



Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

St Benedict's Inner Newcastle Parish: Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West; St Joseph's Church, The Junction; St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, Newcastle; Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Tighes Hill; St Laurence O'Toole Church, Broadmeadow. **Mayfield Parish:** Christ the King, Mayfield West. **Stockton Parish:** St Peter-in-Chains, Stockton.

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2023 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

Our Clergy

Fr John Lovell
Fr Paul Chackanikunnel
Fr Raphael Madukwe
Deacon Kevin Gadd

Regional Office—St Benedict's Centre

25 Farquhar Street, The Junction
PO Box 6, The Junction 2291
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E: newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au
W: www.newcastlecatholic.org.au
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Our Staff

Margaret Cox (*Reception & Administration*)
Monday, Tuesday, Friday

Anne Warren (*Business Manager*)
Tuesday and Thursday

Thelma Dickson (*Administration*)
Monday-Friday

Elul Teclé (*Administration*)

Dr Anne Millard (*Music, Liturgy, Sacraments*)

Other Contacts

Bereavement Team: P: (02) 4979 1252

Mercy Pastoral Team: Sr Patricia Whitten rsm
0448463679

St Joseph's Pastoral Team: Contact the Parish Office



THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Why did John the Baptist go into the wilderness? To commune with God in simplicity and silence. What might we learn from this? To begin to unclutter our lives of unnecessary noise, distractions and material desires, so the one who loves us most can more fully enter our hearts!

Fr John

Parish Bulletin: Prayer requests and items for the Bulletin should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays.

Promoters of Safeguarding

Fr John Lovell p: (02) 4979 1106

Gail Lovell P: (02) 4979 1256

Anne Millard P: (02) 4979 1252

Sacred Heart Cathedral sits on the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and their continuing relationship with the land, pay respect to their Elders past, present and future, and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

THE PARISH DIARY...(for the week ahead)

2nd Week of Advent, Year B

Monday—11th December

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Tuesday—12th December

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:15am Mass @ Stockton (EOY School Mass)

5:30pm Ecumenical Peace Service @ The Cathedral

Wednesday—13th December

Memorial of St Lucy

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Mayfield West

Thursday—14th December

Memorial of St John of the Cross

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

6:00pm Choir Practice @ The Cathedral

7:00pm The Australian Voices Concert @ The Cathedral

Friday—15th December

10:15am Mass @ The Junction

11am Exposition, Adoration, and Reconciliation @ The Cathedral (until 12pm)

12:05pm Mass (with Anointing) @ The Cathedral

Saturday—16th December

9:15am Mass @ The Cathedral followed by Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help (followed by Reconciliation)

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ Mayfield West

5:30pm Mass @ The Cathedral

5:30pm Mass @ The Junction

Sunday—17th December

Third Sunday of Advent

7:30am Mass @ St Mary's

8:00am Mass @ Tighes Hill

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

9:30am Mass @ The Cathedral

Live streamed via the Diocesan website:

www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/livestream/

11:00am Italian Mass @ The Junction

11:30am Polish Mass @ The Cathedral

2:00pm Tudor Singers Concert @ The Cathedral

5:00pm Mass @ The Cathedral

6:00pm Vietnamese Mass @ Mayfield West

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Third Sunday of Advent

Is 61:1-2, 10-11

1 Thess 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28



PRAYER REQUESTS

RECENTLY DECEASED: Edward (Ted) Jordan, Christina Timbrell, Terry Kelly, Valentina Gasiorek

ANNIVERSARIES: Nicola Rossi, Diane Stavros, Richard Cusick (1st anniversary), Noel Stace, Dawn Stevens, Evie Papworth, Mary Murray, Mary Mills, Maud Sullivan

SICK: Joshua Zalanardo, Cooper James, Jim Eves, Rosa Silivinec, Neil McGoldrick, Sr Rosemary Jackson rsj, Gerard Pearce, Harry Melville, Doreen Mason, Elaine Johnson, Stewart McKinnon, Mark Caesar, Peter Kefecsek, Carlo Rossi, Neil Thomas, Kathryn Gray, Emilie Tseronis



Names may be placed here by contacting the Parish Office. Please refer to the Policy Document on the Parish website—visit www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/downloads.

