



City Pastoral REGION

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Inner Newcastle Parish: Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West; St Joseph's Church, The Junction; St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, Newcastle; Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Tighes Hill; St Laurence O'Toole Church, Broadmeadow. **Mayfield Parish:** Christ the King, Mayfield West. **Stockton Parish:** St Peter-in-Chains, Stockton.

SUNDAY 8 JANUARY 2023

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, YEAR A

Our Clergy

Fr John Lovell

Fr Paul Chackanikunnel

Regional Office—St Benedict's Centre

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Our Staff

Margaret Cox (*Reception & Administration*)

Monday, Tuesday, Friday

Anne Warren (*Business Manager Finance*)

Tuesday and Thursday

Jade Simonsen (*Business Manager Property*)

Monday

Dr Anne Millard (*Music, Liturgy, Sacraments, Bulletin*)

Other Contacts

Lingard Hospital Team: Contact the Parish Office

Mercy Pastoral Team: Sr Patricia Whitten rsm
0429 923254

St Joseph's Pastoral Team: Contact the Parish Office

Parish Bulletin: Prayer requests and items for the Bulletin should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays.



By both His appearing and the manner of His appearing (the Incarnation), the infant Jesus *was* the Epiphany, the revelation of the saving love of God for His people. The term 'Epiphany' literally means to reveal, manifest or show forth. We also need to be aware of the personal epiphanies, or signposts, that occur in each of *our* lives. If we can recognise these, they will help us to discover and fulfil the unique calling God has in store for each one of us.

Our Parishes incorporate suburbs located on the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, pay respect to their Elders past and present, and commit ourselves to work together for reconciliation and justice.

THE PARISH DIARY...(for the week ahead)

First Week of Ordinary Time, Year A

Monday—9th January

The Baptism of the Lord

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Tuesday—10th January

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

8:30am Mass @ Stockton

Wednesday—11th January

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Mayfield West

Thursday—12th January

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

8:30am Mass @ Stockton

Friday—13th January

9:50am Rosary for Ukraine @ The Junction

10:15am Mass @ St Joseph's

11:00am Exposition, Adoration & Reconciliation @
The Cathedral (until 12pm)

12:05pm Mass @ The Cathedral

Saturday—14th January

9:15am Mass @ The Cathedral, followed by the
Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help
(followed by Reconciliation)

5:30pm Mass @ The Cathedral

5:30pm Mass @ The Junction

6:00pm Mass @ Mayfield West

Sunday—15th January

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

7:30am Mass @ St Mary's

8:00am Mass @ Tighes Hill

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

9:30am Mass @ The Cathedral *

11:00am Mass @ The Junction (*Italian*)

11:30am Mass @ The Cathedral (*Polish*)

5:00pm Mass @ The Cathedral

6:00pm Mass @ Mayfield West (*Vietnamese*)

* *Livestreamed on the Cathedral's YouTube channel—
www.youtube.com/c/SacredHeartCathedralHamilton
and on the Diocese website*

FROM THE MODERATOR

Dear friends in Christ,

I'd like to begin by wishing you all every blessing for 2023 and to thank you for your ongoing prayers, encouragement and service to our community here in the City Pastoral Region.



In the week before Christmas, I received a letter from our Diocesan Administrator, Fr Greg Barker, renewing my appointment as Moderator to the Parishes of St Benedict's, Mayfield and Stockton, and as Rector of the Sacred Heart Cathedral until 13 November 2028. I am grateful to Fr Greg for this appointment, along with his guidance and support.

With declining clergy numbers, our region and diocese have and will continue to face various challenges in the years ahead. Since my initial appointment to this region began last April, we have lost Fr John Vo and Fr Peter Thoai, and Deacon Lawrence Caelli retired from active ministry in July last year. However, by the grace of God Fr Paul Chackanikunnel arrived unexpectedly in August, and although his appointment at this stage is still temporary, we are very grateful for his wonderful ministry in our region. I am also very grateful to Fr Bob Searle, who although retired, has offered to continue to support us for as long as he reasonably can, and also to Fr Matthew and our other retired priests who assist us when they can. With these limited resources we will do our best to continue celebrating our regular schedule of Sunday and weekday Masses. We are also getting back to providing regular liturgies to our Catholic Schools and aged care facilities, now that COVID restrictions have been relaxed.

