



# 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 18TH FEBRUARY 2024 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR B

### Our Clergy

Fr John Lovell  
Fr Paul Chackanikunnel  
Fr Anthony Coloma  
Fr Anil Kumar Kuchipudi  
Deacon Kevin Gadd

### Regional Office—St Benedict's Centre

25 Farquhar Street, The Junction  
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W: [www.newcastlecatholic.org.au](http://www.newcastlecatholic.org.au)  
W: [www.sacredheartshamilton.org.au](http://www.sacredheartshamilton.org.au)

### Our Staff

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

Anne Warren (*Business Manager*)  
*Tuesday and Thursday*

Thelma Dickson (*Administration*)  
*Wednesday and Thursday*

Elul Teclé (*Administration*)

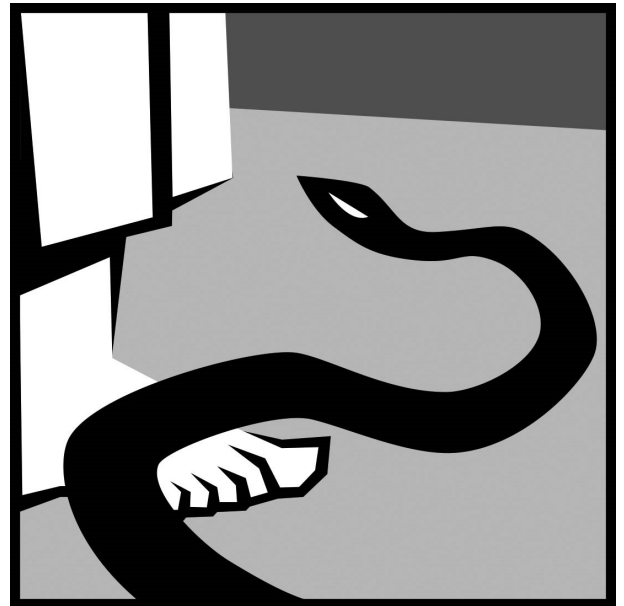
Dr Anne Millard (*Music, Liturgy, Sacraments*)

### 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

Lent is a time when we are called to accompany the Lord on His forty day sojourn into the desert, that we may be better prepared as sharers in His redeeming work of proclaiming the Good News. Fr John

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

### Promotors 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)

*First Week of Lent, Year B*

Monday 19th February

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Tuesday—20th February

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9.00am Mass @ Stockton

Wednesday—21st February

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9am Mass @ Christ the King, Mayfield West

Thursday—22nd February

*Feast of The Chair of St Peter, apostle*

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

Friday—23rd February

10:15am Mass @ St Joseph's

11:00am Exposition, Adoration & Reconciliation @  
The Cathedral (until 12pm)

12:05pm Mass @ The Cathedral

6:00pm Stations of the Cross (in Polish)

Saturday—24th February

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

5:30pm Mass @ The Cathedral

5:30pm Mass @ The Junction

5:30pm Mass @ Mayfield West

Sunday—25th February

*2nd Sunday of Lent, Year B*

7:30am Mass @ St Mary's

8:00am Mass @ Tighes Hill

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

9:30am Mass @ The Cathedral \*

11:00am Mass @ The Junction (*Italian*)

11:30am Mass @ The Cathedral (*Polish*)

5:00pm Mass @ The Cathedral

6.00pm Mass @ Mayfield West (*Vietnamese*) \*\*

*\* Livestreamed on the Cathedral's YouTube channel—  
[www.youtube.com/c/SacredHeartCathedralHamilton](http://www.youtube.com/c/SacredHeartCathedralHamilton)  
and on the Diocesan website*

*\*\* The Vietnamese Mass is now celebrated fortnightly*

### NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

**Second Sunday of Lent**

Gen 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

Ps 115:10. 15-19. R. 114:9

Rom 8:31-34

Mk 9:2-10



## PRAYER REQUESTS

**RECENTLY DECEASED:** Craig Neal Wheatley (Kaiser),  
Sr. Rosemary Jackson rsj

**ANNIVERSARIES:** Kevin & Zoe Lawler, Michael Lennan,  
Edith Raymond, Ray & Eileen Howard, Richard Taper,  
Madge Humphries, Consolacion Dagpin, Jose Chia Uy,  
Hermenio Uy

