

Welcome to the community of the Catholic Parish of St John 23rd Glenwood-Stanhope Gardens where the love of Christ is shining in so many ways.

Mountains, though not specified, are again the locus for today's first reading (Ex 20:1-17 or 20:1-3,7-8,12-17) and gospel (John 2:13-25). This Exodus passage is the source of the classic list of commandments misnamed "the Ten" (the Decalogue); they are more than ten, they are never referred to in Scripture as the Ten, and the two stone tablets are first mentioned only at the end of the whole encounter (Ex 31:18) and all the commandments from the many chapters of the confusing account seem to be written on the both sides of the two tablets. The description is very much like other examples of steles containing laws found in the ancient Middle-East. It provides a good example of how readily people, including literate clerics, muddle related texts. The commandments of today's reading, the so-called priestly Decalogue, function as a prelude to the whole body of commandments given over several chapters; the variant form in Deuteronomy 5 is referred to as the Deuteronomical Decalogue. Soon after receiving them, Moses, enraged by the people's worshipping the molten calf, breaks the stone tablets (Ex 32:19). New tablets are prepared in Ex 34:1, and ten commandments given in 34:14-26 are said to be inscribed on them; these are called the Decalogue in Ex 34:28 and do not conform to the classic formulation since they are largely liturgical, including commands to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Sabbath, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, but ending "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk." These Ten Commandments are the ones placed in the Ark of the Covenant. This confusion of identification and appellation has often led various to torturing the set in today's pericope to make them conform to the misappropriated number. However confused the history is, the summary is handy, even though it has resulted in Catholics and Protestants having variant forms.

The setting for the Exodus episode is the mountain theophany to which Moses and the Israelites were invited, each to attend in their proper place, but the experience so startled the people that they immediately remove themselves some distance and tell Moses not to let God speak directly to them (v.18-19); they preferred the safety of distance and a go-between. It is not clear why this pericope was chosen for this Sunday, but we may guess it was

Hello everyone,  
Thank you for your warm welcome of me into the parish. I am excited about the journey ahead and working closely with you all.

On Sunday, March 3, I will be presented to the bishop as a candidate for orders at our Cathedral. Its the ceremony that ritualises my desire and consent to be ordained. The Church makes a formal recognition confirming of my calling and formation to the Priesthood.

It's a short ritual after the homily. This will happen during the Holy Spirit Seminary Commencement mass. The Rite ends with the Bishop declaring "The Church receives your declaration with joy. May God who has begun the good work in you, bring it to fulfilment. Amen"

I ask for your prayers and encouragement as I continue to say Yes to the Lord.

**Menard**

### Church Painting and Repair of the Cracked Ceiling

There is a great need to repair the cracked ceiling and repaint the interior and external of our church. This is critical so as to prevent bigger damage to the church and it will have a better appearance. We have received a number of quotes and the best option is selected. The total cost of the project is \$30,000. We have raised 20% of the total cost.

**We still need to raise another \$24,000.**

If you are able to assist with a big or small contributions, it will be greatly appreciated. We start the work on the 26th February.

**Finance Committee & Maintenance**

considered helpful in Lent to remind us of the commandments. It has no obvious link to the gospel reading, except that both have mountain settings. This results in an apparent breach of the usual pattern of associating first and gospel readings.

John's account of the cleansing of the Temple (John 2:13-25) has particular relevance to Lenten preparation for the approaching crisis in Jerusalem and the crucifixion. A shorter form, less v.23-25, is read on the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (09 November). Mark's version (11:15-17) might have been considered better for year B, especially given the fact that, unlike Matthew and Luke, its citation from Isaiah 56:7, "My house will be called a house of prayer", includes the concluding phrase "for all nations", which would link back to last Sunday's mention of all nations blessing themselves by Abraham's descendants. However, John's version typically specifies that the incident took place shortly before the feast of Passover, and his extension with the discussion about destroying the Temple and rebuilding it in three days is appropriate for our Lenten journey. The addition also diverts attention from the laws that embody the Covenant, to the person of Christ, who manifests and embodies the New Covenant.

