



## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### 11 February 2024

#### MESSAGE FROM FR MICHAEL

We have all experienced isolation, separation, and exclusion during the recent pandemic. Even in the family home people have had to isolate themselves from each other so as not to infect others. We see the ancient prohibitions against contact with people who have contracted leprosy or hansen's disease as it is called now. Thankfully they can now treat and cure this affliction with medication.

Jesus breaks the isolation barrier because he is 'moved with compassion' for the one who is suffering and quickly accedes to the healing request and insists the man perform the rituals that will proclaim him healed. He also requests 'tell no one anything' which the man in his healed state ignores. So, Jesus becomes the one who has to 'live outside in deserted places' because of the crowds wanting healing, yet they still came to him.

Jesus came for the oppressed, the outcast, the sinner and he lived and worked on the peripheries of the society in which he lived. We see in the ministry of Pope Francis a reaching out to the edges and a ministry to the peripheries, an embracing of the 'other' and a willingness to dialogue. Modelling the ministry of Jesus, the Pope, in his writings and the setting of priorities seeks to challenge us about the sort of Christianity and Catholic life we live.

This makes some uncomfortable and is challenging, very much in line with the Gospel message. May we be open to the challenge and seek to live lives that witness to the Gospel.

Yours, in the Lord Jesus, Fr Michael



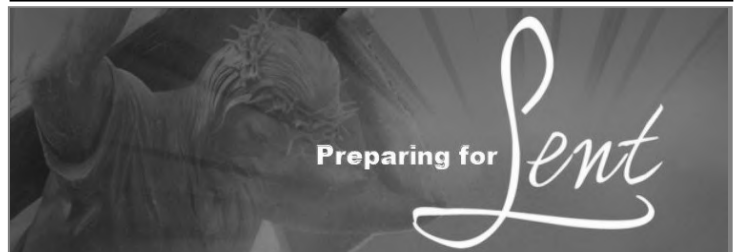
#### ASH WEDNESDAY MASS TIMES AT ST MARK'S



**7:30am** Mass with Distribution of Ashes  
*Morning Prayer of the Church 15 minutes prior to Mass.*

**9:30am** Mass with Distribution of Ashes  
*St Mark's Primary School Years 3 - 6 attending*

**7:00pm** Mass with Distribution of Ashes



#### Collect for your Lenten Preparation

##### LENTEN BULLETIN:

*Take home your Parish Lenten Bulletin with all the offerings to help you to pause in the daily demands of your life and to take stock in where you are in your relationship with God.*

##### PROJECT COMPASSION:

*Take home your envelopes or boxes and begin your almsgiving.*

##### REPENT AND BELIEVE:

*Be filled with the love of God and attend one of our Lenten gatherings.*

##### LITTLE BOOKS:

*Collect your little black book (purple for children) for daily reflections according to Luke.*

**A donation is asked for each Little Book.**

##### PARISH TENDER:

St Mark's Parish is looking for **General Handyman Services** and **Lawn Moving and Gardening Services** from any parishioner interested or if you know of a recommendation. Contact the Parish Office. Certificate of currency & SWMS required.

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Entrance Antiphon

Cf Psalm 30:3-4

**(All)** Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

### The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.  
We praise you, we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory.  
Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

### First Reading

Leviticus 13.1-2, 45-46

A reading from the book of Leviticus.

*As long as they are unclean they shall live alone outside the camp.*

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: "When a person has on the skin of the body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a leprous disease on the skin of the body, that person shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. "A person who has the leprous disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of the head be dishevelled and shall cover the upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' A person shall remain unclean as long as the disease persists. and being unclean, that person shall live alone with a dwelling outside the camp."

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32.1-2, 5, 10bc-11 (R.7)

**(R.) You are my refuge, O Lord, and the joy of my salvation.**

1. Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
2. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the guilt of my sin. **(R.)**
3. Steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart. **(R.)**

### Second Reading

1 Corinthians 10.23 - 11.1

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.*

"All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." If an unbeliever invites you to a meal, and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience, I mean the other's conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else's conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks? Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

### Gospel Acclamation

Luke 7.16

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people.

*Alleluia.*

### Gospel

Mark 1.40-45

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

*Jesus touched the man with leprosy and he was cured.*

A man with leprosy came to Jesus begging him, and kneeling said to Jesus, "If you choose, you can make me clean."

Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!"

Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

After sternly warning him Jesus sent him away at once, saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But the man went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, and people came to Jesus from every quarter.



**"It is not good that man should be alone".  
Healing the Sick by Healing Relationships**

The sick, the vulnerable and the poor are at the heart of the Church; they must also be at the heart of our human concern and pastoral attention. May we never forget this! And let us commend ourselves to Mary Most Holy, Health of the Sick, that she may intercede for us and help us to be artisans of closeness and fraternal relationships. © Excerpt Pope Francis XXXII World Day of Sick Message - [read full message](#)



**YEAR 1**

**FAMILY MASS**

We welcome all our new families  
to Year 1 Family Mass

**Sunday 9:00am**

**25 February 2024**

Followed by morning tea in the  
Parish gardens.

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## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### Prayers of the Faithful

**Leader:** In times of trouble the Lord listens to our pleas. With confidence in God's mercy, let us turn to the Lord in prayer.

**Reader:** Let us pray for the Church, that we may be examples of true witness to Christ's compassion for all.

*(pause).* **Lord hear us:**

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** Let us pray, that on this Project Compassion Sunday, we will be attentive to the cry of the poor and the vulnerable in places of great need. *(pause).*

**Lord hear us:**

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** Let us pray for all nations and those who celebrate Lunar New Year, may God bless them and keep them safe.

*(pause).* **Lord hear us:**

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** Let us pray, that our community will offer the hand of friendship to those who are lonely or afraid. *(pause).*

**Lord hear us:**

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** Let us pray that the sick will be treated with care and compassion, and that health care workers will be supported in their vocation *(pause).* **Lord hear us:**

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** Let us pray for those who have died, that they will be filled with eternal joy. *(pause).* **Lord hear us:**

**All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** Strengthen us, God of all goodness, with the recognition and compassion to respond to the needs of the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

### Communion Antiphon

*Cf Psalm 77:29-30*

**(All)** They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

## PROJECT COMPASSION PRAYER 2024

God of all hope,  
we pray for our world with all its beauty and need.

We thank you for the love in our lives that is  
a mirror of your unending love.

May all creation know your compassion this Lent  
and may we take courage to share it, especially with  
those who don't have what they need.

In our time, we hear the same words you spoke to Moses:  
'I will be with you,' when you ask us to do courageous things.

Through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving,  
move us to act in the company of your Spirit,  
showing compassion and acting for justice  
to renew the face of the Earth,  
now and for all future generations.

We ask this in the name of Christ.  
Amen.

Have you ever felt a little nervous when asking for help? You might need to borrow someone's car or get them to read over a job application. Isn't it wonderful when they say 'of course I want to!' It is so much better than 'I'll see if I can fit it in' or 'I'd love to, but I can't.'

The person affected by leprosy in today's Gospel had a lonely life. The first reading from the book of Leviticus tells us how those suffering certain diseases were required to live away from the community, 'outside the camp.' There was surely a fear of contagion, but it must have been tough for the people in isolation. Jesus stretched out his hand. He reaches into the world of the lonely. Jesus is always creating community, especially with those overlooked by others.

Lent starts this week with Ash Wednesday. As we prepare to celebrate once again the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter, Project Compassion gives us the chance to act as Jesus did. To reach out to those in some of the most challenging situations imaginable.

Once again, the theme for Project Compassion is **For All Future Generations**. This year, that theme is being drawn from the story of the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-20).

Moses was part of a stolen generation. He was taken from his family because Pharaoh was committing genocide against the people of Israel. One day, he was working for his father-in-law in what seems to have been a family business. His sheep wander off and suddenly Moses encounters a bush that is burning but not consumed. He is stunned. A voice tells him to remove his shoes because he is standing on 'holy ground.' The earth beneath our feet is indeed a sacred place. It is God's gift to us.

God tells Moses that he has heard the cry of his people. God responds to injustice and chooses Moses to speak to Pharaoh. Moses is scared but God promises 'I will be with you.' God will share the journey. All the time, God remains a mystery. He tells Moses 'I am who I am.' Moses wants more detail, so God simply says that this is the same God who has been longing for justice for the whole of history:

'By this name I shall be invoked for all future generations.' As God called Moses, so now God calls us to work 'for all future generations.'

