

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.

Last Sunday's gospel reading spoke of destroying and rebuilding the Temple, though we know Jesus was referring to himself. Today's first reading (2 Chr 36:14-16,19-23) reflects on how Israel's sins led to the destruction of the First Temple and exile in Babylon, and how Cyrus, King of Persia, reported his commission to build a new temple in Jerusalem and to free the Israelites to return there. Cyrus is thus shown to be the opposite of Pharaoh in the time of the Exodus, for had at every turn Pharaoh resisted letting the Israelites go, even for only a few days to sacrifice to God in the wilderness. Curiously, Cyrus' last word, the last word of 2 Chronicles itself, is the same verb as found in Abraham's story two weeks ago ('alah). It is translated here as "Let him ascend [to Jerusalem]", consistent both with the traditional reading indicated by the Septuagint and the general reference for going to Jerusalem, but it may also read "Let him offer". Cyrus, unbidden by the Israelites, frees them and encourages them to worship God. Cyrus' apparently extraordinary action is therefore seen as having been motivated by God. Whatever the political motives for Cyrus' actions, our literary character is a God-fearing Gentile, a just king and the anointed agent of God - in all ways he is the very opposite of Egypt's Pharaoh.

Cyrus' unbidden actions have some parallel in the second reading (Eph 2:4-10) which in the last verse employs the word *poiēma* (things that have been made), translated for us as "work of art". The only other instance of this noun in the New Testament is in Romans 1:20 (translated "the things [God] has made"). In both instances creature could also be a suitable translation, but in both it also refers to that which has been saved in God's act of salvation. This act of salvation is as unbidden as the act of creation, which the next word in Ephesians points to (*ktisthentes*; those having been created), a related form of which appears in Romans 1:25. This is the theologically important point of this word and its context: creation and salvation, making and repairing, or forming and reforming, are two facets of a single divine impulse. Ephesians points to the twofold mystery: God creates humankind, which tradition holds was in the image of the Son; and the salvation wrought in Jesus Christ the Son recreates us into that intended image (see also Eph 1:3-7). The saving work of God is a manifestation of that same love that founds the act of creation itself. At the metaphorical level the first and second readings are in parallel: Babylon, the land of exile due to sin, is the state of sin in which we are separated from God's intended state for us; it is God's unbidden initiative and doing that brings us back, just as God's unbidden act of creation brought us into being.

These two themes, that is, God's love that founds creation and salvation, and Christ as the agent of creation and salvation, are also present in today's gospel (John 3:14-21; see also the reflection for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14 September). The first link is clear, being found in the references to God's "great love for the world". The second is less obvious, and yet, as is so typical of John, it involves an even deeper, incarnational layer that is conveyed only indirectly, imaginatively. It is located in the reference to the image of the bronze serpent lifted up in view of those bitten by serpents. In the desert, the image of that which causes the injury becomes the cause of healing. But the image of the thing stands in for the thing itself (like synecdoche, a figure of speech), here revealing that at God's instigation the injurer then heals the injury. In this case, the Jesus the man heals what human beings had hurt; salvation can be achieved only by God the creator, and this is manifest in Christ, God truly incarnate, such that in his true humanity is humanity's salvation wrought.

#### EASTER 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

#### Church Painting and Repair of the Cracked Ceiling

We are certain you all appreciate a clean newly painted, and all the cracks in the ceiling fixed in the Church. It has a better look now, including the toilets, sacristy and kitchen area. The total cost of the project is \$30,000. While we had the scissor lifts around we changed all the damaged or to be damaged fire sensors which was also a absolute necessity. We have so far raised 33% of the total cost, we need to raise the remaining 77% of the cost. Please continue your support, so we can pay the painters.

Thank you very much for your continued support.

**Finance Committee & Maintenance**

#### 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

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

#### Masses of Devotion

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

#### Exposition + Benediction

1 <sup>st</sup> Fri	after 9.15am 7.30pm
---------------------	---------------------

#### Reconciliation

After the weekday masses	
Sat	after the 9am mass until 10.30am
	5:15 - 5:45pm before the Vigil Mass or upon request

#### Sacraments

Sun	12pm Baptism by appointment
-----	-----------------------------

#### Prayers

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

#### Praise & Worship

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

#### Special Blessings

Blessing during masses	
1 <sup>st</sup> Sun	Birthday celebrants
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sun	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

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

### First Reading

A reading from the second book of Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

*The wrath and the mercy of the Lord are revealed in the exile and liberation of his people.*

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation.'

And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up."'

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 136

**R. Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps. **R.**

For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. 'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion's songs.' **R.**

O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! **R.**

O let my tongue cleave my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! **R.**

### Second Reading

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians 2:4-10

*When we were dead through sins, he brought us to life.*

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ - it is through grace that you have been saved - and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.

