

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.'

Gospel Reflection

The American spiritual writer, Patty Houser, wrote: 'I never listen to what a person says. I look at what a person does because what they do tells me who they really are' (Cf. https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/14247693.Patty_Houser) We all know this as the maxim, 'Actions speak louder than words'. This maxim was first recorded in 1628 from John Pym, an English parliamentarian, whose attempted arrest in 1642 by Charles I sparked the English Civil War. We have all heard it so often that we believe it. It is certainly true that our actions reveal us to others, but I would not go as far as Patty Houser and say that I never listen to what a person says. As much as our actions are important, I think that our words are pretty important as well.

The author of the gospel in Matthew's name knew this. Whoever wrote it—scholarship generally thinks that it was written about AD 80 in Antioch, near the modern Turkish city of Antakya, near the Syrian border—was part of a community of Christian Jews who had formed around Matthew, one of the Twelve. Matthew's Gospel emphasises how Jesus fulfils the Hebrew Scriptures, and today's passage about Isaiah's prophecy about the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali is no exception. The centre of the gospel has five parts, and each part is divided into two: what Jesus does (the narrative) and what Jesus says (the discourse). Today we are hearing from the narrative of the first part. In the following five weeks we shall read from the discourse of the first part. Interestingly, whoever put our scriptural readings together seems to be telling us that words are more important than actions, since we get five weeks of words but only this one week of action. But we can leave that aside.

In our reading today we get only a small extract from the first narrative that includes the call of the first disciples (a good reason not to read the shorter form of the gospel, which even cuts out the call). We begin with a one-line summary of the central message of Jesus: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'.

We heard these same words on the Second Sunday in Advent on the lips of John the Baptiser. We shall hear them again throughout the season of Lent. 'Repent.' It is worth saying again that the Greek imperative verb metanoeite means to turn around and head in a completely new direction. Jesus came to stop us getting lost and to point us in the right direction; he came to help us find God again. Today we meet four small-businessmen, Simon and Andrew, James and John. They have a little food-supply industry. We hear time and again these days that small business is the backbone of the economy. These four guys are making their contribution to the economic development of their community. This is what many of us also do.

Now, as important as that is for their own success and prosperity, Jesus calls them to follow him, calls them to leave that all behind. Why would he do that? And why would they listen to him? As St Augustine says in one of his homilies (Sermo 96), 'What the Lord has commanded seems hard and harsh, that any who wish to follow him should deny themselves'. Why does anyone take up a sea change? It is all about finding meaning and purpose in life. It is not that there is anything wrong with working, but Jesus calls us to see that there is more to life than this. Augustine says, 'learn to love yourself by not loving yourself'. In other words, put things into perspective. This is what it means to turn around and head off in the right direction.

Today we can thank God that, like Simon and Andrew, James and John, each one of us is called by Jesus to repent, to turn around, to go in the right direction. We can be thankful that each one of us is called to follow him, to fish not for food but for life. The Eucharist of the broken body and the blood poured out is the direction we are to follow; it is the life we are to seek.

Geoffrey D Dunn

HAPPY 28th SARDOTAL ANNIVERSARY FATHER JOLLY
22ND JANUARY

Congratulations on your priestly ministry.

May God abundantly bless your priesthood with renewed grace, deep fulfilment, and steadfast strength as you continue to serve our community with unwavering dedication and love. Please know that you remain in our prayers as you minister among us with joy, compassion, and faith

Caring for our parish 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 provides for the running costs of our church, ministry expenses.

We have a Planned Giving Program. We encourage parishioners to register for direct debit or credit card deductions as alternative to an envelope system. Support can be provided via the registration forms available at the church foyer or from the website or scan the QR Code

TapnGo machines available by the entrances.

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.



Consult not your fears
but your hopes and
your dreams -
Pope St John 23rd

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 <i>during school days</i>
2nd Sat	7:30pm Indonesian Mass

Masses of Devotion

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

Exposition + Benediction

1 st Fri	after 9.15am, 7.30pm
Wed	8:00pm Holy Hour

Reconciliation

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

Sacraments

Sun	12pm Baptism <i>by appointment</i>
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Prayers

Tue	7:00pm Rosary and novena prayers (<i>Church Tabernacle</i>)
Thurs	7:00pm Lectio Divina (<i>church</i>)
Fri	6:30pm Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group (<i>office</i>) Pauline Camilleri 0407 417039

Special Blessings

Blessing during masses	
1 st Sun	Birthday celebrants
3 rd Sun	Wedding anniversaries

Homebound?

