

The Catholic Parishes of Branxton & Singleton are part of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

5 September 2021

First Reading

Is 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.

'Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;

for water gushes in the desert,
streams in the wasteland,
the scorched earth becomes a lake,
the parched land springs of water.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 145:7-10. R. v.1

(R.) Praise the Lord, my soul!

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **(R.)**

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bound down,
the Lord who loves the just,
the Lord, who protects the stranger. **(R.)**

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. **(R.)**

Second Reading

Jas 2:1-5

A reading from the letter of St James.

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God

chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

cf. Mt 4:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick. Alleluia!

Gospel

Mk 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



REFLECTION

by Fr Michael Tate

Ephphatha

As we began to welcome the Gospel, we made the sign of the Cross on our foreheads, on our lips and over our hearts. It is meant to be accompanied by the thought: 'May the Gospel be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart.' It wouldn't be enough to mentally recite that little prayer. We have to do something physical.

Jesus could not have been more physical than in the story of today's Gospel. He stuck his fingers in the man's ears and touched the man's tongue with spittle, saying the Aramaic word 'Ephphatha', 'Be opened'.

Our Lord could have healed this man with a simple prayer. But he acknowledged the sheer physicality of the person to be cured. We are not angels, but ensouled bodies and that is how our Lord particularly related to this man in need of healing.

It is in the sacrament of Baptism that we imitate the Ephphatha incident in today's Gospel. At one stage, the priest lightly touches the ears and then lightly touches the mouth of the person being baptised. This brings the baptised person into a community formed by hearing and speaking the Word in faith.

We could take a moment to recall the Ephphatha dimension of our baptism. Take your thumb and lightly touch your ears (a parent could do this for an infant) making a prayer along the lines of our baptism: 'The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak. May He again touch my ears to receive His Word and my mouth to proclaim His faith to the glory and praise of God the Father. Amen.'



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God

Prayer Requests

Sick: Bishop Bill Wright, Helen Boza, Bernadette Coffey, Helen Conlin, Conchita Ekin, Leanne Hardy, Austin Hoffman, Blake Lloyd, Mick McCrone, Anne Standing, Gloria Trunk, Lorraine Winter, John Thomas and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Anniversaries: Drusilla Nowlan. **Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.**

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Perpetual Day of Remembrance

1st Reading: Ez 37:1-14

2nd Reading: Rom 14:7-9

Gospel: Lk 1:46-56



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Parish Secretary	Mrs Erica Janssen	Parish Office: 02 5507 4048 (Tues-Fri, 9am-3pm) Unit 5, 16 Cambridge St, Singleton	Email: singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au Web: www.singletoncatholicparish.org.au
Facebook	Catholic Parishes of Singleton and Branxton		YouTube Twitter singletonbranxton @parish_sb
PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Singleton	<i>St Patrick's Church</i>	Queen Street Singleton 2330	Contact: 02 5507 4048
Broke	<i>Immaculate Conception Catholic Church</i>	Wollombi Street, Broke	Contact: 0407 488 872 or 0458 626 299
Glendon Brook	<i>St. Paul's Catholic Church</i>	874 Glendonbrook Road, Glendon Brook	Contact: 6577 6168
PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Branxton	<i>St Brigid's Catholic Church</i>	Station St, Branxton 2335	Contact: 0407 381 525
Greta	<i>St Catherine's Catholic Church</i>	Branxton Street, Greta 2334	Contact: 0428 485 025

Schools in our Parishes

St. Catherine's Catholic College	<i>Principal: Mrs Niamh Marzol</i>	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au
Rosary Park Catholic School	<i>Principal: Miss Sallyanne Stanbridge</i>	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au
St Nicholas Early Education Singleton	<i>Director: Ms Amy Hunter</i>	Office: 02 4015 2860	Email: singleton@stnicholasmn.org.au
St Nicholas Early Education Branxton	<i>Director: Ms Natalie James</i>	Office: 02 4931 1220	Email: branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au

MASS ROSTER - SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 5pm	Counters
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	J Walker C Crow	J Dries	Janssen Family	
Commentator		L Harrison	G Cattermole	J Patton	E Janssen	
Readers	C Trunk A Trunk	L Pozywio	J Duldulao H Duldulao	T Cochrane Mila Stowe	H Janssen N Janssen	
Prayers		L Harrison	P Boyd	F King	E Janssen	2 Welcomers are required each week.
Offertory	P Conroy S Trunk	P Bridge	C O'Connor B Thompson			
Extraordinary Ministers of Communion						NO Ministers of Communion are required.

Faithful and compassionate God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy; hear the prayers we offer, that in the ministry to which you have called us, may we serve you faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

WEEKLY MASS DIARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6 September	7 September	8 September THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	9 September St Peter Claver	10 September	11 September	12 September PERPETUAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
NO MASS WILL BE SAID STAY AT HOME ORDER IN PLACE					9:00am Novena 9:20am Mass 9:45am Recon St Patrick's Singleton 5:00pm Mass Broke	7:00am Mass 10:00am Mass 5:00pm Mass St Patrick's Singleton
					5:30pm Recon 6:00pm Mass St Brigid's Branxton	7:35am Rosary 8:00am Mass St Catherine's Greta

St Brigid, St Catherine, St Patrick, and St Paul – pray for us

Weekly Notices

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

We welcome visitors from all faith communities to our Parish Mass. If you are new members of our Parish, we ask that you take a Welcome Pack from the back of the church, complete and return the Member forms and one of our welcoming team will contact you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Wonnarua people, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

We acknowledge the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failures of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults, and the consequent breach of trust.

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR OUR PARISHES

From 5pm Thursday 5 August until 11.59pm Friday 10 September 2021 places of public worship are **CLOSED**. This means that Mass will not be said during this time to protect the people of NSW from the evolving COVID-19 outbreak. Please stay safe, stay home and follow the orders to keep our community safe and we look forward to sharing public Mass again with you soon.

Due to the Orders being extended, Fr Thomas and the Singleton Parish Sacramental team have had to postpone the Confirmation and Holy Communion Masses planned for 10 and 11 September. Families will be informed when new dates are set.

You are invited to join Mass from St Patrick's Church, Singleton on our Parish Facebook page [SingletonBranxtonCatholicParish](#) and the Parish Website <https://singletoncatholicparish.org.au> from 7.00am on Sunday mornings during lockdown.

You can also join Mass from Sacred Heart Cathedral on Sundays at 9.30am on the Diocese YouTube page which you can link from their website <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream/>

Synod Session Three Postponed

Session Three of the Synod, originally planned for 20 November 2021, has been postponed. This decision was taken after consultation with the Synod Working Party, the Council of Priests, and the Council for Mission.

In preparation for the upcoming First Assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council our Diocesan Plenary Council members Bernadette Gibson, Fr Andrew Doohan VG, and Helen Belcher are seeking input from our diocesan community.

You are invited to join them for a series of conversations around the Plenary Council agenda and its associated questions, and guided by the Holy Spirit, so they can hear from as many people as possible. Plenary Conversations will be over a number of weeks each Thursday from 26 August to 30 September between 7.00pm and 8.30pm via Zoom.

To register go to <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/plenary-council-lead-up-conversations-tickets-168063956819>

Australia Needs Fatima – Public Rosary

The Public Rosary will be held on Saturday 16 October 2021 at St Catherine's Greta from 10.00am, if the public health order restrictions allow. This Rosary will be to ask God's blessing on our country and an end to the Covid-19 virus. If the restrictions prevent a public gathering on this day, then maybe you could encourage those around you to say the Rosary with you in your front yards. If you hold a Rosary like this, please let Darryl know on 0418662672 so that he can pass on details to the Australia Needs Fatima organization.

**NATIONAL
CHILD PROTECTION
WEEK 2021**
5-11 SEPTEMBER

EVERY CHILD IN EVERY COMMUNITY NEEDS A FAIR GO

National Child Protection Week invites all Australians to play their part to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This year, National Child Protection Week (NCPW) occurs across Australia from 5-11 September. This is the 31st year celebration with the theme:

Every child, in every community, needs a fair go.

*To treat all of Australia's children fairly,
we need to make sure every family and community
has what kids need to thrive and be healthy.*

With the crisis of Covid-19, National Child Protection Week will be a little different this year. However, while there will likely be fewer events, the campaign will definitely still go ahead. The added pressure on families and communities means that now – more than ever – we all need to play our part in protecting all children.

