

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"

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME — YEAR A

23RD AUGUST 2026

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

FIRST READING

Is 22 : 19-23

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace: I dismiss you from your office, I remove you from your post, and the same day I call on my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. I invest him with your robe, gird him with your sash, entrust him with your authority; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. I place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; should he open, no one shall close, should he close, no one shall open. I drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a throne of glory for his father's house. *The word of the Lord.*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 137

R: Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, you have heard the words of my mouth. Before the angels I will bless you. I will adore before your holy temple. (R.)

I thank you for your faithfulness and love which excel all we ever knew of you. On the day I called, you answered; you increased the strength of my soul. (R.)

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly and the haughty he knows from afar. Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands. (R.)

SECOND READING

Rom 11 : 33-36

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

How rich are the depths of God – how deep his wisdom and knowledge – and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen. *The word of the Lord*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are Peter, the rock on which I build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 16 : 13-20

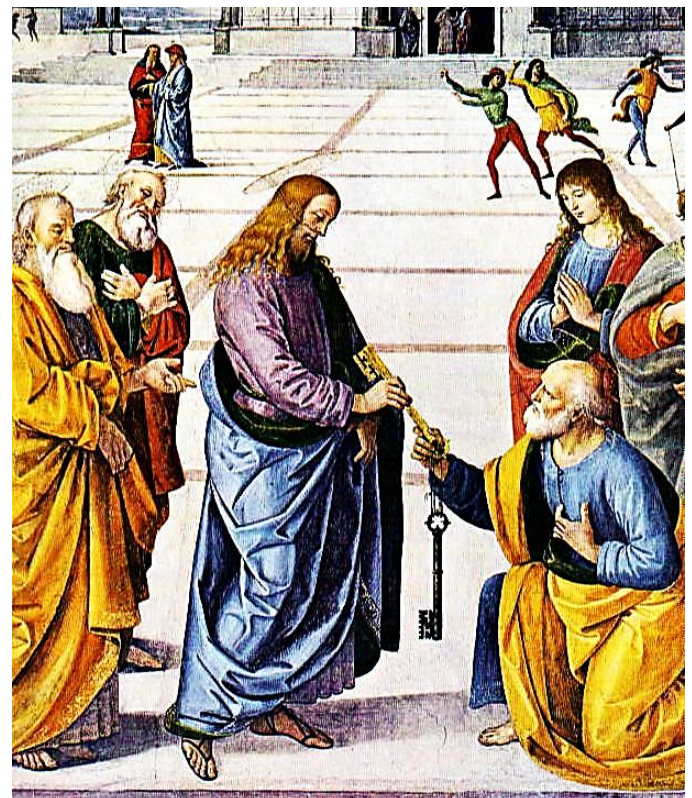
A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Matthew

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some

Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ. *The Gospel of the Lord*

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.



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 & Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:	Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am Every 3rd Sunday of the month 10:15-11am		
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

What's in a Name?

Jesus had a sense of humour! Simon, son of Jonah, was far from being a rock solid supporter of Jesus. So Jesus gave him the nickname 'Rocky' which in the Greek is Petros.

Jesus puns with the nickname: 'You are Rocky and upon this rock I will build my church.' The natural personality of shifting sands was being transformed by the blessing just given (the only blessing bestowed upon an apostle by Jesus).

Notice that Jesus only makes promises about 'my church', not a church shaped by human imagination, e.g. modes of Roman Imperial rule or with a Eurocentric mindset.

We could pause for a moment to pray that the Risen Lord showers the successor of St Peter with every blessing so that the Church of Jesus the Christ continues to prevail over the forces of death which threaten humanity.

© Fr Michael Tate

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

YOUTH ANNOUNCEMENT

2027 World Youth Day Fundraising Bake Sale

We will be having a bake sale on **20th September 2026** to fundraise for next year's World Youth Day trip. We will be selling mooncakes (sweet potato and red bean flavour). **\$5** for one, **\$20** for six. Stay tuned for further announcements.

HSC Blessing

On **27th September 2026** we shall have special blessings for those sitting the HSC this year.

No Weekday Mass from **1st to 4th September 2026**
(Tuesday to Friday)

PARISH ACTIVITES



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 via ZOOM. resume on 7th Oct 2026, then every FIRST Thursday of the month, 8pm-9pm, 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, 6.30pm, 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



Voices of St Monica's Choir Needs You Children & Youth welcome!

Rehearsal: Every Sunday during school term, 10 - 11:25am
Enquiries and Registration: Winnie Cheung, 0405 608 691
or email: winnieklau@yahoo.com.au

2026 Father's Day Appeal

There will be special collections at the Masses on 5th & 6th September for supporting our retired clergies.

Scripture: Matthew 16: 13-20

Observation

When Jesus first asks his disciples about who the public speculated the Messiah could be, they report a variety of names, but 'Jesus' wasn't among those mentioned. In fact, it was widely hypothesised at the time that this Messiah might be a powerful political figure who could threaten the government, and of course, the Romans didn't like the sound of that. That's why Jesus needed his disciples to keep his Messianic identity a secret until his crucifixion – because it could disrupt the course of his Earthly mission.

However, even before witnessing Jesus's death and resurrection, Peter was still able to deduce that only Jesus could be the Messiah, because Jesus *was* God. He deduced this not by trusting the various public opinions of the time, but by trusting what God revealed to him.

Application

In today's world, there are many conflicting ideas about what Jesus's teachings really meant. Some Christian groups don't believe that Jesus is physically present in the Eucharist, despite the Bible explicitly saying so. Others may believe that Jesus's mother Mary wasn't really sinless, that confession isn't necessary, or that you need to reach a certain age and "give consent" before being baptised. There are even some who believe that Jesus isn't really God, or that he was merely a prophet. Such division in belief is nothing new, as we can see in today's Gospel. So, how do we know what the truth is?

To find out, we can't let ourselves be led astray by all these different man-made beliefs, and instead, need to look for what God revealed to us, just like Peter. And for us today, this revelation can be found in the Catholic Church. You see, when God revealed Jesus's messianic identity to Peter, this was only one step towards a much wider revelation to the entire world on who Jesus really is. Because right then and there, Jesus gave Peter the enormous responsibility of leading his church. Jesus knew that when he completes his Earthly life, *someone* still needs to communicate the true interpretation of God's scriptures to his followers. *Someone* still needs to lead his apostles. For this, Jesus chose the man who God revealed the truth to, and that is how Peter became the first pope. And in an unbroken chain of succession over almost two thousand years, the papacy continues to this day, enabling God's revelation of the one true faith through the Catholic church, not just to us Catholics, but to rest of the world, who are still yet to believe the truth.

Prayer

Dear Jesus. I pray for the Pope – that you may strengthen and guide him as he leads your church in this age of growing division and faithlessness. Grant him wisdom and courage, and that through his work, the world may come to know that you are the Messiah, sent by God to free the world from sin and death. Amen.

29th / 30th August ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
Readers	J. Kandalajt M. Joseph	S. Joseph J. Jacob	T. Lim M. Caga-Anan
Extraordinary Ministers	L. Iemma M. Samson	J. DeAraujo M. Joseph	TBA
Acolytes	P. Handcock	N. Joseph	A. Cheung
Cleaning	Group 1 – Chinese Chaplaincy (28 th August)		
Children's Liturgy	Maria F / Michelle		
Morning Tea	Shankar & Mehaara		
Counting	Group 3		