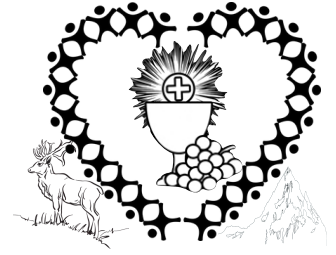


*Our Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:
Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
Sparwood at 9am Sunday morning,
and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.*



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

6th/7th May 2023



Dear All,

Such an exciting time – a Coronation this weekend and the Bishop visiting Sparwood next weekend.

King Charles, Queen Camila and Bishop Gregory!

As I write this we are still preparing for the Coronation. Here in the parish, the day before the Coronation we will be having a Mass to pray for the King's intention, and at the weekend Masses there will be a special prayer that the Bishops of England and Wales have asked us priests to include.

(As I mentioned last week, the oath that the King will take is interesting as it touches on the idea of justice and mercy, and also the place of faith in an increasingly secular society. But if you missed that, I will point you back to last week's e-mail.)



In Sparwood our youngsters are busily preparing for the visit of Bp. Gregory for Confirmation and First Holy Communion next weekend, and there is a certain level of excitement about this as well.

Hope

Now perhaps I am wrong, but I do wonder if there is a lack of hope about at this time, a lack of hope for the future. I wonder if, as we watch the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camila, generally there is a lack of belief that through their reign we will be blessed? Or even, is there anything good ahead that will occur during their reign?

Similarly with our youngsters progressing through the sacraments; as a parish, do people really think that these young people who are receiving the sacraments are going to set the church on fire? Or even, are they coming into a church worth celebrating? I do wonder whether, as a society, we generally lack hope.

I am sure that Covid has had something to do with this, as well as the war in Ukraine, and of course, the conspiracy theorists aren't exactly heralds of hope either. So there is a lot going against hope at the moment.

But as Christians we believe in faith, hope and love.

Love never ends.

*But as for prophecies, they will come to an end;
as for tongues, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will come to an end.*

*For we know only in part,
and we prophesy only in part;
but when the complete comes,
the partial will come to an end.*

*When I was a child,
I spoke like a child,
I thought like a child,
I reasoned like a child;
when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.*

*For now we see in a mirror, dimly,
but then we will see face to face.*

*Now I know only in part;
then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13



Here I just want to say that I am very excited about the future – **I have hope!**

As I look ahead I see so many good things happening. And while many people are fearful of advances in technology, I see good possibilities ahead.

(A simple example: I really dislike going to see a doctor. It starts with making an appointment that is never at a good time; then sitting in a waiting room where you really don't want others to tell you about their illnesses, nor do you want to share yours; and then the worst bit, going in and telling the doctor what is wrong with you – something that sounded fine when you practised it at home but now just sounds pathetic. So I hope you can see that I would much prefer to go on-line and talk to a computer and be told what, if anything, is wrong – without the patronising “You're okay and will live!”)

But honestly, how new technology plays out is really a subject beyond my competence, so here I just want to share a very little bit of hope that I have in relation to the Church and to faith.

When it comes to the Holy Spirit, how can one not be hopeful? If one really understands the power of the Holy Spirit, how can one not trust that all is possible? How can one not have hope? It simply needs the eyes to see it, the heart to embrace it.

What was the issue that Peter and his companions had before they understood the Resurrection of Christ? They saw the problem of the Romans dominating their precious homeland, they didn't see hope in their church, they couldn't see that God's plan was not only at work, but was steaming ahead like a train! So they despaired. It wasn't that hope was absent, quite the opposite! Hope was there – at that time more than at any other point in history – yet they did not have the eyes to see it.

