

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."

Reflection

Today's gospel reading consists of three parables of the kingdom, and an interpretation of the first (v.24-30). The second parable (v.31-32) is curiously connected to two visions in Ezekiel and to Nebuchadnezzar's second dream in the book of Daniel, revealed in the references to birds that nest or dwell in the tree's branches (Ezek 17:23; 31:6; Dan 4:12). In Ezekiel 17 it is not the vigorous vine planted by the king of Babylon that survives, but the little shoot that God plucked from a tree and planted in Israel; it grows into a great tree, and is a home for the birds. Conversely, the great tree in Ezekiel 31 is Egypt, which, proud of its own grandeur, was brought down. Daniel's great tree is Nebuchadnezzar, who prides in his own greatness and is brought down, but repenting at the end he is restored to the throne as a humble king. By contrast, the gospel's humble mustard performs as the tree: the kingdom of heaven is not like the great kingdoms of earth, but is like the humble life of common people. The third parable (v.33) is the simplest: leaven works unseen—who knows how?—but certainly changing the dough and consequent bread from within. So too the kingdom of heaven works certainly but subtly, changing society from within.

Back in the first parable (v.24-30), unique to Matthew, there is a more complicated image. Related to last week's parable of the sower, its interpretation likewise originated in the early Church. Mark's version is like that of the yeast, but Matthew's has the added element of dandelion. It broaches the problem of evil: Why does God permit evil in the world? A simplistic approach presumes that what we find offensive should not exist, so God is not all-powerful or surely he would root evil out, or God is not good or surely he would not inflict pain. Thus concluding that

there is no God is, in a perverse sense, to claim oneself to be an impotent god, for lurking at its depth is the thought, "If I were God, the world would be better". Almost in response to this, the first reading (Wis 12:13, 16-19) opens: "There is no god, other than you, who cares for everything". It develops the idea of how God's power reveals itself in leniency—a contrast to the ways of the world; for what earthly ruler is lenient to opposition? All over the world, in every age, rulers and governments declare opponents to be enemies to be repressed or uprooted, so in totalitarian regimes we have imprisonment, and executions, and invasions, while in others we find leaders and presidents encouraging mob harassment of the declared foe. This exercise of power is based in weakness, for these rulers have a real fear of being overthrown. God cannot be overthrown, and so is lenient; God seeks reform, and does not destroy for the sake of the good that is also present. So too in the parable: the servants are troubled by the dandelion, but the owner chooses not to damage the innocent wheat by uprooting the weed. Perhaps examination of the dandelion may challenge our simple classification of things as evil. Dandelion is a nuisance only when it grows with our wheat. The ryegrasses to which it belongs provide some of the most valuable pastures in the world. We name as weeds those plants that upset our plans, but this does not mean they are not valuable to others. Are we the only creatures who matter? And do we always know when the things we like rely on things we despise? Such is the wonder of the world—that all things move in balance, if we but had the wisdom to see as God sees, who alone knows good and evil, and who alone can judge justly.

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</i> <i>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	
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
Or if you would like a visit from the Vincentians, please contact the Parish Office or share the relevant contact details with us.

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/>

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

See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

First Reading

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

In the place of sin, you give repentance.

There is no god, other than you, who cares for everything, to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly. Your justice has its source in strength, your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all. You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned and you expose the insolence of those who know it; but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgement, you govern us with great lenience, for you have only to will, and your power is there. By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men, and you have given your sons the good hope that after sin you will grant repentance. The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 85:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of love to all who call. Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my voice. **R.**

All the nations shall come to adore you and glorify your name, O Lord: for you are great and do marvellous deeds, you who alone are God. **R.**

But you, God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger, O Lord, abounding in love and truth, turn and take pity on me. **R.**

Second Reading

Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit himself pleads for us in a way that could never be put into words.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

cf 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

Tristan Sampang, Raymond Miners, Valeria Laureta

Remembrances:

Death Anniversary

Lili Mantoura Khoury

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

Thanksgiving

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

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-30

Let them grow together until the harvest.

