

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 readings show how creatively a Scripture passage may be used in different contexts. In the gospel reading (Matt 16:13-20), Jesus challenges the disciples to say who they think he is. Peter replies with an amplified version of what the disciples in the boat said two weeks ago: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (which is also on Peter's lips in John 6:69). Jesus praises him as blessed, and famously declares him the rock on which he will build his Church, and, unique to Matthew, "gives" him the keys to bind and loose. The same binding and loosing, without mention of keys, is later declared of the disciples collectively (Matt 18:18). The post-resurrection commissioning of the apostles in John 22:23 has a similar construction, but in terms of remitting (releasing) or retaining sins. What does this curiosity of the keys mean? Keys lock and unlock, that is, they seal what is closed (be it a door or a chain that binds) so it cannot be opened, or they unseal so the closed can be opened or the bound unbound. There is much semantic overlapping here. Even if not borrowed directly from a passage in today's first reading (Isa 22:19-23), it is related. It concerns the promotion of Eliakim to replace Shebna as steward during the reign of King Hezekiah, the last good king of Judah before the Babylonian exile; he did what pleased the Lord, and Jerusalem and Judah were preserved from the Assyrians' assault. But Eliakim's promotion is not quite what it seems, for after likening him to a peg set in a firm place there come two verses that are not included in our Lectionary, but they change the tone: Eliakim's family will hang on this firmly set peg, but the peg will give way and all hanging on it will be shattered. Did the evangelist have this in mind? Or does it reflect a negative view of Peter in Matthew's Gospel, perhaps indicated also by its final specific mention of Peter, that is his denial of Jesus

during the trial, and his going out to weep bitterly? However, Peter's failure did not bring the whole edifice down, and he does become one of the "pillars" of the primitive Church. To add to the complexity, Isaiah's key is found in Revelation 3:7, but it is the Risen One who holds it. It is part of the message to the Philadelphians, who have before them an open door that none can close, and if they hold firm the risen One will make them a pillar in the temple of God, never to go out of it. It corresponds to the other references to keys, again found in Revelation: the Risen One has the keys of (the house of) death and the underworld (Rev 1:18), and later an angel is given the key to the bottomless pit in which Satan is bound and locked up (Rev 9:1 and 20:1). So Isaiah's image is applied to both Peter and Christ, and extended to angels. These instances point to a rich and living use of metaphors borrowed from the prophets, but it is hard for us to determine exactly how the New Testament authors understood them even as they redeployed them. Beyond saying that it has something to do with authority to permit or deny, there is no single way of interpreting the original passage or its borrowed use. Use of this passage as a cudgel in disputes about how to understand the primacy the gospels accord to Peter, and in Roman Catholic minds to the papacy, ignores the complexity in Scripture. Even the Catechism is complex in use: no. 242, drawing on sermons of Pope Leo I, says that the faith professed by Peter is the rock of the Church, but in no. 552 Peter himself is the foundation, yet also here it is the faith professed that has primacy, for all depends on who Jesus is.

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>
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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

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

First Reading

Isaiah 22:19-23

I place the key of the House of David upon his shoulder.

Thus says the Lord of hosts to Shebna, the master of the palace:

I dismiss you from your office, I remove you from your post, and the same day I call on my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. I invest him with your robe, gird him with your sash, entrust him with your authority; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. I place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; should he open, no one shall close, should he close, no one shall open. I drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a throne of glory for his father's house.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 137:1-3, 6, 8

R. Lord, your love is eternal; do not forsake the work of your hands.

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, you have heard the words of my mouth. Before the angels I will bless you, I will adore before your holy temple. **R.**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love which excel all we ever knew of you. On the day I called, you answered; you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly and the haughty he knows from afar. Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

Second Reading

Romans 11:33-36

From him, through him, and in him are all things.

