

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

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

World Day for Grandparents & Elderly

27 July 2025

First Reading **Genesis 18:20-32**

A reading from the book of Genesis.

The Lord said, 'How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their sin! I propose to go down and see whether or not they have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me. I am determined to know.' The men left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Approaching him he said, 'Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of the whole earth not administer justice?' The Lord replied, 'If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them.'

Abraham replied, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this to my Lord, I who am dust and ashes. But perhaps the fifty just men lack five: will you destroy the whole city for five?' 'No', he replied 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five just men there.' Again Abraham said to him, 'Perhaps there will only be forty there.' 'I will not do it' he replied 'for the sake of the forty.' Abraham said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak: perhaps there will only be thirty there.' 'I will not do it' he replied 'if I find thirty there.' He said, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this, but perhaps there will only be twenty there.' 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the twenty.' He said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten.' 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the ten.'

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 137:1-3. 6-8. R. v.3

(R.) Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple. **(R.)**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. **(R.)**

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.
Though I walk in the midst of affliction
you give me life and frustrate my foes. **(R.)**

You stretch out your hand and save me,
your hand will do all things for me.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. **(R.)**

Second Reading **Colossians 2:12-14**

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

You have been buried with Christ, when you were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were dead, because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins.

He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Romans 8:15

Alleluia, alleluia!

**You have received the Spirit which makes us God's children,
and in that Spirit we call God our Father.
Alleluia!**

Gospel

Luke 11:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:

"Father, may your name be held holy,
your kingdom come;
give us each day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.

And do not put us to the test."

He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him"; and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake

instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



**REFLECTION BY NICK BRODIE
HEAVEN & EARTH CAN COINCIDE**

People often imagine huge distance between Earth and a Heaven beyond the horizon of the universe. But Jesus Christ taught us to pray 'Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.'

How can this come about? Jesus identified two areas on which we need to focus to help make Heaven and Earth share the same space.

'Give us this day our daily bread.' This petition is very real for most inhabitants of the world – a plea for the necessities of life to stave off real hunger. If we respond to this plea, we can change a Hellish situation to a place where Heaven and Earth coincide.

'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' But, first to Shakespeare: 'The quality of Mercy is not strained. It falleth as the gentle rain of Heaven on to the place beneath.'

If we develop a hardness of heart which refuses to show forgiveness, then we are like earth concreted over and are unable to absorb God's forgiveness into our own lives. When we forgive someone, we become more able to absorb the gentle rain of heavenly mercy and forgiveness.

So, Heaven and Earth need not be as distant as supposed. Our Lord has shown us how we can help make these dimensions of existence coincide.

We could take a moment to resolve to pray the 'Our Father' by our lives, helping to provide evidence for our acclamation:

'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts,
Heaven and Earth are full of your Glory'

<p>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</p> <p>COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.</p>	<p>We remember in our prayers:</p> <p>Sick: Cecily Agnew, Michael Agnew, Mary Bailey, Sienna Baker, Chris Cantrall, Lorraine Cooper, Josè Joaquim De Sousa, Austin Hoffman, Dulcie Maynard, Indira Nanda, Chris O'Leary, Jen Phillips, Marianne Reynolds, Anne Standing, Allan Seque, Ross Timmins, Sharon Wood, Zoe. Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers.</p> <p>Baptisms: Suliasi, Kalani and Apisai Waqa (Greta). Called by name to be a child of God.</p> <p>Anniversaries: Bill Burton, Barry Davy, Shirley McAleer.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C 1st Reading: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23 2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11 Gospel: Luke 12:13-21</p>	
<p>MYSTERY OF FAITH When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim you Death, O Lord, until you come again.</p>	

PARISH CONTACTS			
Administrator	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: Allan Humphreys
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	Principal: Mr David Crawford	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au
Rosary Park Catholic School	Principal: Mr Ashley Bora	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au

MASS ROSTER – SUNDAY 3 AUGUST 2025						
	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8.15am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 5pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	C Langford	J Dries	J Dries	29 July 2025 J Woolley
Commentator		L Ehlers	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
Readers	J Stafa S Stafa	K Ingold	J Tindale E Thomas	T Cochrane VOLUNTEER NEEDED	P Goodwin A Borg	
Prayers		L Ehlers	P Boyd	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	Kevin M	
Offertory	C & A Trunk	Norma Colleen	VOLUNTEER NEEDED VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED VOLUNTEER NEEDED	Kevin & Jonathon M	
Extraordinary Minister	P Conroy		M Alsleben	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	A Borg	

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
28 July	29 July	30 July	31 July	1 August	2 August	3 August
	<i>Sts Martha, Mary and Lazarus</i>	<i>St Peter Chrysologus</i>	<i>St Ignatius of Loyola</i>	<i>St Alphonsus Liguori</i>	<i>St Eusebius of Vercelli St Peter Julian Eymard</i>	EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C
OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	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>10.00am</u> Memorial Mass (Brian Coffey) St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass 1 st Anniversary St Patrick's Singleton	<u>7.00am</u> SCAE <u>10.00m</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.

