



City Pastoral REGION

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

St Benedict's 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.

Mayfield Parish: Christ the King, Mayfield West. **Stockton Parish:** St Peter-in-Chains, Stockton.

SUNDAY 11TH JANUARY 2026

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Our Clergy

Fr Greg Barker, Parish Priest

Fr Sabu Pulimalayil, Assistant Priest

Fr Niel Olano, Assistant Priest

Fr Anthony Coloma, Assistant Priest

Deacon Kevin Gadd

Regional Office

McAuley Building, 242 Parry St, Newcastle West, 2302

PO Box 6, The Junction 2291

P: (02) 4979 1101

E: newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au

W: www.newcastlecatholic.org.au

W: www.sacredhearthamilton.org.au

After hours emergency phone: 0494 390 653

Our Staff

Anne Warren (*Business Manager*)

Jenny Pascua (*Parish Secretary*)

Daloras Howes (*Administration*)

Peter Davies (*Administration*)

Mary-Anne de Luca (*Sacraments*)

Dr Anne Millard (*Music & Liturgy*)

Bereavement Team:

Margaret Cox, Gail Lovell, Christopher Gregory,
Margaret Beard, Margaret Newton, Anne Millard
(02) 4979 1252

St Joseph's Pastoral Team:

Contact the Parish Office

Promoters of Safeguarding:

Louise Outram, Adele Rubino, Cynthia Tamonan,
Sr Kath Williams rsm



The Baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of his ministry. The story describes a very tangible and textured encounter with God in terms accessible to human imagination. At the same time, the events draw human thinking, feeling and sensing to unfamiliar and mysterious levels of experience. A captivating theophany is depicted: the heavens are torn apart, the Spirit appears and descends like a dove on Jesus and the voice of God affirms that Jesus is the chosen one, the 'Beloved'. There is unmistakable tenderness here.

Jenny Close

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)

1st week in Ordinary Time, Year A

Mon 12 Jan

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Tues 13 Jan

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

Wed 14 Jan

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Mayfield West

Thurs 15 Jan

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

11:00am Mass @ Fronditha, Mayfield

Fri 16 Jan

10:15am Mass @ The Junction

11:00am Exposition, Adoration & Reconciliation @ The Cathedral

12:05pm Mass @ The Cathedral

Sat 17 Jan *St Anthony. abbot*

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

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ The Cathedral

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ The Junction

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ Mayfield West

Sun 18 Jan *2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time*

7:30am Mass @ St Mary's

8:00am Mass @ Tighes Hill

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

9:30am Mass @ The Cathedral *

11:00am Italian Mass @ The Junction

12noon Polish Mass @ The Cathedral

5:00pm Mass @ The Cathedral

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



NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Is 49:3, 5-6

1 Cor 1:1-3

Jn 1:29-34

PRAYER REQUESTS

RECENTLY DECEASED: Lawrence Smith, Bernice Moore, Daniel Miller, Nola Corbett, Colleen Bryde

ANNIVERSARIES: Betty Stott, Edward McCormack, Laurie Crump, Ivy Wolfgang, Colleen Winterford, Sr Colleen Casey rsj, Colin Isles, Bernard Hogan

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: John Hayes, Gary Valaire, Jeremy Eden, Braxton Rayner, Patricia Gillett, Carlo Rossi, Tui Innes, Raymond Morley, Louise Hall, Phil Riordan, Twon Nguyen, Eileen Jennings, Gwen Haggerty, Nick Fazzini, Rose Gathercole, Alexander Klein, Patty Keegan, Kathryn Kennedy

Names may be placed in "Prayer Requests" by contacting the Parish Office. Please refer to the Policy Document on the Parish website - visit www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/downloads.



Please send prayer requests and items for the Bulletin to the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays.

OUR BELOVED DEAD

We remember those in our Columbaria whose anniversaries occur in January.