### Our Parish Mission

*The Parish of St John XXIII is a faith community with the Eucharist as its heart. Inspired by John XXIII's prophetic opening of the windows of the Church, we welcome the fresh air of the Holy Spirit, inviting every person to share in the responsibility of enriching the life and faith of our community by sharing their gifts and talents."*

### Mass Times

<b>Mon</b>	8:30am
<b>Tues-Fri</b>	9:15am
<b>Sat</b>	9.00am, 6pm Vigil
<b>Sun</b>	7:30am, 9am, 10:30am, 6pm
<b>Holy Cross Primary School</b>	
<b>Thurs</b>	9:15am during school days

### Masses of Devotion

<b>1st Tues</b>	7.30pm Novena Mass <i>Our Lady of Perpetual Help</i>
<b>1st Fri</b>	7:30pm Novena Mass <i>Sacred Heart of Jesus</i>

### Exposition + Benediction

<b>1st Fri</b>	after 9.15am 7.30pm
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### Reconciliation

**After the weekday masses**

<b>Sat</b>	after the 9am mass until 10.30am 5:15 - 5:45pm before the Vigil Mass or upon request
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### Sacraments

<b>Sun</b>	12pm Baptism by appointment
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### Prayers

<b>Mon</b>	7.30pm Christian Meditation <i>Frances Pegram 0417 406715</i>
<b>Tue</b>	7:00pm Rosary and novena prayers ( <i>Church Tabernacle</i> )
<b>Fri</b>	6.30pm Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group <i>Pauline Camilleri 0407 417039</i>

### Praise & Worship

<b>Fri</b>	7:30pm Risen Lord Comm
<b>3rd Sat</b>	7:30pm SJ23rd Prayer Grp

### Special Blessings

**Blessing during masses**

<b>1st Sun</b>	Birthday celebrants
<b>3rd Sun</b>	Couple's Wedding anniversary



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands in which the Catholic Parish of St John XXIII and the Diocese of Parramatta sits, the land of the Darug and Gundungurra people. We would like to pay our respects to the Aboriginal Elders past, present and future for they hold the traditions, memories and wisdom of Mother Earth on which we place our feet upon today.

### Entrance Antiphon

When I prove my holiness among you, I will gather you from all the foreign lands; and I will pour clean water upon you and cleanse you from all your impurities, and I will give you a new spirit, says the Lord.

### First Reading

A reading from the book of Exodus 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17

*The Law was given through Moses.*

God spoke all these words. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

'You shall have no gods except me.

'You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God to misuse it, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.

'Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given to you.

'You shall not kill.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.'

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

### Responsorial Psalm

115:10, 15-19

**R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul. The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. **R.**

The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart. The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes. **R.**

The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever. The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. **R.**

They are more to be desired than gold, than the purest of gold and sweeter are they than honey, than honey from the comb. **R.**

### TRIDUUM MASS TIMES

22 <sup>nd</sup> March	2nd Rite of Reconciliation	6pm Church
28 <sup>th</sup> March	Holy Thursday	7.30pm School hub
29 <sup>th</sup> March	Good Friday	
	Stations of the Cross	10am School grounds
	Veneration of the Cross	3pm School hub
30 <sup>th</sup> March	Easter Vigil	7:30pm Church
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Easter Sunday	Regular mass times at church
		7:30am 9am 10:30am 6pm

### Second Reading

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 1:22-25

*We are preaching a crucified Christ, a scandal to many, but to those who have been called, the wisdom of God.*

While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

### Gospel Acclamation

John 3:16

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son, that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

### Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 2:13-25

*Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.*

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

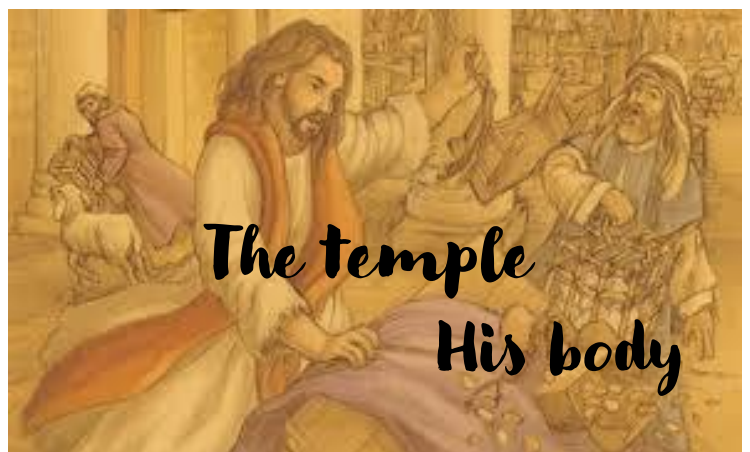
During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

### Communion Antiphon

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young: by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.



## Special Intentions

### Recently Deceased:

Adrian Gould, Eddie Santillian, Louis Sant

### Anniversary:

### Deceased:

### Sick: Names published with permission.

Lord Jesus, heal me. Heal in me whatever You see needs healing. Heal me of whatever might separate me from You. Heal my memory, heal my heart, heal my emotions, heal my spirit, heal my body, heal my soul. Lay Your hands now gently upon me and heal me through Your love for me. Amen.

Stella Drummond, Jovita Castillo, John Tipton, Geoffrey Robinson, Wally Atie, Cindy Dadivas, Isagani Ocampo, Marilyn Nalapo, Helen West, Obet Dionisio, Emma Q. Fernando, Fr Joseph Theda Ojastro, Gil Dormido, Jennifer Estrada, Jack Canlas, Ben&Etta Benesa, Cristina Arceo, Cesar De Jesus, Virginia Santos, Gloria Bueno, Bev Lewis, Perla Magculang, Jonathan Gemin, John Pellissery, Peter McArdle, Ksenija Bosnic, Elsie Knapp, Victor Pons, Barbara Thompson, Dr Bronwyn Andrews, Jakov & Marija Franich, Jo Daly, Virgie Villanueva, Raymond Lanzona, Florentina Elisura, Charlie Busuttill, Zoey Illic, Emma Matoza, Louise Smith, Anna Sebastian, Christina Properzi, Paco Matias, Maria Romeo, Matteazi Family, Cathie Christie, Manuel Sarris, Pat Daly, Dudley Francis, Lenka Olivier Talija, John Todhunter, Rosamma Elizabeth Langley, Carrie Conolly, Jovita Castillo, Peter Dawson, Hilary Regan, Jerry Bondoc, Susanne Krajancic, Elizabeth Candame, Valeria Laureta

### Thanksgiving:

If you or a family member is homebound and would want to receive communion in your home please contact the parish office.

### PRAYING in the SILENCE of the HEART

God of every human being, when we simply desire to welcome your love, a flame rises up little by little deep in our souls. Very fragile though it be, it always keeps burning.

Brother Roger of Taizé

### March Church Calendar

Mon	4	8:30am - Mass
Tues	5	9:15am - Mass 7:00pm - Rosary prayer 7:30pm - Novena Mass to Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Wed	6	9:15am - Mass
Thurs	7	9:15am - Mass
Fri	8	9:15am - Mass 7:00pm—Station of the Cross followed by Mass then Retreat
Sat	9	9:15am - Mass 10:00am - Retreat 6:00pm - Vigil Mass
Sun	10	7:30, 9:00, 10:30am - Mass 6:00pm - Mass

## Praying together

### Our Lady of Perpetual Help Prayer

O Mother of Perpetual Help, grant that I may ever invoke your powerful name, the protection of the living and the salvation of the dying. Purest Mary, let your name henceforth be ever on my lips. Delay not, Blessed Lady, to rescue me whenever I call on you. In my temptations, in my needs, I will never cease to call on you, ever repeating your sacred name, Mary, Mary. What a consolation, what sweetness, what confidence fills my soul when I utter your sacred name or even only think of you! I thank the Lord for having given you so sweet, so powerful, so lovely a name. But I will not be content with merely uttering your name. Let my love for you prompt me ever to hail you Mother of Perpetual Help. Mother of Perpetual Help, pray for me and grant me the favour I confidently ask of you. (Then say three Hail Marys).

