



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

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Year B

31 December 2023

First Reading

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.

The Lord honours the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons. Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins, he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune.

Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own, he shall be heard on the day when he prays.

Long life comes to him who honours his father, he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord.

My son, support your father in his old age, do not grieve him during his life.

Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy, do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 104:1-6. 8-9. R.v.7.8

(R.) The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
O sing to him, sing his praise;
tell all his wonderful works! *(R.)*

Be proud of his holy name,
let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice.
Consider the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face. *(R.)*

Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, the judgements he spoke.
O children of Abraham, his servant,
O sons of the Jacob he chose. *(R.)*

He remembers his covenant for ever,
his promise for a thousand generations,
the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac. *(R.)*

Second Reading

Col 3:12-21

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians.

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and

inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness. Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. Parents, never drive your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Lk 1:38

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and the fullness of his message live within you.

Alleluia!



Gospel

Lk 2:22-40

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said:

'Now, Master,
you can let your servant go in peace,
just as you promised;
because my eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared for all the nations to see,
a light to enlighten the pagans
and the glory of your people Israel.'

As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said

about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.'

There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

BY FR MICHAEL TATE

The Liberation of Women

In today's Gospel, Mary, having given birth, is regarded as ritually unclean. She could not take part in public worship until she was 'purified'. This involved offering up a couple of pigeons which she and Joseph had to buy.

No wonder that, at the Cleansing of the Temple, Jesus shatters the cages in which the pigeons were kept! He was angry with a Temple system which saw Mary that way, which thought of all women giving birth that way. Indeed, his whole ministry is full of instances when women breach religious and cultural taboos in his presence, because of his presence.

This Feast of the Holy Family gives us the opportunity to thank God for our mothers who, like Mary, helped fulfil God's plan for humankind by birthing us into the world.

We could pause for a moment to pray that the Church changes rules and structures which confine women in cages built from ideologies foreign to the Gospel, lest those rules become swords which pierce Mary's soul.

We could pause for a moment to ask whether now, is the time for a Marian response: 'Be it done unto me according to your word.'

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:
The shepherds went in haste,
and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant
lying in a manger.
COMMUNION ANTIPHON:
Our God has appeared on the earth, and
lived among us.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
The Epiphany of the Lord, Year B
1st Reading: Is 60:1-6
2nd Reading: Eph 3:2-3, 5-6
Gospel: Mt 2:1-12

MYSTERY OF FAITH
*When we eat this Bread and drink
this Cup, we proclaim your Death
O Lord until you come again.*

Prayer Requests

Sick: Lorraine Cooper, Phuong Ho, Ron Hebbe, Austin Hoffman, Warren Markham, Jen Phillips, Olga Roberts, Selene Maree Stanholm-Atkins and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Anniversaries: Pamela Davy. *Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.*

Due to Privacy Laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put 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	Promoters of Safeguarding Contact via the Parish Office	Singleton Parish: Niamh Marzol Branxton Parish: Lydia Gorczyca
St Patrick's Parish PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Singleton	<i>St Patrick's Church</i>	Queen Street Singleton 2330	
Broke	<i>Immaculate Conception Catholic Church</i>	Wollombi Street, Broke	
Glendon Brook	<i>St. Paul's Catholic Church</i>	874 Glendonbrook Road, Glendon Brook	
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	
Greta	St Catherine's Catholic Church	Branxton Street, Greta 2334	
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 Alex Stafford	Office: 02 4931 1220	Email: branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au

MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 7 JANUARY 2024

	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8am	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	Counting will be done on Tues 9/1/24. Any counters available.
Commentator		M Ingold	G Cattermole		VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
Readers	P Conroy C Szumilas	SCAE LEADER REQ'D L Gorczyca	J Tindale E Thomas	T Cochrane	P Goodwin A Borg	
Prayers		M Ingold	C Langford	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	M Cunningham	
Offertory	L Waters family	C Miller A Humphreys	G Cattermole	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
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
1 January <i>MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD</i>	2 January <i>Sts Basil and Gregory</i>	3 January <i>Holy Name of Jesus</i>	4 January	5 January	6 January	7 January <i>THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, YEAR B</i>
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE CLOSED		
<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 Adoration & Benediction St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00m</u> Mass <u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton
<u>9.30am</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta				<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton	<u>7.35am</u> Rosary <u>8.15am</u> SCAE 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.

SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Information brochures are available in the entrance to the church. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult, contact the Office of Safeguarding 02 49791390 or childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au or visit www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au for more information and resources.

Parish Office Hours

The Parish Office will be **CLOSED 25 Dec to 9 Jan** (Bulletins for this period were published on 22 December). I wish you all a very happy new year full of light and peace.

Do you have the Mass App?

Whether you're at home or travelling, the Diocese's mobile app shows you Churches and Mass times near you. If you're looking to attend Christmas Mass in your Parish, or you're just not sure about upcoming Mass times near you, simply searching in the app by your location allows you to find service times in your area. You can download the app for free from the **Apple App Store** and **Google Play Store**. Just search for 'Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle' and click install on your mobile or tablet!

Cemetery Thanks

A very special thank you to those who have worked hard to ensure the cemeteries in Singleton and Branxton are tidy for visitors at this special time of year. Special thanks in Singleton to Terry Dunn, Adrian Klasen, Ron Nowland, Kerry Dries and Julies Dries.