At Sacred Heart Cathedral:

Colleen Bennett
Patricia Blick
Maureen Burke
Madeleine Cherry
Elaine Dodds
Lawrence (Jack) Drage
Mary Drage
Robert Driscoll
Bernard Duggan
Nancy Gorman
Harold (Harry) Hancock
Henry Charles Hardy

Allan Hart
William Hart
Ken (John) Johnson
Margaret Jones
Maureen Narvo
Frank (Fiore) Pati
Thi Bich Van Pham
Margery Presland
John Scrogings
Margaret Scrogings
Hendericus (Henk) Van Schyndel

At St Joseph's:

John Edward Carr
Annie Stamp
Rita Schuck
Ray Callen
Brendan Blakemore
Doug Carey
Raymond Dent
Joyce Gleeson
William Hartsorn
John O'Callaghan

Stephen Smith
Peg Sugden
Kerrie Walters
Thea Ethel Bennis
Christine Brain
Shirley Casey
Jack & Dinah Heaton
Milce Lettoof
William 'Bill' Henderson

Eternal rest grant unto them and may perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace, Amen.

FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

Dear Parish Family,



I have recently returned from three days in Parramatta at the Mary Mackillop Spirituality Centre, where I chaired the NSW gathering of Clergy Life and Ministry Directors for our province. Part of its brief is the ongoing formation of clergy and their 'professional and pastoral' development. For this Diocese I look after things like the Pastoral Supervision, Spiritual Direction, Professional Development days, Retreats and Reflection days amongst other opportunities. What I really like is the acknowledgement that all our formation and development, priests included, is ongoing. Anyone who thinks they walk out of Uni, finish an apprenticeship or get ordained with everything they will ever need to know is delusional.

I say that in part as the last few days we Directors have been hearing about the Synod on Synodality from one of the few lay women who had the great challenge and opportunity of being a voting delegate at that Synod. Great learning. Same voting rights as all the Cardinals and Bishops who would normally have sole voting. It was revolutionary as you would have read and heard. Even though Synodality (consulting, collaborating, discerning and listening) has been a major part of Church life for 2000 years, we have neither practised it well at times nor understood the part it plays in our decision making fully. Someone still must make the decision; the decision is never in isolation and comes if we are true to our mission, from a process of hearing what the Spirit is calling us to from the voices of others. The directors under the leadership and input of Mrs Kelly Paget, Chancellor of the Diocese of Broken Bay (revolutionary in itself), helped us practise how Synodality worked at the Synod and how it should work in the discernment processes of church and in particular parish life. Every voice is heard when listening is practised properly.

It is no coincidence that we are thinking and talking about our part in a Synodal church on this the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and reflecting on our own mission out of our baptisms. Baptism begins a lifelong vocation in Christ for all of us.

I heard of an initiative in one of the Broken Bay Parishes where they have a Parish-in-Council rather than a Parish Council. The entire parish is invited four times a year to discern the planning, implementation and future direction of the Parish's pastoral plan. Regularly they meet as a Parish with between 150 and 200 parishioners attending for conversations in the

Spirit where every voice is heard. My hope is that at our next assembly day we might break their record! Not to be competitive, rather as a sign that every part of our parishes is represented and that every opportunity has been taken to 'be in' and to listen to the Spirit.

In my own discernment and prayer, my own listening to the Spirit, I know that for us to be a strong, supportive and alive missionary parish everyone has a part to play, everyone has wisdom to share that comes from the Spirit and everyone needs to hear the invitation to share that wisdom and to be heard.

Greg, PP

WELCOME TO OUR NEWLY BAPTISED!

We joyfully welcome those receiving the Sacrament of Baptism at the Cathedral on this feast of the Baptism of Lord: Ellis, Alistair and Darcy Lynch, and Luca Lynch. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide and strengthen you as you and your family walk in faith with us.



CONGRATULATIONS!