How rich are the depths of God - how deep his wisdom and knowledge - and how impossible to penetrate his motives or understand his methods! Who could ever know the mind of the Lord? Who could ever be his counsellor? Who could ever give him anything or lend him anything? All that exists comes from him; all is by him and for him. To him be glory for ever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

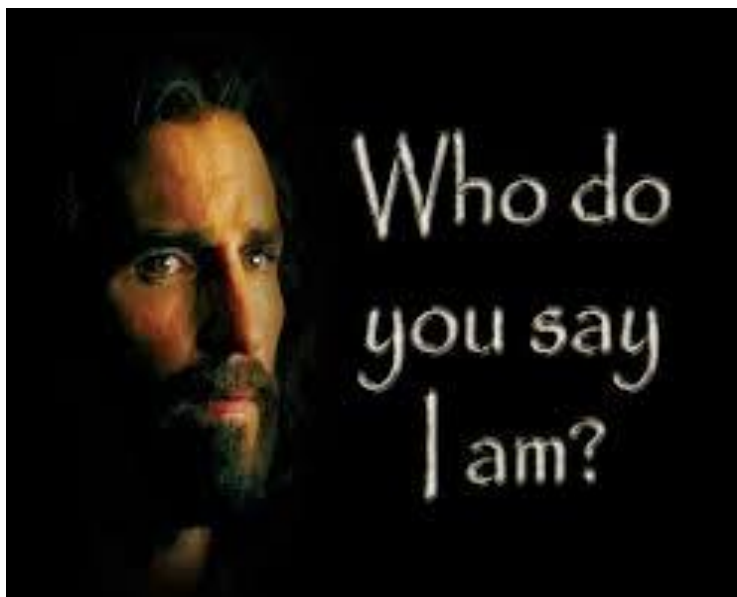
Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 16:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are Peter, the rock on which I will build my Church; the gates of hell will not hold out against it. 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

Therese Cassar, George Matthew

Remembrances:

Rustico Reyes

Death Anniversary

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

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 16:13-20

You are Peter, to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Communion Antiphon

The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

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 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.

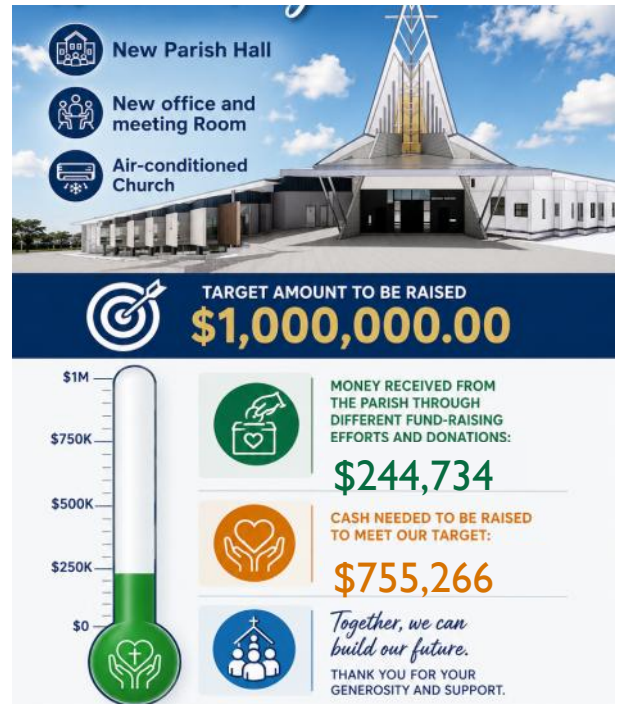
St. Joseph, the patron of families and workers, **Pray for us**
 St. John XXIII, Patron of our parish, **Pray for us**
 St. Vincent Ferrer, Patron of all builders, **Pray for us**

How to contribute

Be part of that good news. Let us be generous, cheerful and rejoice in the goodness of the Lord. For your donations:

- ★ Dedicated "Tap & go" machines at both entrances
 - ★ 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/StJohnXXIIIIPG.SG>
 - ★ scan QR Code
- Thank you for your support.

