

Seeing Beyond the Horizon, Following Jesus in the New Year!

As the Church begins a new liturgical year, today's Gospel from Matthew invites us to reflect on the call of discipleship and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near," He proclaims, and immediately He begins to call His first followers, Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John, to leave their nets and follow Him. These early moments reveal a profound truth: following Jesus requires courage, vision, and a willingness to step into the unknown.

A story that captures this beautifully comes from an old Indian chief. On his deathbed, he summoned his three sons and asked them to climb the holy mountain and bring back something of beauty. The first returned with a rare, delicate flower; the second with a polished, colourful stone. The third returned empty-handed. "Father," he said, "I have brought nothing. But from the peak, I saw on the far side a land of green pastures and a crystal lake. I glimpsed a better future for our tribe, and I was so overwhelmed by the vision that I returned with nothing else." The chief declared him the new leader, for he had brought the most precious gift of all—a vision for the future.

In many ways, this mirrors the call of the first disciples. Jesus invites them to leave the familiar shores of Galilee, the safety of their nets and boats, and follow Him into a life filled with purpose and vision. Like the son who saw beyond the mountain, they are invited not merely to witness miracles, but to envision a world transformed by God's kingdom. Their courage and openness allowed them to see possibilities beyond the horizon and embrace a new future.



Photo by Jonny Gios on Unsplash

Here in Australia, the summer holidays are in full swing, and Australia Day is just around the corner, —a time for reflection, rest, and also planning for the year ahead. Like the disciples and the young tribe leader, we are invited to step away from the familiar, to pause and discern where God is calling us this year. What vision of life, community, and faith is God placing before us? What nets are we ready to leave behind in order to follow Him more fully?

Jesus' call is not just to action, but to imagination, hope, and courage. As we plan for the months ahead, may we, like the disciples, be attentive to God's invitation to leave our comfort zones and embrace the vision He has for our lives. May we have eyes to see the new possibilities, hearts willing to respond, and hands ready to act for the kingdom of heaven here and now.

Fr Sebastian

When should I complete my Safeguarding Training?

All Clergy, employees and volunteers in parish ministry are required by the NSW Children's Guardian Act 2019 to be current and complete with Safeguarding Training. Check with your Parish Office when you are due to update your Safeguarding Training.

- If you are new to ministry, you must complete the Introductory Modules 1-3 (Cycle 1).
- If you completed Cycle 1 modules two years ago, you must complete Renewal Modules 4 and 5 (Cycle 2)
- If you renewed your Cycle 2 two years ago, you must complete a Refresher Module 6 (Cycle 3)

Safeguarding Training Modules can always be completed online at <https://learning.safeguarding.org.au/>. Face-to-face training opportunities can be found at <https://parracatholic.org/connect/events/?series=safeguarding-training>.

Faith B4U...

The Parish Prayer Chest

You are welcome to write a prayer and place it in the prayer chest located in the chapel; perhaps to give thanks or to pray for the world, to praise God or to ask blessing and care for God's creation, to mention a special intention or to remember a loved one.

All prayers will be read with love by volunteer parishioners at the Rosary prayer time or other parish prayer group times. The prayers will then be placed at the altar during a weekend Mass.

As you write your prayer, may you sense God's tender closeness in your journey!

**Happy Australia
Day**

26th January

9:15am Mass

All Welcome



Blacktown Parish presents 'The Witness'

The community of Mary Queen of the Family Parish, Blacktown, are bringing to life the musical "The Witness" – telling the story of the life of Jesus through the eyes of St Peter. Open auditions are taking place on **Sunday 1 February from 11am-1pm and 2pm-4pm and Monday 2 February from 6pm-8pm at St Patrick's Church, Blacktown**. We encourage anyone interested in being part of The Witness experience to register.

For vocal auditions, contact our Music Director, Marianne Fernandes, at music@bethewitness.com.au. To learn more, visit Be The Witness – The Musical or email info@bethewitness.com.au.

Let us pray...

FOR OUR SICK, that they will be nourished with hope & recognise the loving presence of God in their lives.

Elie Aboumelhem, Mary Anjoul, Rita Attard, Amara Bewert, Ellen Boissett, Frank Borg, Haryono Budiono, Ann Bugaya, Karl Croning, Mario Curmi, Kathleen Davies, Nerida Fabri, Gabrielle Farfus, Delina Galea, Dorothy Gatt, Kay Jaunais, Margaret Jones, Rachel Karbic, Tulla Kavich, Patrick Kelly, Tyler Kenedy, Peter Kennedy, Maxine Kroebel, Michelle Makin, Joyce Mifsud, Elsie Moran, Joseph Moses, Alex Noble, Bob Nowfel, Brendon Onorato, Benjie Santiago, Michael Scanlon, Connie Shembri, Carmel Thompson, Connie Tudman, Eddie Vella, Joe Vella, Sue Watters, Gerard Watts, Grace Widjaya, Maureen Zarb

FOR DEATH ANNIVERSARIES, that they now know the fullness of life & delight in God - may they pray for our active purpose in God's Mission.

Gerald Mascarenhas, Angelina Saliba, Mary Sultana

FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED, may our Lord embrace them with unimaginable joy & bless those who grieve with the power of hope.

