



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

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Grandparents and the Elderly

28 July 2024

First Reading

2 Kings 4:42-44

A reading from the second book of the Kings

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing Elisha, the man of God, bread from the first-fruits, twenty barley loaves and fresh grain in the ear. 'Give it to the people to eat,' Elisha said. But his servant replied, 'How can I serve this to a hundred men?' 'Give it to the people to eat' he insisted 'for the Lord says this, "They will eat and have some left over."' He served them; they ate and had some over, as the Lord had said.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 144:10-11, 15-18. R. v.16

(R.) The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord, and your friends shall repeat their blessing. They shall speak of the glory of your reign and declare your might, O God. **(R.)**

The eyes of all creatures look to you and you give them their food in due time. You open wide your hand, grant the desires of all who live. **(R.)**

The Lord is just in all his ways and loving in all his deeds. He is close to all who call him, who call on him from their hearts. **(R.)**

Second Reading

Ephesians 4:1-6

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

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, through all and within all.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Luke 7:16

Alleluia, alleluia!

A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people. to which we are called. Alleluia!

Gospel

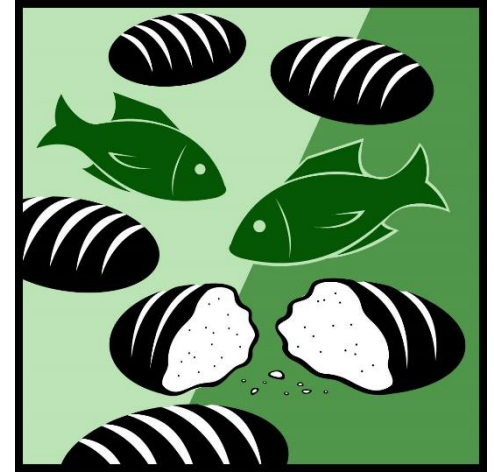
John 6:1-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus went off to the other side of the Sea of Galilee – or of Tiberias – and a large crowd followed him, impressed by the signs he gave by curing the sick. Jesus climbed the hillside, and sat down there with his disciples. It was shortly before the Jewish feast of Passover.

Looking up, Jesus saw the crowds approaching and said to Philip, 'Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?' He only said this to test Philip; he himself knew exactly what he was going to do. Philip answered, 'Two hundred denarii would only buy enough to give them a small piece each.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish; but what is that between so many?' Jesus said to them, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass there, and as many as five thousand men sat down. Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and gave them out to all who were sitting ready; he then did the same with the fish, giving out as much as was wanted. When they had eaten enough he said to the disciples, 'Pick up the pieces left over, so that nothing gets wasted.' So they picked them up, and filled twelve hampers with scraps left over from the meal of five barley loaves. The people, seeing this sign that he had given, said, 'This really is the prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, who could see they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, escaped back to the hills by himself.

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



**REFLECTION
BY NICK BRODIE**

Francis' Focus

Pope Francis draws our attention to the boy's role in today's Gospel passage. He 'makes us think', the Pope says. 'His compassion moved him to offer what he had.'

There is no suggestion in the Gospel that the loaves and fish were forcibly taken from the boy. Rather, it is implied that they were his gift. An act of human charity is, therefore, a key element in Jesus' miracle.

Another noteworthy factor is Jesus' sense of priority. This episode, the Pope points out, 'shows us again that Jesus is attentive to people's primary needs'. This has implications for we who seek to follow him.

After all, the boy was discovered because Jesus prompted his disciples to think about how they could feed the crowd. As the Pope says, 'the people were hungry and Jesus engaged his disciples so that this hunger could be satisfied.'

While Jesus offered the crowd much more than food – 'his Word, his solace, his salvation, ultimately his life' – he did not neglect their physical needs. 'And we, his disciples, cannot ignore this', the Pope affirms. We are called to follow the example of Jesus, his apostles, and the boy with a few loaves and fish. We must not turn our backs on the people or retreat from the world. We must face up to the reality we find – and do what we can

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: God is in his holy place, God who unites those who dwell in his house; he himself gives might and strength to his people.
COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.
NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B 1st Reading: Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15 2nd Reading: Ephesians 4:17, 20-24 Gospel: John 6:24-35
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: Cecily Agnew, Mary Bailey, Karl Bendeich, Basil Bendeich, Carmel Bendeich, Lorraine Cooper, Ron Hebbe, Austin Hoffman, Indira Nanda, Jen Phillips, Selene Stanholm-Atkins, Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Anniversaries: Bill Burton, Shirley McAleer, Corrie McAleer. **Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.**

Recently Deceased: Sr Frances Gannon RSM (31/7 10.30am Convent Chapel), Lynne Williams. **Having returned to the Father, may they rest in peace.**