**SICK:** Maureen Francis, Angela Cottier,  
Patrick McInerney Cowan, Joshua  
Zalanardo, Rosa Silivinec, 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](http://www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/downloads).*

## OUR BELOVED DEAD

We remember those in our Columbaria whose  
anniversaries occur in February  
At Sacred Heart

Robert Bartholomew	Patricia (Trish) Leishman
Jean Belcher	Alan James Long
Gwenneth Bennett	Frank Monaco
Anthony Bookallil	Stan O'Brien
Beryl Jean Clarke	Kathleen O'Neill
Marie Forrest	Roger Saunders
Edna Jean Hancock	Robert Smith
Michael Henessy	Gregory Smith
Ronald Jarrett	Toni Van Schyndel
Czeslaw (Cec) Kizeweter	William (Bill) Warren
Xuyen An Le	Clare Alice Withers
	Joan Woodcock

At St Joseph's:

Nicholas Evans	Gerald Meighan
Robyn Field	Bob Smyth
Marie James	Kath Walsh
Marie Maddrell	Alan Watt
William McNeil	Johanna Schmuck
Margaret McVie	Rodney Wright

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

## PARISH LUNCHEON

Parish Luncheon at *Souths Leagues Club, Llewellyn St,*  
*Merewether @ 12.30pm on Monday, 19th February*  
All welcome. Inquiries to Maureen on 0412 673151.

## SEASONS FOR GROWTH

*No season lasts forever, not even winter.*

Our lives, like the seasons, are constantly changing. These changes often involve many losses and deep grief. Learning how to recognise and adapt to the stressful events and changed circumstances we experience, as well as the ongoing challenges these may bring helps to bring peace and hope into our lives. The Seasons for Growth small group, peer-based educational program offers the opportunity for individual reflection and group discussion by gently and symbolically using the metaphor of the seasons to support adults to:

- **Learn** about how different people respond to change, loss and grief
- **Understand** that it is normal to experience a range of grief reactions
- **Explore** new approaches to dealing with change, loss and grief in their lives
- **Build** communication, decision making and problem solving skills
- **Participate** in a supportive network of peers and adults
- **Integrate** their new learning into their relationships with family, friends and others.

Please consider joining this supportive space in 2024 if you would like to share conversation and learn together with others who are also navigating the different seasons of life and loss.

Seasons for Growth is a four week program, which we will offer during Lent, 2024. The program will run for four Saturday afternoons from 1pm until 4pm on the 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd of March in the Parish Centre. Contact the office to sign up.



## WAY OF THE CROSS

Our Diocese is blessed with rich diversity. This year's Ecumenical Way of the Cross, held on the 5th Sunday of Lent, invites us into a multicultural journey of remembrance. As we relive the story of Jesus' Passion, we recall the stories that have brought us together. This event is a celebrated gathering of our wider community and one not to be missed.

When: Sunday 17 March, 3pm (you are invited to gather from 2pm)

Where: St Joseph's Toronto Church, 140 Wangi Road, Toronto

## ENROLMENTS FOR 2024 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 are 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

## ART AND SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

Creation of art provides an opportunity for a deepening awareness of oneself and the world, and can act as a catalyst for evoking the Spirit. Art is a means to see-to-re-search and find the living meaning of what it means to open the heart. Everyone has the ability to create art, but in order for it to be theological, the artist needs to explore ways that it makes sense of faith. Opening the heart through art involves making meaning through the creation, then reflecting on the art itself and the unfolding the moment-to-moment direct experience of the process.

This workshop will provide an opportunity to awaken the Spirit through the beauty of God's creation, prayer, and reflection. Participants will engage in art making experiences which will nourish their faith.