BOOK CLUB

Sunday, 4th February @ 6:15pm:

Bookclub meets to discuss *That Bligh Girl* by Sue Williams (postponed from December). If you would like to participate in book club meetings, please email

newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au



VIEW, CHEW, CHAT, AND LECTIO

View, Chew, and Chat continues to meet via Zoom. We are using the Diocesan Advent program. If you'd like to join us just for Advent, there's room!

The program for December is as follows:

13th December: 3rd week of the Advent Program

20th December: 4th week of the Advent Program

To participate, please email the parish office.

SERVICE FOR PEACE

Bishop Michael Kennedy and the Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Council invite you to a communal Service for Peace.



Date: Tuesday, 12 December 2023

Time: 5:30pm

Location: Sacred Heart Cathedral

OUR BELOVED DEAD

We remember those in our Columbaria whose anniversaries occur in December.

At Sacred Heart Cathedral:

Mario Cannavale	Kevin Fuge
Aileen Joyce Carey	Louis William Harris
Kathleen Mary Cashman	Margaret Ireland
Joan Cunningham	Anthony (Tony) Losurdo
Bertha Docherty	Helen O'Sullivan
Paul Ferry	James Savage
Maria Franceschi	Patrick Scott
	Margaret Tuxworth

At St Joseph's

Frank Hawkins Jnr	Joan Payne
Ernst Koch	Byeena Winifred Saxby
Cecily Clare Leslie	Pat Skehan
Margaret McGlynn	Patricia Margaret Smith
Athol Moore	Joseph Timbs
Kevin Smith	Grace Hickey
Robert Wakely	Harold Casey
Stan Walters	Kelvin Davis
Dorothy Wilson	Mary Doyle
Franz Schmuck	Bill Edser
Noreen Heaney	Alan Fogarty
Rodger Ryan	Maree Green

Eternal rest grant unto them and may perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace, Amen.

CLERGY NEWS

Bishop Michael Kennedy this week appointed Fr Raphael Madukwe as Assistant Priest in the parishes of Booragul, Boolaroo-Warners Bay, St Joseph's Toronto, as well as St John Vianney Morisset, effective 31 January 2024.

Mr Christopher Voigt (currently Parish leader at Toronto) is the successful candidate for a newly created position of Manager Bishop's Office.

Fr Anil Kuchipudi and Fr Anthony Coloma are appointed as Assistant Priests for the Newcastle Inner City Pastoral Region. Fr Anthony will continue his school chaplaincy roles.

Mr Anton Perera will continue his discernment/formation for ordination at Taree under the direction of Fr Kevin Corrigan.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2023

Christmas Eve – 24 December

5.30pm @ Sacred Heart Cathedral
5.30pm @ The Junction
6.00pm @ Mayfield West
7.30pm @ Sacred Heart Cathedral

Christmas Day – 25 December

Midnight @ Sacred Heart Cathedral
7.30am @ St Mary's
8:00am @ Tighes Hill
9:00am @ Stockton
9.30am @ Sacred Heart Cathedral
11:00am @ The Junction (Italian Mass)
11.30am @ Cathedral (Polish Mass)
5:00pm @ Sacred Heart Cathedral
5:00pm @ Mayfield West (Vietnamese)

*Please note that Christmas Eve is a Sunday, so the regular 5pm Mass @ The Cathedral will not take place. Instead, it will be 5:30pm and the Vigil for Christmas Eve.

There is NO Vietnamese Mass on Christmas Eve @ Mayfield West.



COLUMBAN ART CALENDAR

This iconic Catholic Calendar, well-known for its traditional religious paintings and liturgical information is a major fundraiser for Columban Missionaries. The calendars are available through St Vincent de Paul for \$10 each. They can be purchased from the office



BEQUESTS

To help our Catholic Pastoral Region of Parishes continue its important mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus, you might consider including us in your Will. You would just need to specify which parish or parishes you would like to help with your bequest.

SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility if you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding: P 4979 1390, E childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au or www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au

REFLECTION

BY RICHARD LEONARD

During Advent, Daniel went to his mother demanding a new bicycle for Christmas. 'Danny, we can't afford it', she said, 'so write a letter to Jesus and pray for one instead.' 'Dear Jesus, I've been a good boy this year and would appreciate a new bicycle. Your friend, Daniel.' Now Danny guessed that Jesus knew he was a brat so he tore it up and tried again. 'Dear Jesus, I've been an OK boy this year and I want a new bicycle. Yours truly, Daniel.' Danny knew this wasn't true either so he tore it up and tried again. 'Dear Jesus, I've thought about being a good boy so may I have a new bicycle? Daniel.'