Baptisms: Macalister Hammond (Greta). **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	St Patrick's Church	Queen Street Singleton 2330	
Broke	Immaculate Conception Catholic Church	Wollombi Street, Broke	
Glendon Brook	St. Paul's Catholic Church	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 Alex Stafford	Office: 02 4015 2860	Email: singleton@stnicholasmn.org.au
St Nicholas Early Education Branxton	Director: Ms Stella Danks	Office: 02 4931 1220	Email: branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au

MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 4 AUGUST 2024						
	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 5pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	SCAE LEADER REQD	J Dries	J Dries	G McMillan J Woolley
Commentator		K Ingold	G Cattermole			
Readers	H Hartcher C Trunk	L Gorczyca	J Tindale E Thomas	T Cochrane	P Goodwin A Borg	
Prayers		K Ingold	C Langford	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	M Cunningham	
Offertory	M Thomas D Thomas	C Anderson L Harrison	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
29 July Sts Martha, Mary and Lazarus	30 July St Peter Chrysologus	31 July St Ignatius of Loyola	1 August St Alphonsus Liguori	2 August St Eusebius of Vercelli St Peter Julian Eymard	3 August St Dominic	4 August EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN		
<u>8.00am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</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>7.00am</u> SCAE <u>10.00am</u> Mass <u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton
	<u>9.20am</u> Mass 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.

Parish Office Hours

Other than the usual Monday closure, the Parish office will be closed on Thursday 1 August and Friday 9 August.

Branxton Parish Finance Council Meeting

A meeting of the Branxton Parish Finance Council will be held on Thursday 1 August 2024 at 6pm in the Greta Church Meeting Room.

St Patrick's 1st Anniversary Mass

The 1st Anniversary Mass will be held on Saturday 3 August 2024 at 9.20am. We will be offering Mass for those whose anniversaries occur in August. We also welcome you to join us to pray the Novena from 9am each Saturday.

25th Jubilee Celebrations

Bishop Michael Kennedy invites the People of the Diocese to join him in celebrating his 25th Jubilee of Ordination to the Priesthood at a concelebrated Mass commencing at 11am in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton on Wednesday 14 August 2024. There will be other priest and deacon jubilarians acknowledged at the Mass. All are welcome!

Follow the Yellow Brick Road this August!

Tickets are now on sale for St Catherine's Catholic College's production of The Wizard of Oz! Students and staff having been working hard all year to bring this show to life for their college family and friends and the wider Singleton community! Show times are Friday 16 August at 6.30pm and Saturday 17 August at 2.00pm and 6.30pm.

Tickets available via <https://www.trybooking.com/CTBXU>
Adults \$20, Students/Concession \$10 and Family of 4 \$50.

aMeN caMiNo Community Walk

We invite you to sample the aMeN caMiNo experience through this Community Walk on Saturday 17 August 2024 from 8am-11am beginning at Merewether. Register your Interest here: <https://forms.office.com/r/w3tX1w69t3>.

Mary Mackillop Place Pilgrimage - Cancelled

Due to lack of numbers, the pilgrimage to Mary Mackillop Place on Friday 23 August has been cancelled. God Bless and remember 'We are but travellers on the journey'.

Can You Help CatholicCare Make a Difference?

A single mum, three couples from Afghanistan, a university student, and dozens of school students – these are just a few of the people CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning has supported in the last couple of months. As a not-for-profit organisation, we can't do this work without the generosity of our community. Can you help us to support more? Donate now: www.mycause.com.au/page/345965/make-a-difference.

Season of Creation: Wonder – Weaving - Healing

Join Catholic Earthcare and their Season of Creation Convocation for three special events in September.

- Thursday 12 and Friday 13 September - online keynote presentations, workshops, discussions and spiritual experiences
- Saturday 14 September at Diocesan Resource Centre - hear about and discuss regenerative projects within and beyond our diocese and consider how we can contribute. Morning tea and lunch supplied as part of registration.

Information and Registration at:

www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1231165

aMeN caMiNo Seasons of Creation Weekend Retreat

Join us for an aMeN caMiNo weekend experience during this year's Season of Creation at the beautiful Myall Coast. This caMiNo is suitable for both beginners and experienced walkers. It offers a one or two-day experience on 7 and 8 September. For more information visit our website: mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/faith-formation/amen-camino.

Pope Benedict XVI's Prayer for Grandparents

Lord Jesus,

you were born of the Virgin Mary,
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.

Look with love on grandparents the world over.

Protect them! They are a source of enrichment
for families, for the Church and for all of society.

Support them! As they grow older,
may they continue to be for their families
strong pillars of Gospel faith,

guardians of noble domestic ideals,
living treasures of sound religious traditions.

Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits
of their mature human and spiritual experience.

Lord Jesus,

help families and society to value the presence
and role of grandparents.

May they never be ignored or excluded,
but always encounter respect and love.

Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed
in all the years of life which you give them.