Date: Thursday 14 March (9am-3pm)

Venue: Kilaben Bay Community Centre

Cost: \$25 per person Register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/art-and-spirituality-workshops-2024-tickets-808605269127>

## VIEW, CHEW, CHAT, AND LECTIO

View, Chew, and Chat continues with the Lenten program on February 21. To participate, please email the parish office. We will return to the first series of The Chosen after Lent.

# MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE

FRANCIS

## FOR LENT 2024

### Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom

*Dear brothers and sisters!*

When our God reveals himself, his message is always one of freedom: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex 20:2). These are the first words of the Decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Those who heard them were quite familiar with the exodus of which God spoke: the experience of their bondage still weighed heavily upon them. In the desert, they received the “Ten Words” as a thoroughfare to freedom. We call them “commandments”, in order to emphasize the strength of the love by which God shapes his people. The call to freedom is a demanding one. It is not answered straightaway; it has to mature as part of a journey. Just as Israel in the desert still clung to Egypt – often longing for the past and grumbling against the Lord and Moses – today too, God’s people can cling to an oppressive bondage that it is called to leave behind. We realize how true this is at those moments when we feel hopeless, wandering through life like a desert and lacking a promised land as our destination. Lent is the season of grace in which the desert can become once more – in the words of the prophet Hosea – the place of our first love (cf. Hos 2:16-17). *God shapes his people, he enables us to leave our slavery behind* and experience a Passover from death to life. Like a bridegroom, the Lord draws us once more to himself, whispering words of love to our hearts.

The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to *open our eyes to reality*. When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:7-8). Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other, denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another.

During my visit to Lampedusa, as a way of countering the globalization of indifference, I asked two questions, which have become more and more

pressing: “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9) and “Where is your brother?” (Gen 4:9). Our Lenten journey will be concrete if, by listening once more to those two questions, we realize that even today we remain under the rule of Pharaoh. A rule that makes us weary and indifferent. A model of growth that divides and robs us of a future. Earth, air and water are polluted, but so are our souls. True, Baptism has begun our process of liberation, yet there remains in us an inexplicable longing for slavery. A kind of attraction to the security of familiar things, to the detriment of our freedom.

In the Exodus account, there is a significant detail: it is God who sees, is moved and brings freedom; Israel does not ask for this. Pharaoh stifles dreams, blocks the view of heaven, makes it appear that this world, in which human dignity is trampled upon and authentic bonds are denied, can never change. He put everything in bondage to himself. Let us ask: Do I want a new world? Am I ready to leave behind my compromises with the old? The witness of many of my brother bishops and a great number of those who work for peace and justice has increasingly convinced me that we need to combat a deficit of hope that stifles dreams and the silent cry that reaches to heaven and moves the heart of God. This “deficit of hope” is not unlike the nostalgia for slavery that paralyzed Israel in the desert and prevented it from moving forward. An exodus can be interrupted: how else can we explain the fact that humanity has arrived at the threshold of universal fraternity and at levels of scientific, technical, cultural, and juridical development capable of guaranteeing dignity to all, yet gropes about in the darkness of inequality and conflict.

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

This, however, entails *a struggle*, as the book of Exodus and the temptations of Jesus in the desert make clear to us. The voice of God, who says, “You are my Son, the Beloved” (Mk 1:11), and “You shall have

no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3) is opposed by the enemy and his lies. Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols that we set up for ourselves; we can consider them as his voice speaking within us. To be all-powerful, to be looked up to by all, to domineer over others: every human being is aware of how deeply seductive that lie can be. It is a road well-travelled. We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyze us. Instead of encounter, they create conflict. Yet there is also a new humanity, a people of the little ones and of the humble who have not yielded to the allure of the lie. Whereas those who serve idols become like them, mute, blind, deaf and immobile (cf. Ps 114:4), the poor of spirit are open and ready: a silent force of good that heals and sustains the world.

