

First Reading **Genesis 9:8-15**
A reading from the book of Genesis.

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.'

God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm
Ps 24:4-9. R. see v.10

(R.) Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. **(R.)**

Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord. **(R.)**

The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. **(R.)**

Second Reading **1 Peter 3:18-22**
A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which

saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation **Matthew 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 **Mark 1:12-15**
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

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



REFLECTION
BY NICK BRODIE

Discussing this Gospel, Pope Francis once said that 'Lent is a time of repentance, yes, but it is not a time of sorrow!'

The Pope wanted to remind Christians that Lent is a season of 'a joyous and serious commitment to strip ourselves of our selfishness ... and to renew ourselves according to the grace of our Baptism.' Note his emphasis on it being 'joyous.'

In one of his major teaching documents, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope begins as follows: 'The Joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.' He goes on to say that 'With Christ joy is constantly born anew.' This is the kind of Lent we should all strive for: a joyful one.

Later in the same document the Pope expresses concern about joyless seriousness. 'There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter.'

The Pope then reminds us that 'Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.' Our Lent should be a time of joyful response to that love. Fasts and penances should be helping us find joy in Christ, not misery.

After all, Jesus emerged from the desert proclaiming 'Good News'.

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Nick Brodie is an Australian historian and writer who is currently Dean of Academic Studies of Jane Franklin Hall in Hobart. A graduate of the Australian National University, Flinders University, and the University of Tasmania, he is the author of several books on Australian history and numerous essays on historical, political, and religious topics. In 2017 he was awarded the Bruce Mansfield Prize for the best article in the *Journal of Religious History*. He is currently studying Theology.

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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 B
1st Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18
2nd Reading: Romans 8:31-34
Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

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.**

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

Anniversaries: Joyce Ralston, Edna Tierney, Gloria Trunk. **Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.**

Baptisms: Scarlett Walton-Haywood (Singleton). **Called by name to be a child of God.**

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 25 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	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	J Dries	J Dries	G McMillan
Commentator		L Harrison		SCAE LEADER REQ	H Rapp	
Readers	J Stafa S Stafa	A Humphreys	S Bates VOLUNTEER NEEDED	R James D Cantrall	H Rapp O Brackenrig C Brackenrig	
Prayers		L Harrison	E Thomas	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	A Skardon	
Offertory	S McAlister S Trunk	J Nightingale N Ernst	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
19 February	20 February	21 February <i>St Peter Damian</i>	22 February <i>THE CHAIR OF SAINT PETER THE APOSTLE</i>	23 February <i>St Polycarp</i>	24 February	25 February SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR B
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN		
<u>8.00am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> LOTW St Patrick's Singleton	<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Anointing Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton <u>6.00pm</u> SCAE Glendonbrook	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00m</u> SCAE <u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton
<u>5.30pm</u> Sacramental Info	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta	<u>5.30pm</u> Sacramental Info St Catherine's Greta	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton		<u>6.00pm</u> Mass 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.

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.

2024 Sacramental Program



Children aged in Year 3 or above who are interested in receiving the Sacraments of *Reconciliation, Confirmation and Holy Communion* are asked to attend the information meeting being held in their parish this week. Please bring a copy of your child's baptism certificate with you on the night if they were not baptised in Singleton or Branxton. If your child wishes to be baptised as part of the program, please speak with the Team at the meeting. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the Parish Office.

SINGLETON PARISH

Monday 19 February 2024, 5.30pm St Patrick's, Singleton.

BRANXTON PARISH

Wednesday 21 February 2024, 5.30pm in St Catherine's, Greta.

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.

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.

A reflection group will be gathering on Wednesdays after Mass in Singleton. The Lenten Reflection books '*Transformation through Revelation*' found at the back of the church will be used. If you need a copy, please contact the Parish Office.

Way of the Cross

You are invited to stay after Mass to pray the Stations of the Cross in Singleton on Friday mornings and in Branxton on Thursday mornings.

Plot for Sale in Queen Street Cemetery

A plot is available for purchase in the 3rd monumental section of Singleton Catholic Cemetery, Queen Street. This is a single plot which can be used as a double depth burial. The cost of the plot is \$800. For more information, please contact the Parish Office.

Way of the Cross

Our Diocese is blessed with rich diversity. This year's Ecumenical Way of the Cross, held on the 5th Sunday of Lent, invites us into a multicultural journey of remembrance. As we relive the story of Jesus' Passion, we recall the stories that have brought us together. This event is a celebrated gathering of our wider community and one not to be missed and will be held on Sunday 17 March, 3pm (you are invited to gather from 2pm) at St Joseph's Toronto Church, 140 Wangi Road, Toronto.

