

# 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"*

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A**

**29TH JANUARY 2023**

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Save us, O Lord our God!  
And gather us from the nations,  
to give thanks to your holy name,  
and make it our glory to praise you.

## FIRST READING

**A reading from the prophet Zephaniah**

**Zep 2:3; 3: 12 - 13**

Seek the Lord all you, the humble of the earth, who obey his commands. Seek integrity, seek humility: you may perhaps find shelter on the day of the anger of the Lord.

In your midst I will leave a humble and lowly people, and those who are left in Israel will seek refuge in the name of the Lord.

They will do no wrong, will tell no lies; and the perjured tongue will no longer be found in their mouths. But they will be able to graze and rest with no one to disturb them.

*This is the word of the Lord*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

**Ps 145**

**Response:** Happy the poor in spirit;  
the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. (R.)
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger  
and upholds the widow and orphan. (R.)
3. It is the Lord who loves the just  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign for ever,  
Zion's God, from age to age. (R.)

## SECOND READING

**A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians**

**1 Cor 1 : 26 - 31**

Take yourselves, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? No, it was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen – those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything. The human race has nothing to boast about to God, but you, God has made members of Christ Jesus and by God's

doing he has become our wisdom, and our virtue, and our holiness, and our freedom. As scripture says: if anyone wants to boast, let him boast about the Lord.

*This is the word of the Lord*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Rejoice and be glad;

Your reward will be great in heaven.

Alleluia!



## GOSPEL

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Matthew  
Mt 5 : 1 - 12**

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak.

This is what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.

Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.

Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.

Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.

Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.

Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God.

Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.*

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Let your face shine on your servant.

Save me in your merciful love.

O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you.

# St. Monica's Catholic Parish

## Cnr Church Street and North Rocks Road, North Parramatta

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

### St. Monica's School

School Principal: Lisa Crampton

Phone: 8832 4100

Fax: 8832-4199

Email: stmonicasnparra@parra.catholic.edu.au

## COMMENTARY

### The Beatitudes ... A Call to Action

Jesus doesn't start in a fantasy dream world of perfection. Jesus looks at the world as it often is for many people, perhaps for most people around the world: 'the poor in spirit', 'those who mourn', 'those who are gentle', 'those who hunger and thirst for justice'.

Jesus astonishes the crowd by saying that such people are 'Blessed'. How can this be? The answer lies in our Lord's emphasis on the new community he is establishing under the reign of God: what he calls 'the Kingdom of God'.

Those in such wretched circumstances *will* have things set right, but only if followers of Jesus do everything possible to lift the poor out of the poverty which crushes their spirit, do everything possible to comfort those who mourn, do everything possible to make sure the gentle share the earth's resources, do everything possible to satisfy the craving for justice.

We could pause for a moment to pray the 'Our Father' pledging ourselves to help construct this new society where the Beatitudes can come true:

'Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

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For When You Need Christ Most

Christ be with me, Christ within me.

Christ behind me, Christ before me.

Christ beside me, Christ to win me.

Christ to comfort and restore me.

Christ beneath me, Christ above me.

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger.

Christ in hearts of all that love me.

Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the Name,

the strong Name of the Trinity;

by invocation of the same.

The Three in One, and One in Three,

of whom all nature hath creation,

Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:

Praise to the Lord of my salvation,

Salvation is of Christ the Lord.

Amen.

## FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

January 31, St John Bosco  
February 2, The Presentation of  
the Lord

**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

*Please refer to the notice  
board at the entrance.*

## PARISH ACTIVITIES



**Silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**  
Every Thursday from 8pm–9pm.  
Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am.  
All are welcome.



**St Monica's Parish Rosary Group** resumes on Wednesday, 1st February from 10.00am to 12.00pm in the Parish Centre. Enquiries: Lynn McBride : 0423 696 961



**Christian Meditation** resumes on Thursday, 2nd February from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. Participation via zoom is available. Enquiries/facilitator: Patricia Brown, 0418 406 661 or email: pabrown02@gmail.com



**Catholic Women's League St Monica's Branch** resumes on Monday, 27th February at 10.30am in the Parish Centre. Enquiries: Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



**St Monica's Piety Stall** (open alternate weeks)  
Stall is open on Saturday 4.40 - 6.15pm  
Sunday 8.40 - 10.15am  
Contact: Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



**Remember the Deceased** There is an open diary and pens next to the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue and you are welcome to write down the names of your deceased loved ones or family members on the day of their anniversaries and we will pray for them.



