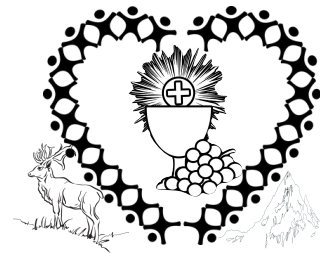


Our Weekend Mass Schedule for the Elk Valley is:
 Fernie on Saturday evening at 5pm,
 Sparwood at 11am Sunday morning,
 and Elkford at 4pm Sunday afternoon.



This the next three weekends Mass will be broadcast via Zoom (see below).

Looking
Forward

*** Timetable ***

Fr. David's last weekend: 22nd/23rd July

Fr. Thomas' first weekend: 29th/30th July

8th/9th July 2023

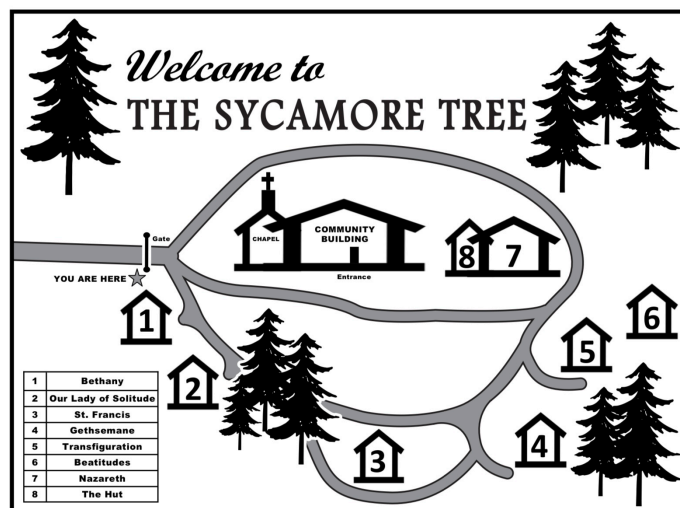
Dear All,

Greetings from the Elk Valley. I am back in the Valley and the timetable for the next few weeks is now slowly coming into focus.

Retreat

This coming weekend was meant to be my last weekend in the parish, but my time here has now been extended by two more weeks as Fr. Thomas can't join us until towards the end of the month. But the issue is that I had already booked a number of things for the coming weeks, most significantly a retreat. So from **Monday 17th to Friday 21st July** I will be away at the Sycamore Tree Retreat Centre in Swan Lake, Montana. There will be three of us priest there for that week. And at the retreat centre there is no cell service and no wifi available to the guests, so it will be a real time of stillness.

What particularly attracted me to this retreat centre was that although it has a regular timetable of liturgies throughout the day – Morning Prayer, Mass, Evening Prayer and other devotions – there are no meals provided. Speaking personally, I find coming together for a meal and sitting in silence is so unnatural and strange, and I don't feel too comfortable with this. I know that some religious orders will have readings during their meals so one isn't quite sitting in silence, but effectively one is eating with people but not interacting with them. But the other alternative is to come together and allow talking, and then for me this completely breaks the stillness and silence. So I love what the Sycamore Tree does by providing basic cooking facilities in one's own cabin and telling people to bring their own food.



When I was at seminary we had some Franciscan nuns who cooked our food and did a lot of the clearing up for us. Many of these nuns in their younger years had been missionaries in Africa or other developing parts of the world. One of the students then asked the nuns about this, how they felt going from being missionaries to cooks for often ungrateful students. The nun replied, “If you can’t serve God with your arms up to their elbows in washing up water, then you can’t serve God on the missions.” That has always stayed with me as such a powerful expression of this nuns faith.

So applying this to the retreat: it is easy to think that I will meditate and give time to God as I walk around the wonderful grounds of the retreat centre or as I sit in the quiet of my cabin, but perhaps I also need to discover how to meditate and give time to God as I cook and wash-up.

Packing

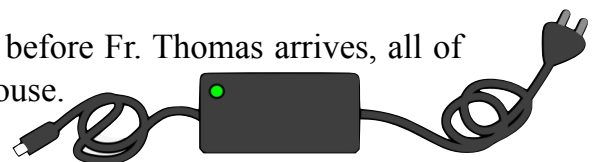
The other issue I have is that I really do need to get a bit more serious about packing. I thought that *practically* it would be an easy task but it would be an *emotionally* stressful experience, so I psyched myself up for this. As it has turned out, logistically it has been tiring and difficult, and I have so not-enjoyed the packing that now emotionally I don’t care about what I am doing, I just want to get it done!

The issue is that I have far too much stuff! Now to mitigate my culpability for this I should explain that in my last two placements before the Elk Valley I lived half my time at one end of the area I covered and half the week at the other end, so it was natural to start acquiring two of so many things: two warm jackets, two pairs of boots, two this, two that. Add to this that I am a bit of a pack-rat, that is, I hate throwing things away, and I end up with far too much stuff.

I remember when we had the fire in Castlegar and the roof melted so everything in the house was covered with a mixture of tar and asbestos. So the contents of the house were visible, but most were not able to be salvaged. Thus the insurers had a very full and accurate list of everything for which we were making an insurance claim. As a result the insurance company rang me and queried one particular box and its contents. I explained, “You know when your cell phone, or your personal stereo, or some other electronic device dies, how you throw the device away but keep the wall charger thinking, ‘That still works, I might need it one day!’ Well, the box was full of those chargers.” The lady from the insurers asked me what was the value of the contents of this box, to which I replied, “Honestly, if someone had volunteered to take the box away, I would have happily paid them. I am so glad to be rid of that box.” There was a long pause because the lady was obviously filling in a computerised form and it couldn’t cope with a negative value for an item! She eventually laughed a bit and said, “So can I put down the value as one dollar?”

I suppose that deep down I have never come to terms with the fact that we live in a ‘throw away’ society.

So as we need to do a really good clean of the house before Fr. Thomas arrives, all of my time this week must be dedicated to clearing the house.





Fr. Thomas

It was a shock for me when I found out that Fr. Neil was not coming to this parish. But I am comforted to know that Fr. Thomas *has to* come and be with us because I have already brought half his luggage and it is sitting in my front room!



And Finally...

When I was at my brother's house, Thumper was happy being with my brother's cats so he wagged his tail. But to one of the cats this looked very much like a toy that he could play with (*photo left*)!

But don't worry, all was well, Thumper and the cat ended up seeing eye to eye (*photo below*), and Thumper's tail was still wagging.

With prayers,
Fr. David @ Thumper



If you are *without* any symptoms of a virus, please join us.
But Covid is still about – thus caution is needed!



**Our broadcast of Sunday Mass will end
on Sunday 23rd July.**

Zoom Link – To our Sunday Masses

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

Topic: **14th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Date & Time: Saturday – 1st July – at 5pm Mountain time from Fernie

Sunday – 2nd July – at **11am** 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 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 is still about – also other viruses are about –
so please still be respectful of other people's space.**

Some people might have vulnerabilities that we don't know about, and with a number of viruses around, please continue to be careful, and please don't breathe over people. If someone at Mass wants a bit of space, we have a lot of it in our churches, so please be respectful. ***Everyone still needs to be careful.***

And if you are at Mass in Fernie on Saturday, I have a suspicion that there might be something after Mass. But if you are in Sparwood, then that yellow food truck that has been parked near the church will be at the Big Truck in town after Mass - but currently it will be 'cash only' as they are not wired yet for Visa.