Understanding the Beatitudes

One of the most striking examples of Jesus' teaching is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. The Beatitudes are the foundation on which that sermon is built. They are also one of the most beautiful statements of Christian ethics. Yet at the same time, they are also some of the trickiest verses in the Bible to interpret. In this subject, we'll tackle the meaning of the blessings by putting them into the context of the gospels, the Hebrew Bible, and wider Jewish literature, like the Dead Sea Scrolls. We'll think about what the Beatitudes contribute to our understanding of Jesus' teaching and mission. And finally, we'll think about how the Beatitudes still matter today. Dates: Thursdays 7 & 14 March (4.00pm-5.30pm) in the Library in Diocesan Resource Centre.

Register at: <https://forms.office.com/r/cGXZ545eRX>

aMeN CaMiNo is on again!

The aMeN caMiNo takes place over five consecutive days. The pilgrimage starts at St John's Chapel, Maitland and concludes at the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton. Pilgrims will walk an average of 20km per day through the beautiful landscape of bush, beach and beyond which we are blessed to have in our backyard. We will also be holding a weekend experience. It will be held on 6-10 July, 3-7 August and 7-8 September. See the noticeboard for more information.

Christian Initiation and Confirmation Review

You are invited to take part in a review of the Ministry of Christian Initiation and the reflection on Confirmation. The review has been structured so that all parish ministers, parents, parishioners, sponsors and others can take part. Visit the link to find out more: <https://mnnews.today/liturgy-matters/2024/57885-liturgy-matters-it-s-time-christian-initiation-and-confirmation-review/>

Ireland Pilgrimage – The Way of the Mercy

From 26 September to 12 October, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will be journeying to Ireland to explore "The Way of Mercy." Embark on a soulful 15-day Irish spiritual journey, drawing inspiration from Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy in 1831. Traverse Dublin's sacred sites and the serene landscapes of Glendalough and the Ring of Kerry, immersing yourself in Ireland's rich religious legacy. Marvel at the majestic Cliffs of Moher, pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Knock. This pilgrimage covers seven captivating cities of Ireland, instrumental in building the foundations of our Christian faith. For more details, please see the flyer on the church noticeboard.

Pope Francis Message for Lent 2024

The Vatican published Pope Francis' Message for Lent 2024 with the theme, "Through the desert God leads us to freedom." The presentation of the Holy Father's Message took place on February 1 at the Holy See Press Office. To read his message go to <https://www.humandevlopment.va/en/news/2024.html>



This year, Project Compassion brings you the stories of three resilient women: Ronita from the Philippines, Leaia from Samoa and Memory from Malawi. While from three different corners of the world and facing vastly different challenges, they are all united by one dream: to create a better world *for all future generations*.

Please donate to Project Compassion.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your parish, by visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion or by calling 1800 024 413.



Once upon a time, I impetuously decided it was time for a trim.

Having cut my own hair once successfully before, I believed I possessed all the necessary skill and stylish prowess that self-complacency could promise. The result was a calamitous imbalance in which I had devastated one half of my head with choppy, injudicious cuts, while the other side remained long, undefiled and intact. How foolishly I grieved for my hair, and even more foolish was I to endeavour on a 40-minute walk to the closest hair salon only to find it closed. I seriously considered catching the next bus to East Maitland from Branxton in hope that I would find a salon that would take me without a booking. Fortunately, my agitation was subdued by common sense, and I quit my reckless plan before it led to anymore disappointment. On my walk home, I was left to reflect on what had caused all this nonsense. It wasn't just the fact that I lacked the skills to cut hair; there was a lack of virtue on my part, namely humility.

This Lent, I decided to give up my leave-in conditioner. I know it sounds like a petty thing, but I realised that it's a necessary sacrifice because it has a potent hold on me. When it comes to picking a thing to give up for Lent, it is very tempting to pick something that, with or without it, wouldn't make a significant difference to our lives. Yet, that is not living in the spirit of Lent. The reason I started with the above anecdote is to demonstrate that we are prone to many earthly attachments. In a season that constantly emphasises our mortality, we are invited to reflect on the things that have the greatest hold on us. Can't we relate to the struggle of watching one more video or post? Eating within the minute-window an hour before communion? Speeding on the freeway? How can we become saints if we do not even give God the best of our time? Therefore, let us adopt the attitude of St Faustina who wrote,

*"I have nothing left for myself, because I have given everything away to souls,
with the result that on the day of judgement I will stand before you empty-handed..."*

Thus, You will have nothing on which to judge me, and we shall meet on that day: Love and mercy..."