**Novena mass - 7:30pm every First Tuesday**

**Join us for rosary and novena prayers every Tuesday, 7:00pm**

For the opportunity of having the statue of Our Lady visit your home, please contact Bart Sarlabus [bart.sarlabus@gmail.com](mailto:bart.sarlabus@gmail.com) or Melva Paguinto [emcipi85@yahoo.com.au](mailto:emcipi85@yahoo.com.au).

Families on the roster, if unable to pick up please don't hesitate to contact Bart or Melva.

**You may invite either Fr Jolly or Fr Zvonimir to join you in prayers at home.**

**Please organise with the parish office.**



### Rosary Statue Family Roster

Mar	5	12	19	26	
	Cruz	Dennis	Jacob	Shalini	
Apr	2	9	16	23	30
	Festejo	Vasram	Sebastian	Ring	Lali
May	7	14	21	28	
	Shalini	Sebastian	Shanti	Gan	
Jun	4	11	18	25	
	available	available	available	available	
Jul	2	9	16	23	30
	available	available	available	available	available

*"A family that prays together, stays together - Fr Patrick Peyton"*

### ALPHA PROGRAM

? Looking for a welcoming space to ask your life and faith questions?

? Interested in meeting other people in the parish?

? Want a space where you can invite your family and friends into the parish community?

St John XXIII's Alpha program is a great next step for you! We meet weekly, always with food, lots of laughter and wholesome life and faith conversation! For program schedule or to express your interest, contact Mei and Donnie on 0432 042140 or fill up the form or scan the QR code



<https://forms.gle/sdEMryVwvhUpNPnZ7>

**Looking forward to meeting you ☺**

### St John 23rd RCIA Programme

This year our Parish is blessed to have 2 catechumens who are in their final weeks of preparation to be baptized in the Church.

**Paula Prats, Hadi Yazdi**

They will receive the other sacraments, together with **William**, as we pray for them each day in their final preparation in the faith journey and for their families.

*May they be strengthened and blessed with graces to grow in the knowledge and in faith.*

## Paying our debt together

We are very grateful to all our parishioners who always generously support our Parish.

**FIRST COLLECTION** supports the priests and deacons of the Diocese.

**SECOND COLLECTION** goes to the running costs of our church, ministry expenses and specially to pay off our church mortgage.

A Planned giving Program is in place to help with the planning/budgeting of church expenses. The Parish Finance Committee encourages parishioners to register for direct debit or credit card deductions instead of the envelope system. An SJ23rd registration form is available at the church foyer or from the website.

**Parishioners who want to make a financial contribution are encouraged to use the TapnGo machines by the entrances or online via BPoint.**

**scan the QR code**





## Pastoral Ministries

*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. Mahatma Gandhi*  
We are in urgent need for volunteers to assist in the different pastoral ministries in our Parish.



# WE NEED YOU

### ⇒ SRE Teachers

If you could spare an hour during weekdays to spread God's word teaching the scriptures to children, **WE NEED YOU**. We currently have 4 public primary schools and a high school in our parish where we hold scripture classes during school hours for 30 minutes during Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. For more information please call Asoki 0430 020265 or Renuka 0414 795814. Training and resources will be provided.

### ⇒ GARDENERS AND CLEANERS

Now that the church is open for celebrations, its floors need to be swept of dust, cobwebs brushed off, candle stands cleaned and garden kept green. We would like to request all our volunteer cleaners and gardeners to come back and continue their ministry. For more information contact [maintenance@john23rd.org.au](mailto:maintenance@john23rd.org.au) or the parish office.

### ⇒ MUSIC MINISTRY

If your passion is music and are interested to assist with the music ministry, you are most welcome to join and make our liturgy celebrations more alive.

Please contact Neil Mascarenhas, our music ministry coordinator via email [neil.mas@gmail.com](mailto:neil.mas@gmail.com)



We still have aprons for sale  
\$30.00

Please contact Techie on  
0438 201436 or the parish office  
for orders.