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

The Church's synodal form, which in these years we are rediscovering and cultivating, suggests that Lent is also *a time of communitarian decisions*, of decisions, small and large, that are countercurrent. Decisions capable of altering the daily lives of individuals and entire neighbourhoods, such as the ways we acquire goods, care for creation, and strive to include those who go unseen or are looked down upon. I invite every Christian community to do just this: to offer its members moments set aside to rethink their lifestyles, times to examine their presence in society and the contribution they make to its betterment. Woe to us if our Christian penance were to resemble the kind of penance that so dismayed Jesus. To us too, he says: "Whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting" (Mt 6:16). Instead, let others see joyful faces, catch the scent of freedom and

experience the love that makes all things new, beginning with the smallest and those nearest to us. This can happen in every one of our Christian communities.

To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: "Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this" ([Address to University Students](#), 3 August 2023). Such is the courage of conversion, born of coming up from slavery. For faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward.

I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.

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

FRANCIS

## BOOK CLUB

**Sunday, 3rd March @ 6:15pm:** Bookclub meets to discuss *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. If you would like to participate in book club meetings, please email [newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au)



## 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.

## LENTEN DISCUSSION GROUP

Each Wednesday following 9am Mass in Mayfield West Church. All welcome.

## UNDERSTANDING THE BEATITUDES

One of the most striking examples of Jesus' teaching is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel. The Beatitudes are the foundation on which that sermon is built. They are also one of the most beautiful statements of Christian ethics. Yet at the same time, they are also some of the trickiest verses in the Bible to interpret. In this subject, we'll tackle the meaning of the blessings by putting them into the context of the gospels, the Hebrew Bible, and wider Jewish literature, like the Dead Sea Scrolls. We'll think about what the Beatitudes contribute to our understanding of Jesus' teaching and mission. And finally, we'll think about how the Beatitudes still matter today.

Dates: Thursdays 7 & 14 March (4.00pm-5.30pm)

Venue: Library in Diocesan Resource Centre Register at: <https://forms.office.com/r/cGXZ545eRX>

## 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.

## PRAISE AND WORSHIP GATHERINGS

The Friday praise and worship gatherings will return for 2024 on Friday 16/2/24 at Holy Cross Catholic Church Glendale from 7pm and will be preceded by 6:30pm Mass. The evenings will also offer teachings and talks on different topics related to growing in the Faith by different presenters as well as the opportunity for healing prayer and fellowship afterwards. There will be a free pizza dinner on the first gathering for 2024.

## CATHEDRAL MORNING TEA

A massive thanks to those who provided the delicious food for our morning tea last week. And thanks to everyone who attended. It was great! Our next morning tea is March 10th

## THE CHUCKLE

There should be a holiday where we remember all the borrowed items we've given out that have never been returned. We'll call it "Lent".



## 2024 – LENTEN REFLECTION – TRANSFORMATION THROUGH REVELATION

During the season of Lent, we are called to look deeply at the human condition, just as Jesus, the Son of God, experienced. We are reminded during this time of hardship, suffering, and ultimately dying that we must stretch ourselves. We must pray and fast from whatever is taking hold of the fullness of life. This time calls for personal reflection and encourages us to look out with missionary eyes to intentionally give to those in need.

To access our Diocesan Resource, Transformation Through Revelation, please visit <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/media/6680/0003733-dio-2024-lenten-program-06.pdf>

## MEN'S ROSARY GROUP

The Men's Rosary will be held on the first Saturday of each month @ 1pm at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle West. For more Information contact Jason on 0499 854 928.

## 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](mailto:childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au) or [www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au)

## "TILLING THE CHURCH: THEOLOGY FOR AN UNFINISHED PROJECT." ZOOM DISCUSSION.

You are invited to discuss Father Richard's latest publication, "Tilling the Church: Theology for an Unfinished Project" chapter by chapter over the next several months online.