Considerable challenges also face our region on the financial front. Due to the impact of covid, declining congregations and costly maintenance issues with our buildings, all our parishes have experienced a couple of years of large annual deficits. With the assistance of our Regional Finance Council and Parish Business Manager, I have undertaken a major review of our position in this region and we will be doing our utmost to turn this situation around, to ensure the long-term financial viability of our parishes. This means certain sacrifices need to be made. To this end I must advise that for the foreseeable future, St Laurence O'Toole Church must remain closed, as we cannot afford to spend the substantial sum required to render it safe to be re-opened. I understand this will come as a disappointment to those who use to regularly worship there, so I am sorry at having to deliver this news.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Is 42:1-4, 6-7

Acts 10:34-38

Mt 3:13-17

Over the coming months, our Parish Office will be moving from its current location in the Convent Building in Farquhar Street, The Junction, to the McAuley Building in Parry Street, Newcastle West. This will bring our office staff much closer to the Cathedral, the Chancery and Presbytery. The vacated convent building will then be assessed for necessary renovations to enable it to be rented out to provide much needed income for St Benedict's Parish. We are also looking to generate sustainable income streams for our 3 parishes from other available building assets and through a rationalization of our current insurance policies.

I am especially grateful to our Regional Finance and Pastoral Council members, our Office staff and parish/pastoral teams and other volunteers for their continued support and guidance on many issues. As we mourn the passing of a great global leader in Pope Benedict, we continue to pray for Pope Francis and the appointment of a new bishop to our diocese soon.

Wishing you and your families every grace and blessing.

Love, Fr John

ROSARY FOR UKRAINE

Pray the Rosary from 9.50am on Fridays at St Joseph's Church, The Junction.



BOOK CLUB



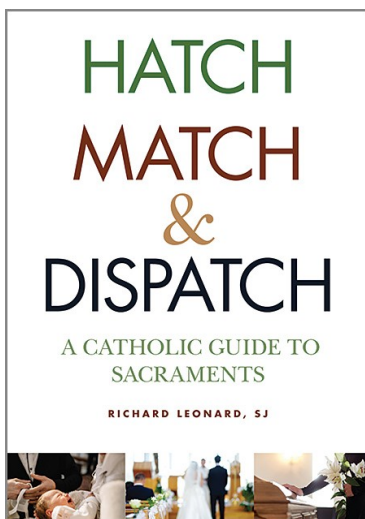
Sunday, 5 February @ 6:15pm: Bookclub meets to discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus. If you would like to participate in book club meetings, please email the office

VIEW, CHEW, AND CHAT:

Returns in February to discuss Richard Leonard's book "Hatch, Match, Dispatch: A Guide to the Sacraments."

The book is available from Paulist Press

<https://www.paulistpress.com/Products/0650-9/hatch-match-and-dispatch.aspx>



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice

The World Day of Prayer is 3 March, 2023 @9am in Sacred Heart Cathedral. If you would like to help plan the liturgy for the Newcastle Inner City Region, please contact Anne Millard on 4979 1101 or by email anne.millard@mn.catholic.org.au.



One of the WDP Guiding Principles states that 'Prayer is rooted in listening to God and to one another. In WDP we listen to the Word of God and to voices of women sharing their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows, their opportunities and needs.'

The theme of the worship service "I Have Heard About Your Faith," based on the letter to the Ephesians, is an invitation to active listening, which is the ground of our prayers. Following the example of the letter (1:15-19), where the author praises the church for their faith in Jesus and love toward all the saints, the worship service contextualizes the witness of the saints with the stories from Taiwan.