Proceeds goes to our church funds

### FLOWERS FOR THE CHURCH

If you wish to donate flowers for the altar, please phone James David on 0413 787596



"Lent is a time to focus on prayer, to open our hearts and minds to God who loves us."  
YOU are invited to experience God's Peace and Love by slowing down and reflecting in a small group each week.  
EVERY FRIDAY EVENING  
at 7 pm at the Parish staff meeting room.  
Call Pauline on 0407417039 for any inquiries.



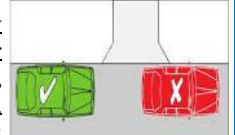
John McCabe  
Karen Green  
Julian Martin  
Suni Fernando

Mei Velasco  
Ajith Lobo  
Helen Festejo  
Rebecca Reynolds

### DRIVEWAY/CARPARK SAFETY

For everyone's safety, please park at least 1.8 meters from the church's driveway entrance.

Your parked vehicle must not block the flow of traffic or impair the vision of other drivers getting into or out of the parking lot, basically impeding vehicles from entering, exiting or turning into or from the church's driveway.



**Vehicle safety is more than just staying alert when parking your car. Let us not become a danger to other road users.**

Remember to please always use the footpath on both sides of the church car park when walking around the church parking lot, again for safety reasons.

Please make sure when you come to Mass, let us consider our neighbours. Do not block the neighbours' driveway.



### GOD LOVES US ALL!

Be inspired and liven up your spirit through Lanni Fides Books

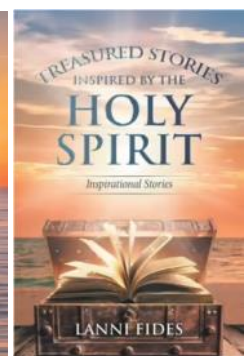
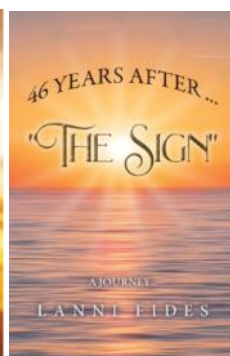
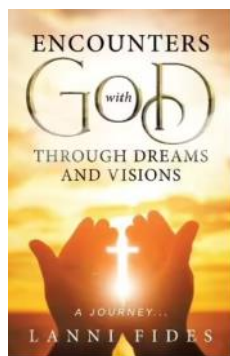
Book 1: ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD THROUGH DREAMS AND VISIONS - author's testimonials of God's messages in sleep.

Book 2: 46 YEARS AFTER ... "THE SIGN" - author's remarkable revelation of her inspiring life story on faith, love, marriage, family, and purpose in life.

Book 3: TREASURED STORIES INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT - inspirational stories of 22 different people in all walks of life, who experienced God's loving hands.

**"Nihil Obstat" Published with Ecclesiastical Approval by Fr Wim Hoekstra, Censor Deputatus, Diocese of Parramatta**

Now on sale at [amazon.com.au](http://amazon.com.au) / search lanni fides books or order directly from the author via email on [lynpanqi@outlook.com](mailto:lynpanqi@outlook.com). Cost/book \$20. A portion of sales goes to Parish SS Project. Author's website: [www.lannifides.com.au](http://www.lannifides.com.au)



### COLUMBARIUM

For our parishioners who are planning to buy a Niche, do so without delay, because we always want to prioritise members of our parish who wish to buy the Niches.

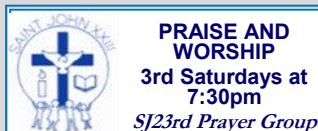
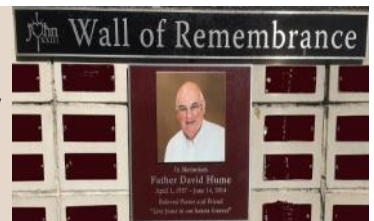
For further information please contact the Parish Office.

### MEMORIAL WALL

The wall in front of the church is devoted to the memory of our deceased family and friends, especially if they are buried overseas.