What was the issue that the disciples who were walking to Emmaus had? They had lost hope: “*we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel*” Luke 24:21. So they were “sad”. It wasn’t that they didn’t know the scriptures, but they hadn’t embraced the fire of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

I have hope, but I so wish I could see it more clearly; yet every day I do see small glimpses of it. Just today I was at an on-line meeting with the Diocesan Director of Faith Formation and she was talking about the new resources that are available within the church, and how these are so grounded in the situation of families today. I was really inspired, so how could I not see a bit of new hopeful light shining?

As part of this we were shown a bit of a video on “Transubstantiation”! The video was dealing with the problem of how we explain to kids that what looks like bread and tastes like bread is really the Body of Christ? It was a beautiful, simple and charming video. I won’t explain it all here, but there was one bit that really took my imagination. The girl in the video was asked to shut her eyes and smell something. What she smelt was flowers, but when she opened her eyes she saw that what in fact she had smelt was scented soap. The point was that our senses are not always correct, or at least, they can’t always determine exactly what something is. So in this case the girl brought to bear another sense, her sight, and then she understood. And what we as Christians are called to do is bring to bear our other senses beyond our physical senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste, that is, our spiritual senses that come from the heart.

It wasn’t the physical senses or even the sense of reason that made the disciples’ hearts burn within them as they walked with Jesus; it was being able to sense the presence of God’s Holy Spirit that enabled them to feel fire in their hearts. As God said to Ezekiel,

*I shall give you a new heart,
and put a new spirit in you;
I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies
and give you a heart of flesh instead.
I shall put my spirit in you...
You will be my people and I shall be your God.*

Ezekiel 36:26-28



Pentecost

As I have been saying in my sermons for the last couple of weeks, Eastertide is not only the time we celebrate Christ’s “paschal mystery”, that is, Christ’s Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension to God’s right hand, but it is especially a time when we pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And one of the most obvious gifts of the Holy Spirit must be hope.

So if you sense a lack of hope in your life, now is the time to pray that the Holy Spirit will gift you with more hope. Now is the time to ask the Holy Spirit to awaken the spiritual senses that enable us to feel the fire of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and our bellies. Now is the time to ask for our eyes to be able to see God’s glory all around us.