Vincent recently travelled back to India for his daughter Jeanne's First Communion. Jeanne is pictured here with Mum Liviani and Dad Vincent.



Communion - Becoming One Body in Christ

Communion is the heart of the Synod on Synodality. It names who we are: a people drawn together by the love of the Trinity.

Communion calls us to:

- Deepen our unity as parish communities
- Heal wounds caused by closures, change, and loss
- Honour our diversity of age, culture, spirituality, and gifts
- Rebuild trust through transparency and listening
- Create an environment where everyone feels “at home”.

At the 1 November Assembly, people expressed a longing for deeper connection:

- “We need to know each other better.”
- “Community has been fractured.”
- “We need welcome, hospitality, and belonging.”

Communion is not uniformity. It is unity in diversity, the richness of many parts forming one body.

When we live communion, our parishes become:

- Safe places
- Welcoming places
- Joyful places
- Prayerful places.

Communion is God’s dream for us: To become one in Christ, for the sake of the world.

Regional Parish Assembly-Session Two: Discerning what we Heard - Saturday 14 February



You are warmly invited to join us for a Regional Parish Assembly on Saturday 14 February at the Sacred Heart Cathedral precinct.

9.30am arrival, 10.00am commencement, 3.00pm finish. This gathering will be a time to discern and dream together. Your voice matters, and together we can help shape the future of our mission and ministry.

RSVP: Please let us know by Monday 9 February if you will be attending by completing this online form:

<https://tinyurl.com/ParishAssembly2>

OR Contact the parish office:

⇒ on 4979 1101

⇒ or newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au



Prayer/Meditation

ST JOSEPH’S PRAYER/DISCUSSION GROUP

Keep an eye out for news of this year’s activities. And a very happy New Year to all.



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION AT TIGHES HILL

This is non-denominational - everyone welcome.

WHEN: Monday afternoon 3.30 for 3.45 start.

WHERE: Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 16 Tighes Tce, Tighes Hill.

The sessions include guided relaxation exercises, a reading from Fr John Main and 20 minutes of silent meditation.

LIVING WATERS MEDITATION CENTRE

A Christian Meditation Centre at 34 Kenrick Street, The Junction, which offers meditation sessions on Wednesdays at 7.30am and Fridays at 11.00am. After meditation on Fridays, Lectio Divina, a personal interaction with Sacred Scripture, is offered. For more information: Carmel Moore rsj 0412122297.



WEDNESDAY ROSARY

Pray the Rosary each Wednesday after 8:15am Mass in Sacred Heart Cathedral.

MEN’S ROSARY GROUP

The Men's Rosary is held the first Saturday of every month following Mass and Novena at Sacred Heart Cathedral. For more information contact Jason on 0499 854 928.



DIVINE MERCY DEVOTION

First Sunday of the Month - 1 February @ 3:00pm: Chaplet of Divine Mercy at Christ the King, Mayfield West.

TAIZE SERVICE

Sunday, 1 February, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Tighes Hill 5pm – 6pm, followed by a shared supper. All welcome.



BOOK CLUB

Book Club meets on Sunday, 1 February, to discuss *Scent of Oranges* by Kathy George.

Looking ahead, our book for March will be *Always Home, Always Homesick* by Hannah Kent, for April it will be *Legacy* by Chris Hammer.

If you would like to participate in book club meetings, please email:

newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au



ST MARY'S CHURCH, THE HILL

Please note the stairwell and gallery at St Mary's Church are not to be used, due to a termite management plan currently in progress.

ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT VIEW, CHEW, AND CHAT



We will be back in February for a wonderful new faith sharing opportunity. All welcome to join us then! To participate, please email the parish office.

newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au

DIOCESAN EVENTS

<https://tinyurl.com/cdmnevents>

RITE OF ELECTION 2026

The Rite of Election on Sunday 22 February 2026 is an opportunity to welcome all catechumens who will be baptised in their parishes at the Easter Vigil. A catechumen is an unbaptised person whose search for meaning has brought them to the Catholic Church. Please join in witness and prayerful support of those who choose to be Catholic. 1.30pm Sacred Heart Cathedral Newcastle West, followed by afternoon tea. RSVP for catering to mission@mn.catholic.org.au.



