

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

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

5 February 2023

First Reading

Is 58:7-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Thus says the Lord:

Share your bread with the hungry,
and shelter the homeless poor,
clothe the man you see to be naked
and turn not from your own kin.
Then will your light shine like the dawn
and your wound be quickly healed over.
Your integrity will go before you
and the glory of the Lord behind you.
Cry, and the Lord will answer;
call, and he will say, 'I am here.'
If you do away with the yoke,
the clenched fist, the wicked word,
if you give your bread to the hungry,
and relief to the oppressed,
your light will rise in the darkness,
and your shadows become like noon.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 111:4-9. R. v.4

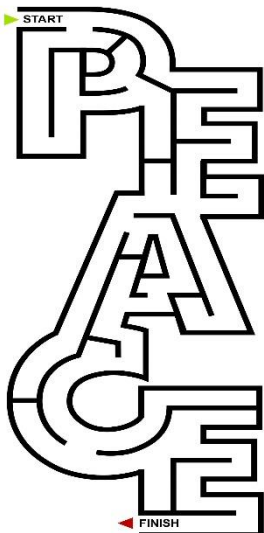
(R.) A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

He is a light in the darkness for the upright:
he is generous, merciful and just.
The good man takes pity and lends,
he conducts his affairs with honour. *(R.)*

The just man will never waver:
he will be remembered for ever.
He has no fear of evil news;
with a firm heart he trusts in the Lord. *(R.)*

With a steadfast heart he will not fear;
open-handed, he gives to the poor;
his justice stands firm for ever.
His head will be raised in glory. *(R.)*

Find your way through the maze



Second Reading

1 Cor 2:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

When I came to you, brothers, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Jn 8:12

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; the man who follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia!

Gospel

Mt 5:13-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing, and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.

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



Salty and Raidant

Jesus doesn't start in a fantasy dream You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the cosmos. 'You' is in the plural. So these descriptions are meant to apply to us as a Christian community.

Salt in the ancient world was a preservative for food. So, we are the ones who are to preserve the earth, to prevent its deterioration, to keep it life-giving.

Salt has to penetrate food to have an effect. We have to penetrate the world with our Sermon on the Mount values. Staying self-contained as a perfect little band of Christians is about as useful as salt remaining in the saltshaker. In Our Lord's scary opinion we would quite rightly be trampled underfoot.

How are we light for the cosmos? By 'good works'? No, a truer translation is by 'beautiful works'. These are those things we do which have grace, elegance and proportion and are therefore pleasing to observe: beautifully-good-works.

We could pause for a moment to pray that we remain salty and tangy, doing good beautifully and elegantly

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

O come, let us worship God
and bow low before the God who made us,
for he is the Lord our God.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy,
his wonders for the children of men,
for he satisfies the thirsty soul,
and the hungry he fills with good things.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading: Sir 15:15-20

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 2:6-10

Gospel: Mt 5:17-37



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, Gary Wills and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Anniversaries: Francis Trunk and Harold Stocks. **Having returned to the Father may they rest in peace.**

Baptisms: George Bennett and Theo Penton (Singleton). **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 12 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	SCAE LEADER	
Commentator	SCAE LEADER	K Ingold	G Cattermole		E Janssen	
Readers	M Thomas S Trunk	L Harrison	J Duldulao H Duldulao	M Stowe *Volunteer Needed	H Janssen T Janssen N Janssen	
Prayers		K Ingold	P Boyd	*Volunteer Needed	E Janssen	Offertory procession and collections can commence again.
Offertory	C & A Trunk	T Ernst	*Volunteer Needed	*Volunteer Needed		
Extraordinary Ministers						
Rosary Leader		D Clarke				

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 February <i>St Paul Miki and Companions</i>	7 February	8 February <i>St Jerome Emiliani St Josephine Bakhita</i>	9 February	10 February <i>St Scholastica</i>	11 February <i>Our Lady of Lourdes</i>	12 February 6 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, A
<u>8.00am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton <u>11.00am</u> Mass Elizabeth Gates	<u>9.00am Novena</u> <u>9.20am Mass</u> St Patrick's Singleton <u>6.00pm Mass</u> Broke	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00am</u> Mass <u>6.00pm</u> SCAE St Patrick's Singleton
	<u>8.50am</u> Rosary <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta		<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton		<u>6.00pm</u> SCAE St Brigid's Branxton	<u>7.35am</u> Rosary <u>8.15am</u> 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.



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/wordofgodssunday 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.

Have a Cuppa for Santo Nino!



PARISH FIESTA 2023 IN HONOUR OF SEÑOR 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.

Lenten Reflection Program

If you are interested in joining Lenten Reflection Group after Mass on Wednesdays in Singleton or after Mass on Thursdays in Branxton, please leave your name on the sheet at the back of the church. The Diocesan Reflection program ‘Finding Light Within the Darkness’ will be used. Groups will start from Ash Wednesday 22 February 2023.

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/>

St Patrick’s Women’s Guild Meeting

The next meeting of the Women’s Guild will be held on Wednesday 8 February 2023 at the home of Elaine Thomas, 21 Henry Drive Singleton Heights commencing at 1.30pm. All are welcome and we would love to see you there.

Branxton St Caritas Monthly Luncheon

All parishioners are invited for lunch on Friday 17 February and Friday 17 March 2023 at 12pm at the Miller Park Hotel restaurant. Come along and join a great group of people sharing a meal and conversation. For more information and to book a seat please phone Mercia on 0447 819 889.

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://cdm.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

Bibles Available

Hard cover Good News Bibles are available for purchase from the Parish Office for \$20 each. If you wish to purchase, please come to the office or give Erica a call to order. These bibles make an ideal gift for Confirmation or First Holy Communion.

Bible in a Year

If you’ve struggled to read the Bible, this podcast is for you. Ascension’s Bible in a Year Podcast, hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz and featuring Jeff Cavins, guides Catholics through the Bible in 365 daily episodes starting January 1st.

www.ascensionpress.com/bibleinayear



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!”