Finally, Danny thought better of making these false claims and so ran to the Church. He went inside and stole a small statue of Mary and ran out the door. He went home, hid it under his bed and wrote this letter. 'Jesus, let's face it, I've broken most of the Commandments; tore up my sister's doll and lots more, I'm desperate. I've got your mother Mary, if you ever want to see her again, give me a bike for Christmas. You know who.'

There is a little bit of Danny in all of us.

We often think that we can bargain with God to get the best possible deal out of life. The problem with this bargaining image is that it cannot be reconciled with a Christian faith which believes in Advent. The bargaining image of God is the furthest thing from the mind of the writers of today's readings – Isaiah, Psalm (84) 85, St Peter and St Mark.

These scriptures remind us that God has not held back one thing in his love for us. By becoming one with us in our flesh, God has done everything he can to assure us of his saving love. He has shown us all what can be shown about how to live lives of sacrifice, justice and love and how to transform our world for better.

The image of us 'doing a deal' with God is so prevalent in our theology and prayer that we can find ourselves lapsing into it all the time. 'If you make me well, God, I will lead a better life.' 'I will return to Sunday Mass if I pass my exams.' 'I will raise my children Catholic if I have a fine day for my wedding.' This is all dreadful stuff. And the Church has to take some responsibility for this and correct it.

The scriptures tell us from the beginning of time to the preaching of John the Baptist, to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit among us today, that we have a God who risked everything so that we might know love and life in this world and in the next. We hold and

proclaim, in season and out of season, a God who emptied himself of power and might and came to us as a baby.

That's not the profile of a deal-doer. It's the portrait of a lover.

So this Advent let's not ransom ourselves to a benevolent dictator. Let's ask for anything we need with confidence that God has heard our words and so sent love itself in Jesus Christ our Lord.

© Richard Leonard SJ

Richard Leonard SJ is the Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting, is a member of the Australian Catholic Media Council and a film critic for all the major Australian Catholic newspapers. He completed a PhD in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne. He lectures in cinema and theology at the Jesuit College of Spirituality and has been a visiting lecturer in Australian cinema at the University of Melbourne, a visiting scholar within the School of Theatre, Film and Television at UCLA and is visiting professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University, has lectured widely and is the author of numerous books.

CHRISTMAS CONCERTS @ SACRED HEART

The following concerts are scheduled at Sacred Heart Cathedral in December:

The Australian Voices celebrates their thirtieth anniversary by sharing the wonders of Australian choral music with the nation! **Thursday December 14 @ 7pm.** Tickets Adult: \$30.00, Concession: \$15.00, School Student: FREE!

<http://www.theaustralianvoices.com/>

The Australian Voices are holding a free workshop for local singers from 4:30-5:30 before the concert. All are welcome!

The Newcastle Tudor Singers, directed by Dr Anne Millard, present "Favourite Things: Christmas Music for Everyone" **Sunday December 17 @ 2pm.**



Image by Freepik

THE CHUCKLE

You: What cartoon mouse walks on two feet?

Them: Mickey Mouse

You: What duck walks on two feet?

Them: Donald Duck

You: No, all ducks do!