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 3:14-21

*God sent his Son into the world that we might be saved through him.*

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believed in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

### Communion Antiphon

Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.



## Special Intentions

### Recently Deceased:

George Dino, Louis Sant, Kathy Hamori, Reginal Santo

### Anniversary:

Antonia Cremona & family members

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

### Thanksgiving:

Abigail Pragasam

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 compassion, disconcerted by the incomprehensible suffering of the innocent, we pray for those who are experiencing times of trial. Inspire the hearts of those who seek the peace that is so indispensable for the whole human family.

*Brother Roger of Taizé*

### March Church Calendar

Mon	11	8:30am - Mass
Tues	12	9:15am - Mass 7:30pm - Rosary and Novena prayer to Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Wed	13	9:15am - Mass
Thurs	14	9:15am - Mass
Fri	15	9:15am - Mass 7:00pm - Station of the Cross followed by Mass
Sat	16	9:00am - Mass 6:00pm - Vigil Mass
Sun	17	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	
	<i>Crux</i>	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	
	Erasmus	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 Bokenham**, 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)

### FLOWERS FOR THE CHURCH

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



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

"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.



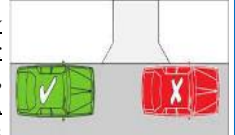
John McCabe  
Karen Green  
Julian Martin  
Suni Fernando

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.

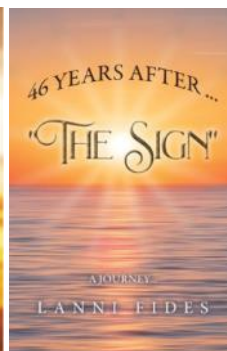
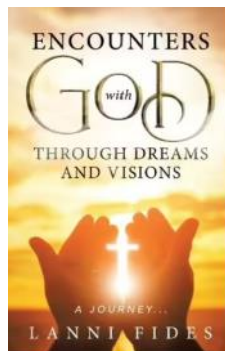
Book 2: 46 YEARS AFTER ... "THE SIGN" - author's remarkable revelation of her inspiring life story on faith, love, marriage, family, and purpose in life.

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 [lynpangi@outlook.com](mailto:lynpangi@outlook.com). Only books 1 & 2 are in her stock, first come, first served basis applies.

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.

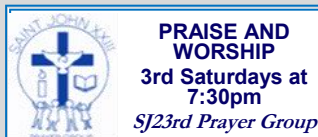
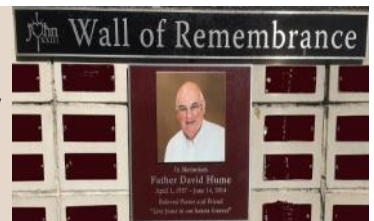
For further information please contact the Parish Office.

### 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



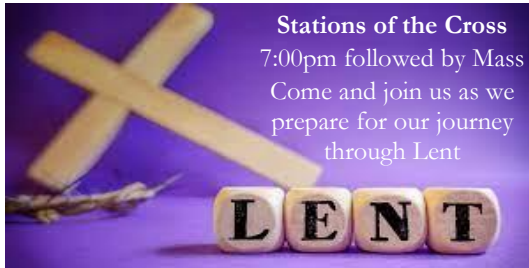
Building our Community  
**TOGETHER**

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.



**Stay With Me**  
*Stay with me, remain here with me.*  
*Watch and pray, watch and pray.*

We are looking for volunteers to keep watch with the Lord during Holy Hour at the Altar of Repose on Holy Thursday for the hours between 9:00pm and midnight. Sign up sheets will be available at the church foyer from Saturday, 09 March for the hours of 9-10pm, 10-11pm, and 11pm to midnight. The last hour is the most important as the numbers tend to dwindle towards the end.

*Matt: 26: 40 "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour."*

### 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.hcglenwood.catholic.edu.au](http://www.hcglenwood.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)	
Rojith de Silva 0405 9563210	Nimeshi Fernando 0417 101009	Vince Erasmo (International) 0406 253698	Jonathan Montaos (Australia) 0401 478733



We all know Lent is a penitential time of the year. However, what often happens during Lent is that many of the penances we adopt revolve around fasting, abstinence and prayer. Some of us give up coffee, desserts or snacks, others take on spiritual practices like trying to attend daily Mass.

But sadly, almsgiving, the traditional third form of penance in the Christian life is often neglected. This is unfortunate, because giving alms is a powerful way to grow in holiness. Catholic writer Scott Hahn even goes as far as saying that almsgiving is superior to prayer and fasting, because as he put it, giving alms includes both prayer and fasting, and surpasses them.

