

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 1 March 2026

2nd Sunday of Lent

Dear Parish Family,

The 'ISIS brides and their children' debate is dominating our media, with no clear outcome in sight. Are you talking about it? Have you formed an opinion? As a local Catholic community, we should be talking and forming opinions, asking questions and trying to find answers. The debate has legal ramifications but, as importantly for us, moral ones as well. We advocate for the most vulnerable and we speak out for the rights and security of children particularly. Regardless of the mothers in this case there are children involved, who are vulnerable and not safe. A circumstance shared with millions beyond our reach; these children are not beyond our reach. Does that change what we think or what we advocate for? It is a conversation worth having.

It seems so much of the conversation in the media is shrouded in unknowns and is being driven by fear as a result. Should they come home to Australia, shouldn't they? Are they extremists, terrorists and a threat to our safety and security, or aren't they? Who are they and what is their story? How did they come to be with ISIS in the first place? Lots of questions unanswered. Australians who commit crimes overseas and who are charged and sentenced are allowed re-entry into Australia once they have served their time. We deport those from overseas who serve prison sentences here once the prison time is up. As an Australian citizen if I commit a crime overseas and return to Australia I can be charged and sentenced here.

The number of books and movies made on the forced marriage of underage girls, of young women tricked into marriage or forced/sold into marriage in some middle eastern and sub-continent countries is almost beyond counting. Post Covid a number of underage girls did not return to school in England, anecdotally believed now to have been taken from the country as brides in places such as Yemen, Pakistan and Bangladesh. They may have gone willingly or possibly tricked. It interests me that in this country we do not do weddings of couples under 18 for good reason; the brain is simply not developed enough to make such a commitment. The government has also introduced a further step in our marriage preparation here: each person seeking marriage is interviewed independently of the other to learn whether there is coercion or a lack of freedom to marry. The ability to understand the ramifications of such a commitment needs maturity and freedom and so we have made child marriages illegal.

The treatment of women in some parts of the world, including parts of Australia, is horrendous, and the numbers denied education, freedom and a voice are staggering. In places around the world women and girls (young boys too) are sold into slavery, traded in marriage, kidnapped, trafficked, prostituted. You might remember Malala who at 15 was shot on a bus by the Taliban for advocating publicly for the education of women in Afghanistan. At 17 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

I am not sure what the answer to the ISIS bride situation is in truth, I just keep thinking what would Jesus do (Matthew 19:14).

Greg, Parish Priest

Parish Priest

Fr Greg Barker

Assisting Clergy

Fr Niel Olano

Fr Anthony Coloma

Deacon Kevin Gadd

Parish Administration

McAuley Building, 242 Parry St,
Newcastle West, 2302

PO Box 6, The Junction 2291

Phone: (02) 4979 1101

Email:

newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au

Website:

www.newcastlecatholic.org.au

Note: Our *NEW website* is looking great. Check it out. Feedback welcome!

Anne Warren (*Business Manager*)

Jenny Pascua (*Parish Secretary*)

Peter Davies (*Administration*)

Mary-Anne de Luca (*Sacraments*)

Dr Anne Millard (*Music & Liturgy*)

The Parish Diary...(for the week ahead)

2nd week of Lent, Year A/2

Mon 2 Mar

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Tues 3 Mar

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

[No 9:00am Mass @ Stockton]

Wed 4 Mar

8.15am Mass @ The Cathedral

[No 9:00am Mass @ Mayfield]

10.30am Welcome Liturgy for new students at San Clemente

Thurs 5 Mar

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

[No 9:00am Mass @ Stockton]

Fri 6 Mar

10:15am Mass @ The Junction (anointing)

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

12:05pm Mass @ The Cathedral

5:00pm Polish Stations of the Cross @ The Cathedral

6:00pm Young Adults' Stations of the Cross @ The Cathedral

Sat 7 Mar

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

Third Sunday of Lent

Sat 7 Mar

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ The Cathedral

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ The Junction

5:30pm Vigil Mass @ Mayfield West

Sun 8 Mar

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 - search Sacred Heart Cathedral Hamilton

The Chuckle

A man used to go to a bar every night and order three beers. He told the bartender he did it to keep a bond with his two brothers who moved away. One night, he only ordered two. The bartender, concerned, offered his condolences for the loss of a brother. The man replied, "Oh, my brothers are fine! It's just that I've decided to give up drinking for Lent."