Homebound and would like to receive Holy Communion please contact the parish office or send text message to Rose Franco on 0401 387427

COELIACS

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

Join & be part of our community.

Welcome pack at the church foyer or scan the QR code



If you want to be part of our mailing list please email

Communications@john23rd.org.au



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/>



Entrance Antiphon

O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

First Reading

Isaiah 8:23 - 9:3

In the Galilean country, the people have seen a great light.

In days past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of the nations.

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 26:1, 4, 13-14

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

The Lord is my light and my help; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; before whom shall I shrink? **R.**

There is one thing I ask of the Lord, for this I long, to live in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to savour the sweetness of the Lord, to behold his temple. **R.**

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. Hope in him, hold firm and take heart. Hope in the Lord! **R.**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

I appeal to you, my brothers and sisters, make up the differences between you.

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul', 'I am for Apollo', 'I am for Cephas', 'I am for Christ'. Has Christ been parcelled out? Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God



The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand



COLUMBIARIUM

If you are considering purchasing a niche, we still have spaces available. These are open to parishioners, families, friends and our neighbouring parishes. For more information, please contact the Parish Office.

Special Intentions

Names published with permission

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

Born to eternal life

Emelyn Moyano, Mario Adran

Remembrances:

Death Anniversary

Tricia Batongbacal, Emelita Perez, Rosario Hili

Sick

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.

Brian McCunnie, John Tipton, Valeria Laureta, Bev Osborn, Lucas Colleta, Dr Bronwyn Andrews Dudley Francis, Marilyn Nalapo, Christina Properzi, Raymond Lanzona, Elizabeth Langley, Gerald Simbulan, Brendan Prideaux Marcelino Matteazi, Carlo Bueno, Helen West, Victor Pons, Ksenija Bosnic Emma Q Fernando, Isagani Ocampo, Myrna Manalili, Lenka Olivier Talija, Florentina Elisura, Peter McArdle Emma Matoza, Rosanna John Pellissery, Zena Samar, Charlie Busuttil, Elsie Knapp, Perla Magculang, Fausto Bayot, Margaret Harrison, Elizabeth Candame, Joshua McCarroll, Cathie Christie, Lily Camilleri, Melissa Nava, Imelda Vinluan, Cindy Dadivas, Louise Smith, Hilary Regan, Mary Phillips, Jude Newnes, Manuel Sarris, Jerwin McCarron, Rosie Carbonel, Maria Romeo, Zoey Illic, Mary Bormate, Bev Lewis, Noah, Carrie Conolly, Jonathan Gemin, Babies with Blister disease, Renado Naldo Ryan Dixon, Barbara Thompson, Natasha Leitao, Troy James, Mr Thomas

Thanksgiving

Wira Peiris, Father Jolly Chacko, Christian Gavanes, Alveine Moyano

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

Gospel Acclamation

John 1:14, 12

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick. Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 4:12-17

He went to Capernaum, that the prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled.

Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali! Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan, Galilee of the nations! The people that lived in darkness has seen a great light; on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death a light has dawned.

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'.

The Gospel of the Lord

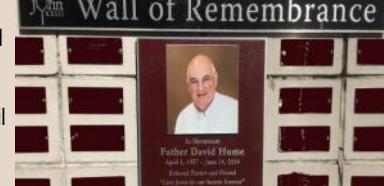
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Communion Antiphon

Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

Wall of Remembrance

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 The plaques cost \$600.00



CONTACTS

PARISH OFFICE

Office Hours

Tue - Fri 8.30 - 4.00pm

Office Contacts

☎ (02) 8883 5981
(AH Emergency)

❶ 0434 033 326
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
❶ 0417 541 637 (emergency only)

Assistant Priest:

Fr Bartholomew Chukwu
✉ chukwu@john23rd.org.au

STAFF

Secretary:

Tanya Gatt
✉ secretary@john23rd.org.au

Finance:

Renuka Soosaipillai
✉ accounts@john23rd.org.au

Sacramental Coordinator:

Helen Zammit

✉ sacramental@john23rd.org.au

OTHER CONTACTS

Parish Council:

John McCabe
✉ johnlmccabe5@gmail.com

Maintenance issues:

David Gorkic

✉ maintenance@john23rd.org.au

Columbarium queries:

✉ columbarium@john23rd.org.au

John McCabe



Mei Velasco
Julian Martin
Suni Fernando
Helen Festejo
Ajith Lobo
Rebecca Reynolds

OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

Ambrose Early Learning

160 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens
☎ (02) 9852 0585
✉ celcstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au
www.celcstanhope.catholic.edu.au

Holy Cross Primary

49 Meurants Lane, Glenwood
Principal: Attila Lendvai
☎ (02) 8664 7100
✉ holycross@parra.catholic.edu.au
www.hcglenwood.catholic.edu.au

St John XXIII Catholic College

160 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens
Principal: Frank Chiment
☎ (02) 9852 0500
✉ stjohn23stanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au
www.stjohn23stanhope.catholic.edu.au

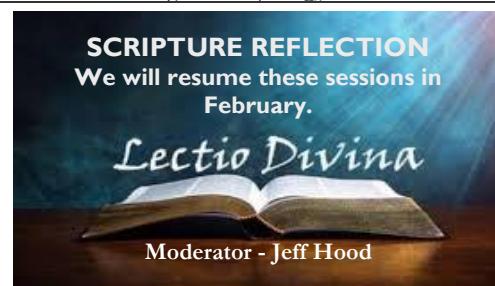
Praying together

When we pray together, our faith is strengthened and our community is drawn closer.
Join us to deepen your faith and open your heart to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Rosary Statue Family Roster

	6	13	20	27	
Jan	Ruggiero	Ring M	Barnouti	Tangungan	
Feb	3	10	17	24	
	Erasmo	Ring	Jacob	Ruggiero	
Mar	3	10	17	24	31
	Paguinto	Hala	Available	Available	Available
Apr	7	14	21	28	
	Available	Available	Available	Available	

"A family that prays together, stays together - Fr Patrick Peyton"
Rosary statue contacts Techie Sarlabus techie.sarlabus@gmail.com or
Melva Paguinto mpipi85@yahoo.com.au



Pastoral Ministries

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. Mahatma Gandhi
We are in need of 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.

⇒ CLEANERS AND GARDENERS

As we give our heartfelt thanks to the wonderful volunteers who faithfully keep our church clean, our gardens green, and our surroundings welcoming, we also invite others to join this valued ministry. A few more helping hands would make a great difference in caring for our shared spiritual home. If you are able to assist, please contact Tanya at the parish office.

⇒ CAKE ANGELS

If anyone is interested to be involved and take leadership of this fun loving dynamic group please contact Tanya at the parish office or Techie at 0438 201436.



A Friendly Reminder to Our Parish Community

We kindly ask all parishioners to help care for our church by cleaning up after themselves after masses. Small actions—such as returning items to their place and disposing of rubbish properly. Help keep our church clean, welcoming, and ready for everyone. Thank you for your care and consideration in looking after our shared spiritual home.

January Calendar

Mon 26 Australia Day
8:30am - Mass

Tues 27 9:15am - Mass
7:00pm - Rosary & Novena
Prayer Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Wed 28 Saint Thomas Aquinas (M)
9:15am - Mass
8:00pm - Holy Hour

Thur 29 9:15am - Mass

Fri 30 9:15am - Mass
Sat 31 Saint John Bosco (M)
9.00am - Mass
6:00pm - Mass

February

Sun 01 7.30am, 9:00am, 10:30am - Mass
6:00pm - Mass



Young at Hearts Seniors Group
Contact either of the following:
Frank Coleiro - 0459 504625
Trevor Coutinho - 0407 150399



Vinnies
join the good works
Message Rose Franco 0401 387427

YOUTH/YOUNG ADULT GROUPS

BLAZE YOUTH Year 7 to 12

WHEN: 7:00 - 9:00pm

WHERE: St John XXIII College (C Block Bell space)
For any queries, please email blaze@john23rd.org.au or
DM @blaze_youthj23 on Insta | FB

IGNITE YOUNG ADULTS 18 - 35 years of age

WHEN: First Sundays each month 7:00 - 9:30pm

WHERE: St John XXIII Staffroom

For any queries please either email
ignite.stjohn23@gmail.com or DM on @ignite_sj23

CRL (Community of the Risen Lord)