Clear a path for the Lord

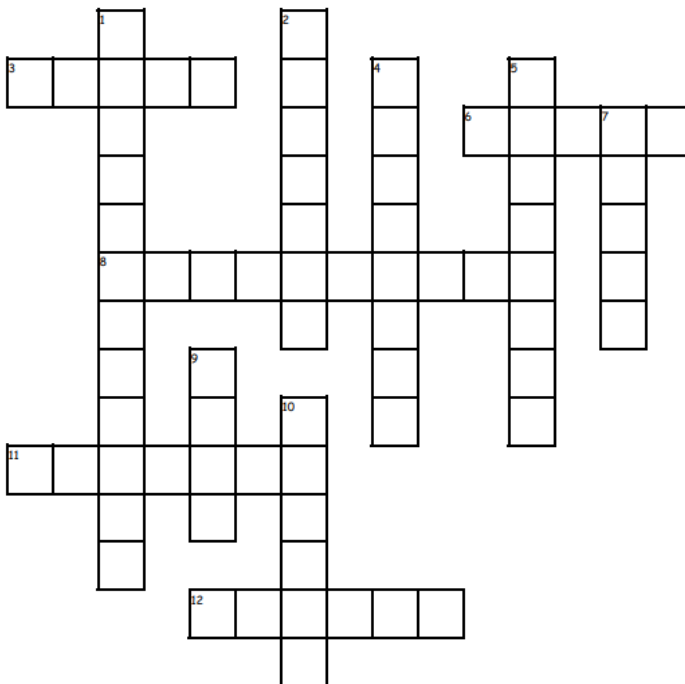
X L I S T R A I G H T P T B A
I E H O L Y S P I R I T F B Z
M P O V O I C E I G M F A Z G
N S N H S J W T J R C R O W D
K S E F W F G X Z A F I H C O
X L E R E A K B G S R O A D T
P I G U U K F N F S T S X D M
E M P S O R R Y E H V R A M R
Z V P R E P A R E O T Y A N R
A C N D E S E R T P M R T M Q
B A P T I S T S M P J W M D G
J O R D A N B P N E O C P L G
F X H I O C T M A R D Z S F M
H U G Q V U I L S S Y B D Q B
B X J M O U N T A I N K F W Z

Try to find these words:

Baptist
crowd
desert
grasshoppers
Holy Spirit
Jordan
mountain
prepare
road
sorry
straight
voice

CROSSWORD

Clear a path for the Lord



Across

- 3: what we say when we apologise
6: what you hear when someone speaks
8: John told the people God would baptise them with the H___ S_____ (two words)
11: to get ready
12: John the Baptist baptised people in this river

Down

- 1: John ate these insects
2: John the _____ baptised people in the Jordan River
4: the opposite of crooked
5: a very high piece of land
7: a large group of people
9: a pathway used by vehicles
10: a hot and sandy place

FOOD BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY

Items of dry goods or tin food e.g. (Vegemite, cornflakes or breakfast foods, sugar, packet or tin soup, sardines, tea, coffee, tin fruit etc), can be placed in the basket at the back of **St Joseph's Church**, The Junction and in the foyer of **Immaculate Heart of Mary Church**, Tighes Hill. St Vincent de Paul members will pick up for distribution to the needy who are very grateful to receive the items. When donating please check expiry dates. Thank you. Questions to Sr Carol Woodland rsj (mob) 0423 700 523 or 4967 2998. The St Joseph's community kindly requests that you do not donate peanut butter.

ST MARY'S, NEWCASTLE:

If you would like to donate, any of the following types of non-perishable items would be most gratefully received: UHT milk, cereal, jam, vegemite, peanut butter, tinned veggies, fruit, soup, fish, meat, dried pasta, rice, pasta sauces, teabags, coffee, biscuits, crackers, custard, jelly, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, conditioner (even the travel sized ones from hotels), deodorant.

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION AT TIGHES HILL

This is non-denominational and everyone is very welcome. Please come.

WHEN: Monday afternoon 3.30 for 3.45 start

WHERE: Mercy Offices, 20 Union Street
(Next door to Mercy Services)

Off street parking available

The Meditation session begins with short guided relaxation exercises then we have a reading from Fr. John Main which leads into 20 minutes of silent meditation

ST JOSEPH'S MEN NEWCASTLE

Join the St Joseph's Men's Group on Saturday 16 December, from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at Mackillop Parish (17 Milson Street, Charlestown) for a fun evening of free pizza, drinks, and games! Connect with fellow men in the community and enjoy a great time together. Contact Curtis on 0477 106 108.

USED STAMPS FOR MARY MACKILLOP TODAY (MMT)

"Mary MacKillop Today" is helping the poorest of the poor with used stamps. Please leave any used stamps in the box provided at the entrance to St Joseph's Church The Junction, or drop them off at the office. Money raised through their sales provides access to learning opportunities for the poorest communities in Australia and internationally.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

The gospel of Mark is sometimes portrayed as a 'no fuss' gospel. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in this week's passage. We have the first eight verses of the gospel and the author wastes no time in announcing the purpose, 'The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' The gospel of Mark does not give any infancy narrative or genealogy like Matthew or Luke, or a theological foreword like John. It jumps straight in with a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God and almost immediately begins to explore his ministry

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Appeal launched last weekend. With more and more vulnerable people experiencing poverty and on the brink of homelessness this Christmas, we urgently need your help.



