

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.

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

Most of the gospel passage we hear today is found only in Matthew's Gospel, especially in the way these four teachings about killing, adultery, divorce, and swearing oaths are structured. There will be two more next week.

'You have learnt how it was said ... but I say to you.' With this antithetical pattern Matthew introduces us to why Christianity is the complete form of God's plan for the world. What Jesus is saying here is that to be a good Christian it is not enough to keep the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are not the pinnacle of Christian living. They are only the foundation upon which true Christian virtue needs to be erected. Jesus sets out a deepening and a radicalising of what God revealed at Sinai to Moses. There is a two-step path to how we are to live. The first is the step, captured in those ancient commandments, of moving from killing to not killing, of committing adultery to not committing adultery, of stealing to not stealing. Jesus tells us this is only the first step.

The second step is not only not to kill but not even to get angry, not only not physically to commit adultery but not even mentally to commit adultery. This is the hidden wisdom of God, not that we are to be better persons but we are to be new persons, new persons in baptism, new persons in the Spirit of God. The Christian is not about doing the bare minimum but about being one's complete self.

St Augustine of Hippo explains this two-step path to virtue in his Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount: 'Not to kill is, therefore, the least commandment, and whoever breaks it will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But those who fulfil it in the sense that they refrain from killing are not all at once heroes fit for the kingdom of heaven. They have, to be sure, risen to a certain degree; but to be perfect they will not even become angry without cause'.

It is interesting to note that Augustine qualifies anger. He says that it is wrong to get angry 'without cause'. This is not what Jesus said. It would seem that Augustine accepted that not all anger was bad. When I look at what Jesus said, I have my own dilemma. I doubt that we can truly live without ever feeling angry. What we can control is how we deal with such emotion. We are capable of finding ways of not letting anger control us. As the author of the letter to the Ephesians writes (4:26): 'Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry'. The author acknowledges that we are going to get angry, but he urges us to deal with it, and to deal with it immediately, before it festers and ruins our relationships with others.

What I think we find Jesus saying in all of this is not so much that God does not want us simply to obey rules and regulations as much as God wants us to live lives full of love for each other. The law of the Lord is the way of love; the law of the Lord is the way of peace; the law of the Lord is the way of Jesus, who gave himself for others. We keep the law of God not simply by what we do and don't do but by keeping it within our hearts, allowing that law to mould us and fashion us into the image of the Son. Jesus wants us to be wholehearted, not legalistic.

We can be thankful today that God has revealed to us the fullness and maturity of life in the Spirit. We can be thankful for the wisdom that God brings us, a wisdom that goes beyond the bare necessities and leads us to the full blossoming of our human potential, which will only be realised in the kingdom to which we have been invited by God's grace.

Geoffrey D. Dunn

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

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

Exposition + Benediction

1st 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>) <i>Pauline Camilleri 0407 417039</i>

Special Blessings

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

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.

Entrance Antiphon

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

First Reading

Sirach 15:15-20

He never commanded anyone to be godless.

If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 118:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

R. Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

They are happy whose life is blameless, who follow God's law! They are happy those who do his will, seeking him with all their hearts. **R.**

You have laid down your precepts to be obeyed with care. May my footsteps be firm to obey your statutes. **R.**

Bless your servant and I shall live and obey your word. Open my eyes that I may consider the wonders of your law. **R.**

Teach me the demands of your statutes and I will keep them to the end. Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart. **R.**

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

God in his wisdom predestined our glory before the ages began.

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

of Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. Alleluia!



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

Alfred Degiorgio, Avelino Olan, Peter Touma, Ernesto Aaron

Remembrances:

Eric Fernando, Pachala Philomina, Fatima Lizi

Death Anniversary

Hemamali Fernando, Merita Fernando

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, Zena Samar, Charlie Busuttill, Elsie Knapp, Perla Magculang, Fausto Bayot, Isagani Ocampo, Myrna Manalili, Lenka Olivier Taliya, Florentina Elisura, Cathie Christie, Rosanna John Pellissery, Peter McArdle, Jerwin McCarron, Emma Matoza, Margaret Harrison, Elizabeth Candame, Joshua McCarroll, Melissa Nava, Imelda Vinluan, Cindy Dadvivas, Louise Smith, Lily Camilleri, Hilary Regan, Mary Phillips, Jude Newnes, Manuel Sarris, Rosie Carbonel, Maria Romeo, Zoey Illic, Mary Bormate, Carrie Conolly, Jonathan Gemin, Babies with Blister disease, Bev Lewis, Renado Naldo, Ryan Dixon, Noah, Natasha Leitao, Troy James, Nicollo Benesa, Mr Thomas, Carlo Dominic, Barbara Thompson

Thanksgiving

Bernadette Virwani

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

Gospel

Matthew 5:20-22, 27-28, 33-34, 37

Such was said to your ancestors; but I am speaking to you.

