

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

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Safeguarding Sunday

8 September 2024

First Reading

Isaiah 35:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.
'Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;
for water gushes in the desert,
streams in the wasteland,
the scorched earth becomes a lake,
the parched land springs of water.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 145:7-10. R. v.1

(R.) Praise the Lord, my soul!

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **(R.)**

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bound down,
the Lord who loves the just,
the Lord, who protects the stranger. **(R.)**

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.
The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age. **(R.)**

Second Reading

James 2:1-5

A reading from the letter of St James.

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

cf Matthew 4:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick. Alleluia!

Gospel

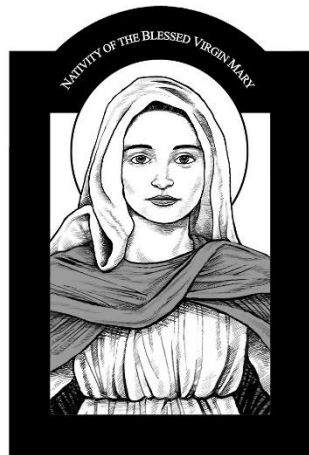
Mark 7:31-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a feast that commemorates the birthday of Jesus' mother. Even though Mary's birth is not recorded in the scriptures, it is mentioned in the Apocryphal writings from the second century, the Protoevangelium of James and is even mentioned in Islamic scripture. Her parents are named as Saint Anne and Saint Joachim and tradition places Mary's birthplace in Jerusalem. The feast has been celebrated since the fifth century – on September 8 in the Roman Calendar.



**REFLECTION
BY NICK BRODIE**

Francis' Focus

Pope Francis draws our attention to an interesting aspect of today's Gospel passage. 'The first thing Jesus does,' the Pope notes, 'is take the man far from the crowd.'

The Pope suggests that in doing so Jesus 'doesn't want to publicise this deed he intends to carry out.' Jesus avoids turning the incident into a self-promotion exercise. His focus remains on the man concerned.

On another occasion, the Pope says that this incident shows that Jesus 'does not want to impress people; He is not seeking popularity or success, but wishes only to do good to people. With this attitude, He teaches us that good is to be done without clamour, without ostentation.'

'The lesson we can take from this episode,' the Pope affirms, 'is that God is not closed in on himself, but instead he opens himself and places himself in communication with humanity.'

With that in mind, we can reflect on what it means for us. 'Jesus revealed to us the secret of a miracle that we too can imitate,' the Pope suggests. By 'becoming protagonists of "Ephphatha"' we can be the ones who open the world to Jesus. We should always be conscious of the needs of others. In doing so, we might just open their hearts and minds to Jesus

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:
You are just, O Lord, and your judgement is right; treat your servant in accord with your merciful love.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:
Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
1st Reading: Isaiah 50:5-9
2nd Reading: James 2:14-18
Gospel: Mark 8:27-35

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

We remember in our prayers:

Sick: Cecily Agnew, Mary Bailey, Basil Bendeich, Lorraine Cooper, Tony Ernst, Ron Hebbe, Austin Hoffman, Indira Nanda, Ian Paget, Jen Phillips, Selene Stanholm-Atkins, Colleen Torrington, Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.**

Recently Deceased: Allen Thomas, Ian Paget (Thurs 12/9 12pm St Patrick's).

Anniversaries: Rev John Kelly, Margaret Allen, Rex Anderson, James Bailey, Des Dagg.

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

Mass intentions for publication may be written on an envelope and placed on the collection plate or emailed or phoned to the Parish Office by 12pm Wednesday. Mass offering envelopes are available in each church entrance. Please write details clearly to avoid errors. A reminder that you need the permission of the person or their family to enable names to be published.

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 15 SEPTEMBER 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	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	J Dries	J Dries	J Brackenrig
Commentator		K Ingold	G Cattermole	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	SCAE LEADER REQD	
Readers	P Conroy M Thomas	L Gorczyca	C Spiteri D Thompson	T Cochrane	St Catherine's Staff	
Prayers		K Ingold	P Boyd	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	St Catherine's Staff	
Offertory	J & K Zaragoza	C Anderson L Harrison	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	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
9 September <i>St Peter Claver</i>	10 September	11 September	12 September <i>Holy Name of Mary</i>	13 September <i>St John Chrysostom</i>	14 September <i>THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</i>	15 September <i>PERPETUAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE</i>
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN		
<u>8.00am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</u> Mas 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> Mass St Patrick's Singleton <u>11.00am</u> Mass Elizabeth Gates	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00am</u> Mass <u>5.00pm</u> SCAE St Patrick's Singleton
	<u>8.55am</u> Rosary <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta		<u>9.20am</u> Mass (Rosary Park Y1, 3, 5) 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.