Your donation can help provide the emergency assistance families, and many others, desperately need to survive, and the long-term support they need to build better futures. Please help!

ENROLMENTS FOR 2023 SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

A child's catholic faith journey began with the Sacrament of Baptism and continues by the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

The preparations for these sacraments in the Inner Newcastle Parish run between February and June of every year and is designed for children going into Year, 4, 5 or 6 in 2024. Preparations are completed as a family with online activities and volunteer work within the community.

Enrolments are now open for the 2024 program. If you are interested in being apart of the program this year please visit the parish website and complete the online enrolment form.

<https://www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/sacramental-enrolment-form/>

For more information please contact the office on 49791101 or newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au

REFLECTION

BY DIANE BERGANT CSA

In the wilderness God's salvation comes to a broken people. In the midst of what is seemingly an impossible situation, hope emerges with vigour. In this context, hope is an openness to surprise, the surprise that God is in no way limited to the imaginings of human minds and the consequences of human history. This is the kind of hope that is proclaimed in the wilderness by John; it is the kind of hope that trusts that from the impossible, God can work a new creation.

There is something of a time warp in Christianity. What is future is made present. The prophetic oracle announces the future as if it is already happening. This sense of the future-present prompts new ways of living. As the future takes root in human lives, the present is transformed into a new creation and the Day of the Lord appears.

God's future comes through the wilderness into the broken city and inspires a broken-hearted people. The contrite heart is a broken heart, an emptied-out heart, a hope-filled heart. It is a heart that is unencumbered by the past and that lives currently in the passing of time and the fragility of being alive. The contrite, broken heart can be filled only by what is promised in the future. This is the paradox of Advent. In the middle of the wilderness, God works the impossible in those whose hearts are ready for the surprise of hope.

© Dianne Bergant CSA

Dianne Bergant CSA was a Professor of Biblical Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where she taught from 1978 to 2014. She holds a BS in Elementary Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, WI; an MA and PhD in Biblical Languages and Literature from St Louis University. Amongst other things, she served as President of Catholic Biblical Association of America (2000-2001) and has been awarded honorary doctorates from several other universities. She was an active member of the Chicago Catholic/Jewish Scholars Dialogue (1988-2017) and sat on the editorial boards of *The Bible Today* (1979-2005), *Biblical Theology Bulletin* (1990-2014), *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1992-2001), *New Theology Review* (1997-2003), *Teaching Theology and Religion* (2003-2005), and *Chicago Studies* (2003-2009). She has taught and lectured in many places in the United States and abroad and has written numerous books, articles and chapters in books.

SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION:



5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 20th December
@ Sacred Heart Cathedral

SIMBANG GABI MASSES

Our Filipino community celebrate their annual Christmas Simbang Gabi novena of Masses in the Sacred Heart Cathedral each night at 7.30 pm from Friday 15th to Saturday 23rd December 2023.

Everyone is welcome. At each Mass a collection plate will be passed around to support the Cathedral.

MEDITATION GROUPS AT LIVING WATERS CENTRE

LIVING WATERS CHRISTIAN MEDIATION CENTRE, 34 Kenrick Street, The Junction, offers meditation sessions on Wednesdays at 7.30am and Fridays at 11.00am – and has done so for the last 25 years, in which time many hundreds of people have taken up this prayer form. After meditation on Fridays *Lectio Divina*, a personal interaction with Sacred Scripture, is offered. Through both practices we open ourselves to the fullness of life; we come to know ourselves by knowing that we are known and loved by God. For more information: Carmel Moore rsj -0412122297 - or just come.

ADVENT 2023:

WITH ANTICIPATION AND JOY

We are called during this holy time to wait with anticipation knowing the joys of what is to come with the arrival of Christ. With Anticipation and Joy is a Diocesan resource that invites all members of the community to gather a circle of people – family, friends, colleagues, ministry teams to reflect mystagogically on the Advent Gospels and associated artworks. This is an opportunity to encounter Christ where we are, to pay attention to what Christ reveals in the scripture and the living tradition of our faith, to share this, to connect it to our life now, and to be changed by it.