Wednesday 21 February: Chapter 3. The Pilgrimage Community of Faith and Hope

To register go to: [www.eventbrite.com.au/e/tilling-the-church-theology-of-an-unfinished-project-tickets-708150125087](http://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/tilling-the-church-theology-of-an-unfinished-project-tickets-708150125087)

## JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

### I will remember my promise

Gen 9:8-15  
Ps 25:4-5abc, 6 & 7cd, R. see v.10  
Mk 1:12-15

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

Try to find these words:

angels  
animals  
bird  
boat  
desert  
flood  
forty  
Galilee  
kingdom  
Noah  
promise  
rainbow

1st Sunday of Lent, Year B (N01LESUB\_2003\_W53.rtf)

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## SENIOR WORDSEARCH

### I will remember my promise

Gen 9:8-15  
Ps 25:4-5abc, 6 & 7cd, R. see v.10  
Mk 1:12-15

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

Try to find these words:

angels  
animals  
bird  
boat  
desert  
flood  
forty  
Galilee  
kingdom  
Noah  
promise  
rainbow

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## REFLECTION

BY GREG SUNTER

The First Reading, from Genesis, and the Gospel this week need to be looked at together. In the Genesis reading, God has just wiped clean the earth and is ready to re-establish the relationship with humanity through Noah and his family. In the short gospel passage, Jesus enters the wilderness as a time of preparation and renewal, ready to embark on his mission of re-establishing the relationship between God and humanity. In both readings there is a sense of a fresh start – a clean slate – for humankind. It is a clear indication of God's commitment to humanity, even when we have totally distanced ourselves from God and forgotten about keeping up our part of the relationship, God is willing to make a clean start of it all again. Both readings offer a reminder of God's constant desire for us to be in right relationship with God and with the world. The presence of Jesus in the world was as clear a signal as the rainbow in the sky that God was willing to give us another go – give us a chance to again see God with new eyes and new understanding.

In the gospel passage, we have a picture of Jesus preparing himself for his public ministry. He takes himself out into the wilderness, away from all that he has known until this time, to reflect on his life so far and this next vital stage that he is about to enter. In the wilderness, Jesus is tempted. He has to face his own doubts and demons before he sets off on the road of his public ministry. When he leaves the desert wilderness and enters back into Galilee he immediately begins to preach and, in the first words accredited to him in this gospel, Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is at hand and it's time to repent and believe. It's a call to open your eyes and get with the program!

### Living the Gospel – Change of heart

Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God is a call to live out God's transformative dream of right relationship with one another and with our world. To accept this call requires a change of heart and mind (a metanoia) and the adoption of a new orientation, a new worldview based on living the kingdom of God. This is a challenge to be counter-cultural – to go 'against the flow' of the majority attitudes at times. It is certainly not an 'easy option' that we are called to live. Jesus' call to 'repent and believe' is a very appropriate call to begin the Lenten season.

Greg Sunter has worked in Catholic Education (Brisbane) for many years, most recently as a member of the Religious Education team and Mission and Formation team. He has extensive experience of praying with young people and forming others to lead prayer with young people. He is the author of books on adolescent faith, is a regular speaker at youth and evangelisation conferences, and is a retreat and reflection facilitator and presenter. His areas of interest include religious education, theology, scripture, spirituality, Catholic ethos, prayer, and ministry with young people.

(R.) Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.  
Lord, teach me your paths.  
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:  
for you are God my saviour. (R.)
2. Remember your mercy, Lord,  
and the love you have shown from of old.  
In your love remember me,  
because of your goodness, O Lord. (R.)
3. The Lord is good and upright.  
He shows the path to those who stray,  
he guides the humble in the right path;  
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

**Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22**

## 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](http://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](http://www.merewetherbeach.catholic.edu.au)

### St Columban's Primary School

Penny Banister (*Principal*)

Church Street, Mayfield NSW 2304

P:(02) 4968 3315

W:[www.mayfieldsc.catholic.edu.au](http://www.mayfieldsc.catholic.edu.au)

### St Peter's Primary School

Michael Punch (*Principal*)

Dunbar St, Stockton NSW 2295

P:(02) 4928 1861

W:[www.stockton.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stockton.catholic.edu.au)

## 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