Jesus said to his disciples: I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Communion Antiphon

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

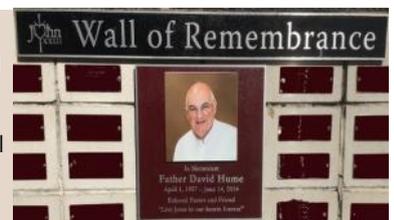


COLUMBARIUM

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.

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 The plaques cost \$600.00



CONTACTS

PARISH OFFICE

Office Hours

Tue - Fri 8.30 - 4.00pm

Office Contacts

☎ (02) 8883 5981

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

☎ 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

✉ johnmccabe5@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

✉ celstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au

www.celstanhope.catholic.edu.au

Holy Cross Primary

49 Meurants Lane, Glenwood

Principal: Attila Lendvai

☎ (02) 8664 7100

✉ holycross@parra.catholic.edu.au

www.bglenwood.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

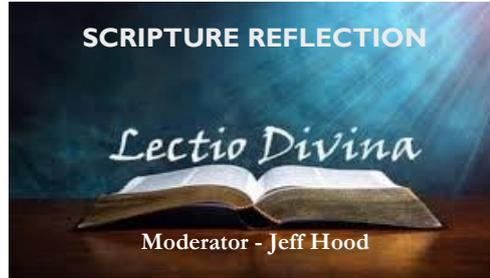
When we pray together, our faith is strengthened and our community is drawn closer. Join us to deepen your faith and open your heart to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Rosary Statue Family Roster

	3	10	17	24	
Feb	Erasmio	Ring	Jacob	Ruggiero	
Mar	3	10	17	24	31
	Paguinto	Hala	Available	Available	Available
Apr	7	14	21	28	
	Available	Available	Available	Available	
May	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 mcipi85@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.



⇒ 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.

February Calendar

Mon	16	8:30am - Mass
Tues	17	9:15am - Mass 7:00pm - Rosary & Novena prayer <i>Our Lady of Perpetual Help</i>
Wed	18	<i>Ash Wednesday</i> 6:00am - Mass 9:15am - Mass 7:00pm - Mass 8:00pm - Holy Hour
Thur	19	9:15am - Mass
Fri	20	9:15am - Mass
Sat	21	9:00am - Mass 6:00pm - Mass
Sun	22	7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am - Mass 6:00pm - Mass

Young at Heart 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 [@blazeyouthsj23](https://www.instagram.com/blazeyouthsj23) on Insta | FB
Contact Ellena - 0478 685 191

BLAZE TERM 1
20th February
6th & 20th March

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 gnite.stjohn23@gmail.com or DM on [@ignite_sj23](https://www.instagram.com/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



Parish Hall/Office Project Plan

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.

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/StJohnXXIIIIPGSG>

scan the QR code



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!

Please contact either

Nanette - 0404 465600

Techie - 0438 201436

THANK YOU

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who so generously contributed and/or sponsored our Gala Dinner Night — Donnie & Mei Velasco, Bhajune Malonzo, John & Ellen McCabe, Oka & Emilia Hidayat, John Irudayaraj, Bob & Grace Agbulos, Elite Asset, YR Group, Climbing Ladders, Luxia Real Estate, Mama Lor Restaurant, and 3K Events Hire.

Also, our sincere appreciation goes to iTravel c/o Susan Clark, Nanette Gamboa, Ajith Lobo & Preema D'Souza, Risen Lord Community for providing raffle prizes which contributed to our raise additional funds for our Parish Hall Project.

A special thank you, as well, to the band for keeping the energy high along with Shonee Attwood, Rommel Olsen, Gerard & Maureen Santiago for leading everyone on their feet dancing the night away.

We enjoyed sumptuous dinner catered by Mama Lor - thank you to Sabrina and her wonderful staff for the excellent service you have provided. Our gratitude as well to 3K Events Hire for the rental support.

