

Fortunately, there is a therapy for recovery from this epidemic. It's a simple one that boils down to this: "look at me and let me hear your voice". A friend tells me of a restaurant in Melbourne which has a sign that says "No wifi. Talk to each other"! And science confirms what we already know: that eye contact is essential for brain development, emotional stability, and social fluency.

Created in the image of God who is a Trinity or Communion of Persons, we are social beings. We find our joy and fulfilment through our relationships with others, both human and divine and from being in their real (not virtual) presence. For God too says to us "look at me and let me hear your voice". I'm reminded of the 19th Century French peasant who used to spend hours each day in his parish church. When the Parish Priest, Saint John Vianney, asked him what he did all that time he said, referring to God, "I look at him and he looks at me".

Phones are not the only Pied Piper doing their best to draw us away from God. There are so many things to look at, to listen to, to busy ourselves with, and to worry about. Many of these things may not necessarily be bad in themselves, but do they leave us time to look at God and listen to him?

God is like that mother I read about. He wants to recover each one of us from our world of distractions and self-

absorption so as to be his fully alive, loving, talking, and laughing children. The Church does all she can to assist this therapy - our Cathedrals, spires, crucifixes, altars & stained glass windows; our liturgies, Gospel readings, chants, bells, & incense; our sacraments, bread, wine, water, and oil; the Eucharist, Jesus Christ's very own body and blood before us – all these things cry out to us from God: "Look at me, listen to me, taste me, smell me, and touch me."

The Church can only do so much for me. In the end, I have to create the time and the space in my life to look at God and let him look at me, to listen to his voice and let him hear my voice in return. Let us enjoy living in the real presence of God.



Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale