

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

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

29 January 2023

First Reading **Zep 2:3, 3:12-13**
A reading from the prophet Zephaniah

Seek the Lord
all you, the humble of the earth,
who obey his commands.
Seek integrity,
seek humility:
you may perhaps find shelter
on the day of the anger of the Lord.
In your midst I will leave
a humble and lowly people,
and those who are left in Israel will seek
refuge in the name of the Lord.
They will do no wrong,
will tell no lies;
and the perjured tongue will no longer
be found in their mouths.
But they will be able to graze and rest
with no one to disturb them.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm
Ps 145:7-10. R. Mt 5:3

*(R.) Happy the poor in spirit;
the kingdom of heaven is theirs!*

It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,
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 bowed down,
the Lord, who protects the stranger
and upholds the widow and orphan. **(R.)**

It is the Lord who loves the just
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. **(R.)**

Second Reading **1 Cor 1:26-31**
A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

Take yourselves, brothers, at the time
when you were called: how many of you
were wise in the ordinary sense of the
word, how many were influential people,
or came from noble families? No, it was to
shame the wise that God chose what is
foolish by human reckoning, and to
shame what is strong that he chose what
is weak by human reckoning; those whom
the world thinks common and
contemptible are the ones that God has
chosen – those who are nothing at all to
show up those who are everything. The
human race has nothing to boast about to

God, but you, God has made members of
Christ Jesus and by God's doing he has
become our wisdom, and our virtue, and
our holiness, and our freedom. As
scripture says: if anyone wants to boast,
let him boast about the Lord.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation **Mt 5:12**

Alleluia, alleluia!
Rejoice and be glad;
Your reward will be great in heaven.
Alleluia!

Gospel **Mt 5:1-12**
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill.
There he sat down and was joined by his
disciples. Then he began to speak. This is
what he taught them:

'How happy are the poor in spirit:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle:
they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn:
they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for
what is right:
they shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful:
they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart:
they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers:
they shall be called sons of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the
cause of right:
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Happy are you when people abuse you and
persecute you and speak all kinds of
calumny against you on my account. Rejoice
and be glad, for your reward will be great in
heaven.'

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



The Beatitudes... A Call to Action

*Jesus doesn't start in a fantasy dream
world of perfection. Jesus looks at the
world as it often is for many people,
perhaps for most people around the
world: 'the poor in spirit', 'those who
mourn', 'those who are gentle', 'those
who hunger and thirst for justice'.*

*Jesus astonishes the crowd by saying that
such people are 'Blessed'. How can this
be? The answer lies in our Lord's
emphasis on the new community he is
establishing under the reign of God: what
he calls 'the Kingdom of God'.*

*Those in such wretched circumstances
will have things set right, but only if
followers of Jesus do everything possible
to lift the poor out of the poverty which
crushes their spirit, do everything possible
to comfort those who mourn, do
everything possible to make sure the
gentle share the earth's resources, do
everything possible to satisfy the craving
for justice.*

*We could pause for a moment to pray the
'Our Father' pledging ourselves to help
construct this new society where the
Beatitudes can come true:*

*'Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on
earth as it is in heaven.'*

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Save us, O Lord our God!
And gather us from the nations,
to give thanks to your holy name,
and make it our glory to praise you.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your merciful love.
O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I
call on you.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Is 58:7-10

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 2:1-5

Gospel: Mt 5:13-16



Prayer Requests

Sick: Helen Conlin, Otis Cowburn, Victoria Diputado, Cathy Dunn (Goulburn), Austin Hoffman, Mary-Rose Hopkins, Warren Markham, Harrison McLachlan, John Ottery, Jen Phillips, Peter Rouse and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Anniversaries: Michael Dunn and Kathleen Thomas. **Having returned to the Father may they rest in peace.**

Baptisms: Archie Cronin, Oakley Cronin, Arden Cronin, Elena Thometzek and Tyler Thometzek (Greta). **Called by name to be a child of God.**

Due to privacy laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be placed in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.

Parish Contacts

Parish Priest	Rev Thomas Chirackal	Presbytery: 6578 9651	Email: Thomas.chirackal@mn.catholic.org.au
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	St Brigid's Catholic Church	Station St, Branxton 2335	Contact: 0407 381 525
Greta	St Catherine's Catholic Church	Branxton Street, Greta 2334	Contact: 0428 485 025

Schools in our Parishes

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

MASS ROSTER - SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2023

	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8.15am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 6pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	C Crow	J Dries		G McMillan (31/1)
Commentator		L Gorczyca	G Cattermole			
Readers	P Conroy C Szumilas	SCAE LEADER M Ingold	J Tindale E Thomas	T Cochrane *Volunteer Needed	P Goodwin A Borg	
Prayers		L Gorczyca	C Langford	*Volunteer Needed	M Cunningham	Offertory procession and collections can commence again.
Offertory	M Thomas S McAlister	G Wilton	*Volunteer Needed	*Volunteer Needed	*Volunteer Needed	
Extraordinary Ministers						
Rosary Leader		L Gorczyca				

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
30 January	31 January <i>St John Bosco</i>	1 February	2 February <i>THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD</i>	3 February <i>St Blaise</i> <i>St Ansgar</i>	4 February	5 February 5 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, A WORD OF GOD SUNDAY
<u>8.00am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>6.00pm</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>6.00pm</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.20am</u> Mass <u>9.45am</u> Adoration <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00am</u> Mass <u>6.00pm</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>
	<u>8.50am</u> Rosary <u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Catherine's Greta</i>		<u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Brigid's Branxton</i>		<u>6.00pm</u> Mass <i>St Brigid's Branxton</i>	<u>7.35am</u> Rosary <u>8.15am</u> SCAE <i>St Catherine's Greta</i>

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.

Office Hour changes - February

The Parish office will be

CLOSED from 12.30pm 2 February

CLOSED Friday 3 February

St Patrick's Parish 1st Anniversary Mass

The 1st Anniversary Mass will be held on Saturday 4 February at 9.20am. We will be praying for the souls of

✠ Marie Crebert

✠ Joe Malloy

Each Saturday at 9am, St Patrick's Parish hold a Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. We would like to invite and welcome you all to attend the Novena and our Anniversary Mass.

Have a Cuppa for Santo Nino!



PARISH FIESTA 2023 IN HONOUR OF SENOR SANTO NINO SUNDAY 12 FEBRUARY

MASS AT 10:00 am
ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

Followed by a cuppa to
celebrate!

COME AND JOIN US!



2023 – Your Year to Volunteer at Mass!

Many positions are without a volunteer on our weekly Mass Roster. If you are interested in helping at Mass, please speak with the parish office or speak with Lydia in Greta and Mercia in Branxton. All new and existing volunteers need to complete the online volunteer registration form at <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/people/volunteer/> If you need help with this please come into the office and Erica can help.

Word of God Sunday – 5 February

The Church in Australia celebrates the Sunday of the Word of God on the first Sunday in February – February 5 in 2023 (Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A). Pope Francis established the day, which is devoted to “the celebration, study and dissemination” of the Word of God. Visit www.catholic.org.au/wordofgodSunday to access resources to help commemorate the day and for suggestions on how to better engage with Sacred Scripture in various ways and settings. Read Pope Francis’ homily on the back page.

2023 Lenten Reflection: Finding Light within the Darkness

Pastoral Ministries has prepared a Lenten resource for our diocese, *Finding Light within the Darkness*. Every Lent there is a fresh invitation to retreat from the noise and busyness of daily life. To listen with our heart, to contemplate our humanness so we can actively focus on humanity. We are invited to turn to God dwelling within us and consider how we can find light in the darkness and how we can be light to others. This resource provides opportunities for prayer, faith-sharing, and outreach in our local community. To access this resource, go to:

<https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/liturgy/lent-2023/>

Parish Support Worker Position

The Maitland-Newcastle Diocese is currently advertising to fill the newly created position of **Parish Support Worker**.

Reporting to the Chancellor of Maitland-Newcastle, the **Parish Support Worker** will advocate for the interests of parishes in project development and other initiatives generated by Shared Services and be a conduit to improve the awareness and understanding of parishes amongst Shared Services personnel. The **Parish Support Worker** will work in close collaboration with the Office of Safeguarding to support parishes achieve and maintain compliance with statutory and Church based safeguarding standards (the ‘Standards’). This will include assisting parish leadership to identify and recruit local safeguarding coordinators within parish communities.

The position description and advertisement are available at <https://cdmn.elmotalent.com.au/careers/dio/job/view/1335?source=6> where you can apply using the online portal. A printed copy of the position is available from the Parish Office.

Applications close 3 February 2023. For more information, please email sean.tynan@mn.catholic.org.au

Complete the Text Maze

“Blessed are the humble, the earth will belong to them.”