Most of all, thank you to our parishioners and friends. Your continued support, generosity, and presence truly made the evening a success.

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**

As we approach the stage of inviting tenders for our building project, we warmly encourage any builders within our parish community who may be interested in participating in the tender process to please speak with Fr Jolly for further details.

As we move closer into the final phase and begin the actual construction, let us continue to support this important project through our prayers and generous financial contributions.



PH 0406 181 188
<http://tripleevents.com>



CLIMBING LADDERS
 Early Learning & Montessori Centre

LG1/25 Regent Honeyeater Grove, North Kellyville NSW 2155

☎ 02 9629 4444 🌐 www.climbingladders.com.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

UPCOMING Community EVENTS

YAHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

23 rd February, Monday, 6:30pm	Pizza & Pasta Night - The Fitzroy Lane Restaurant, 7 Hills RSL. RSVP 18th February
11 th March, Wednesday, after the 9:15am Mass	Psychology and spirituality of getting older, from the wisdom and insights by Jeff Hood RSVP 9 th March
<p>The Young At Heart would like to invite all parishioners to a very informative presentation by Jeff Hood, the seminarian in our parish on Wednesday the 11th of March, after the morning mass and a brief coffee time. Jeff will be sharing his thoughts on the psychology and spirituality of ageing as well as insights into his own story and experiences. Booking is essential, please contact Frank on 0459504625 or Trevor on 0407150399</p>	
22 nd April, Wednesday	Picnic in the Park, TBC
15 th May, Friday, 11:30am	Mother's Day lunch - The Fiddler RSVP 8 th May
10 th July, Friday, after morning mass	Morning tea



For all inquiries/confirmation/RSPVs please call or text
Frank 0459 504 625 or Trevor 0407 150 399

**IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE A
FREE FRIDGE PLEASE
CONTACT THE PARISH
OFFICE 8883 5981**



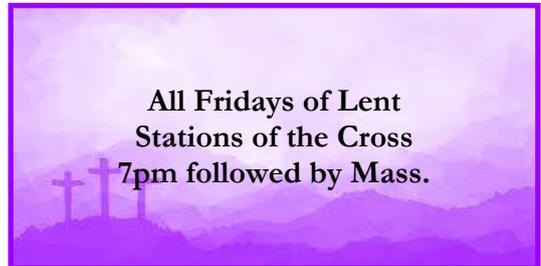
INTERNATIONAL EUCHARIST CONGRESS

Our Holy Father Pope Leo has confirmed his visit to Australia for the International Eucharistic Congress that will take place in Sydney, 2028. As we prepare for this great event, it is a time for us to develop a deeper understanding and love of the Eucharist.

1st March is officially the start of preparations for the **International Eucharist Congress**.

Every parish in Australia is having an hour of Adoration of the Holy Eucharist. A time to praise and worship the Lord. Our parish will have an **hour of adoration on the same day at 5pm to 6pm followed by the Eucharist**.

We ask every parishioner to be part of this worshipping community. We have also the **Holy Hour** in our parish **every Wednesday from 8 to 9pm** and encourage you to join.



Sausage Sizzle

Sunday 15th Feb

Come have a sausage sizzle after 9am &
10.30am Mass



Sausage Sizzle \$3
Sausage & Drink \$5

Come support our Blaze Youth Group!



ASH WEDNESDAY

What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent—and a wonderful opportunity to make yourself 100% available to God!

How available to God are you? 50%? 75%? 96.4%? No matter what your answer, Ash Wednesday is the perfect time to decide that you will spend this Lent increasing that number.

On Ash Wednesday, you can get your forehead blessed with ashes at Mass or a prayer service. These ashes are a reminder that we need to repent.

Repentance is a powerful invitation. When John the Baptist first appeared in the desert of Judea, this was his message: “Repent, prepare the way of the Lord” (Matthew 3:2). Later, when Jesus began his ministry, he led with this message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

But what does it mean for us to repent, here and now, more than two thousand years later? It means the same as it did to the people walking around the dusty pathways in their sandals, trying to inch closer to Jesus as he passed through their town or village. Repent means “to turn back to God.”

We all find ourselves needing to turn back to God many times a day, in ways small and large. It is not a matter of guilt and it is not a shameful thing. It is simply that we are a better version of ourselves when we return to his side!