The worship service shares the letters of encouragement sent to women who faced suffering and injustice. Their stories of faith contemplate issues that are shared by women and girls around the world and that continue to challenge us to prayerful action.

They remind us of the urgency to protect the environment and have a nuclear-free homeland; to be aware of the gender stereotypes women face when defying the traditional role in the workplace or in the family, and to care for the healing of the victims of verbal and sexual abuses. It also brings to light the hidden struggle of the essential workers during the pandemic who had to balance between work and family in a vulnerable economic situation. The sisters thank God for the natural resources of the island and pray for wisdom in face of the political isolation of Taiwan in the international community. They ask for our prayers. What are the stories of faith in your community? How do you encourage them with your prayers and actions? Include those stories in the WDP activities. Praise God and be inspired by those testimonies of love and justice.

May God give us the wisdom and courage to tell the stories of faith that transform lives.



“Lord, I Love You.”

Last words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

This week, the world lost Pope Emeritus Benedict, XVI. Pope Benedict’s contributions to the Church over his seventy years as a priest include integral guidance at Vatican II; countless writings and homilies; eight years as Holy Father; and ten subsequent years praying for all of us.

Yet, all this can be summed up in his last four words:

"Lord, I love you."

Benedict XVI was born **Joseph Alois Ratzinger** on April 16, 1927 in Marktl am Inn, Germany. He died December 31, 2022, Vatican City. He was bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic Church from 2005 until 2013.

Prior to his election as pope, Benedict led a distinguished career as a theologian and as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. His papacy faced several challenges, including a decline in vocations and church attendance, divisive debates concerning the direction of the church, and the effects of the scandal beginning in the late 1990s surrounding the church’s handling of numerous cases of sexual abuse by priests.

Citing his old age, in 2013 he became the first pope to resign since Gregory XII in 1415.



HOMILY BY POPE FRANCIS

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46). These were the final words spoken by the Lord on the cross; his last breath, as it were, which summed up what had been his entire life: a ceaseless self-entrustment into the hands of his Father. His were hands of forgiveness and compassion, healing and mercy, anointing and blessing, which led him also to entrust himself into the hands of his brothers and sisters. The Lord, open to the individuals and their stories that he encountered along the way, allowed himself to be shaped by the Father’s will. He shouldered all the consequences and hardships entailed by the Gospel, even to seeing his hands pierced for love. “See my hands,” he says to Thomas (Jn 20:27), and to each of us: “See my hands.” Pierced hands that constantly reach out to us, inviting us to recognize the love that God has for us and to believe in it (cf. 1 Jn 4:16).

“Father into your hands I commend my spirit.” This is the invitation and the programme of life that he quietly inspires in us. Like a potter (cf. Is 29:16), he wishes to shape the heart of every pastor, until it is attuned to the heart of Christ Jesus (cf. Phil 2:5). Attuned in grateful devotion, in service to the Lord and to his people, a service born of thanksgiving for a completely gracious gift: “You belong to me... you belong to them,” the Lord whispers, “you are under the protection of my hands. You are under the protection of my heart. Stay in my hands and give me yours.” Here we see the “condescension” and closeness of God, who is ready to entrust himself to the frail hands of his disciples, so that they can feed his people and say with him: Take and eat, take and drink, for this is my body which is given up for you (cf. Lk 22:19). The total synkatabasis of God.

Attuned in prayerful devotion, a devotion silently shaped and refined amid the challenges and resistance that every pastor must face (cf. 1 Pet 1:6-7) in trusting obedience to the Lord’s command to feed his flock (cf. Jn 21:17). Like the Master, a shepherd bears the burden of interceding and the strain of anointing his people, especially in situations where goodness must struggle to prevail and the dignity of our brothers and sisters is threatened (cf. Heb 5:7-9). In the course of this intercession, the Lord quietly bestows the spirit of meekness that is ready to understand, accept, hope and risk, notwithstanding any misunderstandings that might result. It is the source of an unseen and elusive fruitfulness, born of his knowing the One in whom he has placed his trust (cf. 2 Tim 1:12). A trust itself born of prayer and adoration, capable of discerning what is expected of a

pastor and shaping his heart and his decisions in accord with God's good time (cf. Jn 21:18): "Feeding means loving, and loving also means being ready to suffer. Loving means giving the sheep what is truly good, the nourishment of God's truth, of God's word, the nourishment of his presence."