#### Why should I give alms?

Jesus gives us a clear mandate to give alms (Mark 6, Luke 12). Strictly speaking, almsgiving means giving financially or materially to someone in need. In a broader sense, almsgiving refers to acts of mercy, covering the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The fact that God blesses those who help the poor and needy is clear throughout the Bible. Giving alms purifies us and helps us grow in virtue, particularly those of charity, mercy and generosity.

We are called to give, driven by a love for God and neighbor. The famous maxim, “whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me,” derived from Matthew 25:40, is Jesus’ invitation to recognize his presence in the poor. Almsgiving is indicative of an authentic conversion of heart because it is rooted in real actions and sacrifices for someone else in need.

Thus, it must become more than us fumbling for change when encountering a homeless person, and certainly far more than just a nice, pious thought. Think about it: If we see a homeless man on the street, does it make sense to wish him well or would it make more sense to ask if the man would like some food to eat (see James 2:14-16)?

#### How can I give more?

Giving is one area that we as Catholics fare quite poorly. For instance, studies show that Catholics tithe just about one percent of their household income. One way to learn to give more is by examining our lifestyles and stuff we own. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, we can divide our possessions into things we absolutely need to sustain our lives (and the lives of those who depend on us); things that we need to maintain our state of life and position in society; and things that we do not really need, for they go beyond our present and probable future needs, and he categorized these as ‘superfluous’ possessions.

We are bound to give alms out of our surplus, i.e. of our ‘superfluous’ possessions. With regards to the first two categories of possessions, we are not obligated to give out of these things, as they are actually needed. Nevertheless, it is still praiseworthy to do so, for in doing so, we alleviate a need in someone’s life with something we might be surprised to discover we can perhaps actually do without. Moreover, we see how Jesus commended this in the story of the widow’s mite, when a poor widow made an offering of two copper coins, and despite her poverty, gave all she had (Luke 21: 3-4).

#### 5 Simple Ways To Give This Lent

Here are five simple ways we can start giving more in concrete ways:

Cut out ‘superfluous’ stuff in our weekly budgets and give away the money saved from that. We can even go a step further by downgrading some of our so-called needs. For instance, instead of getting a tall pumpkin-spice latte at the local coffee shop everyday, we can switch to a cheaper option and then add those savings to our almsgiving fund. Similarly, whatever money we might save this Lent from not eating out or cutting back on desserts or whatever else, can be given to someone in need.

Sign up to volunteer with an outreach program on a regular basis. Most parishes have some form of outreach towards the poor, single mothers, seniors, etc., and by making a commitment to serve at one such program, it will help us give of ourselves for the benefit of someone else.

Set up an automatic regular donation from a credit card/bank account towards a charitable organization. This would save us the hassle of having to do this each week/month and also lower the risk of us changing our minds. A word of caution: we should make sure that the group we choose abides by Catholic teaching, as some prominent charitable organizations supply contraceptives or even provide abortions in the name of helping the poor. Some organizations that we can consider contributing to regularly include Caritas, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities, etc.

Start keeping a supply of snacks or care packages in our cars. I know many people who pack small care packages or keep a box of granola bars in their cars, so when they come across poor people on the streets, they are ready and able to help them by handing these items to them.

Go over the list of spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Pick the ones you can realistically do, and then go out and do them. It’s more possible to do several of these than one might think. Check out the book, *Mercy in the City*, which recorded one woman’s attempt to practice works of mercy in a meaningful way without making any dramatic changes to her lifestyle.

#### What do I do next?

The answer is simple: start giving more. Whether that means donating money or material goods to the poor, or intentionally performing acts of mercy, it all starts with the decision to do so in a real way. We should plan our lives, so that on one hand, we are always prepared to make individual, spontaneous gifts to poor people we meet, and on the other hand, our home budgets should be organized in a way that allows for almsgiving to become a regular habit.

As St. Teresa of Calcutta explained it, Christ wants to give us the chance to put our love for him in living action: “He makes himself the hungry one, not only for bread, but for love. He makes himself the naked one, not only for a piece of cloth, but for that understanding love, that dignity, human dignity. He makes himself the homeless one, not only for the piece of a small room, but for that deep sincere love for the other. And this is the Eucharist. This is Jesus, the Living Bread that he has come to break with you and me.”

And that’s at the heart of why we give alms. Not so much because Jesus commanded us to, nor because by doing so we can expect more virtues or blessings in our lives, though all that is true. But we give alms because by doing so, we are drawn into a deeper encounter with Christ himself, who is present in those to whom we give of ourselves in love.