Changes this Week

Welcome and thank you to Fr John Tobin who will be celebrating Mass in Greta this Sunday morning and next Sunday morning.

Volunteers Needed – Presbytery and Cemetery Singleton

We are in urgent need of volunteers to assist with mowing, garden and lawn maintenance at our Queen Street Cemetery and at the Presbytery. If you can spare some time to assist, please contact the Parish Office.

St Patrick's Morning Tea

Morning Tea will be held after 10am Mass this weekend with a special cake to commemorate the birthday of Mary (8 September). All are invited to stay for a cuppa before heading on with your Sunday.

Senior Singles Lunch

The Senior Singles Group will meet for lunch on Tuesday 10 September 2024 at 12pm in the Albion Hotel Restaurant. All are singles are welcome and we would love to see you there.

St Patrick's Women's Guild Meeting

The Women's Guild next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 September 2024 at 1pm in the home of Jennifer Tindale, 23 Oldknow Cres, Singleton Heights (enter via Willcox Ave). All are welcome and we would love to see you there.

St Brigid's Caritas Group Monthly Lunch

The next monthly lunch for the St Brigid's Parish Caritas will be held at Miller Park Hotel on Friday 20 September from 12 noon. All are welcome to join the group for a chat over a meal.

2024 Public Rosary – October is Month of the Rosary

The Public Rosary is an international campaign to pray the rosary together in commemoration of the last apparition of Our Lady (October 13, 1917) at Fatima. It is a great opportunity for prayer groups and communities to join together in public prayer.

Join the nation-wide rosary chain at St Catherine's Church Greta on Saturday 12 October from 10.00am. This is to commemorate the 106th anniversary of the miracle at Fatima. As this is an outdoor event, please bring along a chair should you need to be seated during the Rosary. If you have any questions, please contact Darryl Clarke.



Perpetual Day of Remembrance

September 15, promulgated as a 'Perpetual Day of Remembrance' in our diocese, marks a day of solemn remembrance of the harm caused by a history of child sexual abuse and failure to protect children. It has two aspects: one focused on supporting survivors and the other on the prayer of the whole church. This year Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday falls on September 15. As a people of faith, we can pray for a change of heart as the ground of hope for a safer future for all. Special prayer resources are available online at www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/perpetual-day-of-remembrance Every person is invited to use and help disseminate the resource for Individuals and households as widely as possible. May Christ be our Light.

Safeguarding Sunday 2024



The Parishes of Branxton and Singleton and the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and people at risk in our community. Mindful of the theme for National Child Protection Week, may we work to create safe spaces where we can have meaningful conversations with children and adults at risk about their safety. This weekend, the Catholic Church in Australia marks **Safeguarding Sunday**, on which we pray for those who have been abused, their families and supporters. We recognise and apologise for the harm done by priests, religious and lay people in Church settings. Rebuilding trust and confidence in the Church requires constant work and vigilance. We recommit to cultural change that will help the Church be a place that respects the dignity of all children and adults at risk, and empowers and listens to all people, especially those who are vulnerable. You can find out more about the Church's work in this area at: <https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Safeguarding-Sunday-2024>

Hope Tree Group – Project 19 Water Tanks Burundi



Sr Cecile from the congregation of Immaculate Heart of Mary (Bene Maria) in Burundi has contacted the Hope Tree Group to assist with installing new water tanks at the hostel where students stay to attend school. At the moment, they are collecting water from the river and transporting back to the hostel to use. You may remember that we assisted the children by supplying new mattresses in the hostel.

The Hope Tree Group is hoping to donate \$1800 for two new tanks to be installed. Cash donations can be left in the donation box at each church or donate online by clicking the DONATE button on our website www.singletoncatholicparish.org.au and scrolling to the details for Hope Tree Group.

