

St. Monica's Parish

North Parramatta



"Our mission is to build up an active parish community with the Eucharist as the centre, foster deeper prayer and spirituality and reach out as a witnessing community"

TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES - YEAR B

22ND AUGUST 2021

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Ps 85: 1 - 3

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me;
save the servant who trusts in you, my God.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Joshua

Jos 24: 1 - 2. 15 - 18

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel together at Shechem; then he called the elders, leaders, judges and scribes of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. Then Joshua said to all the people: 'If you will not serve the Lord, choose today whom you wish to serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are now living. As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.'

The people answered, 'We have no intention of deserting the Lord and serving other gods! Was it not the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, the house of slavery, who worked those great wonders before our eyes and preserved us all along the way we travelled and among all the peoples through whom we journeyed. We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

This is the word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 33

Response: Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. **(R.)**
2. The Lord turns his face against the wicked
to destroy their remembrance from the earth.
The Lord turns his eyes to the just
and his ears to their appeal. **(R.)**
3. They call and the Lord hears
and rescues them in all their distress.
The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will save. **(R.)**
4. Many are the trials of the just man
but from them all the Lord will rescue him.
He will keep guard over all his bones,
not one of his bones shall be broken. **(R.)**
5. Evil brings death to the wicked;
those who hate the good are doomed.
The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants.
Those who hide in him shall not be condemned. **(R.)**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

Eph 5 : 21 - 32

Give way to one another in obedience to Christ. Wives should regard their husbands as they regard the Lord, since as Christ is head of the Church and saves the whole body, so is a husband the head of his wife; and as the Church submits to Christ, so should wives to their husbands, in everything. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with a form of words, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless. In the same way, husbands must love their

wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church, because it is his body – and we are its living parts. For this reason, a man must leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one body. This mystery has many implications; but I am saying it applies to Christ and the Church.

This is the word of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Your words, Lord, are spirit and life:
you have the words of everlasting life.
Alleluia!



GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Jn 6: 63 - 68

After hearing his doctrine many of the followers of Jesus said, 'This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?' Jesus was aware that his followers were complaining about it and said, 'Does this upset you? What if you should see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before?'

'It is the spirit that gives life,
the flesh has nothing to offer.

The words I have spoken to you are spirit
and they are life.

'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the outset those who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him. He went on, 'This is why I told you that no one could come to me unless the Father allows him.' After this, many of his disciples left him and stopped going with him.

Then Jesus said to the Twelve, 'What about you, do you want to go away too?' Simon Peter answered, 'Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Ps 103: 13 - 15

The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord;
you bring forth bread from the earth
and wine to cheer the heart.

St. Monica's Catholic Parish

Cnr Church Street and North Rocks Road, North Parramatta

SUNDAY MASSES:	Saturday Vigil - 5pm; Sunday - 9am, 11.30am (Cantonese/Chinese Mass) and 6pm	
WEEKDAY MASSES:	Tuesday-Friday - 9.15am	
EXPOSITION:	Every Thursday 8pm—9pm Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am,	
RECONCILIATION:	Friday 10-10.30am, Saturday 4-4.40pm, 3rd Sunday of the month 10:15-11am, or on request	
MARRIAGES:	Please contact the Parish Priest at least 12 months prior	
BAPTISMS:	Please contact the Parish Office for appointment with the Parish Priest. Phone: 9630-1951	
ANOINTING OF THE SICK/ EUCHARIST AT HOME	Please contact the Parish Office or Fr Ephraim Lam Phone: 9630-1951	
PARISH ADMINISTRATOR/ CHINESE CHAPLAIN:	Fr. Ephraim Lam Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: shingmanlam@gmail.com
POSTAL ADDRESS:	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151	Website: http://www.stmonicanp.org.au
OFFICE HOURS:	Tuesday-Friday 8.30am-2.30pm	Phone: 9630-1951 Fax: 9630-8738 Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.com

St. Monica's School

School Principal: Lisa Crampton

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COMMENTARY

Joshua's address to the assembly is a prophetic declaration: Thus says the Lord. He places before the people a choice: Whom will they serve? Three options are given. They can continue to serve ancestral gods and remain true to their past identity. They can opt for the gods of the people in whose land they dwell and hope to reap the blessings that accompany the land. Or they can worship the Lord, who is tied neither to their cultural past nor to their geographic present. They must make a choice from among all of the gods to whom they can commit themselves. Joshua's statement of choice is decisive: We will serve the Lord.

The responsorial psalm is the third part of the acrostic poem. The contrast between the just and the wicked is clearly drawn. God looks favourably toward the righteous; the fortunes of the wicked will be just the reverse. The psalmist knows that the theory of retribution is more a statement of faith in God's justice than an accurate description of the circumstances of life. Good people do indeed suffer, but they turn to God in their pain and misery. Whether they are rescued from their affliction or not, they stand under the promise of God's loving presence. Because suffering is often seen as the result of alienation from God, assurance of God's nearness can alleviate the distress that such a misperception might cause.

This epistle addresses some of the responsibilities of husbands in a traditional patriarchal marriage. Although the passage opens with a recommendation for mutual subordination, the reading itself counsels wives who are told to be submissive, not husbands. The teaching is somewhat circular. First, marriage is seen as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the church. Next, this relationship becomes an analogy for marriage. Christ loved the church enough to give his life for it. This is the degree of spousal commitment envisioned for husbands. A second metaphor is used. In the Genesis account, the two are described as constituting one flesh. Husbands are identified with their wives, just as Christ is identified with the church. Marriage now characterises the mysterious union of Christ and the church.

