

# 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 OF LENT - YEAR A

19TH MARCH 2023

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.  
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;  
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast

## FIRST READING

A reading from the first book of Samuel

1 Sm 16: 6 - 7. 10 - 13

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

*This is the word of the Lord*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 22

**Response:** The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.

1. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)
2. He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort. (R.)
3. You have prepared a banquet for me In the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. (R.)
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. (R.)

## SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

Eph 5 : 8 - 14

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said: Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

*This is the word of the Lord*



## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!  
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;  
whoever follows me will have the light of life.  
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

## GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St John

Jn 9 : 1 - 41

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or

his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered, 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'

'As long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.'

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from.' The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him. Jesus said:

'It is for judgement that I have come into this world, so that those without sight may see and those with sight turn blind.'

Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, surely?' Jesus replied:

'Blind? If you were, you would not be guilty, but since you say, "We see", your guilt remains.'

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.*

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed,  
I saw and I believed in God.

# 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

### Spittle and Mud

Our Lord, by the power of his word alone, could have healed the dis-ease of this man, blind since birth. Yet, he made a paste with spittle and put it over the eyes of the blind man. Just as God would have moistened the dust of the earth to shape the first human being, for the blind man, it was as though he had been created anew.

God rarely works by telepathy but has a preferred way of working through the elements of creation, especially in the Sacraments. So, with the Anointing of the Sick, pressing olive oil onto the forehead and hands of the sick or dying symbolises the Holy Spirit entering the very pores of the sick person, relieving that person of undue anxiety and giving strength for the next stage of life.

This sacrament is a formal ritual of healing by the Church. But there are a million informal ways, such as putting one's arm around someone who is lonely or unwell, which are sacramental to the world.

We could pause for a moment that we might go into the world like the man healed by Jesus, eyes wide open to see where we might exercise the healing power of the Lord of the Gospel.

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Lenten Prayer..

Loving Creator of mine,  
I feel the pace quicken,  
the time draw near.

I am filled with joy  
as I move toward Easter  
and the promised  
reconciliation with you.

Teach me to follow  
the example of your Son,  
to be worthy of being called  
one his people:

a Christ-ian.

Help me to live  
each day as he did  
turning hatred to love  
and conflict to peace.

I await the new life  
with eagerness, faith  
and a deep gratitude.

Amen.

### LENT 2023

#### Stations of the Cross

Every Friday from 24th February to 31st March

(Sacrament of Reconciliation Available)

English: 7pm

Chinese: 8pm

### HOLY WEEK 2023

Timetable of various liturgies during Holy Week and Easter Sunday (1st April to 9th April 2023) is available at the main entrance of the church.

Please take one.

### FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

March 20, ST JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

March 25, THE ANNUNCIATION 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 ACTIVITES



**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** Every Wednesday, from 10.00am to 12.00pm in the Parish Centre. Enquiries : Lynn McBride : 0423 696 961

**Christian Meditation** Every Thursday 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**  
Last Monday of the month 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** . 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** Every FIRST and LAST Sunday of the month, 10.15am - 11am, at the Blue Room. Fr. Ephraim will talk about interesting topics from the Bible. All are welcome.

**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)

**St. Monica's Sacraments**  
[stmonicasacraments@gmail.com](mailto:stmonicasacraments@gmail.com)  
**Sacrament of Confirmation**  
*Third Lesson* : Saturday, 25th March at 4pm at the Parish Centre. Children will proceed to 5pm Mass after each lesson.  
*Confirmation Mass* : Friday, 26th May at 7pm.

**St Joseph's Day Mass**  
20th March (Monday)  
English : 9.15am and 7.00pm  
Chinese : 8.00pm

**Annunciation of the Lord Mass**  
24th March (Friday) Vigil Mass  
English: 7.00pm & Chinese: 8.00pm  
(no stations of the Cross)  
25th March (Saturday)  
English : 9.15am

## 25TH/26TH March ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
<b>Readers</b>	G. Basha C. Maxwell	B. McGettigan S. Younes	M. Novak D. Llevado
<b>Extraordinary Ministers</b>	J. Knight A. Hernandez	J. Skulander S. Joseph	
<b>Acolytes</b>	Peter Handcock	Nishan Joseph	John Hilton
<b>Cleaning</b>	Group 2 - Vera		
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Julie Skulander/Maris Strong		
<b>Counting</b>	Group 4 - Peter Mooney/Michael Falamich		

## SOAP Reflection 19<sup>th</sup> March

**Scripture-** This week's gospel is about Jesus healing a man who was born blind from birth. The problem is that the Jewish people, especially the Pharisees, don't believe that the man was cured of his blindness. The Jewish people demand evidence that the man was cured by verifying with the man's parents that he was born blind. The Jewish people, the Pharisees, and the cured man himself don't really understand or recognise Jesus' true identity, and seem to be trying to work out who Jesus is.

**Observation-** I think it is interesting to consider the Pharisee's reasoning for refusing to believe that the blind man was cured. They assert that Jesus can't possibly be a miracle worker or prophet because Jesus doesn't 'observe' or 'keep' the Sabbath, as Jesus cured the blind man during the Sabbath. From the Pharisee's perspective, Jesus is a sinner and cannot be sent from God. For the Pharisees, observing the Sabbath requires adhering to Jewish laws and customs that govern the Sabbath. The Pharisees in this instance are legalistic. Because the Pharisees are legalistic, they are blind to the fact that Jesus cured the blind man so that the man will believe that Jesus is the Son of Man, a person who comes from God. The cured man does end up believing that Jesus comes from God, because he knows that God shows His favour to people who are not sinners. From the blind man's perspective, Jesus' ability to perform miracles is a sign that Jesus is in God's favour. The blind man doesn't fully realise that Jesus is God Himself, but recognising Jesus' affinity with God is the first and crucial step in having faith in Jesus as the saviour of humanity, which fully come to fruition in His death and resurrection.

**Application-** Although as Catholics, we all acknowledge Jesus is the Saviour and the Son of God, it is important to recognise that we, too, can sometimes suffer from the same spiritual blindness as the Pharisees. We may suffer from spiritual blindness if we are quick to recognise faults in others, but not our own. We may also suffer from spiritual blindness if we believe in natural justice; if we mistakenly that God only permits bad things to happen to people if they did something wrong in their lives, but don't recognise that people's hardships and tribulations can provide opportunities for them to strengthen their faith in God by trusting in Him. Recognising when we are suffering from spiritual blindness requires a lot of introspection and some guidance from the Holy Spirit, so take the time during the week to pray and reflect on instances when you have been ignorant or misguided in your understanding of how God works. For example, did you ever believe that you can strike a bargain with God in the hope that He will give you what you want? Or were you ever sceptical of the idea that God can intervene in our lives through the presence of people in our lives?

**Prayer-** Let us all pray, with humility, to God to relieve us of spiritual blindness, to help us recognise His presence in our lives and for our faith in Him to be strengthened every day, even when we encounter difficult situations.

- Rachel

## 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 😊 This month's topic will be homosexuality, lead by Rebecca and Brian!..

**Youth Camp 2023**  
Youth camp is back on again in the Term 2 holidays, from the 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> July (Tuesday to Friday)! This year's theme will be Fast and Furious, with our topic focusing on families- permission forms will be handed out soon. If you have any questions/concerns so far, please let Hazel (0478209349) or Cheryl (0481507169) know 😊 Get excited!