

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 B

17TH MARCH 2024

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 Jeremiah 31:31-34

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

The word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 50

Response: Create a clean heart in me, O God.

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt.
and cleanse me from my sin. (R.)
2. A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. (R.)
3. Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you. (R.)

SECOND READING Hebrews 5:7-9

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

The word of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
If you serve me, follow me, says the Lord;
and where I am, my servant will also be.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

GOSPEL Jn 12:20-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.

I tell you most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain;
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for the eternal life.

If a man serves me, he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.

If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him.
Now my soul is troubled.

What shall I say:

Father, save me from this hour?

But it was for this very reason that I have come to
this hour.

Father, glorify your name!

A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will
glorify it again.'

People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of
thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.'
Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice
came, but for yours.

'Now sentence is being passed on this world;
now the prince of this world is to be overthrown.
And when I am lifted up from the earth,
I shall draw all men to myself.'

By these words he indicated the kind of death he
would die.

The Gospel of the Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat
falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain.
But if it dies, it bears much fruit.



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 PRIEST/ CHINESE CHAPLAIN:	Fr. Ephraim Lam	Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: shingmanlam@gmail.com
ASSISTANT PARISH PRIEST	Fr Pio Jang	Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.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: Fiona Bylsma

Phone: 8832 4100

Fax: 8832-4199

Email: stmonicasnparra@parra.catholic.edu.au

COMMENTARY

We want to see Jesus

I can observe a baby, but the parents 'see' their baby very differently. They gaze with total fascination, trying to perceive what this little bundle of flesh is really all about, trying to get an insight into its personality, visualising a possible future, hoping for a response.

This Gospel passage begins with a request from some Greeks 'to see Jesus', surely in all the ways parents see their baby. They were trying to perceive what this Jesus was really all about, trying to get an insight into his personality, imagining a possible future, hoping for a response. And there was a response full of allusions to the future.

Jesus was as a grain of wheat. He died and was buried in the earth and that death was fruitful for the whole of humankind. He foresaw being nailed to the cross which would be dropped upright into a hole in the ground. Our Lord says of that scene: 'When I am lifted up I will draw all people to myself.' How were people drawn to this scene?

People saw the length to which Jesus was prepared to go in order to persevere in his mission to live out the message that his Heavenly Father was full of mercy and wanted all people to share in Divine Life. This led to his being lifted up on the cross, being buried in the ground like a grain of wheat, only to rise to new life.

We could take a moment to pray that we will shortly see all this with the eyes of faith as we participate in the rituals of Good Friday and Easter

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St. Monica's Sacraments

stmonicasacraments@gmail.com



SACRAMENT of CONFIRMATION

Candidate Sessions

3:30pm Start then 5pm Mass

3rd - Sat 16th March

4th - Sat 23rd March

RECONCILIATION & REHEARSAL

(Mandatory)

Sat 11th May - 2.00pm (Church) -

Candidate **MUST** attend with

Godparent/sponsor

CEREMONY

Fri 17th May at 5.30pm (Photographs)

7.00pm Mass Start

*Note: Candidates **MUST** attend all 4 lessons and Masses after lessons to be eligible to receive the sacrament. There will be **NO** catchup/makeup lessons available.*

2024 Holy Week & Easter

Liturgy Timetable

is available at the main entrance of the church. Please take one and join our celebrations.

FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

Mar 18, St. Patrick, bishop

Mar 19, St. Joseph, Spouse of The Blessed VIRGIN MARY

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

Peter Handcock, John Hilton, Paul Chiu, John Rodrigues, Dave & Fan Lin Wilson, Francis Lee, Jerry A, Michelle Barnes, Levi Bell, Gesualda Borg, Monica Teresa & Fernanda Carigliano, 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
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: Nathan Cook, email: cookn4@gmail.com



Catholic Women's League St Monica's Branch
Last Monday 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



St Monica's Art Group Every Saturday, 6pm–8pm. The Art Group will gather at the Parish Centre. Mini workshops are available in Feb 2024. Please contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



Bible Brekkie Every FIRST and LAST Sunday of the month, 10.15am - 11am, at the Parish Office. Fr. Ephraim will talk about interesting topics from the Bible. All are welcome.