<https://catholic-link.org/giving-alm-gives-more-jesus-lent/>



OFFICE FOR WORSHIP  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA



For more events please go to <https://parracatholic.org/connect/events/> or <https://catholicoutlook.org/>



**Do you find life & faith inspiration by listening to the experiences of others?**

The Mission Enhancement Team's *Soul Food Podcast* features life & faith stories of people from our diocesan family. Listen now for FREE via our website or on Spotify: <https://pfparra.org.au/soulfood/>

### The FaithFeed - Friday, 15 March

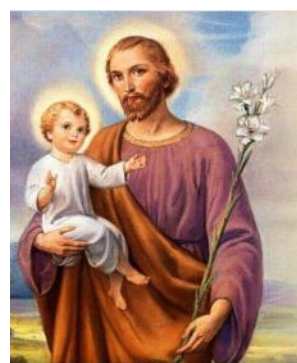
Interested in live music + curious conversations + life & faith stories from those in their 20s, 30s 40s? Sign up for The FaithFeed, Friday 15 March 2024 – doors open 7pm with live music from 7:30PM.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

DATE: Friday, 15 March

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

TIME: Doors open 7pm



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

## CONTACTS

### PARISH OFFICE

#### Office Hours

Tue - Fri 8.30 - 4.00pm

#### Office Contacts

☎ (02) 8883 5981

(AH Emergency)

📞 0423 160567

160 Perfection Avenue,  
Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768

### MAILING

PO Box 23, Stanhope  
Gardens, NSW 2768

### CLERGY

#### Parish Priest:

Fr Jolly Chacko

✉ [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)

### STAFF

#### Secretary:

Tanya Gatt

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

#### Finance:

Renuka Soosaipillai

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

#### Sacramental Coordinator:

Helen Zammit

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

### OTHER CONTACTS

#### Maintenance issues:

David Gorkic

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

#### Columbarium queries:

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

### NEW TO OUR PARISH?

#### Welcome to our parish community!

Please take a welcome pack  
from the church foyer

Visit our website

<http://john23rd.com/>

Like our Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/john23rdparish](http://www.facebook.com/john23rdparish)

### COELIACS

Those who are gluten intolerant may receive communion with a gluten low host. Please inform the acolyte before Mass.



### Office for Safeguarding Parramatta Way is to:

- ◆ Act with Justice, and state that we have a zero tolerance for any form of abuse or harm to children or any person
  - ◆ Act with justice and ensure that laws and obligations are upheld, and safety is paramount
- <https://safeguarding.org.au/>





Trust the sale of your home with your local Parishioner and award-winning licensed real estate agent, **John Irudayaraj.**

A member of your church who believes in the power of giving back, mention this advert and if John sells your home he will make a donation directly to the Church.

0433 969 731  
johnirudayaraj@mcgrath.com.au  
McGrath Northwest

**McGrath**

## Risen Lord Community Praise & Worship Night



**7.30pm  
FRIDAYS,  
St John 23rd  
College Hall**

Come join us for an evening of deep intimacy with the Lord. Learn about the abundant and victorious life that Jesus died and purchased for us to have.



## QUAKERS HILL FAMILY PRACTICE

**Are you looking for a family doctor?**

- Long established accredited General Practice in Quakers Hill
  - Multi Doctor practice with Christian values at the core
  - In-house Allied health and Dental clinic
- Books are now open for new patients**

**Tel – 02 9626 6300**

**www.qhfp.com.au**

# Climate airconditioning

DESIGN // INSTALLATIONS // SERVICE // REPAIRS

# 0400 841 601

ADVERTISE HERE

ADVERTISE HERE

**Selling Your House ?**



Call **JULIA STELLA** on 0431 277 110  
Over 19 years of Real Estate Experience  
I'll be delighted to assist you achieve your Property Goals!  
julia@norwesproperty.com.au  
2/1 Celebration Drive  
Bella Vista

**Norwes**

ADVERTISE HERE

ADVERTISE HERE



0416 336 894  
info@pressurepro.sydney  
sydneypressurepro  
Sydney Pressure Pro

- ✓ Driveways & Retaining Walls
- ✓ Timber Decking & Patios
- ✓ All Outdoor Hard Surfaces
- ✓ Environmentally Friendly
- ✓ Prompt and Reliable
- ✓ Beat Any Verified Quote



**holyfamilyservices.com.au • Call us: 9678 8200**

A Ministry of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth



Talk to me today. 0460 035 598  
**Beth.Jerusalem@cba.com.au**

**Achieve your home owner goals with our support.**



Whether you're looking to buy, invest or switch loans, I'm here to help you through every step. My name is Beth Jerusalem and I'm your local CommBank Home Lending Specialist.

ADVERTISE HERE

ADVERTISE HERE

ADVERTISE HERE