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" "Some enemy has done this" he answered. And the servants said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?" But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Communion Antiphon

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders; he gives food to those who fear him.



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 via the following methods:

- direct debit arrangements to your nominated bank account or credit card
- Regular bank transfers set up at your end to the parish bank account
Account name - Glenwood Stanhope Gardens St John 23rd Parish
BSB - 067 950 A/C - 100002469 Reference: PG (your initial and family name)
- Donating through cash or using the "Tap & go" machines which are available by the entrances.

Please contact the parish office to update us with your preferred giving option. Either by phoning 02 88835981 or emailing accounts@john23rd.org.au.



Support can be provided via the registration forms are available at the church foyer or from the website or scan the QR Code

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**



Dear parishioners and friends,

As part of our journey and building the community, we have been praying for the space for our community gatherings and activities, and we are happy to announce that we have obtained all the needed permission to begin the construction of our parish office and hall. **We congratulate the Secure Building Solutions for winning the bid. (SBS)**

We are finally getting ready to begin the actual construction, and we hope to finish the whole project in 8 months' time (latest by 28th Feb). The total cost of our project will be \$4.4 million including the air-conditioning of the church. Through our serious efforts to see through the project happening we have already spent \$200 thousand on this project and we have another \$3.4 million set apart for this project. Thus, it leads us to a shortage of \$800 thousand. As a Parish we had been dreaming of air-conditioning the church for a long time. We believe it is better to do both at the same time, to reduce again some of the expenses.

As we begin this project, we request every parishioner to be part of this project and donate a foundation stone. **One stone will cost \$100.** Let's begin and let's complete. For donations please see the bank details:

- ★ Dedicated "Tap & go" machines
- ★ Bank transfer
Account name - Glenwood Stanhope Gardens St John 23rd Parish
BSB 067 950 A/C 100002469
Reference - BD (your name)
- ★ BPOINT - For credit card donation visit
<https://www.bpoint.com.au/pay/StJohnXXIIIPGSG>
- ★ scan QRCode

Thank you for your support.

Parish fund raising, finance, Building committees and Fr. Jolly

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



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.

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johnirudayaraj@mcgrath.com.au
McGrath Northwest

McGrath



Where the journey begins

For children aged 6 weeks to 6 years

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Early Learning & Montessori Centre



EXPLORE OUR LEARNING PLACES

- ☎ (02) 8610 3775 Stanhope Gardens
- ☎ (02) 8678 9149 Rouse Hill
- ☎ (02) 9629 4444 North Kellyville

www.climbingladders.com.au

Thank You!

FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT TO OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

TOGETHER WE BUILD A STRONGER PARISH AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Your time, talents, prayers, and support are helping us build a stronger parish and a brighter future together.

PLEASE CONSIDER SPONSORING A BRICK BY SCANNING THE QR CODE ABOVE.

Hall Project Donations

Donations against Target



Donations to Date

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.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 come together in prayer, our faith is strengthened and our community grows closer.

Join us every Tuesday at 7:00 PM at SJ23rd Parish Church as we pray the rosary and a novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

This is an opportunity to deepen your faith and open your heart to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Rosary Statue Family Roster

	7	14	21	28	
Jul	Tambolero	Ring	Tina B	Lee	
Aug	4	11	18	25	
	Jacob	Meena B	Sebastian	Pangilinan E	
Sep	1	8	15	22	29
	Fernandes	Jakob B	Tangunan	Erasmus	Jayakoddy
Oct	6	13	20	27	
	Erasmus	Sebastian	Shalini	Available	