Attuned also in devotion sustained by the consolation of the Spirit, who always precedes the pastor in his mission. In his passionate effort to communicate the beauty and the joy of the Gospel (cf. *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 57). In the fruitful witness of all those who, like Mary, in so many ways stand at the foot of the cross. In the painful yet steadfast serenity that neither attacks nor coerces. In the stubborn but patient hope that the Lord will be faithful to his promise, the promise he made to our fathers and to their descendants forever (cf. Lk 1:54-55).



Holding fast to the Lord's last words and to the witness of his entire life, we too, as an ecclesial community, want to follow in his steps and to commend our brother into the hands of the Father. May those merciful hands find his lamp alight with the oil of the Gospel that he spread and testified to for his entire life (cf. Mt 25:6-7).

At the end of his Pastoral Rule, Saint Gregory the Great urged a friend to offer him this spiritual accompaniment: "Amid the shipwreck of the present life, sustain me, I beseech you, by the plank of your prayer, that, since my own weight sinks me down, the hand of your merit will raise me up." Here we see the awareness of a pastor who cannot carry alone what in truth he could never carry alone, and can thus commend himself to the prayers and the care of the

people entrusted to him. God's faithful people, gathered here, now accompanies and entrusts to him the life of the one who was their pastor. Like the women at the tomb, we too have come with the fragrance of gratitude and the balm of hope, in order to show him once more the love that is undying. We want to do this with the same wisdom, tenderness, and devotion that he bestowed upon us over the years. Together, we want to say: "Father, into your hands we commend his spirit."

Benedict, faithful friend of the Bridegroom, may your joy be complete as you hear his voice, now and forever!

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

THE MAGI

In some translations, the 'wise men' of this passage are referred to as 'Magi'. Magi was the name given to the Persian priestly caste. Persia (now, Iran) lies to the east of Israel. These wise men are also sometimes portrayed as astrologers, but that is largely because of the reference 'We saw his star as it rose'. It is interesting that the passage describes 'some' wise men; tradition has developed a specific number of three – based on the three gifts presented. These anonymous (and purely literary) figures have been given names and their 'relics' lie in honour beneath the Cathedral of Cologne.



Have you thought? Epiphany

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus to humankind. The wise men are the representatives of humanity bearing witness to this revelation. However, the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus as not only the Messiah of Israel but the Saviour of the whole world. Interestingly, in this gospel that emphasises the 'Jewishness' of Jesus, the witnesses to the birth are gentiles from a foreign land. Their inclusion is a powerful declaration that the revelation of Jesus is for all people. Regardless of the liturgical year, this reading is always used on the feast of the Epiphany to celebrate this pivotal moment.

REFLECTION

by Michael Tate

Stars and Seekers after Truth

There is a fascination with stars: their beauty shining and sparkling in the dark canopy of the night; amazement and wonder at their number and extent. And who amongst us hasn't stolen a furtive glance at the horoscopes, half humorously checking 'what the stars hold for me'.

The Magi, the wise men in today's gospel story, were not like the writers of our horoscope columns. They were astronomers – astrologers from ancient religions found to 'the East' of Bethlehem, perhaps modern day Iraq or Syria.

In particular, they would have thought that the birth of those destined to be great figures would be signalled by unusual constellations of events in the night sky. They really believed that stars greatly influenced and controlled the destiny of human beings.