St Patrick's 1st Anniversary Mass

The 1st Anniversary Mass will be held on Saturday 2 August 2025 at 9.20am. We will be offering Mass for the following and all those whose anniversaries occur in August.

- ✠ Jan Kerrin
- ✠ Betty Ball
- ✠ John Gatt
- ✠ Charlotte Gallagher
- ✠ Ian Paget
- ✠ Allan Thomas

Fr Thomas Chirackal – Appointment as Administrator

Bishop Michael Kennedy has appointed Fr Thomas Chirackal as Administrator for the parishes of Branxton and Singleton as his appointment as Parish Priest expired on 5 November 2024. This appointment as Administrator will continue through to 5 November 2026. *Parish Priest appointment is usually for 6 years; Fr Thomas has been here for 6 years already and will be here for 2 more years hence his appointment as Administrator.*

Save the Date – 150th Anniversary Mass for Sisters of Mercy

St Patrick's Parish will be joining with St Catherine's Catholic College for a very special Mass on Sunday 31 August 2025 at 10am to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of catholic education in Singleton. Mark your calendar! There will be more information in coming bulletins!

Celebrating the 1700th Anniversary of the Nicene Creed

Mission & Evangelisation invites you to this premium formation offering with Associate Professor Joel Hodge, National Head, School of Theology, Australian Catholic University on Wednesday 30 July 2025. Choose from one of two two-hour sessions at 3:30pm or 6:00pm as he immerses us in the history and theology of the Nicene Creed. This 'deep-dive' into 'what we believe' is not to be missed as we celebrate its 1700 years. This free event, over 2hrs, face to face, will become part of an ongoing formation series hosted at St John the Baptist Shrine, Maitland in 2025. In between the sessions there will be a shared light supper. Register at

<https://mn.catholic.org.au/event/celebrating-the-1700th-anniversary-of-the-nicene-creed/>

The Liturgical Life of the Church: Celebrating Revelation

Join Sister Louise Gannon and Father Andrew Doohan over two consecutive Saturdays, 16 and 23 August, to explore and reflect on the principles of Catholic liturgy. This is the final unit of the Christian Formation Course. This year we are inviting the participation of any interested members of the faithful, from parishes and schools, who wish to explore and reflect on the principles of Catholic liturgy to join us the Toohey Room, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle West from 9am-4pm. These principles shape the meaning and practice of Catholic liturgy and so deepen our understanding and appreciation of why we do what we do. This is an opportunity to deepen your relationship with God, your understanding of Catholic liturgy, and to reflect on your own full conscious and active participation as a member of the Assembly. All are welcome. Morning tea and lunch provided. Attendance at both days is required to complete the unit. Registrations close 11 August. To register go to <https://mn.catholic.org.au/event/the-liturgical-life-of-the-church-celebrating-revelation/> or send your enquiries to mission@mn.catholic.org.au

Hunter Men's Rosary Crusade Camino

Calling All Men of Faith: Walk the Camino, Pray the Rosary, Build Brotherhood. Join a growing movement of men from across the Hunter region for a meaningful Rosary Camino – a time to pray, walk, and witness together in faith on Saturday 30 August from 10.30am. As we journey from Sacred Heart Cathedral to Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and back, we'll unite in praying the Holy Rosary, seeking the intercession of Our Lady for our families, our Church, and our world. Whether you're a seasoned pilgrim or walking for the first time, this Camino invites you into something greater – a shared mission of prayer and presence. Bring a friend, your parish group, or simply come as you are. Let us walk together – for Our Lady, for our Church, for each other. Registrations close 23 August. Register at <https://mn.catholic.org.au/event/hunter-mens-rosary-crusade-camino/> Enquiries to mission@mn.catholic.org.au



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2025

PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

**'Blessed are those who have not lost hope'
(Sir 14:2)**

*How beautiful are these words of yours, Lord!
Help us to continue our pilgrimage through time,
animated by the hope that comes from You!*

*Help us in this divisive world,
to bring the hope of communion.
Help us in this world, wounded by wars,
to bring the hope of peace.
Help us in this world, which is dehumanizing,
to bring the beauty of an ancient smile.*

*Help us to be, for our grandchildren,
for our loved ones
and for everyone we meet,
the memory of your tenderness.*

*Help us to bring,
in a world distracted from You,
the Hope of a new life that only You can give!*

*For in You, Lord, nothing is lost
For in You, Lord, everything begins again!
Amen.*

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR THE 5th WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY 2025

[27 July 2025]

Blessed are those who have not lost hope (cf. Sir 14:2)

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Jubilee we are now celebrating helps us to realize that hope is a constant source of joy, whatever our age. When that hope has also been tempered by fire over the course of a long life, it proves a source of deep happiness.

Sacred Scripture offers us many examples of men and women whom the Lord called late in life to play a part in his saving plan. We can think of Abraham and Sarah, who, advanced in years, found it hard to believe when God promised them a child. Their childlessness seemed to prevent them from any hope for the future.