For any enquiries please email [columbarium@john23rd.org.au](mailto:columbarium@john23rd.org.au)

The plaques cost \$500.00



## Community Events



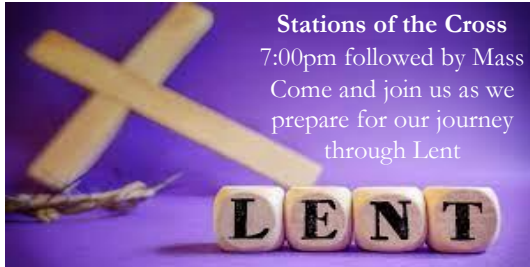
Building our Community  
**TOGETHER**

We are organizing some mini events to contribute to our much needed church funds but **most especially** to boost our parish community engagements. It's about time to get together, know each other and begin to build up our Parish Community of St John 23rd.

We invite our different cultural community to host a Saturday Vigil or Sunday mornings mini event after our mass celebrations for a full community involvement. We encourage our parish community to support these mini endeavours.

Any other suggestions for church fanfare, activities or just availability of support are most welcome and greatly appreciated. Please contact either Nanette - 0404 465600 or Techie - 0439 201436.

**JOIN US,  
ENJOY WITH US  
UPCOMING  
EVENT/S  
Save the dates in  
your diary**



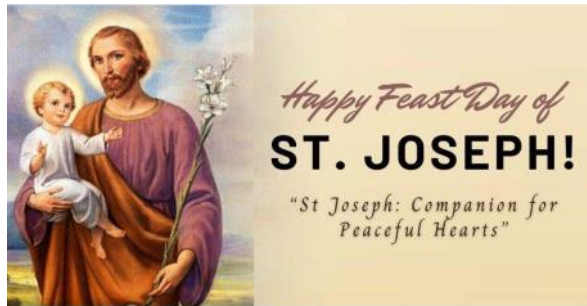
### Stations of the Cross

7:00pm followed by Mass  
Come and join us as we  
prepare for our journey  
through Lent

The Parish of SJ23rd would like to invite Parishioners interested to take part as an "Apostle" for the Washing of the Feet for the 7.30pm Holy Thursday mass celebration.

This will take place at the school Hub.

Please contact Frank by Monday the 25th March on 0459504625.



### Happy Feast Day of ST. JOSEPH!

"St Joseph: Companion for  
Peaceful Hearts"

#### Solemn High Mass:

10:30AM, Saturday, 16 March 2024  
@ St Patrick's Church,  
51-59 Allawah St, Blacktown 2148  
Main Celebrant:  
Most Rev Robert McGuckin  
Bishop Emeritus of Toowoomba

#### Novena Masses:

6 March - 8:00 PM  
7-12 March - 7:30 PM  
13 March - 8:00 PM  
14 March - 7:30 PM  
@ St Michael's Church,  
58 Orwell St, Blacktown 2148



THE FILIPINO  
CHAPLAINCY,  
DIOCESE OF  
PARRAMATTA

Email:  
filchap.dop@gmail.com  
Facebook page:  
fb.com/filchap

### TO THE SENIORS OF OUR PARISH

**Come and join!** "Young at Hearts Seniors Club" invites you to join in a special presentation on "**Demystifying Dementia**" led by Donna Ward, Community Engagement and program Director, Group Homes Australia (GHA), who will be sharing valuable insights and a deeper understanding of dementia.

You'll also learn how to reduce risk factors and gain practical tips and strategies to support your loved ones and others in the Community to live well with dementia.

Following mass and morning tea,

**WHEN:** Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 10.15am-11.30am

**WHERE:** Catholic Parish of St John 23<sup>rd</sup>

To register your interest, (after the 16<sup>th</sup> of February) please contact either Frank 0459 504625 email [frank.coleiro@gmail.com](mailto:frank.coleiro@gmail.com) or Trevor on 0407 150399



## YOUTH MINISTRY

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13



For all youth ministry enquiries

✉ [blaze@john23rd.org.au](mailto:blaze@john23rd.org.au)

Follow us

[www.facebook.com/blazeyouthsj23/](https://www.facebook.com/blazeyouthsj23/)

<https://www.instagram.com/blazeyouthsj23/>

### REGISTRATION FORM

BLAZE youth group is an initiative from Stanhope Parish to encourage community amongst the youth. It is a space for encouragement and open faith talk. Our sessions focus on one relevant theme each term. We start the night with casual conversation and dinner followed by games and then a faith-based talk, concluding with a discussion.

