such good intentions.

And this is where Holy Week comes in. If there is ever a week when we can push aside other things and give a bit of extra time for reflection, this is the week. And the Church provides a series of services that hopefully will assist you with this.

So while the Church encourages Catholics to participate in all three of the major services of this week, it does so in the hope that this will be part of a real time of prayer and of growth. These services are offered as a gift!



Holy Week

Maundy Service:*Sparwood 7pm Wednesday 5th & Fernie 7pm Thursday 6th*

And on the theme of ‘gift’, our Maundy service is exactly about God’s gift. Maundy means command or commandment, but perhaps not in the way we understand the word ‘command’ today. In Roman times a command would be given, and if you received a command from a senior officer, that officer was also giving you the authority and the power you needed to carry out that command. So if a local army officer received an instruction from Roman to go somewhere and do something, that command authorised the army officer to both go out in the name of the Roman Emperor and to call on the resources of the Roman Empire that were needed to fulfil that command. It is in this sense that Christ ‘commanded’ his followers to love one another as he has loved them; Christ authorises and enables.

And the command is:

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

But the command is a practical one, to love others by our actions in the world:

After Jesus had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:12-14)

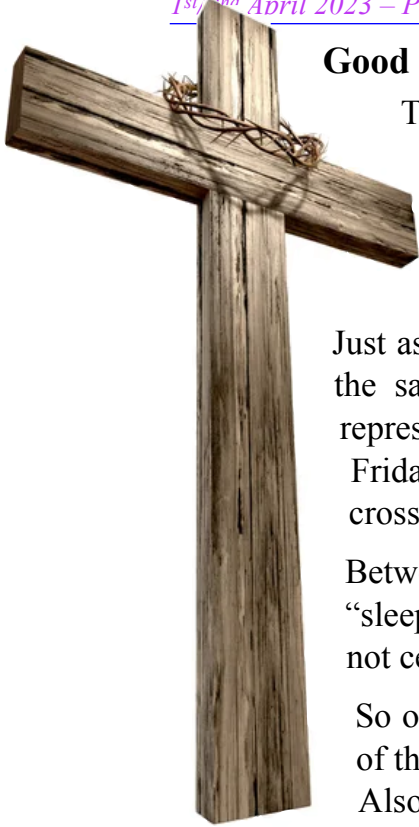
This is what we are invited to reflect upon at the Maundy Service. Here in the Valley the washing of feet is open to anyone who is at the service. It will be a very simple action of coming forward and stepping into a shallow bowl of water, letting the priest touch your feet and say a prayer. So please come with suitable footwear so you can partake in this ceremony. You might want to bring slippers or some other footwear to church which you can easily take off before the washing of feet.



And then, having the words, “Just as I have loved you” still echoing in our ears we will move to the Eucharist. This celebration of the taking, blessing, breaking and sharing of Christ’s body and blood recalls the last supper and the first Eucharist – the ultimate sign of

Christ’s self-giving, not just on that one night, but at every celebration of the Mass. So, again, with the idea of ‘gift’ in our minds, you are invited to come to this Maundy Mass and let yourself be immersed in the celebration. It is not that the self-giving action of Christ is repeated, but the one and only, the original self-giving of Christ is made present and offered to us as food and drink.

At the end of each Maundy Mass there will be a time of ‘watching’, so here is another chance to make a quiet space during this special week.



Good Friday Service:

Sparwood 12noon & Fernie 3pm

The Good Friday service is not a Mass; although we receive Communion, the Hosts that we receive will have been consecrated at the Maundy service, the remembrance of the Last Supper. At this service the Church asks that our main focus is on the Cross.

Just as an altar in a church – *as the table of the sacrifice* – represents the sacrifice that was offered upon it, so the wood of the Cross represents the sacrifice that was offered upon it. Thus on Good Friday it is not a crucifix that we honour, but “the wood of the cross”, which the liturgy calls the “instrument of our salvation”.

Between our Good Friday service and the Easter Vigil the Church “sleeps”, that is, with Christ laying in the tomb, the sacraments are not celebrated.

So our Good Friday service centres around two actions: the reading of the Passion from John’s gospel, and the ‘Veneration of the Cross’. Also, to reflect the fact that Christ’s sacrifice on the cross effects our whole world, we have some extended prayers for our world.

My fear is that on Good Friday I will be noticing the roughness of the Cross, or some other really quite minor detail; then I will wonder what will be in the minds of those who are celebrating Good Friday in Ukraine, and I am sure it will not be the colour or texture of the Cross, but the pain and the suffering that it represents, and the boundless love that enabled Christ to embrace the Cross for us. So I know that I will have to prepare for this service to be able to really enter into it.

At the end of this e-mail I will include the seven things that Christ is reported to have said while hanging upon the Cross. These are known as “The Seven Last Words” of Christ. You might want to ponder on these before the Good Friday.

Easter Vigil:

(Sparwood Only) 8pm Holy Saturday

If you wanted to know what Christians believe, then you could do worse than to go to an Easter Vigil because the full story is there! From God creating everything, through the fall and separation, through the promise that God gave to restore what we had lost, and the actions of Christ that brought this about – that is the story of the Vigil.