Prayer Requests



RECENTLY DECEASED: Michael Mather, Bronislav Wilnierak, Mervyn Tissera, Loretta Lumacang Zurita

ANNIVERSARIES: Laurel Russell, Isabela Haggarty, Joan Levy, Helen McCullen, Norman Charles Woodland, Ronnie Jennings Lauren Connors

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: John Hayes, Gary Valaire, Jeremy Eden, Braxton Rayner, Patricia Gillett, Tui Innes, Raymond Morley, Louise Hall, Phil Riordan, Twon Nguyen, Eileen Jennings, Gwen Haggerty, Nick Fazzini, Rose Gathercole, Alexander Klein, Patty Keegan, Kathryn Kennedy, Leonetta Papichio, John Woods, Rae Booc, Hoagy VanEwyk, Pat Fitzpatrick, Loreto Olano, Martyn Docherty

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

Our Columbaria

Those in our Columbaria with March anniversaries:

At Sacred Heart

Cathedral:

Louise Anne Balzer

Grahame Blick

Francesco Bufi

Veronica Ellen (Verona)

Cable

Edward Caelli

Warren Cunningham

Michael Edward Delaney

Veroncia Ellicott

Betsy Gadd-Ardesch

Frank Gibson

Olwyn Livingstone

Keith Martin

Nigel Mulliigan

Terence O'Beirne

John O'Brien

Peter Francis O'Sullivan

Wesbrook (Wes) Smythe

Coz Sphiris

Anna Maria Stefanson

William (Bill) Van Schyndel

Thomas (Jack) Wakely

At St Joseph's:

Gloria Doyle

Carmel Blair

Muriel Boekenstein

Della Brain

Ellis Brown

Thelma Doohan

Megan Evans

Margaret Fleming

Barry Lewis John Gordon

Joyce Johns

Jack Muldoon

Yvonne Pryde

John Sowerby

Paul Wallace

Win Young

Kenneth McDonnell

Eleanora C Bertoss

Kathleen Booker

James Struck

Barbara Georgas

Tony Tamplin

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

Piano to Give Away

Upright Beale Piano. Good condition. Steel frame. Needs tuning. Please contact the parish office.



Holy Hour - Sunday 1 March 2026

The Catholic Church in Australia begins the journey to the **Eucharistic Congress 2028** on this second Sunday of Lent.

Parishes across the country will hold an hour of Eucharistic Adoration following Mass this Sunday. Hearing the Gospel of the Transfiguration proclaimed today, it is hoped that we may all be united in prayer across the country, seeking a eucharistic transfiguration of our own lives and within our communities.

YOU are invited to join with us as part of a **nationwide Holy Hour on Sunday, 1 March 2026 at 10.30am in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West.**

“In 2028, Australia will host a landmark moment as Sydney hosts the International Eucharistic Congress (Eucharist28). This is more than a single event. It marks the beginning of a journey of renewal, transformation and mission, centred on an encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. A moment to believe. The journey has begun.” Search eucharist28.org to find out more.

EUCHARIST28

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the gift of your real presence in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Grant us the grace to receive you reverently, worship you truly and serve you with hearts renewed.

By the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen us, so that as you gave yourself to the Father and to us, we too may offer our lives to God and to others.

Inspire and help us to serve you in those who are in need, especially the defenceless and homeless, the lonely and lost.

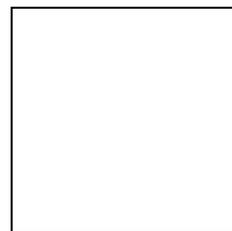
Unite us with your sacrifice of the Mass, so that we may truly become what we have received, the Body of Christ.

Amen.



Second Sunday of Lent
28 February – 1 March 2026

Sisilia is a 13-year-old girl living in remote Tanzania, who had to walk long distances to collect water every day. Thanks to Project Compassion, Sisilia's school and village now have safe clean water close by and she can spend more time studying so she can fulfil her dream of one day becoming a pilot.



Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty this Lent.*

Easter Raffle



To help us prepare for a giant Easter raffle, to raise funds for our parishes, we're asking each family to donate an egg, bunny or bilby. Baskets are available at the main entrance of each church on weekends. During the week you are welcome to bring along your donation to the parish office. Tickets on sale from next weekend, with expected drawing on Palm Sunday. Winners will be notified by phone.

Regular Opportunities for Prayer and Meditation

• Tighes Hill Christian Meditation

(non-denominational) - each Monday
3.30pm at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Tighes Hill



• Living Waters Meditation Centre

- each Wednesday 7.30am and Friday
11.00am at 34 Kenrick St The Junction

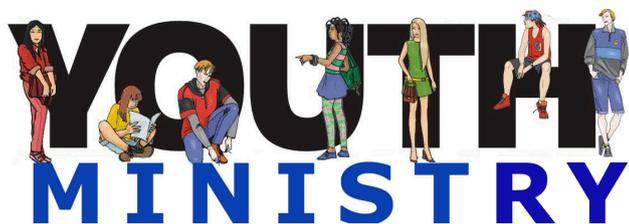
- **The Rosary** - each Wednesday after 8.15am Mass at The Cathedral, First Saturday of the month after Mass and Novena at The Cathedral



- **Divine Mercy Devotion** - first Sunday of the month 3.00-4.00pm at Christ the King, Mayfield West



- **Taize Service** - first Sunday of the month 5.00 - 6.00pm at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Tighes Hill, followed by a shared supper.



Stations of the Cross

Join other young adults (18-35) on Friday nights during Lent to pray the **Stations of the Cross**. Together, we celebrate this sacred season by walking with Jesus in his Passion, drawing closer to him in prayer and to each other in fellowship. Come as you are, bring a friend, and journey with us toward Easter in hope. When: 6pm Fridays in Lent (excluding Good Friday) Location: Sacred Heart Cathedral

Social Night

EPIC won trivia last year... now it's time to spend the voucher! Pop in for a fun **Social Night** at The Oak in Tighes Hill as we cash in our victory and enjoy a relaxed evening together. No agenda, no pressure, just good food, great chats, and the chance to build friendships beyond our usual gatherings. If you haven't been to an EPIC event before, this is the perfect opportunity to connect, laugh, and unwind with other young adults. Open to all aged 18 to 35. When: **Tuesday 17th March at 6pm** No RSVP required, contact Jono on 0432 504 217 with any questions. Follow us on Insta at @epicnewcastle to keep up to date on young adult events!

Alpha "Come and See" Night and Coaching Day

Friday 6 and Saturday 7 March

Do you love Jesus and have a heart for those who do not know Him? Do you want to share the Good News of Christ with those you meet? You are invited to the Alpha "*Come and See*" to learn about how we can do this in our parishes.

Alpha in a Catholic Context specialist, Tania Rimac, will coach us in the City Pastoral Region and Fr Greg Barker extends this invitation to all.

📅 **Friday Night 6 March 7pm – 9pm: Come & See**
Experience what Alpha is like, enjoy warm hospitality, and discover how this course can impact lives in our parish communities.

📅 **Saturday 7 March 9am – 4pm: Coaching Day**
This practical and inspiring coaching day will equip you with the tools and confidence to run Alpha in your parish.

Where: St Columban's School Hall, 39c Church St, Mayfield NSW 2304

Cost: Free

Register: <https://www.trybooking.com/DJPCG>

For more information or help with registering please contact Mary-Anne de Luca on 0409 077 373.

Parish Group Meetings

St Joseph's Prayer/Discussion Group has commenced our 2026 program with the Wollongong Lenten Program. We meet on Thursdays during Lent at 9.30am in the meeting room at The Junction and will continue until Easter. All welcome. Contact Janet Tully on 0435 518 671.



Book Club meets on Sunday, 1 March, to discuss *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

View, Chew, and Chat has started a new series, *Parousia: The Bible and the Mass*. Join us on Wednesdays as we explore how Scripture comes alive in the Mass and deepens our understanding of what we celebrate each week. All welcome to join us! To participate, please email the parish office:

newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au



Faith Sharing on the Sunday Gospel at Tighes Hill Church after 8am Mass on 1st, 8th, 22nd and 29th March 2026.