Season of Creation: Sings

All in the Newcastle, Hunter and Manning community are invited to gather to sing in praise and wonder of creation as a celebration of the Season of Creation on Saturday 21 September 2024, 2-4pm in Sacred Heart Cathedral. In the spirit of community choirs, we will learn a song, pray, and enjoy afternoon tea. Register at <https://forms.office.com/r/xKCr907ew6> Please bring a cutting of a favourite plant to exchange your cuttings during prayer. Those who love taking photos of nature can join the **Season of Creation Photography** initiative and send your image/s to rose.mcallister@mn.catholic.org.au by 16/09/24. The images will be displayed at Creation Sings.

Promoters of Safeguarding Update - September 2024

The Promoters of Safeguarding continue to endorse a culture of safeguarding within each Parish. Firstly, I would like to introduce the Promoters for our Parishes: myself, Niamh Marzol from Singleton and Lydia Gorczyca who represents the Branxton Parish.

Promoters of Safeguarding Network Meetings are facilitated by the Office of Safeguarding for all parish representatives to attend and discuss all things Safeguarding. Previous meetings were used to discuss the audit process and requirements. If you would be interested in attending these meetings, please contact the Parish Office.

We would like to draw your attention to the second meeting for 2024 which was held on Thursday 18 July in East Maitland. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, however, below is a summary of the meeting. The main focus of the day was on the document: *ADAPTION OF THE SAFEGUARDING MODELS OF THE NATIONAL DISABILITIES SERVICES AND THE NSW AGEING & DISABILITY COMMISSION*.

Topics addressed in the safeguarding of vulnerable persons were:

1. The Church's understanding of a vulnerable person as legislated by Pope Francis:

"...any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist an offence".

2. The Diocese's operational definition of a vulnerable person:

An adult living with physical disability, chronic or persistent mental illness, neurodiversity, developmental delay or other cognitive disability

3. Abuse types

- a. **Emotional/Psychological abuse** – abuse that occurs when a person is subjected to behaviours or actions aimed at preventing or controlling their behaviour with the intent to cause them emotional harm of fear through manipulation, isolation or intimidation.
- b. **Neglect** – A failure to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities of life. Occurs when the vulnerable person's primary carer/entity providing care fails to meet their duty of care / statutory / contractual obligation.
- c. **Physical abuse** - Intentional bodily injury. Some examples include slapping, pinching, choking, kicking, shoving, or inappropriately using drugs or physical restraints.
- d. **Financial** – the improper use of another person's assets or the use or withholding of another person's resources usually committed by carers, families or guardians who act formally or informally as financial advisers.
- e. **Sexual Abuse**– non-consensual sexual contact, exploitative behaviour, rape and indecent assault, sexual harassment or sexual interference in any form.
- f. **Coercive control** – assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to intimidate the victim to make them subservient and obedient to the wishes of the abuser.

4. Individual risk factors affecting vulnerable persons

- Social isolation, lack of social connections with family, neighbours, community
- Confusion/uncertainty about what is their property or belongings
- Deteriorating health, cognitive decline, dementia and capacity issues
- Personality and behaviour change due to illness and/or other factors
- History of family dysfunction, domestic and family violence and abuse
- Insecure accommodation and financial difficulties
- Substance abuse and other addictive behaviours e.g. gambling
- Relative powerlessness because of diminished abilities
- Women who have experienced (often unreported) domestic violence for many years
- Limited English, cultural issues and dependency

5. Reporting abuse of vulnerable adults

The Diocese is committed to safeguarding vulnerable persons **BUT** as a Church we believe in and defend principles of self-determination (Free Will). Vulnerable adults should be in control of reporting their own situation and are free to make poor, even self-destructive choices **IF** they have the mental capacity to do so.

Mental capacity

'capacity'- the ability to make decisions about things that affect a person's daily life.

Capacity includes:

- where to live and what to buy, what support or services are needed
- when to go to the doctor or agreeing to medical treatment and matters of importance (legal consequences) e.g. entering into a contract

Capacity assessment principles

- Presumption of capacity – don't assume lack of capacity based on appearances
- Assess the person's decision-making ability – not the decision they make
- Respect a person's privacy and only substitute decision-making as a last resort

Tips on assessing capacity

- Ensure the person is informed – tell them about the process
- Be flexible in how you approach assessing the person's capacity
- Don't make value judgments – avoid influencing or pressuring the person
- Be clear about what you are assessing

More information regarding the Diocesan Commitment to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Persons and how to report abuse is available at <https://officeofsafeguarding.org.au/> Resources are also available at the back of each church.

Kind regards, Niamh Marzol, Parish Promoter of Safeguarding.