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



WEEKLY UPDATE REPORT—17 August to 21 August

Completed Items

- Site establishment
- Site survey
- Demolish existing awning, deck and concrete footpath

Activities being completed this week onsite

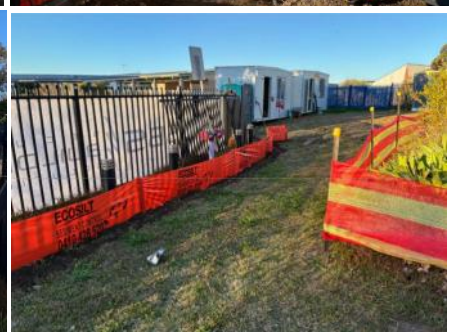
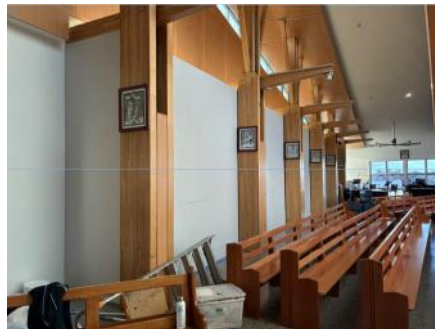
- Removal of doors
- Hydraulic temp services connections
- Disconnect existing services and re-reroute sewer
- Cover door openings
- Earthworks - dig inspection holes, cut and prepare site, detailed cut and build driveway
- Service location
- Grid and RL set outs

WHS

- Temp fencing has been established with relevant signage fixed
- Contact information for school reps has been received and sent to site team

Contracts Let

- Switchcom - Electrical
- Sydform - Concrete
- Ace Group- Structural steel
- DTC - Demolition
- All Hills Fencing - gate
- TJM - Hydraulic & stormwater
- Geo Surv - Surveying and locating
- MGI Piling - Piling
- WCG - Security
- GCA - Geotech
- Tantiworx - Earthworks
- TNM - Pinboard
- Echo - Mechanical



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

✉ 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 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

Aug	4	11	18	25	
	Jacob	Meena B	Sebastian	Pangilinan E	
Sep	1	8	15	22	29
	Fernandes	Jakob B	Tanganun	Erasmus	Jayakoddy
Oct	6	13	20	27	
	Erasmus	Sebastian	Shalini	Ring	
Nov	3	10	17	24	
	Barnouti	Tina B.	Available	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.

Natural Family Planning

MET Natural Fertility: Sympto-Thermal Method (STM) Initial Instruction via Teams August 27

Tuesday 27 August, 7:30-8:30pm. The most important symptom alerting women to ovulation is used in all methods of Natural Family Planning (NFP). The Sympto-Thermal Method includes measuring your basal body temperature, which also confirms ovulation! This method is 99.6% effective in postponing pregnancy and helps couples identify the best time to achieve pregnancy! If you would like to refresh your knowledge and skills or begin NFP then this is the session for you! To register visit parracatholic.org/natural-fertility

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

Group Bookings 10+ Concessions Available Limited Seats

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/>

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.

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 18 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 Limuangco 0478 629629 International

		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

For more info contact
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

RCIA Enquiry Session

The parish RCIA team is having the enquiry session on Thursday 20th August 2026 at 7.00pm in the Church kitchen area.

If you have family or friends or anyone who might be interested in understanding our Catholic faith, please invite them to this session.

The RCIA programme will commence on Wednesday, 2nd September 2026.

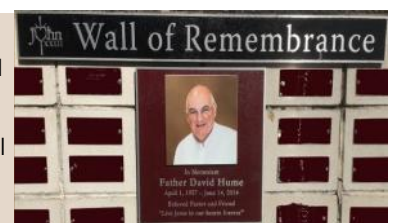


COLUMBARIUM

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



Community Events

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!