A Lenten Retreat Invitation

“Consecrate in the Truth, Be Christ to Others”



8 March 2026, from 12noon.
Toohey Room, 841 Hunter Street,
Newcastle West

Speaker: Fr Gregory Barker, Vicar
General of the Diocese of Maitland -
Newcastle



**Thanks for Supporting
the Catholic Mission
Appeal 2025**

Catholic Mission would like to thank all our parishioners for your extraordinary generosity and commitment to World Mission collection in 2025. Your prayers and donations are a powerful expression of faith in action, for our projects in Zambia.

Looking ahead to 2026, this year marks the 100 years of World Mission Sunday, and Pope Leo has declared the theme as “One in Christ, United in Mission.” This historic year will see renewed mission efforts, particularly in Africa, supporting communities through education and long-term development.

More details about these mission projects will be shared later in the year. Thank you for continuing to be part of this global mission of hope.

A Message of Gratitude for contributing towards Children's Missions:

Margaret Crockett sincerely thanks all parishioners who faithfully contribute each month to the Children’s Mission Partners appeal. To date, a remarkable \$55,760 has been raised through your ongoing generosity. Each month the donations are recorded and forwarded to Catholic Mission in Sydney, supporting children and families in need across the world.

Jenifer Fernandes, the Diocesan Director wants to share that this beautiful initiative began over 30 years ago with a simple invitation — to give just \$1 and encourage 15 others to do the same. That small act of kindness has grown every month, and currently is supporting the children's mission in 14 countries.

Your faithful support continues to bring hope, care and opportunity to many young lives. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity and missionary spirit.

Parish Teams

Promoters of Safeguarding: Louise Outram, Cynthia Tamonan, Alex Tamonan, Sr Kath Williams rsm, Annie Evans.

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.

RCIA: Contact Mary-Anne at the parish office. Our website has a form which can be used to express interest in becoming a Catholic.

Sacramental Program: Contact Mary-Anne at the Parish Office.

Baptism team: Meets on the first Tuesday of the month, with parents who are preparing for their children’s baptism.

Safeguarding

The Australian Government is enforcing online safety laws to reduce cyberbullying. However, the most common form of bullying in schools is verbal bullying (teasing, insults, and threats). Social bullying (e.g. excluding others or spreading rumours) is next most common, while physical bullying is less frequent, but can still cause visible injuries and serious emotional harm.

What is bullying? Bullying requires intent, repetition, and a power imbalance (i.e. use of physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others.). Bullying is NOT a single, accidental, or non-deliberate act. Each of the following behaviours are NOT bullying if there is *no intent to harm or humiliate* and the act is *not repeated*:

- Accidental or one-time actions: e.g. unintentionally bumping/tripping another child, a single joke about someone.
- Normal conflict: Disagreements, arguments, or conflicts between peers are part of growing up.
- Exclusion without intent: *Occasionally* leaving someone out of a game or activity.
- Disliking someone: Expressing dislike is natural and not bullying, provided it does not escalate.
- Impulsive aggression: Spontaneous, emotionally charged acts of aggression.
- Prejudice-based statements without power imbalance: biased or unfair generalisations about a group (race, sex, ability) made by someone who does not hold systemic or institutional power may be hurtful but are *not bullying unless they involve intent or repetition*.

Diocesan Events

<https://tinyurl.com/cdmnevents>

Diocesan Resource Centre

Opening Hours: Mondays and Fridays, 10am to 4pm.
Open 1st & 3rd Saturday of each month, 10am to 2pm.
cnr Tudor and Parry Sts, Newcastle West.

All resources are available to borrow; and are searchable on the library catalogue, which can be accessed through this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/DOMNLibrary>

OR use the QR code.



Praying Scripture Group

*Diocesan Resource Centre - Cnr Parry & Tudor Streets,
Newcastle West*

The Praying Scripture group has started meeting at 2:30pm on Saturdays during Lent, at the Diocesan Resource Centre adjacent to Sacred Heart Cathedral Hamilton, to pray and reflect on the Lenten Gospels. We will continue to meet after Easter with a particular focus on the Gospel of John this year. You can contact Wayne Caruana for more information on 0466 631394.

Formation Film

Saturday 7 March, 11am, cnr Parry & Tudor Streets, Newcastle West – beside Sacred Heart Cathedral. Join us as we watch and discuss the 2024 release film ***Small Things Like These***.