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children. The Office of Safeguarding is the structural expression of the Diocese's commitment to demonstrate the highest standards of recognising and upholding the dignity and rights of all children. They have several resources available for children of different ages and for the broader community. To find out more visit their website <https://officeofsafeguarding.org.au/national-child-protection-week/>

Perpetual Day of Remembrance – Shine the Light of Christ

In 2020 Bishop Bill decreed that a Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday, a feast day, was to be inscribed into the Diocesan Liturgical Calendar, to be held on the Sunday on or prior to 15 September. In this decree he said:

'In light of the dreadful history of sexual abuse of children by clergy and other people working for this diocese, we have undertaken all available measures to ensure the safety of children in our community today. We have also tried to meet the needs of survivors of abuse for support and redress, while acknowledging that their on-going suffering cannot be healed by measures of financial redress or any other one-off measure or assistance alone. Among the needs expressed to me by survivors of abuse, there is also the need for the Catholic community to fully acknowledge the crimes and failures of the past, in public ways, and to ensure that neither those who suffered nor the crimes themselves are ever allowed to fade from memory.

Though it is not on the same level as the pain of those who were abused, there is also much hurt in the wider community. Many people can't get over being deceived and betrayed by individuals whom they took for good priests or religious, teachers or fellow parishioners. We have all to some extent lost our innocence. It is important for all of us, then, that we do not try to deny or suppress those hurts, but bring them into the realms of faith and prayer, both as a means of community healing and as a stimulus to greater care for the survivors among us and for the generations of children yet to come.'

Next Sunday, 12 September 2021 is Perpetual Day of Remembrance. Resources to use at home are available on the Diocese website

<https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/media/4753/perpetual-day-of-remembrance-resources-individuals-household-2021-final.pdf>

HAPPY
Father's Day

Blessed is the Father
who lets the Lord
be his guiding hand,
whose faith brings
his family courage,
whose wisdom comes
from God,
and whose children
still stand and honour him.



Plenary Council
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

Plenary Conversations Report Week One: Conversion

Peter Conroy will attend the Plenary Conversations being held over the next few weeks in preparation for the upcoming First Assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council and share his comments and observations with us.

The speaker for the evening spoke about the meaning of conversion. We were then invited to reflect on his words. In a zoom meeting setting this was done both as a larger group and then as a smaller group.

These are some points that I took from the conversation.

Conversion occurs on many levels. It tends to be seen as something personal. People talk about 'their conversion' or the 'event that led to a significant change in their lives' however, conversion is much more than that. Yes, it occurs at a personal level, but it also takes place at the level of community. It can and should be ecclesiastic and must also be environmental. Note this last level does not mean at the level of nature but at the broadest level of where and how we live. For true conversion to occur we need to consider ourselves introspectively but also as part of the universal whole in which we live and breathe.

The second consideration is that unlike the Hollywood image that is often portrayed, we should see conversion as a journey. Our conversion is a life-long transformation. We travel along an emotional road and interact with people in a variety of circumstances. Our conversion is our growth and understanding of God's plan for us.

A final observation is that conversion is not private, but it is personal. No one else can live our conversion life, even in the most loving of relationships, conversion is our own personal journey, however it is not private, it is meant to be shared and built upon by the grace of God, given through others. If we remain private, we do not share community, ecclesiastic or environmental conversion, but at a personal level we can be the inspiration to help others on their conversion journey.

Fan the Flame

Towards Plenary Assembly One October 2021



Plenary Council
Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

'He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

Mark 7:31-37

The Church hears the cries of the poor and the groans of the earth. It seeks to stand in solidarity with the poor and the marginalised, and to exercise good stewardship of the fragile ecosystems that support life on earth.

(Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, "A New Earth: The Environmental Challenge. Social Justice Statement 2002", accessed 23 April 2021, <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Social-Justice-Statement-2002.pdf>, 10.)

www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/fanthefflame/

Let's Stay COVID Safe at Mass

1. Wear a **MASK** to Mass – in force until 30 July 2021. Can be removed to receive communion.
2. If you are sick – stay **HOME** and get tested.
3. Check in using the Service NSW **QR CODE** or Registration sheet.
4. Show the Welcomer the **GREEN** tick screen.
5. **SANITISE** your hands.
6. Collect a bulletin and **TAKE IT** with you.
7. **WAVE** instead of shaking hands.
8. Maintain **1.5M** physical distancing from those not in your household.
9. During the Communion Procession, please form **ONE** line, with those on the left side of the celebrant to process **FIRST** and maintain **1.5m** physical distancing.