Lewis Zammitt

Catholic Faith Enquiry

Do you know someone who might be interested in finding out more about the Catholic faith, wanting to know about Jesus or explore questions to discover more about life and faith?

Please share the gift of faith with others by inviting someone who is interested or thinking about becoming part of the catholic community to contact the parish office phone: **9631 8135** or email: parishoffice@olqp.org.au where we can arrange to meet up with them and accompany them in their next steps of their faith journey.

Children's Liturgy Volunteers needed

Children's Liturgy - Once a month with a small team to share the Gospel with our young children during either the 8:30am or 10:30am Mass. School Terms only.

For details contact the Parish Office on: P: **9631 8135** or email: parishoffice@olqp.org.au

Rosary Making Workshop

Come along for a fun evening of community and crafting rosary beads that will then be donated to the sick and dying in hospitals across our Diocese. The craft evening will be held on **Monday 9 February at the Bishop Bede Heather Centre, Blacktown**. Costs are \$5 per person – payable on arrival (includes all materials).

To register and for more information, please visit parracatholic.org/rosary-workshops

Missionaries of God's Love Discernment Retreat Weekend

An opportunity for single women aged 18-35 to come and listen for the voice of Jesus, ask questions and experience prayer, talks, sisterhood and times of sharing to help you discern your vocation.

The weekend will be held on from **13 to 15 March at Carmel House, 345 St Andrews Road, Varroville**. Registration: mgl sisters.sydney@gmail.com

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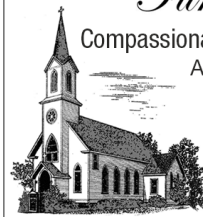
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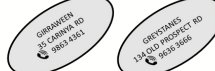
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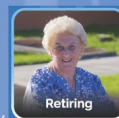
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Our Mission: To grow as a community in the likeness of Christ.

St Josephine Bakhita Memorial Mass & Community Celebration

You are warmly invited to the annual St Josephine Bakhita Memorial Mass & Community Celebration on **Sunday 8 February at 12:30pm at St Patrick's Church, MQOF Parish, Blacktown**. The South-Sudanese and Sudanese Catholic Community, supported by the Mission Enhancement Team, will celebrate their national patron saint, share their spirituality, culture and cuisine, and pray for the victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. All are welcome to attend.

MET Natural Fertility

Natural Family Planning (NFP).

Are you looking for help to track your fertility cycle? Come and explore a natural, effective, healthy and scientific approach to achieve, space/avoid pregnancy or monitor women's health. NFP is suitable for all situations including post-contraception, breastfeeding mothers and women experiencing peri-menopause. Express your interest at www.parracatholic.org/learn/natural-family-planning

Volunteer Cook wanted for Catholic Care's Houses to Homes program

Catholic Care's Houses to Homes program is seeking a volunteer cook to lead simple, hands-on cooking sessions for a small group of women once a month. Sessions run on a **Friday from 10am to 12 midday**, with all ingredients provided, and conclude with participants sharing the meal together.

All required screening and training will be supported.

For more information or to express interest, please contact enquiries@catholiccarewsbm.org.au or call 8843 2500.

Catholic Engaged Encounter Weekend

February 21-22nd.

How prepared are you for marriage? Engaged Encounter provides you with deeper insights into each other and into married life. We give you a chance to spend time together to strengthen and enrich your relationship. Additional weekends will be held from 23-24 May and 8-9 August. For further information, visit our website: www.engagedencounter.org.au

FEAST DAYS

This week we celebrate

28th Wednesday **St Thomas Aquinas**, priest, doctor
31st Saturday **St John Bosco**, priest

Christ's Catholic Community

Come and join us in understanding the Gospels more deeply. Fridays at 10am in the Youth room.

Contact: Mary Testa 0403 302 283

This Sunday's Readings

1st Reading

Isaiah

8:23 - 9:3

2nd Reading

1 Corinthians

1:10-13, 17:1

Gospel

Matthew

4:12-23

Next Sunday's Readings

1st Reading

Zephaniah

2:3; 3:12-13

2nd Reading

1 Corinthians

1:26-31

Gospel

Matthew

5:1-12

Mass Times

Monday - 9:15am

Tuesday - 9:15am

Wednesday - 6:30am | 9:15am

Thursday - 9:15am

Friday - 6:30am | 9:15am

Saturday - Vigil 5:00pm (live streamed)

Sunday - 7:00am | 8:30am | 10:30am | 6:00pm

Memorial Mass - Last Tuesday night of each month (except December) at 7:00pm

Mass for Peace with anointing of the sick - First Saturday of each month (except January) at 10:30am

Reconciliation:

Saturday - 4:00pm - 4.45pm

Please join us via Facebook or Website, olqp.org.au, every Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:00pm

Rosary in the church: Weekdays at 8:30am & Friday nights at 7:30pm

ZOOM option available Friday night for those who cannot travel to the church for rosary.

Meeting ID: 896 7944 2594 | Passcode: rosary

P: 9631 8135 | E: parishoffice@olqp.org.au

Emergency Contact Only 0447 509 207

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Parish Office hours: 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 4pm Monday to Friday

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