Lunch will be served after the film.

Reservations requested:

<https://tinyurl.com/CDMN-FormationFilm>

or call Mary on 0249230682



Meditation/reflection/sharing Exploring the poetry of the mystics

Reading and listening to poetry before becoming silent and still. It engages the whole person-mind, heart and body.

Saturday, March 28th 9.30am to 12.30

Donation: \$10.00

Morning Tea Provided at 9.30. **RSVP** by March 23rd
annecuskelly@hotmail.com or 0407436808

Name our Bulletin

From responses to the survey, we have narrowed down possible names for the bulletin to four:

- ◆ *Between Hill and Harbour*
- ◆ *Beachside Bulletin*
- ◆ *The Parish Vine*
- ◆ *Living Waters*

Use the QR code to cast your vote!

The winner of the \$100 gift voucher will be announced next week.



Become an SRE Teacher — Share Faith, Bring Hope

Monday 2 March 1-3pm

Mullane Room, 841 Hunter St Newcastle West

Our parishes are looking for generous hearts to join our team of Special Religious Education (SRE) teachers. This beautiful ministry allows you to share the love of Jesus with children in our local public schools, offering them encouragement, connection, and a sense of belonging.

If you've ever felt a nudge to serve, this is a wonderful place to begin. All training, support and resources are provided - you simply bring your witness and willingness. Come along, meet the team, and discover how your "yes" could make a real difference in a child's life. Contact Nicola Graham 0417 773 444
nicola.graham@mn.catholic.org.au

Celebrate International Women's Day at Mary MacKillop Place

Join us on Sunday 8 March as we celebrate International Women's Day and honour Saint Mary MacKillop.

Mass at 1pm at the Mary MacKillop Memorial Chapel
7 Mount Street, North Sydney.

(Also celebrated at 8am and 11am)

The 1pm Mass will include a special blessing and prayer for International Women's Day, giving thanks for the dignity and contribution of women in our Church and wider community.

Cake and refreshments will be shared in the courtyard after Mass. All are welcome!

Called & Gifted Discernment Process

After the success of the 2025 trial, Mission & Evangelisation is working with the Catherine of Siena Institute to offer the Called & Gifted Discernment Process this year. We will again offer this life-changing discernment process, inviting you to discover your God-given charisms. Commencing in May, step forward in faith and help our parishes thrive through use of your gifts.

Express your interest here: [https://tinyurl.com/](https://tinyurl.com/CalledandGifted2026)

[CalledandGifted2026](https://tinyurl.com/CalledandGifted2026)

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 ask 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.



Sacraments of Initiation - Enrolments for 2026



Our program of preparation for Confirmation and First Communion has started, but there is still time to enrol.

If you are interested in registering your child to be part of the sacramental journey this year, please fill out the following form:

<https://tinyurl.com/Initiation2026>

For parents who have been unable to attend an information session, we are holding a further session at the Sacred Heart Cathedral:

Thursday, March 5 6:45pm - 8:00pm

If you feel called to assist parents in preparing children for Sacraments of Initiation, or if you would like more information, please contact our pastoral associate for Sacraments Mary-Anne de Luca on 0409 077 373 or email mary-anne.deluca@mn.catholic.org.au.