But, *these* Magi were open to the insights of other religious traditions. And it was that combination of their own religion of astrology and their reading about Jewish expectations of a wonderful person who would inaugurate a new epoch of history, which led them to:

To what? To whom? To Jesus, in a nondescript dwelling, in a nondescript town, hovered over by an exhausted Mary and a protective Joseph. This would be a most unexpected culmination of their journey.

Yet, because they were genuine seekers after truth, they were open enough to see in this baby what their own religious teaching had prepared them for, even as they were led beyond that religious system.

They were the first non-Jewish people to kneel before that infant. They did homage to this baby. Why? I think it was because they realised that the stars did not control *this* infant.

On the contrary: 'There is something in *this* baby which *caused* the night sky to respond. *This* baby is responsible for the movement of the stars!'

They were sufficiently filled with wonder that they preserved the child from the deadly schemes of Herod, not reporting where they had found him. And, then they returned to their home country, 'by a different way'. They were on a different journey after encountering the Child.

What does this Gospel passage hold for us today?

Who can doubt that the Holy Spirit led these wise men from the East to the manger? In fact, the Holy Spirit is at work in every human being, prompting each and every one to become seekers after Truth.

People may be trapped in the limiting language of their astrology or Buddhism, or an ideology such as atheism or whatever. Of course, those systems of thought cannot save anyone.

But, individually and personally, Buddhists and atheists and astrologers can be set on a journey towards 'the Love which moves the sun and all the stars' (Dante).

As a person responds to the (often anonymous) prompting of the Holy Spirit and tries to lead a good humane life, then the Church teaches that the Holy Spirit can draw them into the saving life of God.

This is where we differ drastically from some fundamentalists. The Catholic Church believes that the billions in China and India, who have never heard the Gospel, can be saved.

But, such persons, even leading humane lives, do not savour the fullness of Truth as we do with the privilege of having the scriptures and the sacraments. Where it is possible, we are obliged to offer them the road map to the Truth.

That Truth which we have the privilege of understanding leads us to accept the claims made on us by the baby to whom the Astrologers paid homage:



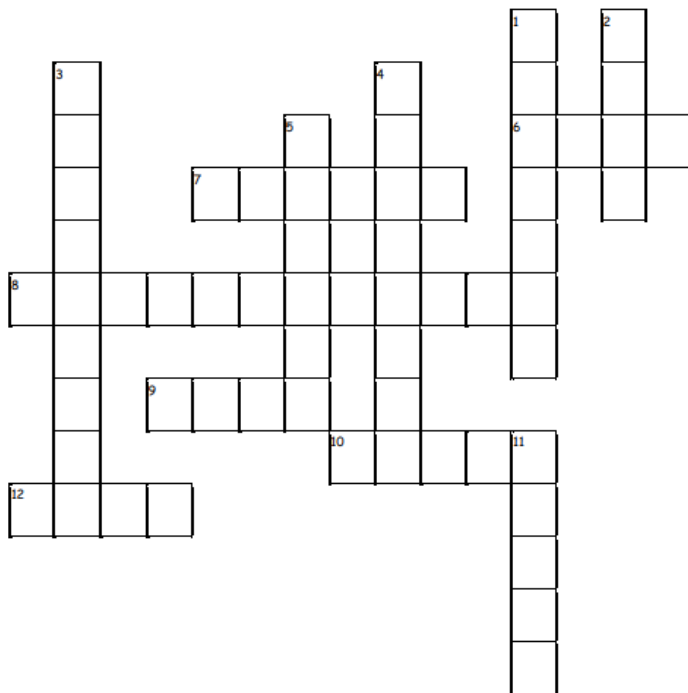
We understand and accept
that *He* is the Body Language of God,
that *He* is 'God with us', Emmanuel,
that *He* is The Answer to all the seeking after truth
and the yearning of the human heart.
O come, let us adore *Him*.