August Calendar

Mon	24	<i>Saint Bartholomew (F)</i> 8:30am - Mass
Tues	25	9:15am - Mass 7:00pm - Rosary Novena prayer <i>Our Lady of Perpetual Help</i>
Wed	26	9:15am - Mass 8:00pm - Holy Hour
Thurs	27	<i>Saint Monica (M)</i> 9:15am - Mass
Fri	28	<i>Saint Augustine (M)</i> 9:15am - Mass
Sat	29	<i>The Passion of Saint John the Baptist (M)</i> 9:15am - Mass 6:00pm - Mass
Sun	30	7.30am 9:00am 10:30am masses 6:00pm - Mass

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

 Sate anyone? It's back. Join us for a day of delicious Indonesian sate (satay) dish with other savory and sweets.	30 August - Satay and others after the morning masses	Hosted by Indonesia Community
Father's Day celebration Celebrate Fathers with Us – A Dinner for a Cause!	18 September - The Hills Lodge	Hosted by OLPH prayer group

Sunday, 30 August - Satay Sunday



Come and enjoy a delicious Sunday treat hosted by our wonderful Indonesian Community!

Savour authentic Indonesian Satay, freshly prepared and served with warmth and love. Bring your family and friends, enjoy great food, and celebrate the wonderful diversity of our parish community. Everyone is welcome! Come hungry and enjoy a taste of Indonesia! **After our morning masses**

Please save the date — Sunday, 4 October 2026

We are delighted to invite everyone to celebrate St John XXIII Parish Feast Day on Sunday, 4 October, following the 10:30 AM Mass until 2:00 PM, at St John XXIII School Hall.

Come along with your family and friends for a wonderful afternoon of food, treats, music, games and plenty of fun for the kids. There will also be an exciting raffle draw with fantastic prizes, including air tickets to India and New Zealand, a 65" Smart TV, a Sydney Harbour cruise, an iPad and more.

This is a special opportunity for us to come together as one parish community, celebrate our feast day and enjoy a great afternoon of fellowship and fun.

Please scan the QR code to register as this will help us with catering and other logistics.

Celebrate Fathers with Us – Dinner for a Cause!

This September, join our OLPH Prayer Group as we honour and celebrate all fathers with a special event, "A Tribute to All Fathers", on 18 September 2026.

Enjoy a delightful evening with your loved ones, featuring a two-course plated dinner with drinks, be entertained by live music to set the mood. Plus, there's an exciting surprise raffle draw where all attendees have the chance to win!

The event will take place at The Hills Lodge, Castle Hill with limited seating for only 100 guest—so don't miss out.

Let us come together as a community to create cherished memories while supporting a meaningful cause.

All proceeds will benefit our beloved St John XXIII Parish.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PRAYER GROUP ST JOHN XXIII PARISH

DINNER FOR A CAUSE A TRIBUTE TO ALL FATHERS

**18th SEPTEMBER, FRIDAY
6:30PM TO 11:30PM**

2 COURSE PLATED DINNER | DRINK | MUSIC®

**THE HILLS LODGE
1 Salisbury Road cnr Windsor Road,
Castle Hill, NSW 2154**

**Tickets \$125pp
ONLY 100 SEATS AVAILABLE
SURPRISE RAFFLE PRIZES**

COCKTAIL ATTIRE

**PROCEEDS GOES TO
ST JOHN XXIII PARISH**

**For more information
MARCY 0427 607047 | MELVA 0413 725224**

\$20 RAFFLE TICKET ON SALE AT THE CHURCH FOYER or help us sell to your relatives and friends

Building Our Community Together

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

Making Sense of the Beatitudes

The Beatitudes are some of Jesus' most famous and beloved words. Yet we can brush them off in a pious but dismissive way. In piety, we revere them, but how often do we take them seriously, as if they truly applied to our lives today?