Then after hearing this story, in the basic but powerful symbols of fire and water we celebrate the new life of Easter. We will celebrate the Light of Christ – a light that not only guides us through life but reveals God's abiding presence in our lives. We will celebrate the living waters of Baptism and once more let any dryness in our hearts receive this life-giving water. Then we will share in our sacred meal – the 'bread of life' and the 'chalice of salvation'. Finally we will be sent out to live, celebrate and proclaim our faith in our everyday lives.



Please do try to attend an Easter Vigil somewhere. The Church ranks this as the most important Mass of the year, and certainly it is the most elaborate, with the hope that all who attend will be able to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Easter Sunday Morning:

Sparwood 9am & Fernie 11am

On Easter morning in Sparwood we hope to have the baptism of young Watipa! This will be a great way to celebrate our Easter faith. Both our morning services will be celebrating the joy of Easter, when we will hear about Christ's rising to new and everlasting life. In response we will renew our baptismal vows – that is, the profession of our faith in a God who loves us.

In summary: Holy Week is an opportunity to reflect upon the most important events of our faith, they go to the core of what we believe. Please see if you can be part of them, and to hold Holy Week as a special time to receive God's gifts.

Weekly E-mail

I am writing this on Thursday 30th March, and every day from now until after Easter is somewhat full, so I am not going to try to produce a weekly e-mail until perhaps 21st April – two weeks after Easter.

And Finally...

Recently when Thumper visited my brother's house he met my brother's cats and saw their nice beds. The cats looked so content in their beds that Thumper wanted to see if they were really as comfortable as they looked. I am not sure!

With prayers, *Fr. David & Thumper*



Service Times for Holy Week & Easter Weekend

April – all times are Mountain Time unless otherwise shown.

Monday 3 rd	– 7pm (Pacific time) Chrism Mass	– Nelson
Wednesday 5 th	– 7pm - Maundy Mass	– Sparwood
Thursday 6 th	– 7pm - Maundy Mass	– Fernie
Friday 7 th <i>Good Friday</i>	– 12noon - Good Friday Service	– Sparwood
	– 3pm - Good Friday Service	– Fernie
Saturday 8 th <i>Holy Saturday</i>	– 5pm - First Mass for Easter	– Fernie
	– 8pm - Easter Vigil	– Sparwood
Sunday 9 th <i>Easter Sunday</i>	– 9am - Mass for Easter Morning	– Sparwood
	– 11am - Mass for Easter Morning	– Fernie
	– 4pm Easter Mass	– Elkford

The following services will be broadcast on Zoom:

<i>Maundy Thursday at 7pm</i>	<i>(from Fernie)</i>
<i>Good Friday at 3pm</i>	<i>(from Fernie)</i>
<i>First Mass of Easter at 5pm Saturday</i>	<i>(from Fernie)</i>
<i>Easter Vigil at 8pm Saturday night</i>	<i>(from Sparwood)</i>
<i>Easter Morning Mass at 9am</i>	<i>(from Sparwood)</i>

If you can't be with us in person for any reason, and you can't be at any other church,
then please do try to join us via Zoom
so these services can help you make this coming week a truly Holy Week,
and make Easter a real celebration!

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



Zoom Link – To Our Holy Week & Easter Masses

The following service will be broadcast on Zoom:

<i>Maundy Thursday at 7pm</i>	<i>(from Fernie)</i>
<i>Good Friday at 3pm</i>	<i>(from Fernie)</i>
<i>First Mass of Easter at 5pm Saturday</i>	<i>(from Fernie)</i>
<i>Easter Vigil at 8pm Saturday night</i>	<i>(from Sparwood)</i>
<i>Easter Morning Mass at 9am</i>	<i>(from Sparwood)</i>

It is the same link for all these five services:

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@holyfamilyfernief.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 greetings 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. 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.



The Seven Last Words

‘The Seven Last Words’ is the collective title for the seven utterances that Jesus is quoted as having made as he hung on the Cross. They come from across the gospels; three coming from John’s gospel, three from Luke and one comes from both Matthew and Mark’s gospel.

As you read these, do not read them as if you are learning a fact or getting some information; rather read them like a love letter, to feel what the person is saying to you from their heart. They are:

- *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”*
- *“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”*
- *“Woman, here is your son... Here is your mother.”*
- *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*
- *“I am thirsty.”*
- *“It is finished.”*
- *“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”*

I find reading through these seven ‘words’ a wonderful way to meditate on the death of Jesus, and they stir up in me so many thoughts.

The theologians have taken these and fitted them into more general categories. That is:

- *Forgiveness*
- *Salvation*
- *Relationship*
- *Abandonment*
- *Distress*
- *Triumph*
- *Reunion*

If you want to do something extra in Holy Week, you could imagine yourself as a bystander, standing some way from the cross, and listening to these words.

What thoughts come to mind?

What else do you see?

I wonder whether, on the ground below one of the three crosses, a small bird might fly down and land to investigate the drops of blood that had fallen.

Do you see anything else?

And how do you feel?