We encourage all youth from Year 7 to Year 12 to join in on the fun, meet like-minded people and gain a deeper understanding of their faith.

Sessions run from 7pm to 9pm every second Friday throughout the school

If you would like to come along to one of our sessions, please contact the team at [blaze@john23rd.org.au](mailto:blaze@john23rd.org.au)

## OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

### Catholic Early Learning Centre

160 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens

☎ (02) 9852 0585

✉ [celcstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:celcstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au)

🌐 [www.celcstanhope.catholic.edu.au](http://www.celcstanhope.catholic.edu.au)

### Holy Cross Primary

49 Meurants Lane, Glenwood

Principal: Louise O'Donnell

☎ (02) 8664 7100

✉ [holycross@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:holycross@parra.catholic.edu.au)

🌐 [www.beglenwood.catholic.edu.au](http://www.beglenwood.catholic.edu.au)

### St John XXIII Catholic College

160 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens

Principal: Dr Peter Webster

☎ (02) 9852 0500

✉ [stmarks@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:stmarks@parra.catholic.edu.au)

🌐 [www.stjohn23stanhope.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stjohn23stanhope.catholic.edu.au)

Youth Coordinator	Asst Youth Coordinator	Youth Leaders		
Amanda Lee 0413 545 318	Caitlin Green 0425 579 594	Taylor Coutinho Natasja Surjanto Brendan Weber	Charlotte Todhunter Anna Todhunter	Johnathan Soosaipillai Earl Carvalho

## MORE YOUTH GROUPS

CRL (Community of the Risen Lord)		YFC (Youth for Christ)	
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## Why You Should Go on a Retreat

Tim Drake

COMMENTARY: Seek the blessings of a time of holy rest with Our Lord, for ‘There is no one gentler than God in revealing ourselves to ourselves.’ Every retreat we take is a kind of practice for what we will be doing for all of eternity: worshipping and resting in the Lord.

*“On my second day, God healed my marriage in the hermitage.”*

Given that her husband wasn’t present, this female retreatant’s statement confirmed for me not only that miracles still happen, but that one potential blessing of retreats is healing — whether physical, emotional or spiritual. Some of the blessings that result from a faith-based retreat are tangible; others are perceptible only in the soul.

When most people are asked why they don’t go on retreat, they’ll respond that they just don’t have the time. It’s an interesting response, given that God has given us all the time that we have. When we take time for a faith-based retreat, we are really giving back to God that which already belongs to him. The blessings that flow from that conscious engagement with God are plentiful.

The foremost blessing of a retreat is the recognition that God is God, and we are not. Going on a retreat demonstrates a posture of humility. We approach the Holy Trinity, on our knees, acknowledging our place in the universe before God.

During Lent, we are already predisposed to encountering Christ and growing closer to him. All of Lent is a reminder of Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection. Through devotions, almsgiving, acts of service, prayer and penance, we are drawn ever closer in union with Our Savior. If we desire authentic friendship with Christ, we must spend time with him. A retreat is a wonderful, uninterrupted way of doing so.

A retreat offers the blessing of getting to know Christ better. Whether a silent or guided retreat, we are giving back to God the gift of time. The spiritual movements, stirrings, communion and prayer that happen during that blessed time are a conversation that can last a lifetime. The Holy Spirit is our primary spiritual director, and through our time of contemplation, we come not only to know God better, but also ourselves. One retreatant once told me, “There is no one gentler than God in revealing ourselves to ourselves.”

We are a wounded people. Each of us has been hurt in life, and we carry these wounds with us. A retreat offers the opportunity for a soul to be nourished and tended to by the Divine Healer. Repeatedly, as the executive director of a retreat center, I encounter guests who describe how God has provided healing during their time of retreat.

