

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"

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR A 15TH MARCH 2026

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

FIRST READING **1 Sam 16 : 6-7, 10-13** A reading from the first book of Samuel

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. *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 **Eph 5 : 8-14**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

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.

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 **Jn 9 : 1-41**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St John

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.' *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

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: shingmanlam@gmail.com
Postal Address:	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151 Website: https://stmonicanp.org.au		
Office hours:	Tuesday-Friday Sunday	8.30am-2.30pm 9am-11am	Phone:9630-1951 Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.com

St. Monica's School

School Principal: Fiona Bylsma Phone: 8832 4100 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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Eucharistic Congress 2028 Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the gift of your real presence in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Grant us the grace to receive you reverently, worship you truly and serve you with hearts renewed. By the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen us, so that as you gave yourself to the Father and to us, we too may offer our lives to God and to others. Inspire and help us to serve you in those who are in need, especially the defenceless and homeless, the lonely and lost. Unite us with your sacrifice of the Mass, so that we may truly become what we have received, the Body of Christ. Amen

2026 Holy Week & Easter Sunday Mass Timetable is available. Please take a leaflet at the tables near the church main entrance.

Project Compassion 2026

Please return the boxes with your donation before Good Friday. For details and donation online please use the QR code on those boxes.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

All Fridays in March 2026, 7:30pm (*Confession available*)

Youth Announcements

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).

Special Masses in Lent 2026

17th March (Tue) St. Patrick's Day Mass at 9:15am
 19th March (Thu) St. Joseph's Day Mass at 9:15am, 7:30pm
 25th March (Wed) Feast of Annunciation Mass at 9:15am, 7:30pm



Silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
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: Lynette Iwachiw 0423 696 961



Christian Meditation
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



Catholic Women's League St Monica's Branch
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
Every Saturday 6pm-8pm at the Parish Centre. New workshops are available each week. Please contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



Bible Supper
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 or send an email to Fr Ephraim.



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



Sacramental Program for Baptized Children 2026
Please send an email to our coordinator for details:
stmonicasacraments@gmail.com

Scripture - John 9:1-41

Observation

Today's gospel is a profound narrative on how Jesus reveals his loving and merciful nature to us through his works. This compassion extends to everyone, even the blind man, who was also a beggar and appears to be ostracised from the Pharisees. Jesus was the first to notice him and takes initiative to approach him, drawing the attention of the disciples asking for an explanation for the blindness - was it a form of punishment because of the man's sin; or the parents'? Jesus clarifies that it was neither; specific suffering is not owed or caused by a specific sin. Sometimes permitting suffering on righteous and just men is all part of God's divine plan to bring about a greater good. In this case, the blind man was born in darkness so that the light of God may shine upon the whole world.

Application

This passage serves as a reminder that suffering exists in this world because of sin and it is through suffering we are able to see God's grace, on both a large and individual scale. It can be difficult to reconcile the former, given we live in a world rife with war, conflict and poverty; however, taking the time to meditate on God's providence and the countless times throughout the Bible He showed humanity the extent of his love can provide us some level of comfort - for after all, God's power operates on a medium beyond our basic human understanding. In a more applicable sense, there may have been instances where we assumed those who live with disabilities need or want healing because they are deformed in some way and therefore need to be fixed. However, Jesus subverts this notion through the Gospel by talking to the blind man first and retains his dignity by engaging in a conversation with him; rather than the Pharisees, who quickly claimed him a sinner and threw him out. We are reminded that God's presence can be found in everyone, and encouraged to extend an empathetic arm to those who are suffering or marginalised.

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for your love and merciful kindness. Although there is suffering and evil in this world, may we have comfort knowing it is all part of your divine plan for humanity and your kingdom. We are limited in our knowledge and understanding; at times of despair, may we then trust in you and your providence. We pray for those who are hurt, and suffering in any way - may they one day experience your grace in the same way the blind man did, and they come to see you through your word and beliefs, and not just in your works. Amen.

21st / 22nd March ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
Readers	O. Meleca A. Bentley	M. Joseph C. Cheung	M. Novak D. Llevado
Extraordinary Ministers	M. Woolridge B. Meleca	S. Joseph M. Joseph	TBA
Acolytes	P. Handcock	N. Joseph	J. Hilton
Cleaning	Group – 2 Vera's Cleaning Crew (20 th March)		
Children's Liturgy	Michelle / Maria F		
Morning Tea	Gonzales & Meleca		
Counting	Group 5		

For details of the **Sydney 2028 International Eucharistic Congress**, please go to their website:
<https://eucharist28.org/>



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