PARISH CENSUS & PLANNED GIVING FORMS

You can use the link or QR code to complete and submit the form online.

<https://tinyurl.com/newcparishcensus>



SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY BY DIANNE BERGANT CSA

We hear the first of four passages (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13 – 53:12) traditionally known as the servant songs. They constitute a unique set of poems that identify a mysterious figure, who acts as a pious agent of God's compassionate care. Most significant in this description of the servant is his having been endowed with God's own spirit. Here the servant has received the spirit of the Lord in order to bring forth justice to the nations. This justice is not harsh and exacting, making a public pronouncement of God's judgment of Israel; it is gentle and understanding. The passage describes the deliverance of the whole world, not the rescue of Israel from its particular bondage. The universalism here cannot be denied.

The scene in the psalm is the celestial court with the divine council. Heavenly beings are charged to sing praise to God's glory and might. God's wondrous name is revered in heaven as well as on earth. The entire council is enjoined to pay homage to God who is revealed as sovereign. God's sovereignty is manifested in the power that God exercises over the forces of nature. God sits triumphant above the flood waters. The scene is majestic. God's thunderous voice has silenced the forces of chaos, and now God reigns supreme forever as king of heaven and earth.

Normally, an observant Jew like Peter would not enter the home of a Gentile like Cornelius. The first words of his discourse ('I begin to see') indicate that he was not always open to association with Gentiles as he is now. It was an insight about God that changed his view of those who were not Jewish. He realised that 'God shows no partiality' and, therefore, neither should he. All are acceptable to God, Jew and Gentile alike. Like Jesus, Peter now moves in circumstances (contact with Gentiles) that were considered unclean. Like Jesus, he disregards such a judgment and refuses to conform to such a manner of estrangement.

Jesus leaves the familiarity and security of his home in the region of Galilee and journeys to the Jordan River where John is baptising. John questions the appropriateness of Jesus' submission to the baptism that John performs. He maintains that he should be baptised by Jesus instead. Although he will make different claims about himself and his ministry and will require different things of his followers, by participating in John's baptism Jesus associates himself with the message of repentance and the need for renewal that John represents. A dove appears and the Trinitarian scene is completed with the voice from heaven, which identifies Jesus as 'Son'. The episode has also been considered by many as the depiction of the divine commissioning of Jesus.

© Dianne Bergant CSA

Dianne Bergant CSA was a Professor of Biblical Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, where she taught from 1978 to 2014. She holds a BS in Elementary Education from Marian College, Fond du Lac, WI; an MA and PhD in Biblical Languages and Literature from St Louis University. Amongst other things, she served as President of Catholic Biblical Association of America (2000-2001) and has been awarded honorary doctorates from several other universities. She was an active member of the Chicago Catholic/Jewish Scholars Dialogue (1988-2017). She has taught and lectured in many places in the United States and abroad.

FROM THE PROMOTERS OF SAFEGUARDING

Since the start of 2026, New South Wales has experienced a tragically high number of coastal incidents: at least nine people have died or are missing in drowning incidents along the NSW coast.

Lifesaving authorities and data show that the tragic drownings recorded this holiday period have again all happened at unpatrolled locations, outside patrol hours, or away from flagged swimming zones, where there is no volunteer lifesaver/lifeguard supervision.

Based on the most recent official reports of coastal drownings in New South Wales, **no drowning fatalities have occurred between the red and yellow flags** for many years on beaches while they were actively patrolled by lifesavers.

