

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

First Sunday of Lent, Year A

26 February 2023

First Reading **Gen 2:7-9, 3:1-7**
A reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being.

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm
Ps 50:3-6. 12-14. 17. R. see v.3

(R.) Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin. **(R.)**

My offences truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done. **(R.)**

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **(R.)**

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise. **(R.)**

Second Reading **Rom 5:12-19**
A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift. The results of the gift also outweigh the results of one man's sin: for after one single fall came judgement with a verdict of condemnation, now after many falls comes grace with its verdict of acquittal. If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation **Mt 4:4**

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
king of endless glory!
No one lives on bread alone,
but on every word that comes
from the mouth of God.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
king of endless glory!**

Gospel **Mt 4:1-11**
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says:

Man does not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes from the
mouth of God.'

The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the

Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says:

He will put you in his angels' charge,
and they will support you on their hands
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'
Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says:
You must not put the Lord your God to the
test.'

Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these', he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God,
and serve him alone.'

Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



It is Written

Jesus was offered three shortcuts for his ministry. Firstly, exceptional powers to satisfy his own needs (bread out of stones). Secondly, when he needed to take risks, angels to keep him safe. Thirdly, when he wanted to change the world, absolute political power.

These were the Temptations of Christ, but also for us. If you or I are tempted to sin, we will find the marks of this threefold pattern. We want the whole world to change to satisfy us, or we want to take stupid risks and come out unscathed, or we want to exercise total power over others.

How can we try to follow Jesus without the shortcuts of the fantasy world which the Devil may offer? Note that Jesus resisted each temptation with: 'It is written'. The forty days of Lent are a perfect opportunity to read what 'is written' in the Gospels about the episodes and pattern of the life of Jesus Christ.

We could pause for a moment to find what is written and to imitate what we find. That is how the Devil is defeated.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

When he calls on me, I will answer him;
I will deliver him and give him glory,
I will grant him length of days.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes forth from the
mouth of God.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Second Sunday of Lent, Year A

1st Reading: Gen 12:1-4

2nd Reading: 2 Tm 1:8-10

Gospel: Mt 17:1-9



Prayer Requests

Sick: Otis Cowburn, 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: Victor Trunk. **Having returned to the Father may they rest in peace.**

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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
St Patrick's Parish PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Singleton	St Patrick's Church	Queen Street Singleton 2330	Contact: 02 5507 4048
Broke	Immaculate Conception Catholic Church	Wollombi Street, Broke	Contact: 0407 488 872 or 0458 626 299
Glendon Brook	St. Paul's Catholic Church	874 Glendonbrook Road, Glendon Brook	Contact: 6577 6168
St Brigid's Parish 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 MARCH 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	J Dries	J Woolley (28/2)
Commentator		L Harrison	G Cattermole			
Readers	J Stafa S Stafa	SCAE LEADER M Ingold	J Tindale E Thomas	T Cochrane	P Goodwin A Borg	
Prayers		L Harrison	C Langford	*Volunteer Needed	M Cunningham	Offertory procession and collections can commence again.
Offertory	Partridge Family	G Wilton	G Cattermole	*Volunteer Needed	*Volunteer Needed	
Extraordinary Ministers		*Volunteer needed	*Volunteer needed	*Volunteer needed	*Volunteer needed	
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
27 February <i>St Gregory of Narek</i>	28 February	1 March	2 March	3 March	4 March <i>St Casimir</i>	5 March 2 ND SUNDAY IN LENT YEAR A
<u>8.00am</u> LOTW <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>6.00pm</u> LOTW <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.20am</u> LOTW <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>6.00pm</u> LOTW <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.20am</u> LOTW <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>9.00am Novena</u> <u>9.20am LOTW</u> <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>
	NO MASS <i>St Catherine's Greta</i>		NO 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.

Parish Office Update

Many of you will have heard that Fr Thomas' brother, Joseph Chirackal, passed away last Sunday at the age of 89. Fr Thomas flew home to India to be with his family on Tuesday and he will return to Australia on Friday 10 March. During this time Fr John Tobin has kindly offered to say Mass on the weekends and Ash Wednesday for us. Weekday Singleton mass (including Saturday morning) will be changed to lay-lead Liturgy of the Word services and Greta and Branxton weekday Mass will be cancelled. Thank you to Fr John for being with us during this time.

Lenten Reflection Program

The Diocesan Reflection program 'Finding Light Within the Darkness' will be used for our Lenten Reflection this year. Groups will start from Ash Wednesday 22 February 2023. Copies of the program are available at each church. If you missed getting a copy, please contact the parish office.



Parish Sacramental Programs 2023

Information Meetings have been held in Singleton and Branxton for those interested in the Sacramental Program this year. If your child is interested in receiving the Sacraments of *Reconciliation, Confirmation and Holy Communion* and you were not able to get to the meeting, please contact the Parish Office on 5507 4048 ASAP. The sessions will begin in March for the children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

St Patrick's Parish 1st Anniversary Mass

The 1st Anniversary Mass will be held on Saturday 4 March 2023 at 9.30am. Our prayers will be for the soul of Michael King. At 9am each Saturday St Patrick's Parish holds 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.