When is Ash Wednesday 2026?

This year Ash Wednesday is on February 18, 2026.

The History of Ashes on Ash Wednesday

You might be wondering why we get ashes on our foreheads for Ash Wednesday. Throughout history, ashes have been a powerful outward symbol of interior repentance and spiritual awareness. Here are some examples of ashes in the Bible:

† Therefore I disown what I have said, and repent in dust and ashes." (*Job 42:6*)

† Daughter of my people, dress in sackcloth, roll in the ashes." (*Jeremiah 6:26*)

† I turned to the Lord God, to seek help, in prayer and petition, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes." (*Daniel 9:3*)

† When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh: “By decree of the king and his nobles, no man or beast, no cattle or sheep, shall taste anything; they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water. Man and beast alike must be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God; they all must turn from their evil way and from the violence of their hands." (*Jonah 3: 6-8*)

The Early Christians used ashes to show repentance as well, but not just on Ash Wednesday! After going to confession, it was common for the priest to give the person ashes on their forehead. Catholics have been receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday since the time of St. Gregory the Great. In 1091, Pope Urban II encouraged the entire Church to use ashes on Ash Wednesday.

If you want to get blessed with ashes this Ash Wednesday, be sure to check with your local parish. Most churches celebrate Mass or have a prayer service on Ash Wednesday, and all are welcome to attend and be blessed with ashes.

Is Ash Wednesday a Holy Day of Obligation?

Contrary to popular belief, Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation. Even though you're not required to attend Mass, Ash Wednesday is a wonderful opportunity to rearrange your priorities and feed your soul before one of the most important seasons of the entire year!

Can you eat meat on Ash Wednesday?

No. Unless you have a medical exemption, Ash Wednesday is a day of Abstinence for Catholics.

Avoiding meat can be difficult, but it's a powerful way to be disciplined about your priorities. When you make little sacrifices a part of your everyday spirituality, amazing things happen!

For example, suppose you have a craving for a Coke, but you have a glass of water instead. It is the smallest thing. Nobody notices. And yet, by this simple action you strengthen your willpower and become an even better-version-of-yourself.

Or, say your soup tastes a little dull. You could add salt and pepper, but you don't. It's a little thing. It's nothing. But by saying no to yourself in small ways, it makes you even freer to say yes to the things that truly matter.

If you want to grow in strength this Lent, there's one simple thing you can do: Try to never leave a meal table without practicing some form of sacrifice. It is these tiny acts that will strengthen your will for the great moments of decision that are a part of each of our lives!

What are the fasting rules for Ash Wednesday?

The Church requires all Catholics from ages 14-59 to fast on Ash Wednesday. As long as you are in good health, this means that you should only eat one full meal, plus two smaller meals that do not equal a full meal. Ash Wednesday is also a day where Catholics avoid eating meat.

There is great wisdom in the Christian practice of fasting—even though its benefits are largely forgotten! Fasting is a spiritual exercise, and as such is primarily an action of the inner life. Authentic fasting draws us nearer to God and opens our hearts to receive his many gifts.

Fasting is also a sharp reminder that there are more important things in life than food. Authentic Christian fasting helps to release us from our attachments to the things of this world. It is often these worldly attachments that prevent us from becoming the-best-version-of-ourselves. Fasting also serves as a reminder that everything in this world is passing and thus encourages us to consider life beyond death.

Go without food for several hours and you quickly realize how truly weak, fragile, and dependent we are. This knowledge of self strips away arrogance and fosters a loving acknowledgment of our utter dependence on God. Ash Wednesday is a powerful day to rediscover the power of fasting in your life!

Make It Personal

Ash Wednesday is the perfect time to decide if you want to have the kind of Lent that's easy to forget...or the kind that changes your life. Do you want a renewed commitment to prayer? More discipline in a specific area of your life? A stronger marriage? More peace? This Ash Wednesday, set aside 15 minutes to set your intentions for the season of Lent!

<https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/lent/ash-wednesday.html>



**18TH FEBRUARY
MASS TIMES**

This coming Wednesday is Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting and every one of you to participate in one of the masses.

Our mass times are

6.00am, 9.15am and 7pm - SJXXIII Church

School masses are meant for children and staff only.

11.00am School Mass John XXII

Please bring your Palms from last year, there is a box at the back foyer. Thank you

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