As the Second Vatican Council proclaims, Jesus teaches us fully what it means to be human. Jesus is the answer to the question that is every human life. In truth, this is on display in the beatitudes, which foreshadow Jesus' life and the truth of discipleship. In the words of St. John Paul II, the Beatitudes are "a self-portrait of Christ and ... are invitations to discipleship and communion" (Veritatis Splendor 16).

Each of the beatitudes begins with the Greek word *makarios*, which is often translated "blessed" or "happy." We should take note of their traditional title—Beatitudes, which perhaps ironically suggests that herein lies the path to true happiness, or beatitude. In this vein, some scholars suggest that a better translation of the Greek word might be "flourishing," such that the beatitudes would read: "Flourishing are the poor in spirit," etc.

Human flourishing is closely tied to virtue in the classical tradition, as found in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Here, the ethical life is not merely about external deeds but a journey toward becoming a certain kind of person, a process of the full flowering of human nature—of living the fully human life. This full-flowering of human life is simultaneously about living in accordance with truth, justice, and the moral virtues and attaining happiness, since the latter comes about through the objective perfecting of our human nature, as opposed to more modern notions of happiness as mere subjective contentment. For, in the classical sense, happiness is ultimately the fruit of one's character.

The Beatitudes and the Spiritual Life

Blessed are the poor in spirit. The first beatitude is traditionally tied to humility. In fact, in the lectionary, this passage is paired with Zephaniah 2:3 and 3:12, both of which emphasize humility as the character of the authentic people of God. Humility is the bedrock of the spiritual life: coming face to face with our brokenness—our true poverty—is precisely what allows the divine physician to enter into the deepest crevices of our hearts.

As many of the saints have insisted, what produces sanctity is not just to "will it." Rather, the saints generally point in two directions: (1) the importance of recognizing our brokenness; and (2) taking seriously the infinite mercy of God. If we only think about the former—our brokenness—we can despair. But if we only focus on the latter—God's mercy—we can fall into presumption. The combination of both inclines us toward the Lord in our weakness, but it does so with a filial boldness—childlike confidence in the Father's love and mercy.

This dynamic is at play in the second beatitude as well.

Blessed are those who mourn. "Mourning" here is associated with sadness over our sin. Commenting on this passage, Pope Benedict XVI describes two kinds of mourning—one exemplified in Peter, the other in Judas. Both men betrayed Jesus, but they differ in what happened afterward. In the face of Peter's brokenness, he experiences the "healing tears" of repentance, while Judas falls tragically into despair. Benedict writes:

There are two kinds of mourning. The first is the kind that has lost hope, that has become mistrustful of love

and of truth, and that therefore eats away and destroys man from within. But there is also the mourning occasioned by the shattering encounter with truth, which leads man to undergo conversion and to resist evil. This mourning heals, because it teaches man to hope and to love again. Judas is an example of the first kind of mourning: Struck with horror at his own fall, he no longer dares to hope and hangs himself in despair. Peter is an example of the second kind: Struck by the Lord's gaze, he bursts into healing tears that plow up the soil of his soul. He begins anew and is himself renewed.

Jesus of Nazareth, vol. I, p. 86, emphasis added

The link between the first two beatitudes then is this: In seeing our poverty of spirit, our brokenness, we "mourn" over the reality of our sin. But in confidence we turn to the Lord for healing and transformation; and in the Holy Spirit—in the Father's love—we find true comfort (see Matthew 5:4).

Blessed are the meek. This beatitude alludes to Psalm 37:11, where the "meek shall inherit the land" (the words used in both the Hebrew and Greek original texts mean "land" and "earth"). The Hebrew word for "meek" here is *anawim*, which refers to the faithful and humble of ancient Israel—it is a word that captures the righteous remnant, the people of God as God desires them to become. In this sense, Mary quintessentially embodies the *anawim*, as is manifest in her Magnificat (see Luke 1:46-55). And Jesus of course is later said to be "gentle" and "lowly" (see Matthew 11:29).