B	L	E	A	C	M	I	C	E	B
E	R	S	E	B	H	E	N	P	J
Q	E	S	H	E	T	E	A	R	D
A	D	O	A	L	K	I	N	T	H
R	P	F	M	B	D	E	L	K	W
E	T	H	U	Q	L	D	E	L	I
M	H	E	H	A	L	E	B	L	J
U	C	V	D	F	O	W	I	F	A
X	D	G	D	J	N	G	T	O	E
H	A	I	A	B	V	O	G	T	P
M	F	H	R	G	O	C	A	H	E
A	S	C	L	H	D	E	N	J	M

Homily of Pope Francis on Word of God Sunday

The Word of God is for everyone. The Gospel presents us with Jesus always on the move, on his way to others. On no occasion in his public life does he give us the idea that he is a stationary teacher, a professor seated on a chair; on the contrary, we see him as an itinerant, we see him as a pilgrim, travelling through towns and villages, encountering faces and their stories. His feet are those of the messenger announcing the good news of God's love (cf. Is 52:7-8). In Galilee of the Gentiles, on the sea route, beyond the Jordan, where Jesus preaches, there was – the text notes – a people plunged into darkness: foreigners, pagans, women and men from various regions and cultures (cf. Mt 4:15-16). Now they too can see the light. And so Jesus “enlarges the boundaries”: the Word of God, which heals and raises up, is not only destined for the righteous of Israel, but for all; he wants to reach those far away, he wants to heal the sick, he wants to save sinners, he wants to gather the lost sheep and lift up those whose hearts are weary and oppressed. In short, Jesus ‘reaches out’ to tell us that God’s mercy is for everyone. Let us not forget this: God’s mercy is for everyone, for each one of us. Each person can say, “God’s mercy is for me”.

This aspect is fundamental also for us. It reminds us that the Word is a gift addressed to everyone; therefore, we can never restrict its field of action, for beyond all our calculations, it springs forth in a spontaneous, unforeseen and unpredictable way (cf. Mk 4:26-28), in the ways and times that the Holy Spirit knows. Moreover, if salvation is destined for all, even the most distant and lost, then the proclamation of the Word must become the main priority of the ecclesial community, as it was for Jesus. May it not happen that we profess a God with an expansive heart, yet become a Church with a closed heart – this, I dare say, would be a curse; may it not happen that we preach salvation for all, yet make the way to receive it impractical; may it not happen that we recognize we are called to proclaim the Kingdom, yet neglect the Word, losing ourselves in so many secondary activities or discussions. Let us learn from Jesus to put the Word at the centre, to enlarge our boundaries, to open ourselves up to people, and to foster experiences of encounter with the Lord, realizing that the Word of God “is not encased in abstract or static formulas, but has a dynamic power in history which is made up of persons and events, words and actions, developments and tensions”.

Let us now come to the second aspect: the Word of God, which is addressed to all, calls everyone to conversion. In fact, Jesus repeats in his preaching: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 4:17). This means that God’s nearness is not inconsequential, his presence does not leave things as they are, it does not advocate a quiet life. On the contrary, his Word shakes us, disturbs us, incites us to change, to conversion. It throws us into crisis because it “is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4:12). Like a sword, the Word penetrates life, enabling us to discern the feelings and thoughts of the heart, that is, making us see where the light of goodness is to be afforded room and where, instead, the thick darkness of vices and sins is to be resisted. When it enters us, the Word transforms our hearts and minds; it changes us and leads us to direct our lives to the Lord.

Here is Jesus’ invitation: God has come close to you; recognize his presence, make room for his Word, and you will change your outlook on life. I can also put it like this: place your life under the Word of God. This is the path the Church shows us. All of us, even the pastors of the Church, are under the authority of the Word of God. Not under our own tastes, tendencies and preferences, but under the one Word of God that moulds us, converts us and calls us to be united in the one Church of Christ. So, brothers and sisters, we can ask ourselves: Where does my life find direction, from where does it draw its orientation? From the many “words” I hear, from ideologies, or from the Word of God that guides and purifies me? What are the aspects in me that require change and conversion?

Finally – the third step – the Word of God, which is addressed to everyone and calls us to conversion, makes us heralds. Indeed, Jesus walks along the shore of the Sea of Galilee and calls Simon and Andrew, two brothers who were fishermen. With his Word he invites them to follow him, telling them that he will make them “fishers of men” (Mt. 4,19): no longer just experts in boats, nets and fish, but experts in seeking others. And just as in sailing and fishing they had learned to leave the shore and cast their nets into the deep, in the same way they would become apostles capable of sailing upon the open seas of the world, of going out to meet their brothers and sisters and proclaiming the joy of the Gospel. This is the dynamism of the Word: it draws us into the “net” of the Father’s love and makes us apostles moved by an unquenchable desire to bring all those we encounter into the barque of the Kingdom. This is not proselytism because it is the Word of God that calls us, not our own word.

Today let us also hear the invitation to be fishers of men: let us feel that we are called by Jesus in person to proclaim his Word, to bear witness to it in everyday life, to live it in justice and charity, called to “give it flesh” by tenderly caring for those who suffer. This is our mission: to become seekers of the lost, oppressed and discouraged, not to bring them ourselves, but the consolation of the Word, the disruptive proclamation of God that transforms life, to bring the joy of knowing that He is our Father and addresses each one of us, to bring the beauty of saying, “Brother, sister, God has come close to you, listen and you will find in his Word an amazing gift!”