2024 God's Word – Daily Reflections

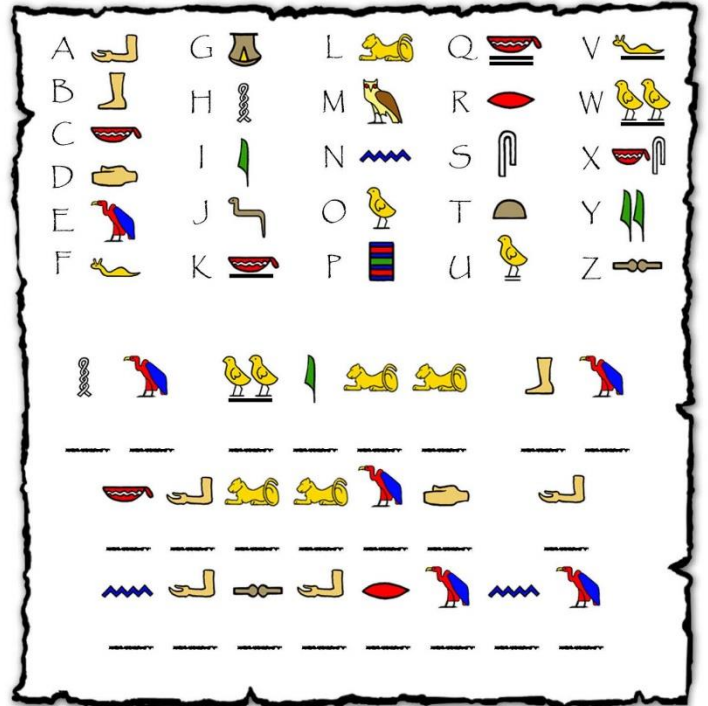
Designed to help you to keep the Word of God close to your heart in your daily life. A companion on the journey to pray, to share, to grow in God's love and be nourished by the Word of God. Includes the Bible readings set down for each day, with a reflection. Limited copies are available at the Parish Office. Please bring \$15 cash for payment.

2024 Lenten Reflection – Transformation through Revelation

During the season of Lent, we are called to look deeply at the human condition, just as Jesus, the Son of God, experienced. We are reminded during this time of hardship, suffering, and ultimately dying that we must stretch ourselves. We must pray and fast from whatever is taking hold of the fullness of life. This time calls for personal reflection and encourages us to look out with missionary eyes to intentionally give to those in need. To access our Diocesan Resource, Transformation Through Revelation, please visit <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/media/6680/0003733-dio-2024-lenten-program-06.pdf>

DECODE THE PROPHECY

Use the code below to decipher the prophet's message



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Ritual

The ritual of purification referred to in today's passage would take place 40 days after childbirth. It was a ritual for the mother, not the child. Mary and Joseph took the opportunity of attending the Temple to bring Jesus into the presence of God who, according to tradition, dwelt in the Temple. The tradition associated with this purification of women after childbirth dictated that a lamb and a turtledove or pigeon be sacrificed. However, for the poor, an extra turtledove or pigeon could be substituted for the lamb. This fact gives us an indication of the status of Mary and Joseph.



As we stand on the threshold of a brand-new year, it is with hearts full of gratitude and hope that I extend my warmest wishes to each one of you. The past year has been a journey filled with blessings, challenges, and the unwavering support of our parish community.

In the face of the tragic bus accident, we supported those affected and prayed for the deceased. We are also saddened by the unexpected loss of some of our active parishioners who've left a gap that could not be filled.

Let us thank God for all the blessings he showered on us in the past year. The formation of the Evangelisation and Mission team has brought new vigour in the parish. Your generous contribution through the Hope Tree Group charity has made a great difference in the lives so many people.

I use this opportunity to thank each one of you. I wish to thank Erica for her efficient office administration of the parish. I thank all the pastoral and finance committee members and liturgy teams for guiding me to lead the parish in the right direction. I thank all the volunteers, sacramental team members, bereavement teams, sacristans, church cleaners, decorators and all those who assist at our liturgies in various roles.

At this time, I would also remind you that we are still in need of volunteers. I urge you to come forward and use your talents and time for the building up of the kingdom of God.

As we embark on this new chapter together, let us carry forward the lessons of the past and embrace the opportunities that the future holds for us. May the coming year be a time of growth finding new ways to fulfill the evangelising mission of our parish. Let us continue to build bonds of love and friendship within our parish family, fostering a spirit of unity that strengthens us all.

May the New Year bring you and your loved ones peace, prosperity, and boundless joy.

Wishing you a Happy and Blessed New Year!

Always at your service

Fr Thomas Chirackal

2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR



The Holy Family of Nazareth consisting of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, serves as a model for our families, providing guidance and inspiration for our own lives.

The Holy Family was not exempt from problems, trials, and suffering. They experienced poverty, danger, persecution, and even had to flee to Egypt. However, it was their courage, fidelity, and love for one another and for God that allowed them to overcome these challenges and accept them as expressions of God's will. The Holy Family's example teaches us that a happy family life is not measured by the absence of hardships, but by how we face and overcome them with faith and love.

The Holy Family's communion of love, based on truth, indissoluble fidelity, and openness to the gift of life, serves as an example for families today. They lived as a community of shared plans, solidarity, forgiveness, and faith, where each member contributed their specific gifts to the growth of all. This model of the Holy Family can inspire us to foster these same values within our own families.

The Holy Family is seen as the icon of the domestic Church, calling families to pray together. Prayer is essential in the family, as it helps children from a young age to perceive the meaning of God and live in an atmosphere marked by His presence. By praying together as a family, we can become of one heart and soul, truly embodying the spirit of the Holy Family.

By following the example of the Holy Family, we can create a domestic Church that reflects the love and presence of God in our lives.