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

Rosary statue contacts Techie Sarlabus techie.sarlabus@gmail.com or

Melva Paguinto emcipi85@yahoo.com.au



Diocesan News

Adult Confirmations 2026

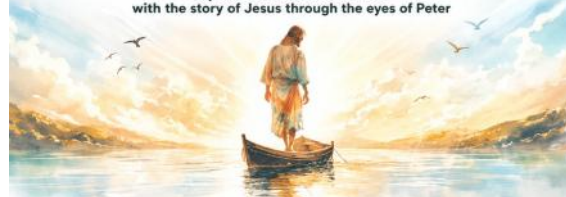
The Office for Worship will host a Catechesis and Formation Day for those candidates (16+) interested in receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation this year. This will be on Saturday 29th August, 9.30am – 2.00pm at the Bishop Bede Heather Centre in Blacktown. A light lunch will be provided on the day. It is recommended that all sponsors attend the catechesis day. A contribution of \$40 is suggested from the candidates to assist in covering the Catechesis Day.

The Confirmation will take place on Tuesday 1st September, 2026 at 7:30pm at the Cathedral. Please Note: Enrolment forms and a copy of Baptismal Certificates should be sent to OFW before Monday 18th August, 2026. For more information, please contact the Office for Worship ofw@parracatholic.org or 0460 037 795.

SPECIAL EOY / EARLY BIRD GROUP OFFER

Be The Witness

A powerful musical encounter
with the story of Jesus through the eyes of Peter



10–13 September 2026
**Riverside Theatres
Parramatta**



Invite your parish, ministry, family and friends

Scan for
Group Bookings



www.bethewitness.com.au

With the support and
encouragement of
Bishop Vincent Long

Presented by
Mary, Queen of the Family Parish,
Blacktown

Diocesan News



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

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.



⇒ Liturgical Ministry

"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest." Luke 10: The St. John XXIII Parish Liturgy Team warmly invites parishioners to serve and contribute in the following ministries below. Please contact Parish Office if you are interested or for additional information.



Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Assist in the distribution of Holy Communion during liturgies and bring Communion to the sick and homebound.
Open to men and women aged 18 and above.



Ministers of the Word

Proclaim the Scriptures and offer commentary during liturgies.
Open to men and women aged 18 and above.



Junior Servers

Assist the Celebrant, Deacons, and Acolytes during liturgical celebrations.
Open to boys and girls aged 10 and above who have received First Holy Communion (Confirmation preferred)



Tech Ministry

Support and coordinate technical aspects of the liturgy, including sound systems and projection.
Open to men and women aged 16 and above.
No prior experience is required.



Ushers & Greeters

Greet and assist parishioners, helping to create a warm and welcoming environment.
Open to men, women, and children aged 12 and above.

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 on Insta | FB or Contact Ellena - 0478 685 191

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

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

Blaze Term 3 Dates

		24 JUL
7 AUG	21 AUG	4 SEP
16 SEP		

Young at Hearts Seniors Group

Contact either of the following:
Frank Coleiro - 0459 504625
Trevor Coutinho - 0407 150399

Vinnies

join the good works

Please contact for more info
Debra Pitre 0412 570333

Try Alpha?

EXPLORE FAITH WITH YOUR ST JOHN XXIII COMMUNITY.

Alpha is a series of sessions that allows people to connect, discover more about their faith and answer life's biggest questions.

We invite you to join us as we go on this journey together.

Contact: Joyce Celestino

☎ 0450 001 047

✉ joyce_claire16@hotmail.com



Junior Server Training

We warmly invite all children who have said "YES" to God's call to serve as Junior Servers during Mass to attend a training session conducted by the Liturgy Team.

Date: Saturday, 25 July

Time: 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

This training is open to anyone who has expressed an interest in becoming a Junior Server or would like to join this special ministry. It is an important step in preparing to serve at Mass with reverence and confidence.

For further information, please contact the Parish Office.

We look forward to welcoming you!

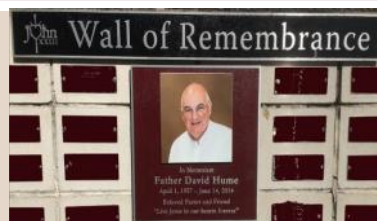


COLUMBARIUM

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



UPCOMING Community EVENTS



Building our
Community
TOGETHER

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!