CHILDREN'S LITURGY
Every Sunday at 9am Mass (during School Terms)
Young children haven't receive Holy Communion are welcome to join.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS 2024

Every Friday from 16th February to 22nd March
English: 7pm Chinese: 8pm
Confession is available from 7pm to 8:45pm

Project Compassion 2024

The boxes with the donations can be returned to the parish by Good Friday, 29th March 2024, or make your donations using the QR code on the boxes.

Special Masses during Lent 2024

St. Patrick's Feast Day
18th March (MON) 9:15am (English)

St. Joseph's Feast Day
19th March (TUE) 9:15am (English)
7:30pm (English & Chinese)

23rd/24th March ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
Readers	S. Meleca C. Meleca	P. Fleming B. Hooker	
Extraordinary Ministers	A. Bentley M. Samson	J. Skulander M. Jospeh	
Acolytes	P. Senjak	I. Goldthorpe	
Cleaning	Group 2 - Vera (22nd March)		
Children's Liturgy	Maria/Chidinma		
Morning Tea	Julie & Maris		
Counting	Group 4 - Peter Mooney		



SOAP Reflection 17th March 2024

Scripture: John 12:20–33

Observation: Today's gospel begins with several Greeks approaching Philip requesting to see Jesus. Not much is said about these Greeks and their intentions, whether it was out of curiosity or a genuine desire to know Jesus, but what struck me was that they serve as an example to us, a simple yet powerful way to open our minds and hearts to Christ.

When Philip and Andrew bring their request to Jesus' attention, he does not address it in a straightforward and direct manner. Jesus does not draw attention to himself, but rather to the purpose of his life, the sacrifice he must bear for our benefit. He indicates this in his parable where he says, "unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." Here we can see two parallels, either a wheat grain lives and exists for itself, falls to the ground naturally and dies, or it dies to itself and is buried in the ground, offering itself to bear many seeds.

Jesus follows this with another parable directed to his disciples, "whoever loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." At first, this might come off as harsh and confusing, why would Jesus tell us to hate our life and not love it? In this instance, the words, "love" and "hate" represent two opposing ways of living. In the first way, Jesus is saying if you live in a self-centred manner, making yourself the number one priority over everything, even God, this is wrong and you are committing an act of idolatry. But if you instead live life against the grain by embracing God and live with an attitude of service, you will have eternal life.

Therefore, the gospel today invites us not only to appreciate the sacrifice Jesus is about to make but to give ourselves also to God and to those around us, to become the servant that Jesus is and call us to be!

Application: In a world that encourages us to embrace individualism and self-fulfilment, to "love our life" and give in to our desires and wishes, we can often fall short in living a self-centred lifestyle. Whether that be getting good grades, advancing in our career or financial status, there is always something desirable in this world which urges us to chase after. Among all these temptations and distractions, it can be difficult to clear our minds and give our time and attention to simply love God, to listen and hear Him.

During this Lenten season, we are invited to form a deeper connection with Christ in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. More than just attending Sunday Mass, let us open our hearts to God and offer our time daily. This is where we can lean on the Greeks who in today's gospel showed us a simple way to open our hearts to Christ. "I want to see you, Lord" can be a simple way to start your day or prayer. I also encourage you to follow this up with a daily prayer, perhaps from the Bible or a prayer app. Attending Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation is another helpful way to recentre ourselves and further our relationship with God as we prepare ourselves for Easter.

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you for showing us Your ultimate love by sending Your son into our world to save us from our sin. During this Lenten season, I pray that we may be able to open our hearts and place our trust in You. I pray for strength and guidance so that we too can be a giver, not just a receiver, and live life fully to Your will. In your son's name we pray. 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! This month, we will be talking about what it means to live out our faith. 😊

Youth Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross will be run by youths on Friday 22nd March. It will start at 7pm and 8pm. Please come and participate if you can!

Good Friday Night Walk

The annual Good Friday night walk held by the Catholic Youth Paramatta is coming on 29th March (Good Friday). You will be joined by hundreds of youths from across the diocese as you pilgrimage from St Patrick's Catholic Church in Blacktown to St Patrick's Cathedral in Paramatta. The walk is fully supervised and held overnight from 10pm to 7am. You will be stopping at several churches along the way where there will be reflections on the Stations of the Cross and Christ's Passion. St Monica's will be hosting one of the stations! If you are interested in joining the pilgrimage walk, please message Rebecca Cheung on 0449 055 395.

