

# 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”*

## 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR A 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2026

### 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

**Ezek 37 : 12-14**

#### A reading from the First book of Samuel

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. *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 if 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

**Rom 8 : 8-11**

#### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

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.

*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

**Jn 11 : 1-45**

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

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. *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**

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>
Postal Address:	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151 Website: <a href="https://stmonicanp.org.au">https://stmonicanp.org.au</a>		
Office hours:	Tuesday-Friday Sunday	8.30am-2.30pm 9am-11am	Phone:9630-1951 Email: <a href="mailto:stmonicanp@bigpond.com">stmonicanp@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**

**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.

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mtat@bigpond.com

**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*)

**Special Masses in Lent 2026**

25<sup>th</sup> March (Wed) Feast of Annunciation Mass at 9:15am, 7:30pm

**Karaoke Night**

We're excited to invite you to our Karaoke Night, where you can enjoy a simple dinner and sing your heart out to your favourite songs. Whether you're a shower-singer, stage superstar, or just here for the vibes, this night is all about good company, warm laughs, and amazing melodies.

Please mark **11th April 2026** (Saturday), 6pm to 9pm, in your diary — you won't want to miss it!

Dinner tickets will go on sale on 29th March 2026, so keep an eye out.  
*Inquiry hotline: 0411 192 278*

## PARISH ACTIVITES



### 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 10am to 12pm 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 3rd Monday of the month at 10.30am at 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.  
Contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



### Bible Supper

Resume on 16<sup>th</sup> April 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 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](mailto:stmonicasacraments@gmail.com)

Scripture: John 11: 1-45

**Observation:** In this passage, Jesus receives word from Mary and Martha that Lazarus, a person Jesus cared deeply for and was Mary and Martha's brother, was sick. When Jesus heard about this, He told his disciples to prepare for travel back to Judea, much to the disciples' protest, asking why Jesus would return to a place where he was being stoned by the Jews. Jesus then cryptically tells His disciples, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." When Jesus and his disciples arrive, they find out that Lazarus had been dead and stored in a tomb for 4 days. Martha expresses her faith that Jesus could have saved Lazarus, and Jesus tells her that he is "the resurrection and the life," promising that those who believe in him will have eternal life. When Mary arrives, Jesus is deeply moved by the grief of the people and even weeps. At the tomb, Jesus prays to God and commands Lazarus to come out, and Lazarus is miraculously raised from the dead.

### Application:

The one key message that I found consistent in this long passage is that faith in God will always lead us back to him however there are many different instances that we can find this message. The first section of the chapter, Jesus says, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light." Instead of talking literally about the light of the world, Jesus intends to talk more about the light of God, and the loss of this light when we are lost. Calling those who chose to stone him as lost without the light of God to guide them. How many times do we act in our everyday lives where we do not follow the light of God? Secondly, when Jesus arrives at the household, even while in mourning, He reaffirms Martha's faith in God by telling her that Lazarus will rise again and stating that he is the "resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die". As Jesus approaches the tomb there are some Jews who doubt that he is the Son of God, and again he reaffirms Mary's faith by telling her "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" Where in our lives do we doubt that God is always there for us? Instead we should always look for ways to appreciate that God is with us, say small prayers of thanks for anything. "Thank you God for blessing me another day to learn at school" or "Thank you Lord for giving us the eyes to see your glory everyday"

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for the reminder that you are the resurrection and the life. Just as you reaffirmed the faith that Mary and Martha have in you and showed your power by raising Lazarus, help us to reaffirm our faith and trust in you even when we face moments of doubt, fear, or sadness. Lord help guide us in our lives when we feel lost, call us back on your path to righteousness. Help us to appreciate the small blessings you give us each day and to thank you for them with grateful hearts. Amen.

## Youth Announcements

### Good Friday Night Walk – 3/4/2026

Every year on Good Friday, hundreds of young Catholics in the diocese of Parramatta come together for a 20km pilgrimage walk across Western Sydney, where pilgrims journey together in prayer and reflection of Christ and our faith. The pilgrimage will start from St Patrick's Catholic Church, Mary, Queen of the Family Parish in Blacktown late on Good Friday night, and end at St Patrick's Cathedral in Parramatta in the early hours of Holy Saturday. Our youth group had been asked to host 2 of the stations this year so we will need a good number of youths and leaders to participate. If you would like to participate, please contact Raphael on 0420 947 121 for details.

### Life Skills Workshop – 11/4/2026

Have you ever sat through classes and thought "when am I ever going to use this in real life? e.g. calculus". Our leaders from St Monica's Youth Group have kindly volunteered their time to run a series of holiday workshops focusing on important life skills that they don't teach you in school! The first workshop will be on how to write a killer resume and ace a job interview. It is open to youth aged 15 years and above. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Cheryl on 0481 507 169 for more details. There are also printed flyers with all the details you can pick up near the main entrance church.

28 <sup>th</sup> / 29 <sup>th</sup> March ROSTERS			
	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
<b>Readers</b>	J. Kandalaft S. Meleca	M. Falamich S. Joseph	E. Saleh M. Ellis
<b>Extraordinary Ministers</b>	C. North L. Iemma	J. Skulander C. Cheung	TBA
<b>Acolytes</b>	P. Senjak	N. Joseph	A. Cheung
<b>Cleaning</b>	Group – 1 Chinese Chaplaincy (27 <sup>th</sup> March)		
<b>Children's Liturgy</b>	Julie - Sheryl		
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Astorga & Mungcal		
<b>Counting</b>	Group 1		

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