



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

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Word of God Sunday

4 February 2024

First Reading

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

A reading from the book of Job.

Job began to speak:

Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service,
his time no better than hired drudgery?
Like the slave, sighing for the shade,
or the workman with no thought but his wages,
months of delusion I have assigned to me,
nothing for my own but nights of grief.
Lying in bed I wonder, 'When will it be day?'
Risen I think, 'How slowly evening comes!'
Restlessly I fret till twilight falls.
Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days have passed,
and vanished, leaving no hope behind.
Remember that my life is but a breath,
and that my eyes will never again see joy.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 146:1-6. R. v.3

(R.) Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.

Praise the Lord for he is good;
sing to our God for he is loving:
to him our praise is due. **(R.)**

The Lord builds up Jerusalem
and brings back Israel's exiles,
he heals the broken-hearted,
he binds up all their wounds.
He fixes the number of the stars;
he calls each one by its name. **(R.)**

Our Lord is great and almighty;
his wisdom can never be measured.
The Lord raises the lowly;
he humbles the wicked to the dust. **(R.)**

Second Reading 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23

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

I do not boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it! If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. Do you know what my reward is? It is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me.

So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost; and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessings.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 8:17

**Alleluia, alleluia!
He bore our sickness,
and endured our suffering.
Alleluia!**

Gospel

Mark 1:29-39

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they told him about her straightaway. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them.

That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was. In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you.' He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came.' And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

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



**REFLECTION
BY FR MICHAEL TATE**

The Divine Touch

The mother-in-law of Simon (Peter) was sick in bed with a raging fever. When Jesus learned about her distressed state, he 'took her by the hand and helped her up'. He broke the taboo about physical contact with a woman not his relative because he wanted to holistically heal her dis-ease.

Simon's mother-in-law didn't need an aspirin and a cup of tea. She felt quarantined, isolated, and needed a hand reassuring her of sociable relationships. Jesus overcame her fever and her dis-ease with the world.

At every Mass we exchange a physical gesture at the greeting of Peace. This quite often overcomes being ill-at-ease with a family member or just with the neighbour in the pew. We need to take that symbolic action into the world. For somebody, it may be the most touching thing we ever do.

We could pause for a moment to identify that person who needs us to reach out, to take their hand and help them up.

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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 B
1st Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

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, Noel House, Warren Markham, Bob MacDonnell, Jen Phillips, Olga Roberts, Selene Maree Stanholm-Atkins and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Baptisms: Henry Hunter (Glendonbrook) and Elaiah Thompson (Singleton). **Called by name to be a child of God.**

Recently Deceased: Clare Ernst. **May they rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon them.**

Anniversaries: Andrew Humphreys. **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 11 FEBRUARY 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		J Dries	J Dries	J Brackenrig
Commentator		K Ingold			SCAE LEADER REQ	
Readers	P Conroy M Thomas	L Harrison	J Duldulao H Duldulao	M Stowe VOLUNTEER NEEDED	T Janssen H Janssen N Janssen	
Prayers		K Ingold	P Boyd	F King	E Janssen	
Offertory	K Jones K Jones	D Clarke J Clarke	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
Rosary Leader		C Miller				

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
5 February <i>St Agatha</i>	6 February <i>St Paul Miki & Companions</i>	7 February	8 February <i>St Jerome Emiliani St Josephine Bakhita</i>	9 February	10 February <i>St Scholastica</i>	11 February Project Compassion SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORD TIME, YEAR B
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN		
<u>8.00am</u> LOTW <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 <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i> <u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>Elizabeth Gates</i>	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00m</u> Mass <u>6.00pm</u> SCAE <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>
	<u>9.20am</u> Mass <i>St Catherine's Greta</i>		<u>11.00am</u> Funeral Mass <i>(Clare Ernst) 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> Mass <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.

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 Fiesta



PARISH FIESTA 2024

IN HONOUR OF SENOR SANTO NINO
SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY MASS AT 10:00 am
ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH
Followed by lunch and celebrations at Singleton Civic Centre.
PLEASE JOIN US – Place your name on the sheet on the noticeboard.

Raffle tickets will be on sale at Mass and at Fiesta, with a range of amazing prizes on offer. Funds go to Singleton Parish.

Ash Wednesday Mass Times

Mass will be said for **Ash Wednesday, 14 February 2024**, at 9.20am in St Patrick's Singleton and at 6.00pm in St Brigid's Branxton.

Singleton Community Praise and Prayer Gathering

You are invited to join the Praise Gathering for Singleton Christians this **Sunday 4 February 2024** at the Salvation Army, York Street, Singleton, from 4pm. This is a gathering together of Christians from across the body of Christ in our Singleton community – everyone is invited to come along and join with our brothers and sisters in Christ for a time of Praise and worship, prayer and fellowship.

St Patrick's Women's Guild Meeting

The next meeting of the Women's Guild will be held on **Wednesday 14 February 2024** 1.30pm in the home of Jennifer Tindale, 23 Oldknow Crescent Singleton Heights. All are welcome and we would love to see there.

