



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

Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year B

St Patrick's Day

17 March 2024

First Reading **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

A reading from the second book of Chronicles.

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 50:3-4. 12-15. R. v.12

(R.) Create a clean heart in me, O God.

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.)*

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,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you. *(R.)*

Second Reading **Hebrews 5:7-9**

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation **John 12:26**

**Glory to you, Word of God,
Lord Jesus Christ!**

**If you serve me, follow me, says the Lord;
and where I am, my servant will also be.**

**Glory to you, Word of God,
Lord Jesus Christ!**

Gospel **John 12:20-33**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them:

'Now the hour has come
for the Son of Man to be glorified.
I tell you most solemnly,
unless a wheat grain falls on the ground
and dies,
it remains only a single grain;
but if it dies,
it yields a rich harvest.

Anyone who loves his life loses it;
anyone who hates his life in this world
will keep it for the eternal life.
If a man serves me, he must follow me,
wherever I am, my servant will be there too.
If anyone serves me, my Father will honour
him.

Now my soul is troubled.
What shall I say:
Father, save me from this hour?
But it was for this very reason that I have
come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name!
A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it,
and I will glorify it again.'
People standing by, who heard this, said it
was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an
angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It
was not for my sake that this voice came, but
for yours.

'Now sentence is being passed on this
world;
now the prince of this world is to be
overthrown.

And when I am lifted up from the earth,
I shall draw all men to myself.'

By these words he indicated the kind of death
he would die

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



**REFLECTION
BY NICK BRODIE**

'Today's Gospel invites us to turn our gaze to the crucifix,' Pope Francis once said, adding that it 'is not an ornamental object or clothing accessory.' Rather, it is something more: 'a religious symbol to contemplate and understand.'

This is a theme to which the Pope has repeatedly turned. On another occasion he reminded his listeners that the image of the crucified Jesus is something newcomers first encounter: 'In churches, in the homes of Christians, even worn on their persons,' a cross is meant to symbolise the faith of those who display it.

That being the case, it is beholden on us as individuals and communities to show what being a follower of Jesus really means. Jesus responded to Philip and Andrew by speaking of the grain that dies to yield a good harvest and of the follower who serves. As Jesus' words suggest, real understanding comes from the witness of service and self-sacrifice.

Whenever people encounter a crucifix or cross, therefore, they should also see signs of servant discipleship. Whether in our churches, homes or daily lives, we are all called to be authentic bearers of the cross. We should strive to offer the world what the Pope characterises as 'the witness of a life that is given in service, a life that takes upon itself the style of God – closeness, compassion and tenderness.'

'The important thing is that the sign be consistent with the Gospel,' says Pope Francis. Whenever or wherever people display a cross, they should also themselves be living signs of 'love, service, unreserved self-giving.'

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:
Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:
Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, B
1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7
2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel: Mark 14:1-15:47

MYSTERY OF FAITH
Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Prayer Requests

Sick: Mary Bailey, Lorraine Cooper, Phuong Ho, Ron Hebbe, Austin Hoffman, Noel House, Warren Markham, Bob MacDonnell, Indira Nanda, 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: Anne Boyd, Michael King, Peter McMahon, Ernie MacDonnell, Gregory McShane, Des O'Connor and Robert Winter. **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	Acting Principal: Ms Lauren Carlson	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 24 MARCH 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 Gorczyca			H Rapp	
Readers	M Thomas P Conroy	K Ingold	S Bates VOLUNTEER NEEDED	R James D Cantrall	H Rapp O Brackenrig C Brackenrig	
Prayers		L Gorczyca	E Thomas	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	A Skardon	
Offertory	S McAlister S Trunk	C Anderson L Harrison	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
18 March <i>St Patrick</i>	19 March <i>St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	20 March	21 March	22 March	23 March <i>St Turibius of Mogrovejo</i>	24 March PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD, YEAR B
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN		
8.00am Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>		9.20am LOTW <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i> 5.30pm Reconciliation Practice	6.00pm Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>	9.20am Anointing Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i> 11.00am Mass <i>Elizabeth Gates</i> 6.00pm RECONCILIATION	9.00am Novena 9.20am Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i> 6.00pm Mass <i>Glendonbrook</i>	7.00am Mass 10.00am Mass 6.00pm Mass <i>St Patrick's Singleton</i>
			9.20am Mass <i>St Brigid's Branxton</i>		6.00pm Mass <i>St Brigid's Branxton</i>	7.35am Rosary 8.15am 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.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Singleton Parishioners are invited to join the children of the sacramental program to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during a liturgy on Friday 22 March at 6.00pm.

Confession is the sacrament of the tenderness of God, his way of embracing us. Pope Francis

Lenten Reflection – Transformation through Revelation

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 Greta Tuesday mornings, Branxton Thursday mornings, and Singleton on Friday mornings.

Review of Confirmation Guidance and Procedures

All parishioners, parents and sponsors, ministers and anyone else involved in the preparation and celebration of Confirmation over recent years, is invited to participate in our review process. Please read the article by clicking this link where everything is explained and the Review Document is available <https://mnnews.today/liturgy-matters/2024/57885-liturgy-matters-it-s-time-christian-initiation-and-confirmation-review/> Closing date for the review is 17 March 2024.