Rojith de Silva 0405 9563210

Nimeshi Fernando 0417 101009

YFC (Youth for Christ)

Dominic Lim 0468 826253 Australia

Ronan Limguangco 0478 629629 International

Diocesan News



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

FIRST COLLECTION supports the priests and deacons of the Diocese.**SECOND COLLECTION** provides for the running costs of our church, ministry expenses. We have a Planned Giving Program. We encourage parishioners to register for direct debit or credit card deductions as alternative to an envelope system. Support can be provided via the registration forms are available at the church foyer or from the website or scan the QR Code**TapnGo** machines available by the entrances.**HALL PROJECT****Prayer**

Almighty God, we thank you for your many blessings to our parish and to each of us.

We pray for your guidance and wisdom as we prepare ourselves to begin the construction. May your Holy spirit be with all our Engineers, architects, builders and all involved in this project. Protect them from harm and grant them skill and diligence. May this hall be a place of unity, fellowship and faith formation for our community, a space where we can grow in faith and serve others. Bless all our sponsors, donors and each of us who contribute in our own humble ways and means. Whatever we do, may we do it for your glory.

St. Joseph, the patron of families and workers, **Pray for us**
 St. John XXIII, Patron of our parish, **Pray for us**
 St. Vincent Ferrer, Patron of all builders, **Pray for us**

Ways to donate**Bank transfer**

Account name: Blessed John XXIII Parish

BSB : 067 950 A/C : 00000313

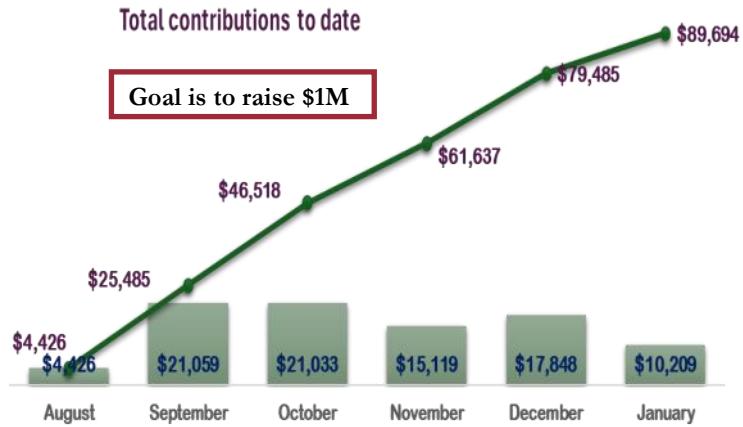
Reference: BD (your name)

BPOINT

For credit card donation visit

<https://www.bpoint.com.au/pay/StJohnXXIIIPGSG>

scan the QR code

**CONTRIBUTION UPDATE****Total contributions to date****Goal is to raise \$1M****Let's Build our future together**

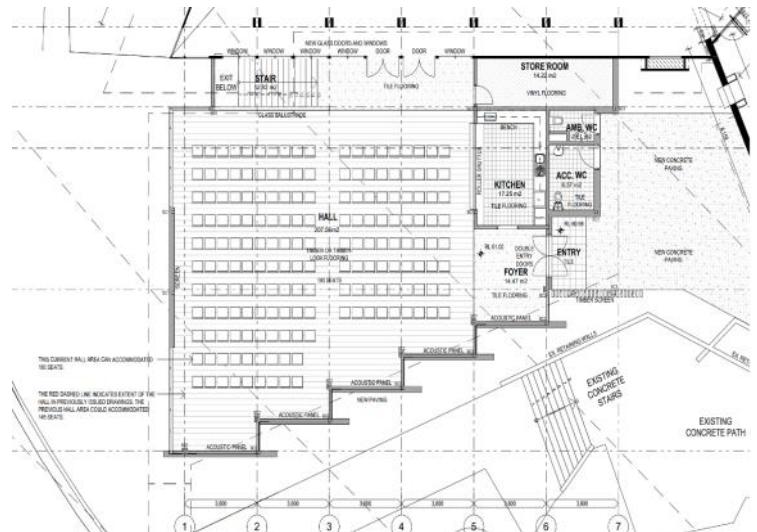
With the Parish Hall project now underway, we are excited to step up our fundraising efforts. This new hall is a lasting investment for our children, our youth, our families, and all parishioners — young and old. It will be a welcoming space for faith formation, community gatherings, and a strong sense of belonging, where future generations can continue to grow in Christ.