**St Monica's Art Group** Resuming on the 4th February. Every Saturday, 6pm–8pm, the Art Group will gather at the Parish Centre. Mini workshops are available. Please contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



**Tap & Go** is now available for donation for ongoing Church building maintenance fund. Machine is placed near the Statute of Saint Joseph. Envelopes are also available on the tables at the entrance to the Church if you wish to donate via cash/credit card. Your donation is greatly appreciated.



**Bible Brekkie** Resuming on 26th February. Every FIRST and LAST Sunday of the month, 10.15am - 11am, at the Blue Room. Fr. Ephraim will talk about interesting topics

### Write the WORD 2022-2024

To anticipate the celebration of the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this parish, everyone is invited to join in "Write the WORD" to increase our familiarity of the Holy Scripture. For details you can take a leaflet at the main entrances of the church, or call the Parish Office (9630 1951), or send an email to [write.the.word.2024@gmail.com](mailto:write.the.word.2024@gmail.com)

## No weekday Masses from 23rd Jan to 10th Feb 2023

As Fr Ephraim is out of the parish, the weekday's Masses (Monday to Friday) from 23rd Jan to 10th Feb will be cancelled.

The Masses on Saturdays and Sundays will remain as normal and be said by guest priests.

### 04th/5th February ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
<b>Readers</b>	M. Whippy J. Whippy	J. Pinto M. Falamich	W. Sassine M. Ellis
<b>Extraordinary Ministers</b>	M. Samson J. Knight	M. Joseph S. Joseph	
<b>Acolytes</b>	Peter Handcock	Rashane Joseph	Adrian Cheung
<b>Cleaning</b>	Group 1 - Chinese Chaplaincy		
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Abby Liu		
<b>Counting</b>	Group 2 - Bernadette Fraser & Brigid McGettigan		



## Saint Stephen the Martyr

Stephen became the first Christian martyr following a complaint that the elderly widows of the Hellenist Christians were not receiving proper care from the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, which was dominated by the Hebrew-speaking majority.

Stephen belonged to this Hellenist group. The New American Bible notes that the Hellenists here were most likely Palestinian Jews who spoke only Greek. In contrast, the Hebrews referred to in the account of Stephen's death were probably Palestinian Jews who spoke Hebrew or Aramaic and also Greek. Together, they formed the Jerusalem Jewish Christian community. In general, the term Hellenist was applied to anyone who was culturally Greek. As a rule, the Hellenists did not necessarily have a problem with the Roman Empire, and they tended to maintain their own synagogues in Jerusalem (though they still venerated the temple). Many moved to Jerusalem as they grew old out of a desire to die and be buried in the holy city. Undoubtedly, some of these became the widows in our story.

In response to the aforementioned complaint, the Apostles ordained seven deacons specifically to attend to the temporal relief of the poor in the Hellenist Jewish Christian community. Stephen is the first named of these deacons. He was known for his wisdom and holiness. He was also a forceful preacher. It was this quality that would eventually set him on the path to his death.

Members of several synagogues challenged Stephen to a debate. Stephen apparently defeated them so badly that they wanted revenge. Humiliated, they accused Stephen of blasphemy against Moses and God. The Jewish authorities, already wary of the preaching of the Apostles and the growth of Jewish converts to their message, had Stephen arrested and dragged before the Sanhedrin. The primary allegation against him seems to be a claim that he said Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple and challenge the traditions established by Moses.

Interestingly, Stephen's defense seems to pit him against the temple and its sacrificial cult. This stands in sharp contrast to the majority of Jewish Christians at the time. While his reverence for the Law of Moses is clear, he suggests the temple cult is not a legitimate part of this law. For Stephen, Jesus was the one who restored the religion of Moses, whereas the temple was compared to the golden calf forged by Aaron in the desert. This argument was not well-received by the Sanhedrin. The rest is history, as indicated by the passage that began our reflection.

As the first Christian martyr, Stephen was declared a saint. He is the patron of altar servers, bricklayers, casket makers and, of course, deacons. He is often shown with stones, the Book of the Gospels, a small church and a palm frond. The palm branch symbolizes victory, triumph, peace and eternal life. Stephen's feast day is December 26.

Doug Culp, from the *Faith* magazine

## Youth Announcements



### St Monica's Youth Group (FYRE)

Youth group continues for another month in the community room, starting at 10:30AM! Feel free to drop by for some games and friendly chats 😊 In February we will be looking at abortion and euthanasia, led by Gordon and Ryan!