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Our physical hunger is a sign that points to a deeper hunger. Hunger reveals that we are not self-sufficient; we are creatures, in need of God and others. Our physical hunger, then, is a sign of our deep spiritual longing for the Infinite, for God. We all worship something. We need only look at how we spend our time, money, and mental and emotional energy. There are some things we simply will not "miss"—things we continually make time for. This beatitude beckons us to discern the movements of our heart and foster a deep yearning for what truly matters. Only by rightly ordering our desires at the deepest level will we ever truly be "satisfied" (see Matthew 5:6).

In the next three beatitudes, we begin to see how authentic love of God produces genuine love of neighbor.

Blessed are the merciful. Merciful people have received God's love and forgiveness; they saw their brokenness and came to the divine physician. After coming to grips with their weakness and their deep need for grace, they now have a posture of love and mercy toward others. They pity—rather than condemn—the sinner. Nonetheless, merciful people still call sinners to a higher standard because they know that sin leads to sadness; it destroys our lives and wrecks any possibility of true and lasting happiness.

In being conformed to the image of God, the forgiven sinner images divine mercy for others. In fact, this seems to be a condition for full entrance into the kingdom: "Forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven those who trespass against us" (see also 18:23-35).

Blessed are the pure in heart. In the Bible, the "heart" is the core of a person—it is our "unified center," a combination of intellect and will. The "heart" in the Bible is not a reference to our feelings or sentiment. The "pure" in heart are undivided in heart. Subsequent passages in the Sermon on the Mount track closely with this idea. For example, in Matthew 6:22 we read about a

"sound eye." The word translated here as "sound" is *haplous*, which is sometimes taken either as "healthy" (hence "sound") or "generous." The two ideas actually come together: First, the "eye" in Jewish tradition is connected to greed—an evil eye sees things it wants and covets them. Second, this saying is sandwiched between two passages dealing directly with money and treasure: Matthew 6:21 ("where your treasure is, there will your heart be also") and Matthew 6:24 ("No one can serve two masters ... you cannot serve God and mammon").

In other words, the "sound eye" is both healthy and generous because this person is attached to the right things in an undivided way. They are seeking first the kingdom (see Matthew 6:33). And this is precisely what Jesus means when he says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The Greek word here for "perfect" is *teleios*, a word that has deep resonance in the virtue tradition, referring to that full "flourishing" of human nature mentioned above. The Hebrew roots behind this idea refer to being "complete" or "whole." The pure in heart are undivided because they anchor their lives on God and thereby live with integrity or wholeness—becoming "perfect" in that sense, for they have now found healing in the Lord and have come to rest in him. Conversely, the divided in heart are anxious, the opposite of the "wholeness" or "completeness" mentioned above (see Matthew 6:25-34).

Blessed are the peacemakers. Those who are "complete" in the Lord find peace—and become sources of peace for others. "Peace" here is not merely the absence of conflict, but what St. Augustine describes as the "tranquility of order" (see CCC 2304). Peace is the fruit of an undivided life.

Since the reward of the eighth beatitude is the same as the first ("for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," see Matthew 5:3, 10), some consider the Beatitudes better enumerated as seven, as opposed to eight. If we consider this last one an eighth beatitude ("Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake"), we should see in it the fact that the Christian life is always an imitation of Christ; as St. Paul puts it, we are "conformed" to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). In fact, the Christian life is ultimately a matter of Jesus' life being reproduced in us (see Galatians 2:20).

Hopefully, we can learn to see the Beatitudes not as lofty but unattainable aphorisms but as the heart and soul of the Christian life. Indeed, the Beatitudes enable and empower us to live the truly human life by bringing about genuine human flourishing, both on a natural and supernatural level. For grace does not abolish or destroy nature but builds upon it—that is, grace heals, perfects, and elevates our fallen human nature.

How can we make the Beatitudes real in our lives today?

<https://ascensionpress.com/blogs/articles/the-beatitudes-and-human-flourishing/>

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