Thank you for being part of our shared mission to build a parish founded on prayer, love, and service. As we continue to strengthen our community and enhance our parish facilities, we warmly invite you to partner with us by becoming an event sponsor. Sponsorship is a meaningful way to support the life and mission of our parish, with your generosity recognised during this special event and beyond.

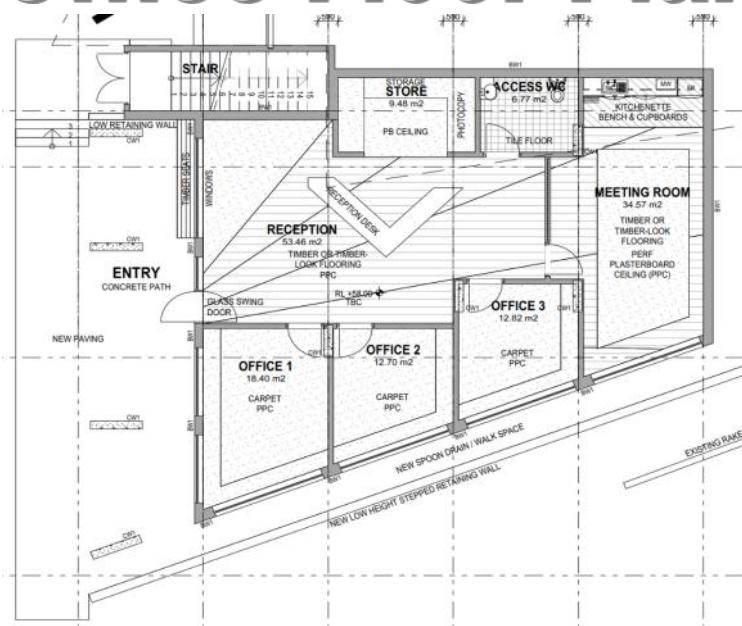
1. Our secret sponsorship. - Be a sponsor and donate whatever amount you wish to donate to this event.
2. Table companion sponsor: \$250 - Acknowledgement on event slides and parish notices and mention in parish community communications for a month.
3. Evening partner sponsor: \$400 - Acknowledgement on event slides, name listed in parish bulletin for 2 months and name and logo displayed on table cards and formal acknowledgement during the opening welcome address.
4. Gala Patron Sponsor: \$500 - Name listed in the Dinner Dance program and acknowledgement during formal opening address, logo displayed on table cards and name listed in the Bulletin for 4 months.
5. Community Building Sponsor: \$1000 - A special certificate of Appreciation from the parish that can be displayed in your business establishment or home tables, presented on the Dinner Dance, name listed for 6 months in the Bulletin adds:



Hall Floor Plan



Office Floor Plan



UPCOMING Community EVENTS



Please contact either

Nanette - 0404 465600

Techie - 0438 201436

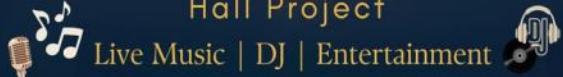
As a vibrant community of St John XXIII Parish, we invite our various cultural groups and ministries to take part in our parish life by hosting a Saturday Vigil or Sunday morning mini-event after our Mass celebrations. These gatherings are a wonderful way to share your culture, connect and strengthen our sense of family and belonging within the parish.

We encourage everyone to come along, participate and support these community-led activities. We also welcome suggestions for future events, fundraising ideas, or any offers of help — your creativity and support are always appreciated and play an important part in making our parish life joyful and thriving!

St John
Catholic Church
XXIII
Proudly invites you to

Gala Dinner Dance

In support of our Parish
Hall Project



Live Music | DJ | Entertainment

SATURDAY, 7TH FEB 2026 @ 7PM

Entry \$100 per person | St John XXIII School Hall
160 Perfection Ave, Stanhope Gardens.

Save 10% when you book a full table (10 guests)

Free entry for children under 10
Child minding available

BOOK YOUR
SPOT NOW



Come and join us for an evening of live music, dancing and delicious buffet dinner. As we continue to strengthen our relationships with one another and enhance our parish facilities with a shared dream of a parish hall, we invite you to our fundraising event—**Parish Dinner Dance on 7 February 2026**.