St Brigid's Caritas Monthly Luncheon

Everyone is invited to join the St Brigid's Caritas group for their monthly luncheon at Miller Park Hotel. Upcoming dates are **Friday 16 February** and **Friday 15 March**. Lunch will be from 12pm and if you would like to attend, please confirm with Mercia.

World Day of Prayer 2024

The 2024 World Day of Prayer will be held on **Friday 1 March** at **10am** in St Brigid's Church, Branxton and at **7pm** in St Patrick's Church, Singleton. This year's country of focus is Palestine. Attendees are asked to bring a plate.

As our parishes are hosting the event this year, any help available to assist with the running the service and catering afterwards would be appreciated. Please speak with Shanelle Thomas or Niamh Marzol in Singleton or Gail Jacobs in Branxton.

Word of God Sunday

The Church in Australia celebrates the Sunday of the Word of God on the first Sunday in February – February 4 in 2024 (Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B). 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.

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. Sign up to the podcast at www.acsensionpress.com/bibleinayear

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Parish Bereavement Teams – Expression of Interests

Interested persons are still invited to contact the Parish Office to submit an Expression of Interest for the Singleton Parish Bereavement Team. Members of the Bereavement Teams are there to support and service people of our parish in their time of loss. They liaise with the Parish Office and Funeral Directors when funeral arrangements are required. New and current ministers in the teams will undertake the Stepping Stones formation program and be supported in their ministry.

RCIA Rite of Election of Catechumens

The Rite of Election on Sunday 18 February 2024 is an opportunity to welcome all catechumens who will be baptised in their parishes at the Easter Vigil [a catechumen is an unbaptised person whose search for meaning has brought them to the Catholic Church]. Although our Parishes do not have any catechumens this year you are invited to join in witness and prayerful support of those who choose to be Catholic. 2.30pm Sacred Heart Cathedral Newcastle West, followed by afternoon tea. RSVP for catering to E sharon.murphy@mn.catholic.org.au P 4979 1134.

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>

Support Funding for Palliative Care

Following government cuts to funding for Palliative Care and increases to funding for Voluntary Assisted Dying (euthanasia), The Hon. Susan Carter (Member of the Legislative Council) has created a petition to put pressure on government to better support and fund palliative care. Bishop Michael has endorsed this petition and the full letter from the Hon. Susan Carter can be found on the church noticeboard. Please consider signing the petition via the following link https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lc/pages/epetition-details.aspx?q=TCDPkH-n_irjDpWLSkyOA



Reflection for Word of God Sunday

by Fr Tom Elich, Editor, Liturgy News

For many decades, the Catholic Church in Australia has taken part in National Bible Sunday organised on the third Sunday in July by Bible Society Australia. It is good that this is an ecumenical event since all Christian Churches hold the Scriptures in common. It is always listed among the special commemorations in the official Ordo, but I suspect in recent times it has been largely ignored in many Catholic parishes.

Towards the end of 2019, Pope Francis instituted a Sunday of the Word of God. This was put down for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. He chose this date because it is close to when the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is celebrated in the northern hemisphere. This timing is quite impractical for Australia. The dates get mixed up with the final weeks of the summer holidays, the return to school and the celebration of Australia Day. This is why, many years ago, we moved the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity to the time between Ascension and Pentecost, which is generally in May.

This raised the question of our date for the Sunday of the Word of God. It cannot easily be near to the Christian unity week because all the Sundays are taken up with Easter, Pentecost and the solemnities which follow. Should it coincide with National Bible Sunday in July? In any case, the Australian bishops have decided to keep it close to Pope Francis' day, so it will be the first Sunday in February. This means we can avail ourselves of any resources which the Holy See may produce.

The Importance of the Word of God

In fact, there were two documents about Scripture released by the Holy See on 30 September – one in 2019 and the other in 2020. They mark the 1600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome, the great Scripture scholar who prepared the definitive translation of the Bible into Latin. The first document institutes the Sunday of the Word of God, intended to help people to grow in religious and intimate familiarity with the sacred Scriptures. The second gives an account of St Jerome, his scholarship, his faith and his “living and tender love” of the Word of God. Jerome is proposed as a model for enculturating the Gospel and discovering Christ for our time.

Most are no doubt familiar with the saying of Vatican II: “the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she has venerated the Lord’s body ... offering people the bread of life from the one table of the Word of God and the body of Christ (Dei Verbum 21).” In the same vein, the second document quotes St Jerome: “We are reading the sacred Scriptures. For me, the Gospel is the body of Christ; for me, the holy Scriptures are his teaching. And when he says: ‘whoever does not eat my flesh and drink my blood’ (Jn 6:53), even though these words can also be understood of the [eucharistic] Mystery, Christ’s body and blood are really the word of Scripture, God’s teaching.”

Disseminate the Word

The first Sunday in February is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God. The document inaugurating this day, *Aperuit Illis*, offers a number of practical strategies (AI, 3).

Let us embrace Sunday of the Word of God to help us launch our new year with a deeper and richer encounter with the Risen Lord. And if it works well in February, why not do it again on the third Sunday in July?