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.

Legion of Mary - Acies

The Legion of Mary invite you to join them for Acies on Sunday 24 March 2024 at 2pm in St Joseph's Church, East Maitland. The service will be followed by afternoon tea in the Therry Centre. *Acies is the renewal of the Legion's act of consecration. Acies is Latin for "a standing army," and the Legion professes their allegiance to Mary and Jesus.*

Chrism Mass

Each year during Holy Week all the faithful of the Church of Maitland-Newcastle are invited to gather with Bishop Michael Kennedy for the Chrism Mass. Here we bless and consecrate the Sacred Oils that will be used for ministry during the year. Join the Diocesan community on Tuesday 26 March from 7pm at Sacred Heart Cathedral. All are welcome, read more about it: <https://mnnews.today/liturgy-matters/2024/57932-liturgy-matters-come-on-down-to-the-chrism-mass/>

To Witness and to Accompany with Christian Hope

The Diocese is holding workshops with Rev. Fr Kevin McGovern, a Christian ethicist and former director of Melbourne's Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics. The workshop will focus on accompanying those whom we care for that may be critically ill or at a terminal phase of their life. On Wednesday 20 March, 2pm -4pm and 6:30pm - 8:30pm Input, discussion and face-to-face workshops will be held. These are suitable for staff and volunteers in parishes and staff from Catholic health and aged care providers. Register via Eventbrite: <https://CDMN-witness.eventbrite.com.au> or phone (02) 4979-1329.

Project Compassion – Fourth Sunday of Lent

This year, Project Compassion brings you the stories of three resilient women from three different corners of the world. They are facing vastly different challenges, but are all united by one dream: to create a better tomorrow for all future generations.

Meet **Ronita** from the Philippines. Ronita is a mother of two young boys living in a slum in Quezon City. She went back to school to finish her education so that she could earn income to support her children.

Meet **Leaia** from Samoa. Not having access to a reliable source of clean water was very difficult for Leaia and her family. But, with the support of Caritas Australia, a water tank was installed at their home, improving their health and living conditions.

Meet **Memory** from Malawi. Memory, the eldest daughter from a rural Malawian family, trained to become a carpenter and is now a trailblazer for future generations of women in her village.

Throughout Project Compassion, you will get to know the stories of Ronita, Leaia and Memory. Journey with them as they forge a path to a brighter future for all generations.

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.



 **Caritas**
AUSTRALIA

 **PROJECT**
COMPASSION

A Prayer of Saint Patrick

May the Strength of God pilot us.
May the Power of God preserve us.
May the Wisdom of God instruct us.
May the Hand of God protect us.
May the Way of God direct us.
May the Shield of God defend us.
May the Host of God guard us.
Against the snares of the evil ones.
Against temptations of the world.

May Christ be with us!
May Christ be before us!
May Christ be in us, Christ be over all!
May Thy Salvation, Lord, Always be ours,
This day, O Lord, and evermore. Amen.



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Lent 2024:

Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom



Dear brothers and sisters!

Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2). Lent is a season of conversion, a time of freedom. Jesus himself, as we recall each year on the first Sunday of Lent, was driven into the desert by the Spirit in order to be tempted in freedom. For forty days, he will stand before us and with us: the incarnate Son. Unlike Pharaoh, God does not want subjects, but sons and daughters. The desert is the place where our freedom can mature in a personal decision not to fall back into slavery. In Lent, we find new criteria of justice and a community with which we can press forward on a road not yet taken.

This, however, entails a struggle, as the book of Exodus and the temptations of Jesus in the desert make clear to us. The voice of God, who says, "You are my Son, the Beloved" (Mk 1:11), and "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3) is opposed by the enemy and his lies. Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols that we set up for ourselves; we can consider them as his voice speaking within us. To be all-powerful, to be looked up to by all, to domineer over others: every human being is aware of how deeply seductive that lie can be. It is a road well-

travelled. We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyze us.

Instead of encounter, they create conflict. Yet there is also a new humanity, a people of the little ones and of the humble who have not yielded to the allure of the lie. Whereas those who serve idols become like them, mute, blind, deaf and immobile (cf. Ps 114:4), the poor of spirit are open and ready: a silent force of good that heals and sustains the world.

It is time to act, and in Lent, to act also means to pause. To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan in the presence of a wounded brother or sister. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love. Not to have other gods is to pause in the presence of God beside the flesh of our neighbour. For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us. Then the atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another: in place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travellers. This is God's dream, the promised land to which we journey once we have left our slavery behind.

To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: "Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this". Such is the courage of conversion, born of coming up from slavery. For faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward.

I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 3 December 2023, First Sunday of Advent.

FRANCIS

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER TRIDUUM 2024

Mass of the Lord's Supper	Friday of the Passion of the Lord	Holy Saturday Easter Vigil	Easter Sunday
Thurs 28 March	Fri 29 March	Sat 30 March	Sun 31 March
Singleton 6.30pm Branxton 6.30pm	Stations of the Cross Branxton 10.00am Singleton 11.00am Passion of the Lord Singleton 3.00pm Greta 3.00pm	Singleton 7.45pm Branxton 7.45pm	Greta 8.00am Singleton 10.00am