MAINS

Beef with Mushroom - Savoury tender beef slices sautéed with button mushrooms in a rich gravy.

Chop Suey - A colourful medley of crisp stir-fried vegetables with shrimp, quail eggs, and meat.

Chicken Pastel - A creamy, comforting Filipino stew made with chicken, chorizo, and vegetables, topped with a golden flaky crust.

Sweet and Sour Fish - Crispy deep-fried fish fillets tossed in a vibrant, tangy sauce with bell peppers and pineapples.

Mixed Noodles - A celebratory blend of Bihon and Canton noodles, stir-fried with vegetables and savoury seasonings.

Roasted Pork Belly (Lechon) - Succulent, slow-roasted pork with perfectly crispy skin and tender meat.

Steamed Rice - Fluffy white rice to complement the various savory sauces.

DESSERTS

Leche Flan - A silky, rich Filipino caramel custard.

Turron - Crispy, deep-fried banana rolls dusted with brown sugar.

Fruit Platter - Assortment of sliced seasonal fresh fruits.

DRINKS

Soft Drinks, Coffee and Tea

Table Wines and Dessert Liqueur - A curated selection kindly provided by Fr. Jolly.

PARTS OF THE MASS EXPLAINED

In talking or thinking about the Mass, first attention should be given to the Eucharistic Prayer. This, the center of the Mass, is that part when the Church recalls Jesus

Christ, does again what the Lord did at the Last Supper, and Prays with Him to the Heavenly Father. The Eucharistic Prayer is the heart of the Mass and deserves our close attention, our "Amen."

The Eucharistic Prayer is followed by the Communion Rite. Starting with the Our Father, we prepare for Holy Communion with our Lord.

Immediately before the Eucharistic Prayer is the short Offertory. Now the bread and wine, usually brought to the priest in a procession, are offered to God.

And before the Offertory there is a "Liturgy of the Word," when we listen to selected readings from the Bible and have them explained in the homily. At this time in the Mass, we review our sacred writings, our written heritage.

And before the Liturgy of the Word, there is a short Introductory Rite. In this we express our sinfulness and say together prayers to our God.

Every Mass we join in, ideally, means going through a familiar beloved journey which, though familiar, is different and novel every time.

The Preparatory Rites

After processing to the sanctuary and reverencing the Blessed Sacrament, the priest kisses the altar because the altar represents the Body of Christ and is the sacred place of sacrifice.

During the procession you may join in a hymn. Then you receive an opening greeting from the priest. There follows a short penitential rite. At this time you should recall your own failures, sins, selfishness and pride and should ask God's pardon and mercy with the help of the subsequent prayers.

If the "Gloria" is said, make this an expression of your praise of God. Then listen to the Opening Prayer of the Mass and make its sentiments your own. This you do by saying "Amen" at its end.

The Scripture Readings

This part of the Mass is controlled by a separate book, the "Lectionary for Mass." The Lectionary is a large book, usually kept open at the pulpit, from which the lectors and priest read Bible passages for the day's liturgy.

The Lectionary is a remarkable piece of work. In clever fashion it gives us Bible readings expressing the message of the Bible as well as the liturgical season. By paying close attention to the readings, Sunday after Sunday, an alert Catholic can become reasonably familiar with the entire Bible.

Every Sunday there are three readings. These are printed in the Lectionary in a three year cycle. The year 1975 brings readings from the A cycle; 1976 from the B cycle; 1977 the C cycle; 1978 the A cycle again, etc.

During the ordinary green vestment Sundays ("Sundays in Ordinary Time"), we have Gospel readings in somewhat continuous fashion. Cycle A has Matthew's Gospel; Cycle B that of Mark; Cycle C, Luke's. During Lent and Advent we read John's Gospel. Each time you stand for the Gospel, therefore, you are listening to another ongoing section of our most precious writings. And every three years you will have reviewed all four Gospels.

The first reading is generally from the Old Testament. This is chosen with two points in mind: (1) to illustrate some common link, some parallel, with the Gospel reading; (2) to acquaint us with all the 46 books of the Old Testament over the 3 year cycle. So you should listen carefully to the first reading for two reasons: to learn about this particular Old Testament book, and to notice the theme that will be picked up in the third reading, the Gospel.

After the Old Testament reading there is a "Responsorial Psalm." This is part of an Old Testament Psalm, chosen because it voices the sentiments of prayer we should express to God after hearing this first reading. There is a striking similarity in mood and sentiment between the Old Testament reading and the psalm which responds to it.