To access the resource, go to:

https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/media/6563/0003487-dio-advent-reflection-book_2023.pdf

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A Baptism of Forgiveness

The understanding that we generally have of baptism today has not always been the case. At the time of John and Jesus, the Jewish tradition used baptism as a ritual bath to cleanse a person who had become ritually unclean and make them able to participate in religious rituals. What John was preaching was a baptism for the forgiveness of sins – a new interpretation at the time. He emphasised that repentance was essential for forgiveness and that there needed to be a conscious returning to God. John's baptism was a symbolic act to signify the willingness of the person to renounce their sins and make a more conscious return to God.

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

This Sunday's Gospel passage ([Mk 1:1-8](#)) introduces the person and work of John the Baptist. He reveals to his contemporaries an itinerary of faith similar to the one that Advent proposes to us, who are preparing ourselves to receive the Lord at Christmas. This itinerary of faith is an itinerary of *conversion*. What does the word 'conversion' mean? In the Bible it means, first and foremost, to change direction and orientation; and thus also to change one's way of thinking. In the moral and spiritual life, to convert means to turn oneself from evil to good, from sin to love of God. And this is what the Baptist was teaching, who in the desert of Judea was "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (v. 4). Receiving baptism was an outward and visible sign of the conversion of those who had listened to his preaching and decided to repent. That baptism occurred with immersion in the Jordan, in water, but it proved useless; it was only a sign and it was useless if there was no willingness to repent and change one's life.

Conversion involves suffering for sins committed, the desire to be free from them, the intention to exclude them from one's own life forever. To exclude sin it is also necessary to reject everything that is connected to it; the things that are connected to sin and thus, we have to reject: a worldly mentality, excessive esteem for comforts, excessive esteem for pleasure, for well-being, for wealth. The example of this detachment comes to us once again from today's Gospel in the person of John the Baptist: an austere man who renounces excess and seeks the essential. This is the first aspect of conversion: *detachment from sin and worldliness*: commencing a journey of detachment from these things.

The other aspect of conversion is the aim of the journey, that is, the *search for God and his kingdom*. Detachment from worldly things and seeking God and his kingdom. Abandoning comforts and a worldly mentality is not an end in itself; it is not an asceticism only to do penance: a Christian is not a "fakir". It is something else. Detachment is not an end in itself, but is a means of attaining something greater, namely, the Kingdom of God, communion with God, friendship with God. But this is not easy, because there are many ties that bind us closely to sin; and it is not easy.... Temptation always pulls down, pulls down, and thus, the ties that keep us close to sin: inconstancy, discouragement, malice, unwholesome environments, bad examples. At times the yearning we feel toward the Lord is too weak and it almost seems that God is silent; his promises of consolation seem far away and

unreal to us, like the image of the caring and attentive shepherd, which resounds today in the reading from Isaiah (cf. 40:1, 11). And so one is tempted to say that it is impossible to truly convert. How often we have heard this discouragement! "No, I can't do it. I barely start and then I turn back". And this is bad. But it is possible. It is possible. When you have this discouraging thought, do not remain there, because this is quicksand. It is quicksand: the quicksand of a mediocre existence. This is mediocrity. What can we do in these cases, when one would like to go but feels he or she cannot do it? First of all, remind ourselves that conversion *is a grace*: no one can convert by his or own strength. It is a grace that the Lord gives you, and thus we need to forcefully ask God for it. To ask God to convert us, that we can truly convert, to the degree in which we open ourselves up to the beauty, the goodness, the tenderness of God. Think about God's tenderness. God is not a bad father, an unkind father, no. He is tender. He loves us so much, like the Good Shepherd, who searches for the last member of his flock. It is love, and this is conversion: a grace of God. Begin to walk, because it is he who moves you to walk, and you will see how he will arrive. Pray, walk, and you will always take a step forward.

OUR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

St Joseph's Primary School

Karen McGinlay (*Principal*)

Union Street, The Junction NSW 2291

P:(02) 4961 2827

W:www.merewether.catholic.edu.au

Holy Family Primary School

Ann Jackson (*Principal*)

Pell Street, Merewether NSW 2291

P:(02) 4963 3009

W:www.merewetherbeach.catholic.edu.au

St Columban's Primary School

Danielle Reed (*Principal*)

Church Street, Mayfield NSW 2304

P:(02) 4968 3315

W:www.mayfieldsc.catholic.edu.au

St Peter's Primary School

Mark Konik (*Acting Principal*)

Dunbar St, Stockton NSW 2295

P:(02) 4920 1736

W:www.stockton.catholic.edu.au