One guest described the emotional healing she experienced from the ravages of breast cancer and chemotherapy while on retreat. Another guest described how the beauty of God’s creation outside her hermitage window reminded her of a similar view from her childhood and provided some level of healing from previous abuse. Others have described God’s assistance in helping to overcome addictions. Others describe a kind of healing that comes in the form of clarity or direction, or the removal of anxiety, as the Holy Spirit reveals God’s will in profound, new or interesting ways. Our ways are not God ways.

Another blessing of retreats is that they offer a time of holy rest. In Mark 6:31, Jesus invites his disciples, and us, to “Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.” Amidst the pace of our often-hectic, overscheduled, hyper-connected lives, retreats offer an invitation and an opportunity for a reset. We often live under the illusion that all that happens is because of our doing. We invert reality. It is precisely when we are busiest and believe we cannot withdraw that we should. It is then that we need a reminder that we are not the center of all things.

Retreats offer a pause from technology, social media, schedules, screens, work, shopping, even interacting with other people. Every retreat we take is a kind of practice for what we will be doing for all of eternity: worshipping and resting in the Lord. Like the white space in art, or the pause in music, retreats offer us a space for reflection and renewal. They allow us to be transformed by Christ.

It’s good to remember that we “retreat” because God did so first. On the seventh day, God rested. Christ routinely went off to a solitary place to pray and told his followers to do likewise. If Jesus did so regularly, who are we to think it’s not necessary for us? Only one thing is necessary. In Luke 10:42, Christ tells Martha that only one thing is needful: to sit at Christ’s feet and listen to his word. There is no better place to do that than on retreat. It is there, before God, where we experience Christ’s tender mercy, peace and love.

Just as exercise is a way to form our bodies, and remain healthy, a retreat is physical exertion for our souls. Retreats are how we work on the interior life, the life of the soul. They are vital for our own spiritual growth, renewal, transformation and development. Psalm 46:10 tells us, “Be still, and know that I am God ...” What better way to spend some time during Lent?

Ultimately, though, we do not go on retreat for ourselves alone. While we do go to better ourselves, and strive for sainthood, we should leave our place of retreat and reenter the world better: better wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, friends, co-workers and parishioners. We should take the peace that God provides on retreat and bring that peace to our families, communities, churches, states, countries and world — for it is only through our own holiness, reflecting Christ, that we can leave the world a better place.

<https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/why-you-should-go-on-a-retreat#>



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**Celebrating Holy Week: Formation for Ministers of the Altar: 9 March**

Celebrating Holy Week- a workshop for current Acolytes and Ministers at the Altar will be held on Saturday 9 March 2024, 9:30 – 3:00 PM by the Office for Worship at the Bede Heather Centre 1-5 Marion St Blacktown (formerly known as the IFM). To register or for more information, please contact [lucy.woodbury@parracatholic.org](mailto:lucy.woodbury@parracatholic.org) or call 8838 3456 by 5 March 2024.

DATE: Saturday, 9 March

LOCATION: Bishop Bede Heather Centre 1-5 Marion St Blacktown

TIME: 9.30am

**The FaithFeed - Friday, 15 March**

Interested in live music + curious conversations + life & faith stories from those in their 20s, 30s 40s? Sign up for The FaithFeed, Friday 15 March 2024 – doors open 7pm with live music from 7:30PM.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

DATE: Friday, 15 March

LOCATION: Downstairs @ Bishop Bede Heather Centre, 1-5 Marion Street, Blacktown

TIME: Doors open 7pm



## CONTACTS

### PARISH OFFICE

#### Office Hours

Tue - Fri 8.30 - 4.00pm

#### Office Contacts

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(AH Emergency)

📞 0423 160567

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Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768

### MAILING

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### CLERGY

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✉ [jolly@john23rd.org.au](mailto:jolly@john23rd.org.au)

📞 0417 541 637 (emergency only)

#### Assistant Priest:

Fr Zvonimir Gavranovic

✉ [Zvonimir@john23rd.org.au](mailto:Zvonimir@john23rd.org.au)

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✉ [columbarium@john23rd.org.au](mailto:columbarium@john23rd.org.au)

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