

# 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"*

## THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD — YEAR A

### 11TH JANUARY 2026

#### ENTRANCE ANTIPOH

After the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

#### FIRST READING

Is 42 : 1-4. 6-7

#### A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations. He does not cry out or shout aloud, or make his voice heard in the streets. He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame.

Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver, nor be crushed until true justice is established on earth, for the islands are awaiting his law.

I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon. *The word of the Lord*

#### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 28

**Response:** The Lord will bless his people with peace.

1. O give the Lord you sons of God, give the Lord glory and power; give the Lord the glory of his name. Adore the Lord in his holy court. (R.)
2. The Lord's voice resounding on the waters, the Lord on the immensity of waters; the voice of the Lord, full of power, the voice of the Lord, full of splendour. (R.)
3. The God of glory thunders. In his temple they all cry: 'Glory!' The Lord sat enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits as king for ever. (R.)

#### SECOND READING

Acts 10 : 34-38

#### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'The truth I have now come to realise' he said 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.'

'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ — but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism.'

God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil.'

*The word of the Lord*

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him.

Alleluia!

#### GOSPEL

Mt 3 : 13-17

#### A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Matthew

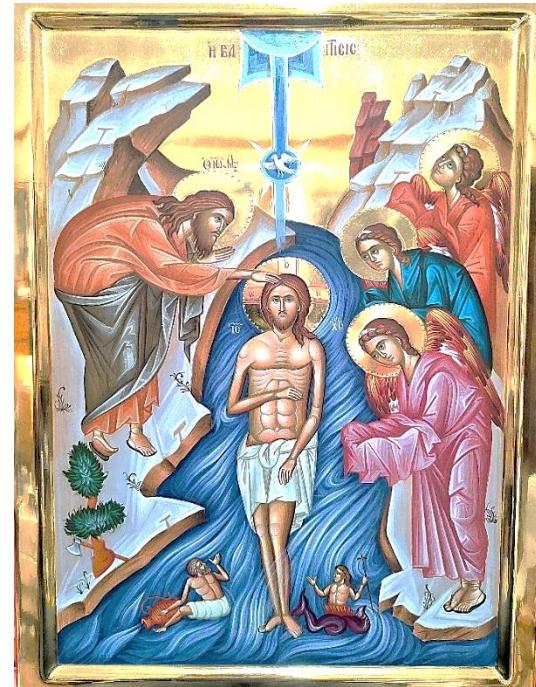
Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you,' he said 'and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands.' At this, John gave in to him.

As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. A voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

#### COMMUNION ANTIPOH

Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.



## St. Monica's Catholic Parish Cnr Church Street and North Rocks Road, North Parramatta

Sunday Masses:	English: Saturday Vigil - 5pm; Sunday - 9am, 6pm Cantonese: Sunday 11.30am
Weekday Masses:	English: Tuesday-Friday - 9.15am
Exposition:	Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am
Reconciliation:	Friday 10-10.30am, Saturday 4-4.30pm, 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: <a href="mailto:shingmanlam@gmail.com">shingmanlam@gmail.com</a>
Assistant Parish priest	Fr. Ambrose Owusu-Ansah Phone: 9630 -1951
Postal Address:	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151 Website: <a href="https://stmonicancp.org.au">https://stmonicancp.org.au</a>
Office hours:	Tuesday-Friday 8.30am-2.30pm Sunday 9am-11am Phone:9630-1951 Email: <a href="mailto:stmonicancp@bigpond.com">stmonicancp@bigpond.com</a>

### St. Monica's School

School Principal: Fiona Bylsma Phone: 8832 4100 Email: [stmonicasnparra@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:stmonicasnparra@parra.catholic.edu.au)

## COMMENTARY

### A Whisper Echoing Heaven

Let us focus on Jesus' mystical experience as he emerged from the waters of the River Jordan.

'Suddenly the heavens opened. Heaven and earth are communicating again! If heaven appeared closed to humankind it is now open again. *And he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him.*' Jesus experienced a sense of being hovered over by the Divine presence 'in dove-like fashion'.

'And a voice spoke from Heaven: "This is my Son, the beloved, my favour rests on him".' In the Jewish tradition this sort of intuitive sensation is called the *bat qol*, the daughter of a voice, a whisper echoing heaven.

Each of us has shared in the baptism of Our Lord, been incorporated into *His* baptism. Divine love and power streamed from heaven to earth into each one of you; the Holy Spirit hovered gently over you; and deep down, at the intimate wellspring of your life, the Divine voice was heard whispering: 'You are my beloved daughter' or 'You are my beloved son,' 'My favour rests on you.'