© Fr Michael Tate

CROSSWORD

We come to worship the king

Mt 2:1-12



Across

- 6: north, south, _ _ _ _ and west
 7: look
 8: one of the gifts given to Jesus
 9: a soft, yellow metal
 10: another of the gifts given to Jesus
 12: this showed the wise men where to find Jesus

Down

- 1: rested on your knees
 2: one who has wisdom
 3: significant
 4: to do something without others knowing
 5: alerted to danger
 11: a type of building people live in

The Epiphany of the Lord,

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JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

The glory of the Lord shines upon you

Is 60:1-6
 Ps 72:1, 2, 10abc, 10de-11, R. see v.11
 Mt 2:1-12

M R W M F S P J Z N Z B O G F
 Y W P L C F K X F A O I T R D
 R F G O L D T S S H P N E M I
 R C R N X D P O A M E V G T V
 H Y Y M C R O W D A N F H R Z
 G L O R Y Y Q R J I Q Q J P D
 F R A N K I N C E N S E T L X
 U F V X A X Z Z R L I Q B X E
 W Z H K H D C Q J S W S M W B
 A O Y E B D H O U S E T U C P
 O Y F M C E J V K W E A R Q C
 R G D G X L X J S Z A R S E A
 E G E Y E S D L Q H S T Y I L
 E G L L O Z P R U V T I V N E
 E L D A Y I Q I S Y S P I P E

Try to find these words:

crowd
 day
 east
 eyes
 frankincense
 glory
 gold
 house
 myrrh
 open
 sea
 star

The Epiphany of the Lord

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TODAY'S LITURGY

Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Mal 3:1; 1 Chr 29:12

Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come;
and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

First Reading: Is 60:1-6

The glory of the Lord shines upon you.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement. (R.)
2. In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds. (R.)
3. The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him. (R.)
4. For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor. (R.)

Second Reading: Eph 3:2-3. 5-6

*The revelation means that pagans now share
the same inheritance, that they are parts of the
same body.*

Gospel Acclamation: Mt 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East;
and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

Gospel: Mt 2:1-12

*We have come from the East to worship the
king.*

Communion Antiphon: Cf. Mt 2:2

We have seen his star in the East,
and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

The English translation of the Psalm Responses, the Alleluia and Gospel Verses, and the Lenten Gospel Acclamations, and the Titles, Summaries, and Conclusion of the Readings, from the Lectionary for Mass © 1997, 1981, 1968, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.

PRAYER REQUESTS

RECENTLY DECEASED: Sr Mary Martina Bell rsj, Pope Benedict XVI

ANNIVERSARIES: Moira Young, Kevin Smith, Rita Maloney, Ivy Wolfgang, Jeffrey Buckby, Maureen Burke

SICK: Christine Dowling, Margaret Cox, Helen Tumbers, Phil Bawden, Madge Humphries, Ronnie Jennings, Eileen Howard, Eva Grant, Colin Bryant, Maureen Sunman, Maree Halbert, Carlo Rossi, Kath Murray, Veronica McCann, Peter Skinner, Tiani Bishop, Tom Parker, Sam Broad, Ronald Watt

Names may be placed here by contacting the Parish Office. Please refer to the Policy Document on the Parish website—visit www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/downloads.

PRAYER FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF OUR NEW BISHOP

Shepherding God
you reveal your way of unfailing love
in the image of the Good Shepherd
who seeks the lost,
shows compassion
knows and is known by the sheep
and lays down his life for them.
We your people of Maitland-Newcastle
are without a bishop to shepherd us.
We ask that your Holy Spirit
who moves through this great south land,
inspire the choice of our new Bishop,
empower his 'yes'
and open our hearts in hospitality and love.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help pray for us
Mary MacKillop of the Cross pray for us

THE CHUCKLE

The wisdom of children:

Patrick, age 10, said, "Never trust a dog to watch your food."

Michael, 14, said, "When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid?" don't answer him."

Michael said, "Never tell your mom her diet's not working."

Susie, age 9, said, "Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time."

Naomi, 15 said, "If you want a kitten, start out by asking for a horse."

Joel, 10 years old, said, "Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat."

Eileen, age 8 said, "Never try to baptize a cat."