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**

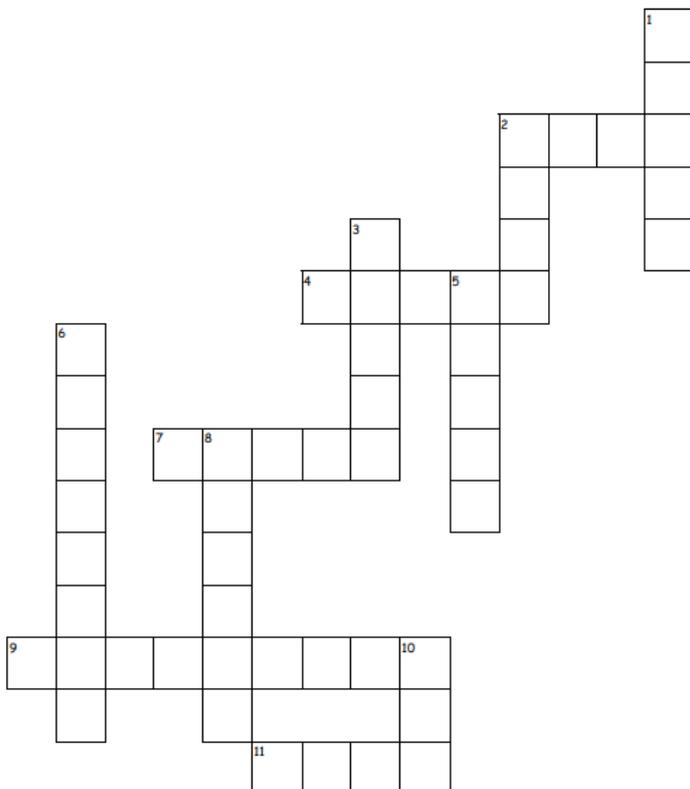
Bequests

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.

CROSSWORD

Jesus' face shone like the sun

Mt 17:1-9



Across

2: level, even

4: hearing someone speak is to listen to their...

7: the brother of John

9: followers of Jesus

11: he was with his brother and Peter

Down

1: the disciple who was also known as Simon

2: the front of your head

3: he appeared along side Jesus and Elijah

5: the disciples heard God's voice coming from where?

6: the disciples witnessed the transfiguration at the top of a ...

8: scared

10: the brightest light in the sky

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 www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au

Today's Liturgy of the Word



First Reading: Gen 12:1-4

The call of Abraham, the father of God's people.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 32:4-5. 18-20. 22. R. v.22

(R.) Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.

1. The word of the Lord is faithful
and all his works to be trusted.
The Lord loves justice and right
and fills the earth with his love. (R.)
2. The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine. (R.)
3. Our soul is waiting for the Lord.
The Lord is our help and our shield.
May your love be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you. (R.)

Second Reading: 2 Tm 1:8-10

God has saved us, and called us to be holy.

Gospel Acclamation: Mt 17:5

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! From the
shining cloud the Father's voice is heard: this is my
beloved Son, hear him. Glory and praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel: Mt 17:1-9

His face shone like the sun.

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Next Week's Readings

3rd Sunday of Lent, Year A

Ex 17:3-7

Rom 5:1-2,5-8

Jn 4:5-42

Tell Us About You

You can use the link or QR code to provide your contact details. You can also let us know if you wish to take on a volunteer roll, and/or join our Planned Giving program.

<https://tinyurl.com/newcparishcensus>



Scripture Commentary

We all need a vision. Long ago, the Book of Proverbs told us that 'where there is no vision,



the people perish.' When we look at the world around us, with so many wars, so much violence, such widespread hardship and numerous groups of people putting up walls against each other, we might wonder where the real leaders are to be found. On the world stage, Pope Leo XIV often seems like a lone voice for peace, justice and sanity. He points a direction based on his deep encounter with God.

Perhaps we find vision in the less well-known stories of ordinary people, some of whom we may know. This week, **Project Compassion** shares with us the story of young **Sisilia** who lives in a remote part of northern Tanzania. Her father died when she was young, and her family has faced enormous difficulty. 'Life is hard,' she says as an understatement. Your help has enabled her village to gain access to a reliable supply of safe water. What has this got to do with education? The time that Sisilia spent walking three times a day for water was having a major impact on her schooling. She now has a vision for life, one she shares with her community.

In today's readings, we hear about vision. In the book of **Genesis**, Abram leaves his country, his family and his father's house. He may not know quite what will happen, but he puts his faith in a call that will lead to life and abundance. He does not have a map, but he does have a vision.

We hear in the **Gospel** that Jesus took his closest friends to the top of a high mountain. His face shone like the sun and became 'as white as the light.' A voice from heaven said, 'this is my beloved son; listen to him.' Peter said how wonderful it was to be there, and he wanted to build a tent so they could stay. But vision is always on the move and Jesus knew that he and his friends had a hard road ahead. The transfiguration may only have lasted a few minutes, but it was clear that Jesus' friends never forgot it. Every year, we hear this story near the start of Lent because we, too, need to be inspired.

During Lent, we are also called to transfigure the world, to make a difference by uniting against poverty.