The second reading each Sunday is from the New Testament writings. Because of the parallel between the other readings, we might be tempted to pay less attention to this second reading. But it is important and helpful. This is simply a continuing reading from the New Testament. So Sunday after Sunday we go through the other books of the New Testament. It is interesting that every year we start the cycle by reading selections from Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. This one letter is given emphasis because the concerns and questions of the Corinthians and the answers of Paul have perennial relevance for the Church today.

The Liturgy of the Word is designed as a class in Bible reading and Bible study. The homily an explanation of the readings with a lesson for contemporary Christian living is meant to help us in learning and living the Word of God for today.

The preferred term now is the homily but most still refer to it as the sermon. Any faithful adult Catholic is a veteran of thousands of sermons and probably has some rather definite ideas on whether sermons are good or bad, in general and also in his or her parish.

A particular problem today is that so many tend to measure sermons according to the standards of TV or radio. Such standards are unrealistic, as most of the people in the pews would admit if they were called upon to deliver a speech before an audience or before a TV camera. Both realism and Christian charity should dispose one to be sympathetic towards the priest or deacon who must preach to others.

This said, however, it is true that there is no substitute for a carefully prepared, practical sermon with a message that inspires and encourages us to live the Christ life with greater courage and spirituality. A good sermon does help much. Even a poor sermon, however, always has good in it if we listen carefully. The sermon is not the most important feature of the Mass. But it is important, and is never to be neglected.

The Eucharistic Prayer

This longer prayer is the "center of the entire celebration." Always introduced with a Preface, it is always concluded with a solemn "Amen." This is a presidential prayer, voiced by the priest alone. He is to try for clear, deliberate and warm delivery, following the exact words. Now the people are to listen attentively and put their "Amen" to it all.

The new Missal has a large number of prefaces approximately 70 new ones. The preface is tailored to the specific liturgy of the Mass being celebrated.

There are four different Eucharistic Prayers. By now the alert Catholic has become acquainted with all of them. The first is the old Roman Canon, developed between the 5th and 7th Centuries and used exclusively in the Western Church from the 11th Century until recently. The longest of the four, it is the most structured. The second Eucharistic Prayer, the shortest, is an enlargement of the 3rd Century Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome. It is simple and rich. The third Eucharistic Prayer, a modern work, is a shortened and simplified version of the Roman Canon. The fourth is the longest of the new texts, is perhaps the best of the Canons, and expresses recent biblical and catechetical developments.

The chief elements of the Eucharistic prayer are these:

- a. Thanksgiving (expressed especially in the preface): in the name of the entire people of God, the priest praises the Father and gives him thanks for the work of salvation or for some special aspect of it in keeping with the day, feast, or season.
- b. Acclamation: united with the angels, the congregation sings or recites the "Sanctus." This acclamation forms part of the Eucharistic prayer, and all the people join with the priest in singing or reciting it.
- c. Epiclesis: in special invocations the Church calls on God's power and asks that the gifts offered by men may be consecrated, that is, become the body and blood of Christ and that the victim may become a source of salvation for those who are to share in communion.
- d. Narrative of the institution and consecration: in the words and actions of Christ, the sacrifice he instituted at the Last Supper is celebrated, when under the appearances of bread and wine he offered his body and blood, gave to his Apostles to eat and drink, and commanded them to carry on this mystery.
- e. Anamnesis: in fulfilment of the command received from Christ through the Apostles, the Church keeps his memorial by recalling especially his passion, resurrection, and ascension.
- f. Offering: in this memorial, the Church and in particular the Church here and now assembled offers the victim to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The Church's intention is that the faithful not only offer the spotless victim but also learn to offer themselves and daily to be drawn into ever more perfect union, through Christ the Mediator, with the Father and with each other, so that at last God may be all in all.
- g. Intercessions: the intercessions make it clear that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church of heaven and earth, and that the offering is made for the Church and all its members, living and dead, who are called to share in the salvation and redemption acquired by the body and blood of Christ.
- h. Final doxology: the praise of God is expressed in the doxology which is confirmed and concluded by the acclamation of the people.

All should listen to the Eucharistic prayer in silent reverence and share in it by making the acclamations.

--from General Instruction of the Roman Missal

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