In today's gospel, Jesus' words or deeds are met with disbelief by some of his own disciples. They were scandalised by what he said. Rather than soften the hardness of his message, Jesus responds to their challenge with one of his own. If they were troubled by the thought of him descending from heaven, what would they think about him ascending back to where he had been originally? Jesus further insists that the flesh (the human way of living) cannot give life, which the spirit can. Faith in Jesus does not come easily or naturally. It is a grace given by God. While some of Jesus' followers have turned away, others have been convinced of the trustworthiness of his claims.

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Pope Francis proclaims "Year of St Joseph"

With the Apostolic Letter "Patris Corde" ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a "Year of Saint Joseph" from, 8 December 2020, to 8 December 2021.



Prayer to St. Joseph

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil.

Amen.

FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

August 23, St Rose of Lima
August 24, BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE
August 27, St Monica
August 28, St Augustine

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE OF OUR PARISH FAMILY WHO ARE SICK. ESPECIALLY

Paul Chiu, John Rodrigues, Dave & Fan Lin Wilson, Francis Lee, Jerry A, Michelle Barnes, Levi Bell, Grace Boitano, Gesualda Borg, Monica Teresa & Fernanda Carigliano, Veronica Coorey, Margaret Dorahy, Heidi Ellich, Josie Estera, Philippe Kalife, Tim Kelly, Mary Korunic, Lillian Leigh, Monique Malouf, Maria Itang Tagle, Sheila Watts, Tina de Larrazabal, Rosa Santos, Llave Family, Gloria Cherote,

MASS INTENTIONS

PARISH ACTIVITES

All parish Masses and activities are cancelled due to lockdown. Please go to our parish Facebook : **St Monica's North Parramatta** for the most up-to-date announcements.

BISHOP'S FATHERS DAY APPEAL



Due to the COVID lockdown, the Clergy Support Foundation is postponing the Bishop's Father's Day Appeal in-Parish collection to a later date, when Churches will once again be open. Parramatta

Catholic Foundation is assisting us with a mail and online appeal around the beginning of September. Your thoughtful gift to the Appeal will mean so much to our retired priests who have put the care of others before themselves. For more information on the Clergy Support Foundation's work or to make a kind donation today, please visit parracatholic.org/fathersdayappeal.

Thank you,
Clergy Support Foundation Committee



St. Monica's Sacraments

stmonicasacraments@gmail.com

First Reconciliation 2021

Reconciliation Registrations are open for children who have received the sacrament of Baptism and are in year 3 or above. Please send an email to Shanika at stmonicasacraments@gmail.com for details and a copy of the registration form. **Please register by the 23rd of August to facilitate preparation of lesson material and delivery of same via post to families in time for Zoom Parent Meeting with Father Lam.**

Act of Spiritual Communion



My Jesus, I believe you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament.

I love you above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

NOTICE FROM THE PARISH OFFICE

Our Office is closed during lockdown and if you need to contact us for any emergency, you can call on **02 9630 1951** and leave a short message or email us at stmonicanp@bigpond.com and we will get back to you as soon as possible. *Thank you.*



What's going on in Afghanistan?

In the past week, amidst the anticipating daily 11am Gladys updates on the COVID-19 situation in Sydney, there has been a news headline sparking global concern- President Ashraf Ghani has fled to Uzbekistan, giving the Taliban the opportunity to finally seize the capital city of Afghanistan (also known as Kabul) and effectively gaining control across the whole country. Why is this such a problem, and what can we do about it?

We will have to backtrack a little bit to understand who the Taliban are, and why there was a war in Afghanistan in the first place. The Taliban is an extreme Islamic group who ruled in Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. During this time, they were able to consolidate their power and claim more territory through their oppressive regime. A small portion of the country still remained outside of their control, and most international nations never properly recognized them as a legitimate government. The United States military intervened to dispose of their regime in late 2001 after the tragic September 9/11 attacks on the twin towers, and promised Afghanistan support for a democratic regime instead. Even though the Taliban were no longer in control, they still regrouped in different parts of the country and continued to wage war against the United States and its allies, fueling a conflict which has been ongoing for several years. They've been able to gain back a lot of territory mainly because US and other western nations have withdrawn their forces in recent months. Kabul was the last major city the Taliban needed for them to claim complete victory. There has been widespread concern and uncertainty for what's to come, as their religious beliefs and brutality have left many Afghan people afraid, and desperate to leave the country. Suppression of non-Islamic activity is not uncommon there, and Pope Francis asked for prayers for the country, "I ask all of you to pray with me to the God of peace so that the clamor of weapons might cease and solutions can be found at the table of dialogue. Only thus can the battered population of that country – men, women, elderly and children – return to their own homes, and live in peace and security, in total mutual respect." The Christian community in Afghanistan is quite small, with only one Catholic Church and around 200 Catholics as of 2018.

The persecution of Christians in the Bible is something we have touched on in our youth group sessions- and it clearly still remains relevant today. We may be wondering how could God do this to his people, to cause even more suffering in this world? But we have to remember we can't understand everything from our finite perspective- we don't have God's mind; we may never truly understand the details of why certain things happen; and even though suffering is most certainly not a good thing, the Bible points us in the right direction of trusting in God's power that he can use it to accomplish good (Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.") So it is important now, more than ever, to pray for the protection of Christian believers and their families in Afghanistan (and even for other parts of the world where oppression is not making news headlines), to pray for their perseverance in overcoming difficulties and persecution, to pray for those who still work to evangelize despite the possibility of persecution and to pray for peace. The people of Afghanistan need our prayers.

Youth Announcements



St Monica's Youth Group (FYRE)

Online youth group continues! In August we are looking at the book of Romans, led by Rashane and Sam! Join us every Saturday night at 8PM on Zoom- feel free to come along 😊 The zoom link is attached- <https://uni-sydney.zoom.us/j/5735998128?pwd=bm1XMnJtT0hnNW9GQ09xc1EzQkpHUT09>