Mary, Mother of all the living,
keep grandparents constantly in your care,

accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,
and by your prayers, grant that all families

may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,
where you await all humanity

for the great embrace of life without end. Amen



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE IV WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY
28 July 2024

“Do not cast me off in my old age” (cf. Ps 71:9)

Dear brothers and sisters,

God never abandons his children, never. Even when our age advances and our powers decline, when our hair grows white and our role in society lessens, when our lives become less productive and can risk appearing useless.

Sacred Scripture, as a whole, is a story of the Lord’s faithful love. It offers us the comforting certainty that God constantly shows us his mercy, always, at every stage of life, in whatever situation we find ourselves, even in our betrayals. The Psalms are filled with the wonder of the human heart before God who cares for us despite our insignificance (cf. *Ps 144:3-4*); they assure us that God has fashioned each one of us from our mother’s womb (cf. *Ps 139:13*) and that even in hell he will not abandon our life (cf. *Ps 16:10*). We can be certain, then, that he will be close to us also in old age, all the more because, in the Bible, growing old is a sign of blessing.

In the Bible, then, we find both the certainty of God’s closeness at every stage of life and the fear of abandonment, particularly in old age and in times of pain. There is no contradiction here. If we look around, we have no difficulty seeing that its words reflect an utterly evident reality. All too often, loneliness is the bleak companion of our lives as elderly persons and grandparents.

There are many reasons for this loneliness: in many places, above all in the poorer countries, the elderly find themselves alone because their children are forced to emigrate. I think too of the many situations of conflict. How many of the elderly are left alone because men – youths and adults – have been called to battle, and women, above all women with small children, have left the country in order to ensure safety for their children. In cities and villages devastated by war, many elderly people are left alone; they are the only signs of life in areas where abandonment and death seem to reign supreme. There is now a widespread conviction that the elderly are burdening the young with the high cost of the social services that they require, and in this way are diverting resources from the development of the community and thus from the young. This is a distorted perception of reality. It assumes that the survival of the elderly puts that of the young at risk, that to favour the young, it is necessary to neglect or even suppress the elderly. Intergenerational conflict is a fallacy and the poisoned fruit of a culture of conflict.

Then too nowadays many women and men seek personal fulfilment in a life as independent as possible and detached from other people. Group memberships are in crisis and individualism is celebrated: the passage from “us” to “me” is one of the most evident signs of our times. The family, which is the first and most radical argument against the notion that we can save ourselves by ourselves, has been one of the victims of this individualistic culture. Yet once we grow old and our powers begin to decline, the illusion of individualism, that we need no one and can live without social bonds, is revealed for what it is. Indeed, we find ourselves needing everything, but at a point in life when we are alone, no longer with others to help, with no one whom we can count on. It is a grim discovery that many people make only when it is too late.

In many older persons we can observe the sense of resignation described in the Book of Ruth, which tells the story of the elderly Naomi who, after the death of her husband and children, encourages her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to their native towns and their homes (cf. *Ruth 1:8*). Naomi – like many elderly people today – is afraid of remaining alone, yet she cannot imagine anything different. As a widow, she knows that she is of little value in the eyes of society; she sees herself as a burden for those two young women who, unlike herself, have their whole lives before them. For this reason, she considers it best to step aside, and so she tells her young daughters-in-law to leave her and to build a future in other places (cf. *Ruth 1:11-13*). Her words reflect the rigid social and religious conventions of her day, which apparently seal her own fate.

To all of us, who are accustomed to the idea that solitude is our unavoidable lot, Ruth teaches that in response to the plea “Do not abandon me”, it is possible to say, “I will not abandon you”. Ruth does not hesitate to subvert what seemed to be an irreversible situation: living alone need not be the only alternative! Not by chance, Ruth – who remained at the side of the elderly Naomi – was an ancestor of the Messiah (cf. *Mt 1:5*), of Jesus, Immanuel, “God with us”, the one who brings God’s own closeness and proximity to all people, of all ages and states of life.

May we express our gratitude to all those people who, often at great sacrifice, follow in practice the example of Ruth, as they care for an older person or simply demonstrate daily closeness to relatives or acquaintances who no longer have anyone else. Ruth, who chose to remain close to Naomi, was then blessed with a happy marriage, a family, a new home. This is always the case: by remaining close to the elderly and acknowledging their unique role in the family, in society and in the Church, we will ourselves receive many gifts, many graces, many blessings!

On this Fourth World Day devoted to them, let us show our tender love for the grandparents and the elderly members of our families. Let us spend time with those who are disheartened and no longer hope in the possibility of a different future. In place of the self-centred attitude that leads to loneliness and abandonment, let us instead show the open heart and the joyful face of men and women who have the courage to say “I will not abandon you”, and to set out on a different path.

To all of you, dear grandparents and elderly persons, and to all those who are close to you I send my blessing, accompanied by my prayers. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me.

FRANCIS