St Patrick's Women's Guild Meeting

The next meeting of the Women's Guild will be held on Wednesday 8 March 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 Parish Update

St Brigid's Church in Branxton will receive a fresh coat of paint internally from 6 March 2023 thanks to a generous bequest left to the parish. The contract for work was awarded to Topaz Dynamics Pty Ltd who will also strip back and re-paint the floor in the sacristy and install a handrail up to the altar.

Branxton St Caritas Monthly Luncheon

All parishioners are invited for lunch on 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.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Sallyanne Stanbridge, Janelle Dixon and Narelle Moylan of Rosary Park Catholic School Branxton who were all recognised for 25 years' service within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle at the recent Emmaus Awards. What a fantastic achievement!

Happy 60th Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to Norma and Tony Ernst who this week celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary! Last Sunday, they were honoured to receive a blessing from Fr John Tobin during Mass. May your marriage continue to be blessed with love, joy and companionship for all the years of your lives.

'I have found the one whom my soul loves.'
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4



Caritas Middle East Emergency Appeal

Caritas Turkey and other Caritas agencies are responding to a series of powerful earthquakes in southeast Turkey and Syria, where thousands of lives have been lost already and the death toll increases by the hour.

Caritas Turkey are on the ground coordinating with local authorities and other organisations to see how they can best assist. Your generous support can help provide emergency relief to help families recover and rebuild from disaster. Visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/turkey-and-syria-earthquake/ or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support to the Middle East by donating to our Middle East Emergency Appeal.

Project Compassion – First Sunday of Lent



After losing her father when she was just 10 years old, Laxmi was at risk of falling further into extreme poverty. But with the support of our partner Caritas Nepal, Laxmi joined a child's club, became a leader in her school and is now a mentor to other children in her village.

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **For All Future Generations**

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes at the church, visit

<https://fundraise.projectcompassion.org.au/o/singleton-catholic-parish>

or Call 1800 024 413.



Mission: Change Their Lives – and Yours!

Communities in Africa, Asia or the Pacific are seeking Australians from a variety of professions and trades to share their skills with those who have less opportunity to develop their talents. Explore 35 positions by scanning the QR code below. On our website you can also see news including stories from those currently supported in Timor-Leste, Samoa, American Samoa and Thailand. Please enquire further about potential assignments for you or someone you know by ringing 02 9560 5333 or online at www.palms.org.au



Message of the Holy Father Francis for Lent 2023

Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey

Dear brothers and sisters!

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all recount the episode of the Transfiguration of Jesus. There we see the Lord's response to the failure of his disciples to understand him. Shortly before, there had been a real clash between the Master and Simon Peter, who, after professing his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, rejected his prediction of the passion and the cross. Jesus had firmly rebuked him: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a scandal to me, because you do not think according to God, but according to men!" (Mt 16:23). Following this, "six days later, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John his brother and led them away to a high mountain" (Mt 17:1).

The Gospel of the Transfiguration is proclaimed every year on the Second Sunday of Lent. During this liturgical season, the Lord takes us with him to a place apart. While our ordinary commitments compel us to remain in our usual places and our often repetitive and sometimes boring routines, during Lent we are invited to ascend "a high mountain" in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline – asceticism – as God's holy people.

Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. This is precisely what Peter and the other disciples needed to do. To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity. We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice and concentration. These requisites are also important for the synodal journey to which, as a Church, we are committed to making. We can benefit greatly from reflecting on the relationship between Lenten penance and the synodal experience.

In his "retreat" on Mount Tabor, Jesus takes with him three disciples, chosen to be witnesses of a unique event. He wants that experience of grace to be shared, not solitary, just as our whole life of faith is an experience that is shared. For it is in togetherness that we follow Jesus. Together too, as a pilgrim Church in time, we experience the liturgical year and Lent within it, walking alongside those whom the Lord has placed among us as fellow travellers. Like the ascent of Jesus and the disciples to Mount Tabor, we can say that our Lenten journey is "synodal", since we make it together along the same path, as disciples of the one Master. For we know that Jesus is himself the Way, and therefore, both in the liturgical journey and in the journey of the Synod, the Church does nothing other than enter ever more deeply and fully into the mystery of Christ the Saviour.

And so, we come to its culmination. The Gospel relates that Jesus "was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light" (Mt 17:2). This is the "summit", the goal of the journey. At the end of their ascent, as they stand on the mountain heights with Jesus, the three disciples are given the grace of seeing him in his glory, resplendent in supernatural light. That light did not come from without but radiated from the Lord himself. The divine beauty of this vision was incomparably greater than all the efforts the disciples had made in the ascent of Tabor. During any strenuous mountain trek, we must keep our eyes firmly fixed on the path; yet the panorama that opens up at the end amazes us and rewards us by its grandeur. So too, the synodal process may often seem arduous, and at times we may become discouraged. Yet what awaits us at the end is undoubtedly something wondrous and amazing, which will help us to understand better God's will and our mission in the service of his kingdom.

Will be continued in next week's bulletin...

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 January, Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul

FRANCIS

To read the Holy Father's full letter visit

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2023/02/17/230217c.html>