A Friendly Reminder to Our Parish Community

We kindly ask all parishioners to help care for our church by tidying up after Mass. Simple gestures - such as disposing of rubbish properly and returning items like bulletins (if not taking them home) make a meaningful difference. Together, let us keep our church clean, welcoming, and ready for all who enter. Thank you for your care and consideration in looking after our shared spiritual home.

July Calendar

Mon	20	8:30am - Mass
Tues	21	9:15am - Mass 7:00pm - Rosary novena prayer <i>Our Lady of Perpetual Help</i>
Wed	22	<i>Saint Mary Magdalene (M)</i> 9:15am - Mass 8:00pm - Holy Hour
Thurs	23	9:15am - Mass
Fri	24	9:15am - Mass
Sat	25	<i>Saint James (F)</i> 9:15am - Mass 6:00pm - Mass 7:00pm - <i>Taste of India food fest</i>
Sun	26	7.30am 9:00am 10:30am masses <i>Taste of India Food Fest after all morning masses</i> 6:00pm - Mass

UPCOMING EVENTS

Warm Up This Winter with a Delicious Bowl of Soup!



With the winter chills, come and warm yourself with a delicious, homemade bowl of soup lovingly prepared by our parish community. Share in the warmth of good food, great company, and fellowship. We look forward to seeing you!

1 August - Saturday after the Vigil Mass
2 August - Sunday after the morning masses

Hosted by our BLAZE Youth Group

8 August - Saturday after the Vigil Mass
9 August - Sunday after the morning masses

Hosted by Vinnies



HAPPY 4TH ANNIVERSARY YOUNG AT HEART GROUP

The Young at Heart (YAH) group once again enjoyed a delightful coffee morning as they celebrated the fourth anniversary of its founding by Father Jolly and Father Zvonimir. It was a special joy to mark this milestone in the company of Father Jolly and Father Barth, whose presence made the celebration even more meaningful. The morning was filled with warm fellowship, laughter, and gratitude as members reflected on four wonderful years of friendship and community.

If you would like to be part of this energetic group please contact:

Frank Coleiro - 0459 504625 or Trevor Coutinho - 0407 150399

Join us for our 2nd Indian Food Fiesta — a delicious fundraiser for our Church Hall and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of our parish community.

Pre-Order your Favourites*

Place your order in advance and collect it after
10am on Sunday, 26 July

Scan or use
<https://forms.gle/J4SOMX9jqW0IDSzY7>

Pre-order cut off
Tuesday, 21st July

***Additional Indian Delicacies Available**

A variety of freshly prepared Indian dishes will also be available for purchase:
Saturday, 25 July – after 6pm mass
Sunday, 26 July – after all morning masses

Stay after Mass, enjoy some delicious food, and spend time in fellowship as we come together as one parish family.

Flavours of India – Parish Fundraiser

The Parish Indian Community warmly invites you to Flavours of India, a weekend of delicious homemade Indian food and community spirit.

Join us after the 6:00 PM Mass on Saturday, 25 July, and after all morning Masses on Sunday, 26 July. Enjoy authentic Indian favourites while supporting our parish, with 100% of proceeds going towards the construction of our new parish hall.

Bring your family and friends—we look forward to sharing a wonderful meal with you!

Probing the Parables

In most defenses of the faith, discussions of Christ's parables are conspicuous by their absence. Yet many of these parables provide a wealth of support for Catholic apologetics. Not only do the parables support truth, they often appear to be directly on-top for the concept that is being argued. Consider several examples.

The Wedding Feast (Faith and Works)

Since the first days of the Reformation in the 1500s, an issue that divides Catholics and Protestants is whether faith alone is sufficient to bring eternal life. No one disputes that God is the final judge, but can the wrong actions of believers end in eternal destruction? The wedding feast seems to provide an obvious answer: Yes.

The parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:1–14) is read at Mass every three years during the latter half of ordinary time. In it, the king sends out servants with invitations to a wedding feast. Many reject the invitation, so additional invitations are sent out to more guests. Many of these reject the invitation also. Of the guests that do show up, a man is rejected because he is not wearing the proper wedding garment.

What is this wedding garment? While Christ minimized the material importance of clothing (Matt. 6:25–33, Luke 12:22–28), he emphasized the importance of the symbolism of the wedding garment. Many other passages in Scripture use clothing as a symbol of virtues and good works. The saint's good deeds are likened to the white linen garment of the bride (Rev. 19:7–8). Isaiah compares the garments of salvation and justice to the apparel of the wedding party (Is. 61:10).

Other Bible passages combine the aspects of faith and justice as if they are inseparable (Is. 11:5, Jer. 5:1, Bar. 5:2, Sir. 27:8). Zechariah's two shepherd staffs, Favor and Bonds, present these two elements. Favor represents the breaking off of the covenant because of the people's unfaithfulness (Zec. 11:10). The other staff, Bonds, represents the breaking off of the brotherhood of Israel and Judah (Zec. 11:14). Once again, the relationship of faith and brotherhood are represented symbolically. The price of the shepherd's life, thirty pieces of silver, is the same as the ransom for a gored slave (cf. Zec. 11:12, Ex. 21:32, Matt. 26:15–16).

The acceptance of the wedding invitation is a call to faith, while the proper garment is the sign of one's good works. Both are necessary to partake in the feast; though many are called, few are chosen.

The Sower (Is the Law Absolute or Relative?)

Ask an eight-year-old to explain the parable of the sower and he may look as though you have asked him to explain quantum mechanics. But ask the same child what three characters Dorothy met as she walked down the yellow brick road in *The Wizard of Oz*, and he'll have the answer immediately.

There is a linkage between the symbolism of these two stories. Christ compares the seed that fell on the footpath, the thorn bush, and the rocky ground to the one who does not understand, care about, or cannot endure the challenges that life dishes out (Matt. 13:1–23, Mark 4:1–20, Luke 8:4–15). Dorothy encounters the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion and notices their shortcomings: no mind, no heart, and no courage.

The seed that fell on the footpath represents the one who fails to understand the word of God. Christ warned of false prophets and false teachers. The remedy that Christ offered was the power of the Holy Spirit acting through the Catholic Church. Wisdom begins with the desire to know. Solomon's request for an understanding heart illustrates how wisdom can only come from God.

We are expected to be certain in our faith but to question our moral judgments. Instead, many people express doubt about their faith, yet they feel certain that their actions are proper. Abortion, euthanasia, and contraception are considered by the Church always to be wrong. Yet even many Catholics think that there is flexibility regarding these issues.

Materialistic issues such as gluttony, avarice and sloth seem more subjective, and yet many people make decisions regarding these issues with a degree of certitude. Only one with fear of the Lord can recognize the certainty of some issues, while seeing that God alone will decide other issues.

The Baltimore Catechism begins by explaining that the purpose of man's existence is to know God, to love him, and to serve him. It is only when one makes that initial move toward knowledge that he can love God with his whole mind. Christ's discussion of the last judgment indicates that there will be some surprises (Matt. 25:37, 44).

The Barren Fig Tree (Sex and Money)

It wasn't long ago that many criticized the Church for never speaking out about anything but sex and money. Both topics are no longer normal fodder for Sunday homily topics. But that doesn't mean that the topics are not front and center on the agenda of many Catholics. As they try to rationalize birth control, pre-marital sex, and sodomy or active homosexuality, the Church has remained consistent in its viewpoint. And while a hedonistic attitude of "live for today because tomorrow you die" often dominates the culture, the stewardship responsibility regarding material wealth pokes up its head throughout Scripture.