Zechariah's reaction to the news of John the Baptist's birth was no different: "How can this be? I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years" (Lk 1:18). Old age, barrenness and physical decline apparently blocked any hope for life and fertility in these men and women. The question that Nicodemus asked Jesus when the Master spoke to him of being "born again" also seems purely rhetorical: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (Jn 3:4). Yet whenever we think that things cannot change, the Lord surprises us with an act of saving power.

The elderly as signs of hope

In the Bible, God repeatedly demonstrates his providential care by turning to people in their later years. This was the case not only with Abraham, Sarah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, but also with Moses, who was called to set his people free when he was already eighty years old (cf. Ex 7:7). God thus teaches us that, in his eyes, old age is a time of blessing and grace, and that the elderly are, for him, *the first witnesses of hope*. Augustine asks, "What do we mean by old age?" He tells us that God himself answers the question: "Let your strength fail, so that my strength may abide within you, and you can say with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then I am strong'" (Super Ps 70,11). The increasing number of elderly people is a sign of the times that we are called to discern, in order to interpret properly this moment of history.

The life of the Church and the world can only be understood in light of the passage of generations. Embracing the elderly helps us to understand that life is more than just the present moment, and should not be wasted in superficial encounters and fleeting relationships. Instead, life is constantly pointing us toward the future. In the book of Genesis, we find the moving episode of the blessing given by the aged Jacob to his grandchildren, the sons of Joseph; his words are an appeal to look to the future with hope, as the time when God's promises will be fulfilled (cf. Gen 48:8-20). If it is true that the weakness of the elderly needs the strength of the young, it is equally true that the inexperience of the young needs the witness of the elderly in order to build the future with wisdom. How often our grandparents have been for us examples of faith and devotion, civic virtue and social commitment, memory and perseverance amid trials! The precious legacy that they have handed down to us with hope and love will always be a source of gratitude and a summons to perseverance.

Signs of hope for the elderly

From biblical times, the Jubilee has been understood as a time of liberation. Slaves were freed, debts were forgiven and land was returned to its original owners. The Jubilee was a time when the social order willed by God was restored, and inequalities and injustices accumulated over the years were remedied. Jesus evoked those moments of liberation when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he proclaimed good news to the poor, sight to the blind and freedom for prisoners and the oppressed (cf. Lk 4:16-21). Looking at the elderly in the spirit of this Jubilee, we are called to help them experience liberation, especially from loneliness and abandonment. This year is a fitting time to do so. God's fidelity to his promises teaches us that there is a blessedness in old age, an authentic evangelical joy inspiring us to break through the barriers of indifference in which the elderly often find themselves enclosed. Our societies, everywhere in the world, are growing all too accustomed to letting this significant and enriching part of their life be marginalized and forgotten.

Given this situation, a change of pace is needed that would be readily seen in an assumption of responsibility on the part of the whole Church. Every parish, association and ecclesial group is called to become a protagonist in a "revolution" of gratitude and care, to be brought about by regular visits to the elderly, the creation of networks of support and prayer for them and with them, and the forging of relationships that can restore hope and dignity to those who feel forgotten. Christian hope always urges us to be more daring, to think big, to be dissatisfied with things the way they are. In this case, it urges us to work for a change that can restore the esteem and affection to which the elderly are entitled.

That is why Pope Francis wanted the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly to be celebrated primarily through an effort to seek out elderly persons who are living alone. For this reason, those who are unable to come to Rome on pilgrimage during this Holy Year may "obtain the Jubilee Indulgence if they visit, for an appropriate amount of time, the elderly who are alone... making, in a sense, a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. Mt 25:34-36)" (APOSTOLIC PENITENTIARY, *Norms for the Granting of the Jubilee Indulgence*, III). Visiting an elderly person is a way of encountering Jesus, who frees us from indifference and loneliness.

As elderly persons, we can hope

The Book of Sirach calls blessed those who have not lost hope (cf. 14:2). Perhaps, especially if our lives are long, we may be tempted to look not to the future but to the past. Yet, as Pope Francis wrote during his last hospitalization, "our bodies are weak, but even so, nothing can prevent us from loving, praying, giving ourselves, being there for one another, in faith, as shining signs of hope" (*Angelus*, 16 March 2025). We possess a freedom that no difficulty can rob us of: it is the freedom to love and to pray. Everyone, always, can love and pray.

Our affection for our loved ones – for the wife or husband with whom we have spent so much of our lives, for our children, for our grandchildren who brighten our days – does not fade when our strength wanes. Indeed, their own affection often revives our energy and brings us hope and comfort.

These signs of living love, which have their roots in God himself, give us courage and remind us that "even if our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16). Especially as we grow older, let us press forward with confidence in the Lord. May we be renewed each day by our encounter with him in prayer and in Holy Mass. Let us lovingly pass on the faith we have lived for so many years, in our families and in our daily encounter with others. May we always praise God for his goodness, cultivate unity with our loved ones, open our hearts to those who are far away and, in particular, to all those in need. In this way, we will be signs of hope, whatever our age.

From the Vatican, 26 June 2025

LEO PP. XIV