These preventable deaths **highlight vulnerability** due to lack of / ignoring beach safety wisdom. Checking beach conditions using the Surf Life Saving **Beachsafe app** offers several key safety benefits for beachgoers:

- **Up-to-date beach conditions:** You can check current patrol status, weather forecasts, swell, tides and *hazard ratings* before you go, helping you pick safer beaches to visit.
- **Find patrolled beaches:** The app shows which beaches are patrolled and when, so you can swim between the red and yellow flags — the safest zones.
- **Hazard information:** It provides details on rip currents, marine stingers and sharks.

SAFEGUARDING

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding: 02 4979 1390, or email childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au or visit

EFTPOS TAP & GO DONATION OPTION

For some time now, EFTPOS devices have been used at the Cathedral and at Stockton and St Mary's churches as an option for 1st & 2nd collection donations. We are now extending this option to other Mass centres. The collection plates remain available for cash offerings, but the EFTPOS option will also be available. Thank you for your generosity and support.

THE CHUCKLE

We're working on a new typeface to be used in our weekly church bulletin. We call it "Baptismal Font".



Helping Others

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS APPEAL

A total of \$20,314.61 was received from the churches within the City Pastoral Region of St Benedict's, Mayfield and Stockton, including proceeds from the sale of Calendars. Many thanks for the generosity of all those who donated.



A few copies of the Columban Calendar remain. \$10. Please contact the parish office

FOOD BASKETS FOR THE NEEDY



Items of dry goods or tin food can be placed in the blue bins located at our churches. When donating please check expiry dates. We request that you do not donate peanut butter. Any of the following non-perishable items are welcome: UHT milk, cereal, spreads, tinned goods, pasta, rice, pasta sauces, tea, coffee, biscuits, custard, jelly, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant. Thank you.

COMMUNITY KITCHENS

The Community Kitchens run by CatholicCare can be accessed by anyone who needs a warm meal or support. Local locations are:



Hamilton South: Every Wednesday, 12pm to 1pm at 29 Fowler Street, Hamilton South

Newcastle: Every Saturday, 5.30pm to 6.30pm (6.30pm to 7.30pm during Daylight Savings) at Civic Park, King Street, Newcastle

BEQUESTS

To help our Catholic Pastoral Region continue its mission of proclaiming the Good News, you might consider including us in your Will. You just need to specify which parish(es) you would like to help.

DONATION OPTIONS

For anyone who wishes to make donations to the parish via direct deposit: Details are provided below for the individual parishes.