These issues were certainly not overlooked in Christ's time. The misuse of money and sex was the downfall of the prodigal son, who squandered his inheritance on prostitutes and wasteful spending (Luke 15:13, 30). Christ often referred to the harlots and the publicans, or the tax collectors. The Jews perceived these people as the lowest on the moral spectrum. The harlots were judged by the people to be sexually promiscuous, and the tax collectors represented the greedy misers who loved money. The harlot wasted her sexual powers in pursuit of money, while her customers wasted their money in pursuit of unproductive and illicit sexual pleasure.

The barren fig tree (Luke 13:6–9) illustrates the mandate to produce. This order can apply to many concepts, but the fruit of sexuality is children, and the fruit of money is social justice. One can look to God's first command to Adam (and later Noah and Jacob) to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28, 9:1, 35:11). This command preceded even the command to avoid Eden's forbidden fruit. The Old Testament also was not silent regarding one's physical possessions. God commands Moses to remember the alien, the widow, and the orphan (Deut. 10:18–19, 14:28–29, 26:12–13).

In the Old Testament, the Israelites annually celebrated three major feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and the feast of the fruit harvest (Ex. 34:18–24). Passover was the predecessor of the Pascal celebration, which concludes with Easter and the beginning of eternal life. Pentecost in the New Testament represents the birth of the Church. It does not seem coincidental that, like Christmas, the feast of the fruit harvest was held at the end of the year. Or in the words of Elizabeth to Mary, "*blessed is the fruit of your womb*" (Luke 1:42).

The creation of life originates with sexual intercourse and bears fruit when one brings a son or daughter of God into the world, a brother or sister of Jesus Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Thus anyone who hears the word of God and follows it is likened not only to Christ's brother and sister but also to his mother (Luke 8:21, Matt. 12:46–50, Mark 3:31–35).

The responsibility of stewardship of money is also developed throughout Scripture. Jacob's son Joseph demonstrated the concept of stewardship. He showed his loyalty as a steward to his Egyptian master, Potiphar (Gen. 39:1–6), his chief jailer in prison (Gen. 39:21–23), and finally to Pharaoh himself (Gen. 41:39–57).

Christ was not silent on this issue either. The parables of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), the rich fool (Luke 12:16–21), and the talents (Mark 25:14–30, Luke 19:11–27) address issues of money, wealth, and abilities. They are readily compared to three of the seven deadly sins—gluttony, avarice, and sloth.

What is the cure for these ills? Give alms and everything becomes clean (Luke 11:41). Like the poor woman who gave her last bread to Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:7–16) or the poor widow who gave her last coins to the temple treasury (Mark 12:41–44, Luke 21:1–4), one must trust in God, not mammon. But remember, John Paul II said, "*Almsgiving is often regarded as a cold act, with no love in it. But almsgiving in the proper sense means realizing the needs of others and letting them share in one's own goods*" (in an address to young people, March 28, 1979). It is important to note that a real internal conversion must take place that motivates the almsgiving.

The Prodigal Son (Is There Really Mortal Sin? Is Confession Necessary?)

Want to start up a stormy discussion among Catholics? Bring up the distinction between mortal and venial sins. Then suggest some examples. It is rare that a consensus will be found. The necessity of confession is also a topic that sometimes divides Catholics. Some background information regarding these topics is first in order.

The Old Testament uses the physical death sentence to emphasize the seriousness of certain sins. Adam and Eve brought on death by their pride and disobedience. The people at the time of Noah and during Abraham's time in Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their evil actions (Gen. 19:1–22). God took the life of Onan for wasting his seed (Gen. 38:8–10). God killed the sons of Aaron (Lev. 10:1–2) and the sons of Eli (1 Sam. 2:12–17, 22–36, 4:11) because they disrespected the rules of the priesthood. Similarly, Mosaic Law imposed the death penalty for sins such as bapshemy, murder as well as many various sexual sins.

