

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 on Sunday mornings at 9am (see below).

Dear All,

This week Thumper and I went for a lovely cycle ride. About 10km out I thought that we would just go to the next bend where there would be a wonderful view and then we would head home. It was at that moment I heard “psh-sh-sh-sh-sh-sh-sh”; my inner tube just disintegrated. So we had a lovely two-hour plus walk back to the car pushing a bike (*that is, Thumper walking and me pushing the bike*). To try to redeem some use out of this unexpected walk, I decided to do some thinking about this Sunday’s readings, and as we know, thinking can be a dangerous thing!

Indebtedness

For various reasons to do with this Sunday’s gospel reading, the idea of being indebted has been in my head.

I started by thinking about when we hear the word ‘indebted’ used. I immediately thought of an event like the Hollywood Oscar ceremony – or other events along similar lines – when people will stand up and, when accepting an award, say “And I am indebted to... so-and-so ...for their help, I couldn’t have done it without them.” I am sure that they are indebted to very many people; and indeed, anyone in a team knows that they couldn’t achieve their goal without the other members of their team. But I think this is only scratching at the surface of indebtedness.

During the pandemic, for me one of the unexpected things that came to the common consciousness was our indebtedness to those – often youngsters, or at least, lowly paid employees – who stack the shelves in supermarkets. And then all the drivers who get our food to us, and all those involved in the long and complicated food chain. As a society we recognised our indebtedness to all these people, and very, very many more who do humble jobs that normally we might never think about or acknowledge as important.

Now this might sound like I am taking the example to an extreme, but on the road between New Denver and Slocan (south of Revelstoke and north of Castlegar) there is a bridge that is on a fast sweeping curve. Like at many other points on this twisting mountainous road, the surface of the road just before this bridge started to break up. A crew came in and did some work and relayed the surface. I can clearly remember the first time I drove over this new hard-top: it was perfectly smooth! Every other road work on that highway had left a new bump to either be avoided or to bounce over, but this one was literally unnoticeable. I remember

thinking, ‘Well done you guys who laid that bit of road surface; the extra care you took in making it smooth was noticed and appreciated.’ And every time after that I drove at a hundred-clicks on this really very nice curve I would say ‘Thank you’. Okay, this is pure silliness, but it was just a thought that got stuck in my brain, and I suppose that because I said ‘Thank you’ I was recognising that I was, in a very small way, indebted to them for choosing to do their job so well.

And going further, sometimes when I am walking my dog in the depths of the bush and I think about the first pioneers charged with opening up British Columbia to enable initially the railroads and then other traffic through. And I would scratch my head and be amazed at how, without GPS or any modern technology, they made those first rail lines and roads. And very clearly, as someone who enjoys this wonderful part of our world, I am indebted to these pioneers.

I hope that you can see that once this idea got going, it was endless. Obviously I am indebted to Mum-and-Dad-in-England and M&D in Canada, and some specific relatives and friends who have helped me, and some teachers, and some priests, and even a bishop or two, but definitely lots and lots of parishioners! But what struck me this week was that if we live as part of a society – that is, we don’t live like Robinson Crusoe on a desert island – then we are not only interconnected with one another, but we are indebted to an innumerable number of people.

And in our modern interconnected world, that indebtedness reaches far beyond Canada’s borders.

I remember in the 1970’s ‘individualism’ was the in thing, and sadly it became a very pervasive philosophy. How often have we said to someone “I have my car, let me drive you there.” only to be politely turned down because the person does not want to be indebted to anyone. What absolute nonsense! We are all indebted to others all the time. But the individualists rationalise this by saying that the road builder in New Denver was paid to do his job so the debt was fulfilled. May be, but I am still grateful to them for doing such a good job. And to the lovely people at the vet’s when my last dog, Ranga, got ill – no wage could buy their genuine concern, kindness and willingness to over look the silly emotionalism of a Brit who didn’t know how to cry.

Last week I said that chapter 18 of Matthew’s gospel only made sense in the light of humility. This week we look at indebtedness. If I knew just a small fraction of my indebtedness to so many people, then what choice would I have but to feel humble.

what are other words for indebtedness?



obligation, liability, debt, arrears, arrearage, appreciation, gratitude, gratefulness, thankfulness



Zoom Broadcast – Unmuting Microphones

As I mentioned last week, when you log onto our Zoom broadcast you might get a new question about allowing the host to unmute your microphone. This is a new facility that Zoom offers so that as we run the broadcast we can remotely unmute the microphone for the reader and musician. Sadly, last week the iPad that the musician uses didn't want to play this game, but I shouted at it and jumped up and down in front of it, so hopefully it will work this week.

And Finally

Last week at Mass I briefly mentioned two families in the parishes. *In Fernie*, I asked for prayers for Peter Caufield; he died peacefully Sunday morning and his funeral is this weekend. Now if you want your heart to be broken, *in Sparwood*, I asked for prayers for Chuck & Yvonne Samatte whose son, Russell, died last week in Oliver. Yvonne and Chuck drove to Oliver, but when they got there Chuck clearly was not very well. He got taken to hospital and died very early on Monday morning. So poor Yvonne lost both a son and a husband in a matter of days. I just can't imagine what she and her family are going through. We keep them all in our prayers. We hope to have a very simple funeral Mass for Chuck later this week.

With many thanks, Fr. David

Link to Sunday Mass

To get the link to our 9am Sunday morning Mass please send an e-mail to one of our parish offices with your name and you will then receive the link each week.

info@hollyfamilyfernie.ca

ElkValleyRC@gmail.com

Please note that in September Zoom are mandating that we use “passcodes” for our broadcasts, so that will need a Meeting ID and a Passcode to log in. Hopefully we will still be able to provide you via e-mail with a ‘clickable’ link that contains both of these.