Account name: **CDF** BSB: **066739**

Account number: **see below***

Reference: **Donation [Surname]**

***Account numbers:**

Newcastle Parish – A/c no: **100008696**

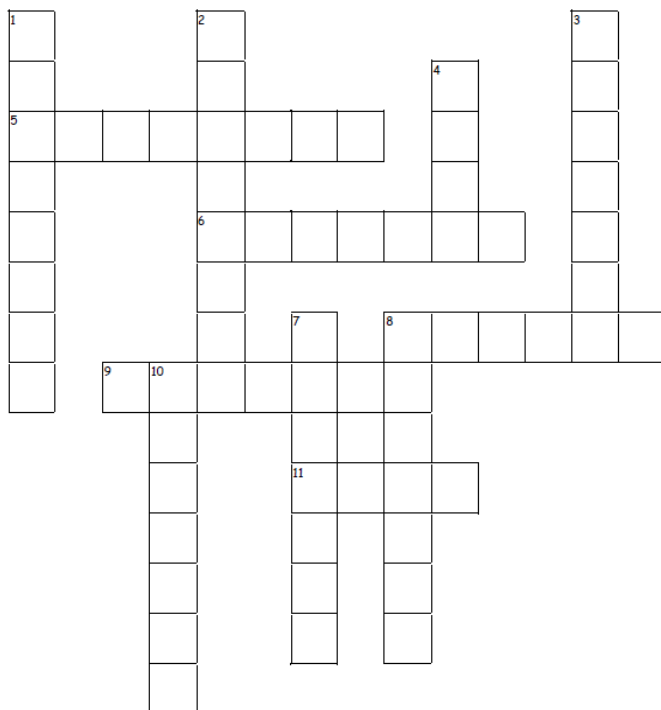
Mayfield Parish – A/c no: **100007169**

Stockton Parish – A/c no: **100003308**

CROSSWORD

God will bring justice to all the earth

Is 42:1-2, 4, 6-7
Ps 29:3abde-4, 3cde & 9ef-10, R.v.11b
Acts 10:34-38
Lk 3:15-16, 21-22



Across

- 5: strong and mighty
6: making something better, curing
8: the opposite of weak
9: a communication or instruction given to a messenger
11: the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in this form

Down

- 1: to become one of God's people
2: praises and gives thanks to God
3: from another place
4: the cousin of Jesus who baptised people with water
7: footwear commonly worn in biblical times
8: someone who serves another
10: extremely happy

JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

You are my own dear son

Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

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

Try to find these words:

baptised
dove
excited
fire
heaven
John
pleased
powerful
prayed
sandals
sky
water

TODAY'S LITURGY

Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Matthew 3:16-17

After the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Is 42:1-4,6-7

Here is my servant, my chosen one in whom I am well pleased.



Responsorial Psalm: Ps 28:1-4. 9-10. R. v.11

(R.) The Lord will bless his people with peace.

1. O give the Lord you sons of God,
give the Lord glory and power;
give the Lord the glory of his name.
Adore the Lord in his holy court. (R.)
2. The Lord's voice resounding on the waters,
the Lord on the immensity of waters;
the voice of the Lord, full of power,
the voice of the Lord, full of splendour. (R.)
3. The God of glory thunders.
In his temple they all cry: 'Glory!'
The Lord sat enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits as king for ever. (R.)

Second Reading: Acts: 10:34-38

God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power.

Gospel Acclamation: see Mark 9:8

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him.
Alleluia!

Gospel: Mt 3:13-17

When Jesus was baptised, the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God came upon him.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Memorial Acclamation:

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.



Communion Antiphon: John 1:32,34

Behold the One of whom John said:
I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.



Have you thought?

A sacramental moment

When we speak about receiving the sacraments, we speak about them as particularly graced moments when God is especially present in our life. The moment of Jesus' baptism was a particularly sacramental and graced moment: God spoke in approval of Jesus and bestowed God's favour upon him. It would be nice for the rest of us if God's presence could be so easily recognised at such times! However, in the absence of a voice from Heaven, we need to be fully present ourselves to sacramental moments and fully present to the moments that celebrate the sacramentality of our everyday lives.

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

St Joseph's Primary School: Karen McGinlay (Principal)

Union Street, The Junction NSW 2291

(02) 4961 2827

www.merewether.catholic.edu.au

Holy Family Primary School: Ann Jackson (Principal)

Pell Street, Merewether NSW 2291

(02) 4963 3009

www.merewetherbeach.catholic.edu.au

St Columban's Primary School: Penny Banister (Principal)

Church Street, Mayfield NSW 2304

(02) 4968 3315

www.mayfieldsc.catholic.edu.au

St Peter's Primary School: Michael Punch (Principal)

Dunbar St, Stockton NSW 2295

(02) 4928 1861

www.stockton.catholic.edu.au

St Francis Xavier's College: Greg Ptolemy (Principal)

Parkway Avenue, Hamilton NSW 2303

(02) 4961 2863

www.hamilton.catholic.edu.au

San Clemente High School: Emma South (Principal)

78 Havelock St, Mayfield NSW 2304

(02) 4014 7300

www.mayfieldsanc.catholic.edu.au

St Dominic's Catholic College: Rachel Jones (Principal)

76 Havelock St, Mayfield NSW 2304

(02) 4968 1295

www.mayfieldsd.catholic.edu.au

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