The New Testament deemphasized these physical judgments, but it stressed the spiritual death that one would face for certain evil actions or non-actions. The serious crimes of the Old Testament were not trivialized but rather the consequences became even more terrifying. Christ alludes to this fatal outcome in many of his parables such as the wheat and the weeds, the sower, the wedding feast, the rich man and Lazarus, the rich fool, the talents, and others. In Christ's discussion about the final judgment (Matt. 25:31–46) he emphasizes how the inaction of many will lead to their ultimate destruction.

As the final judge of our actions, will Christ show mercy or justice? The deadly sins of pride, avarice, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony, and sloth all seem to hinge on the concept of moderation. No one knows exactly where the line will be drawn between pride and courage, avarice and self-preservation, envy and rightful desire, anger and justice, lust and love, gluttony and nourishment, or sloth and rest. While the line may be obscure, the cause and effect can often be more obvious. Pride blinds, anger devours, avarice overwhelms, gluttony consumes, sloth reduces, and lust and envy betray.

The sacrament of confession can be likened to its Old Testament predecessor, the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur (Lev. 16:1–34, 23:26–32). This annual, one-day ritual was the most solemn of the Israelite holy days. The Israelite people were required to fast and do no work and to provide an offering of two goats. The high priest offered up one goat in sacrifice and then laid both hands on the second goat's head (the scapegoat) and confessed the sins of the people of Israel. The goat was then led out into the desert carrying the sins of the Israelites (Lev. 16:20–22). Only a successor to Aaron, a high priest, could make the atonement (Lev. 16:32–33). It was the only day of the year that the high priest could enter the holy of holies, inside the veil of the sanctuary (Lev. 16:2–5).

The life of Jesus Christ reflects the Israelite Day of Atonement in reverse order. At the beginning of his ministry, Christ is physically driven out into the desert (like the scapegoat) where he confronts Satan. At the end of his ministry, Christ is offered up in the divine sacrifice on the cross.

Through Christ's death and by his resurrection, the victory of salvation springs forth from the Spirit of his own baptism. Christ commissioned his disciples to baptize all nations (Matt. 28:19) and to forgive sins through the sacrament of penance (John 20:23). Although similar to the Old Testament in requiring confession (Lev. 16:21) and a priest's intervention (Lev. 16:32), this new sacrament was unique in that the priests were delegated the power to forgive or retain sins.

Often linked, the physical and spiritual works were similar, and they were brought about through the intervention of a holy person. The physical feeding and healing were symbolic of God's authority over both the physical and the spiritual. Since authority was delegated through the prophets of the Old Testament and the priests of the New Testament, signs appear in both. The poor widow is fed when she encounters Elijah, and Naaman is cured after he obeys Elisha's command (1 Kgs. 17:7–16, 2 Kgs. 5:1–15, Luke 4:25–27).

However, both of these Gentiles first had to show that they placed their trust in not only God but also in the person acting in God's behalf. In the beginning of Mark's Gospel, Christ continues this human and divine interplay. After curing the leper, he orders the man to show himself to a priest with the prescribed offering for cleansing (Mark 1:40–44). Next, the paralytic is healed both spiritually and physically by Christ to demonstrate this authority over both the spiritual and the physical (Mark 2:1–12, Matt. 9:1–8, Luke 5:17–26). Then Christ discusses how only the sick require a physician, implying that the spiritually sick are in most need of ministry (Mark 2:17). Likewise, the sacraments that nourish and heal (Communion and confession) must be administered through a consecrated priest.

Like the sower parable, the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32) covers those three essential requirements: knowledge, love, and courage. He recognizes the seriousness of his mistake, he has a change in heart, and he returns to his father and confesses his wrongdoing. Like the prodigal son and the Israelites in the desert, sin affects both God and man (Luke 15:21, Num. 21:7). The priest acts in place of God, and like the father in the Prodigal Son parable, he looks only to whether the penitent understands the nature of the sin, desires to mend his ways and acknowledges the wrong actions.

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