We could pause for a moment to resolve to recall each morning the heavenly whisper at *our* baptism and then re-echo it in *our* lives

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### Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle; be our defence against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

### Pray for the Sick: Peter Handcock

### Youth Announcements

#### World Youth Day 2027 expressions of interest

World Youth Day 2027 will be held in Seoul, South Korea, from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> August 2027. For those who have been to ACYF (Australian Catholic Youth Festival), think that but on a world scale! As it is such a big event, we are taking expressions of interest NOW so we can start the preparation for this pilgrimage ASAP. If you are over 16 and is interested, please contact Cheryl Wong (0481 507 169).

#### St Monica's Youth Group

Youth Group will continue each week in the community room, starting at 10:30AM! If you're year 6 and up, come hang out for some games, make new friends and learn about God together! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of our leaders Raphael Cheung (0420 947 121).

### OLD PALMS

Please bring the blessed palms of last year to the collection boxes at the church in preparation for Ash Wednesday 2026.

## PARISH ACTIVITIES

## Youth Corner

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:13-17



### Silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am. All are welcome.



### St Monica's Parish Rosary Group

Resume on 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026, then every Wednesday from 10.00am to 12.00pm in the Parish Centre.

Enquiries: Lynette Iwachiw 0423 696 961



### Christian Meditation

Resume on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026, then every

Thursday, at the Parish Centre.

6pm-6:25pm Gentle Exercises,  
6:30pm-7:30pm Christian Meditation.

Participation via zoom is available. Enquiries: Patricia Brown, email: [pabrown02@bigpond.com](mailto:pabrown02@bigpond.com)



### Catholic Women's League St Monica's Branch

Resume on 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026, then every third Monday of the month at 10.30 am 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 - 6.15 pm

Sunday 8.40 - 10.15 am

Contact : Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



**St Monica's Art Group** Resume on 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2026, then every Saturday 6pm-8pm at the Parish Centre. New workshops are available each week. Please contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



### Bible Supper

Resume on 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026, then every FIRST & THIRD Thursday of the month, 8pm-9pm, via Zoom.

Fr. Ephraim will introduce every book from the Bible. All are welcome.

To get the Zoom Link please scan the QR code on the left.



### St. Vincent de Paul Society

Please come to their monthly meeting on the last Wednesday of the month, 7pm, at the Parish Centre, or contact Jacob Payra 0431 881 697

**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.

**Observation:** In this passage, Jesus steps into the Jordan to be baptised by John. What stands out isn't power or spectacle, but humility. Jesus doesn't need baptism, yet he chooses to stand in line with everyone else. In the Bible, Jesus explains that this moment is about "fulfilling all righteousness" - in other words, fully entering into God's plan rather than taking shortcuts or exemptions. This moment, he says, is necessary - not dramatic or triumphant, but simply faithful.

As Jesus comes up from the water, heaven opens. The Spirit descends, and a voice affirms him as God's beloved Son.

Importantly, this affirmation comes before Jesus begins his public ministry. We see that before the teaching, the healing, the crowds; there is identity. Jesus is loved and claimed, not because of what he has done, but because of who he is. At the heart of this passage is a lesson not just about baptism, but about identity. God's affirmation comes before achievement. Divine love is not a reward; but a beginning.

**Application:** Many of us live as though our worth is always pending - waiting on results, approval, success, or clarity about who we're meant to become. This passage offers another way. It invites us to enter our own "Jordan moments": ordinary, unseen acts of faithfulness where we choose trust over self-promotion. To live this story is to slow down and resist the urge to perform. It might look like showing up honestly instead of impressively. Like allowing yourself to be a beginner, or choosing integrity when no one is watching. In a culture that celebrates visibility and instant impact, humility becomes a quiet kind of courage.

This week, living out this message could mean making space for silence - letting God speak before the noise of expectations rushes in. It could mean treating yourself with gentleness when you fall short, remembering that your value was never on trial. It might mean stepping into something uncomfortable but right: a hard conversation, a needed apology, a commitment you've been avoiding.

Most of all, it means learning to live from belovedness, not toward it. To let your choices flow from the deep truth that you are already seen, already claimed, already loved.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, Thank you for meeting us where we are, not where we think we should be. Help us quiet the noise that tells us to prove ourselves and teach us to trust your voice that calls us beloved. As we move through this week, give us the courage to walk humbly, to choose what is right over what is easy, and to live from the deep truth that we are already yours. Amen.

17th/18th January ROSTERS			
	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
<b>Readers</b>	J. Kandalaft M. Joseph	S. Joseph S. Yunes	T. Jones D. Cruz
<b>Extraordinary Ministers</b>	L. Iemma M. Samson	J. Skulander M. Joseph	TBA
<b>Acolytes</b>	P. Senjak	N. Joseph	A. Cheung
<b>Cleaning</b>	Group - 2 Vera (16 <sup>th</sup> January)		
<b>Children's Liturgy</b>	Resume in Feb 2026		
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Resume in Feb 2026		
<b>Counting</b>	Group 1		

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