

# 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"*

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR A

26TH MARCH 2023

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Give me justice, O God,  
and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless.  
From the deceitful and cunning rescue me,  
for you, O God, are my strength.

## FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

Ez 37: 12 - 14

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

*This is the word of the Lord*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 129

**Response:** With the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption.

1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
Lord, hear my voice!  
O let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleading. (R.)
2. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?  
But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you. (R.)
3. My soul is waiting for the Lord,  
I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord  
more than watchman for daybreak.  
Let the watchman count on daybreak  
and Israel on the Lord. (R.)
4. Because with the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption,  
Israel indeed he will redeem  
from all its iniquity. (R.)

## SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Rom 8 : 8 - 11

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

*This is the word of the Lord*



## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!  
I am the resurrection and the life, says the  
Lord; whoever believes in me will not die for  
ever.  
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

## GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St John

Jn 11 : 1 - 45

There was a man named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with the two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was ill. –

It was the same Mary, the sister of the sick man Lazarus, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.' The disciples said, 'Rabbi, it is not long since the Jews wanted to stone you; are you going back again?' Jesus replied:

'Are there not twelve hours in the day? A man can walk in the daytime without stumbling because he has the light of this world to see by; but if he walks at night he stumbles, because there is no light to guide him.'

He said that and then added, 'Our friend Lazarus is resting, I am going to wake him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he is able to rest he is sure to get better.' The phrase Jesus used referred to the death of Lazarus, but they thought that by 'rest' he meant 'sleep', so Jesus put it plainly, 'Lazarus is dead; and for your sake I am glad I was not there because now you will believe. But let us go to him.' Then Thomas – known as the Twin – said to the other disciples, 'Let us go too, and die with him.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. Bethany is only about two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to sympathise with them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.'

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in a low voice, 'The Master is here and wants to see you.' Hearing this, Mary got up quickly and went to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village; he was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were in the house sympathising with Mary saw her get up so quickly and go out, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Mary went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at his feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' At the sight of her tears, and those of the Jews who followed her, Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept; and the Jews said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

*'This is the Gospel of the Lord.'*

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Everyone who lives and believes in me  
will not die for ever, says the Lord.

# 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/ EUCARIST 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

### Rage against Death

This Gospel tells us that Our Lord was moved with compassion in an almost violent way, raging against the seeming finality of death. The raising of Lazarus was a demonstration of his power to rob death of its supposed supremacy.

But, Our Lord did not set Lazarus completely free! You may think that to be raised from the dead was not a bad start, but Lazarus was still shuffling: bound, constrained, constricted by the past. To those gathered around the tomb Jesus issued the command: 'Set him free, unbind him.' It was the collective effort of others which enabled Lazarus to walk as a liberated son of God.

You may find yourself commanded by the Lord to help unbind a person who has had a deadening experience which has drained them of life. We get the courage to respond because it is the command of the One who definitively conquered death.

We could pause for a moment to resolve to help liberate others already helped by the grace of Him whom we believe to be *the Resurrection and the Life*.

© Fr Michael Tate; mtate@bigpond.com

Lenten Prayer..

My loving Lord,  
it's so hard to love  
the world sometimes  
and to love it the way  
Jesus did seems impossible.  
Help me to be inspired  
by his love and  
guided by his example.  
Most of all, I want to accept  
that I can't do it alone,  
and that trying is an arrogance  
of self-centeredness.  
I need you, dear God,  
to give me support in this journey.  
Show me how to unlock my heart  
so that I am less selfish.  
Let me be less fearful  
of the pain and darkness  
that will be transformed by you  
into Easter joy.

Amen.

## FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

**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.*

## LENT 2023

### Stations of the Cross

Friday 31st March 2023

(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.

# 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** 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

No Lessons during the school holiday break.  
Lessons resume on the 29th of April at 4pm.



**Project Compassion 2023** - Please collect your Project Compassion Boxes at the Entrance to the Church. Return to the Parish Office or Parish Priest by end of lent. Thank you.



**Bishop's Appeal 2023** will take place this weekend. Your donations support the Seminarians in our Diocese. Please use the QR codes on the posters to donate online or use the limited envelopes provided on the pews. Donations above \$2/- are tax-deductible.

## 01st/2nd April ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
<b>Readers</b>	J. Whippy M. Whippy	A. Espiritu B. Hooker	V. Cruz M. Novak
<b>Extraordinary Ministers</b>	M. Samson M. Wilkinson	B. Hooker M. Joseph	
<b>Acolytes</b>	Patrick Senjak	Ian Goldthorpe	Adrian Cheung
<b>Cleaning</b>	Group 1 - Chinese Chaplaincy		
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Angela & Michael Falamich		
<b>Counting</b>	Group 5 - Peter & Kris Handcock		



## SOAP Reflection 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Scripture-** today's gospel examines another one of Jesus' miracles- this time focusing on the raising of Lazarus to parallel his own eventual death and resurrection. One thing which stood out to me upon reading this was verse 25-27 when Jesus declares "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die," because through the physical restoration of Lazarus' life, we too are reminded that one day Jesus will raise the dead and promise eternal life on earth.

**Observation-** Although Jesus was aware that Lazarus was unwell, he waited three more days until he decided to return to Judea- but why? He also chose a bad time to go because the Pharisees were already planning to kill him; yet I think it's a clear demonstration of Jesus glorifying the Lord, reminding the disciples of his divinity and the healing power he possesses, which was granted to him so that he may use it to lead others to belief (14-15: "Lazarus is dead. And for your sakes I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe.") Its also a reminder of Jesus' omniscience, all-knowing nature- that, despite the delay, he did it for a reason, knowing he would be able to perform a miracle

**Application-** Often we may experience doubt and uncertainty in our lives- just like Mary and Martha we might feel like God is taking a long time to respond to our needs. Yet these are the moments where we should be trusting in God the most- learning to be patient and trusting in the process; that there is a reason or purpose for your challenges because God will be able to glorify himself through it. It is definitely easier said than done sometimes, but with persistent prayer and meditation God will make himself known to you.

**Prayer-** Dear Heavenly Father, I come to you today to ask for strength and guidance; specifically I would like to ask for St Thomas Merton's intercession- My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing, I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire, and I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always though I may need to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

## 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 😊 Next month's topic will be on Euthanasia, led by Ryan and Gordon.

### 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!