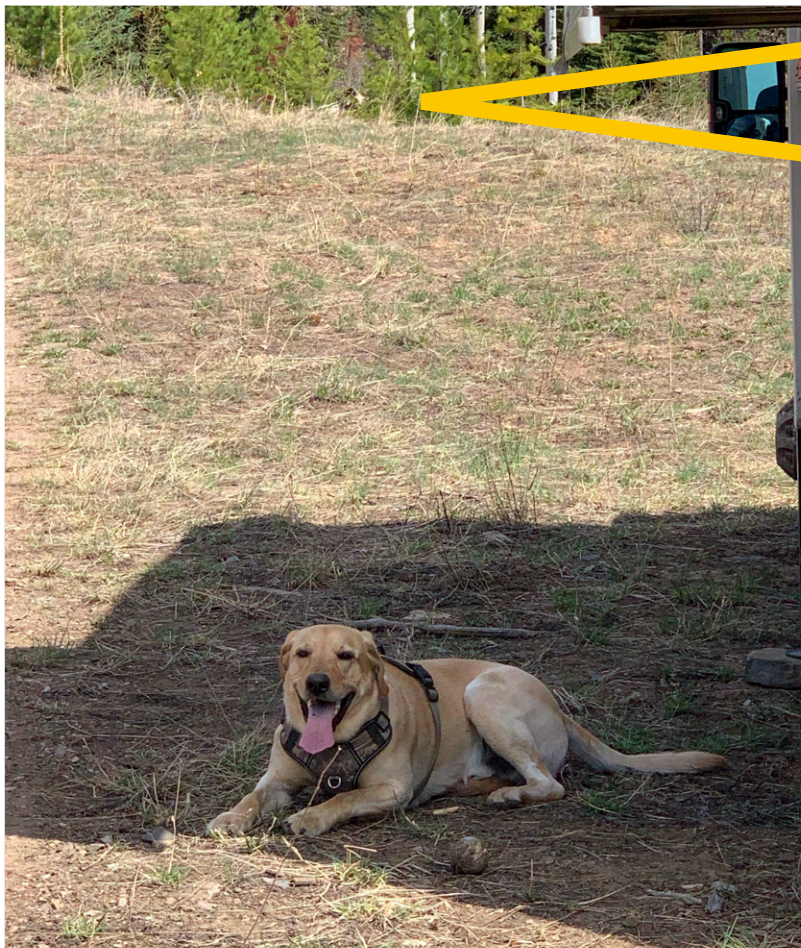
This Sunday's Gospel Reading

This Sunday's gospel is from John chapter 14. It is the well known section that starts, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places."* Now that phrase, 'dwelling places', which can be translated as 'rooms', is partly what I will be preaching on. But here I just want to float the idea that the place that Jesus is going to prepare for us is not a 'dwelling place' or even a 'room', but a 'Communion', a new relationship with the Father. And in that sense, what Christ is preparing is something that will not only be fulfilled in the next life, but we will also experience in this life. It is the Holy Spirit that is the power of love that is the Communion of Father and Son, and what Jesus goes on to say is exactly that he *"will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth"*. So on Sunday I will read a bit longer version of the gospel, and I have included the full text that I will read as an appendix.

And Finally...

Today at our on-line meeting, Yvonne, our diocesan coordinator for faith formation, said that if we speak with conviction and enthusiasm, then we never know who might pop out of the woodwork to come and hear what we have to say. It was just then that Thumper, who was lying in the shade, got up and told me we had a visitor or two, not so much out of the woodwork but out of the woods! With prayers,

Fr. David @ Thumper



*Thumper was so good; he let me know that these two goats had turned up, and he let them know that he didn't want them to come anywhere near me. But he didn't approach them, and when they decided that they had had enough religion and trotted off, he didn't chase them. **Well done Thumper.***

Bishop Christopher Budd RIP - Requiem Mass

**Post Script –***Early Friday Morning*

Bishop Christopher's funeral was at 5am this morning and was live streamed. At Bp. Christopher's request, the funeral wasn't at the Cathedral in Plymouth but was at the Catholic Church in the heart of Exeter, the second largest city in our diocese. It was a moving service that I am sure Bp. Christopher would have been happy with, and I say that because although it brought out the very many graces that the church in Plymouth and beyond has received through the ministry of Bp. Christopher, it was faith in God and God's love that was central.

I was also struck by the simplicity of the Bishop's coffin, which of course, was carried out at the end.

May Bishop Christopher now be embraced by Christ, and find a new 'dwelling place' (or 'room') in heaven, and enjoy the Communion of the Lord forever.



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



Zoom Link – To Eastertide Sunday Masses

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

Topic: **Fifth of Eastertide**

Date & Time: Saturday – 6th May – at 5pm Mountain time from Fernie
Sunday – 7th May – at 9am Mountain Time from Sparwood

To Join Zoom broadcast: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2504236127>

If you have the Zoom App you can join via Meeting ID: 250 423 6127

Audio Only

For audio only, tap: [+17789072071,2504236127#](tel:+17789072071,2504236127#),

Or if you are manually dialling this number: 1 778 907 2071 (pause and wait for the prompt) 250 423 6127# (pause and wait for the prompt) #

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 colds*. So please continue to be careful, and please don't breathe (or pant) over people (*are you listening Thumper?*) 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.



Longer Version of the Weekend Gospel

John 14:1-11, 15-18, 23-27, 31

Jesus said to his disciples,

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places.

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself,
so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas said to him,

“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you will know my Father also.

From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

Jesus said to him,

“Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own;

but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;

but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father,
and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.

This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,

because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.

Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them,

and we will come to them and make our home with them.

Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;

and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

I have said these things to you while I am still with you.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,

will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Rise, let us be on our way.