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# St Mark's Parish Community

## St Mark's Parish 2023 Parochial Report

The data presented is an overview of our Parish, Sacramental, Mission, and Ministry activities last year.

Baptisms	65	SRE Teaching (Catechists)	7 teachers teach 115 children across 7 classes
RCIA (Welcomed to the Catholic Faith)	2	Evangelisation	Prayer Groups 20 gatherings per year
First Communion	57	Parish Groups & Ministries	Average 24 Ministry and Parish Groups
First Reconciliation	50	Weekly emails	1360 on database from Parish Census
Confirmations	59	Parishioner luncheons held	6 per year
Marriages	17	School newsletters sent from Parish Priest	340 families twice per year
Funerals	24	Nursing Home Visits	52 Pastoral visits per year
Anointing (not including Nursing Homes and hospitals)	10	Pastoral calls/visits & deliveries to parishioners	Average 60 per week (Feb - Nov)
Average Sunday Mass Count	280 across 3 Masses	Outreach Groups	2 with weekly pastoral visits and meetings

Each one of these activities happen due to the volunteering efforts of our Parish community. The Church and Parish volunteers often give their time, energy and skills because they are passionate about the mission of the church. If you wish to join as a volunteer speak to the Parish Priest and follow up with a call to the Parish office.

**DOMINICAN SISTERS OF Saint Cecilia**  
Founded in 1860 - Nashville

**WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT DAY**  
with THE DOMINICAN SISTERS OF SAINT CECILIA

**CHRIST, OUR FIRM FOUNDATION**  
Rediscovering the wisdom of the Church's spiritual tradition  
*Matthew 7:24-27*

**16 MARCH 2024**  
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL HALL | SATURDAY 10AM-4PM

**REGISTRATION**  
SCAN QR CODE OR VISIT THE WEBSITE TO REGISTER  
A \$20 FEE ASSISTS WITH COVERING RETREAT EXPENSES.  
DOORS OPEN 9AM. TEA & LUNCH INCLUDED  
[www.bit.ly/3RRAKfa](http://www.bit.ly/3RRAKfa)

SUPPORTED BY **CATHOLIC WOMEN'S NETWORK**

We tend to take it for granted that it is necessary to register ourselves and our **families on a Parish Census**.

We express our desire to belong to a parish community by formally registering in our parish. We want our children to attend a Catholic school or receive parish special religious education, to receive their first Holy Communion and other Sacraments or to later celebrate their marriage in the Church.

When someone is seeking to celebrate a Sacrament, it is only natural for the Church to inquire if the family is registered at their parish. **The Parish Census is not the School Census.**

The Parish Census assists when you are requesting school references, families requiring pastoral care and to maintain parish historical sacramental records.

If you are not registered and wish to register your family or update your information please complete a Parish Census form available from the [Parish Website](http://www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au) or contact the Parish office. [www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au](http://www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au)



### LENT 2024 WITH THE CATHOLIC GUY, BRUCE DOWNES

Lent is a time when we can grow closer to God and prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Easter.

Be inspired. Be refreshed. Be renewed!

For 40 days you will receive a short, practical, and inspiring video in your inbox every morning to help you make this Lenten journey more powerful and prayerful. This program is FREE and you can sign up here: <https://BruceDownes.org/Lent>  
Go to BruceDownes.org for more information.

**WATCH LENT IN 3 MINUTES**  
What is Lent all about?  
Why do Christians receive ashes on Ash Wednesday?  
Why 40 days?

**▶ 3:01**

**11 FEBRUARY**  
**World Day of the Sick 2024**



## Bring back previous Blessed Palms for burning:

Palms are required to burn for Ash Wednesday ashes.

Please drop off in the Church basket provided or at the parish office no later than Sunday 11th February.

If you can assist with Palms for Palm Sunday please contact the parish office. Thank you.

PAVCAKES  
MAKE  
PEOPLE  
HAPPY

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent), observed through participating in confession and absolution as well as eating pancakes. Mass at 9:30am St Mark's Church

## Saint Valentine's Day



O St. Valentine, lover of Christ and of the Church, we ask your intercession that we may learn how to love God above all things and to selfishly love one another.

O glorious St. Valentine, pray for us, that we too may have the steadfast faith of the martyrs. Amen.

### † Sunday 11 February - Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

The liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, recalls a series of 18 appearances that the Blessed Virgin Mary made to a 14-year-old French peasant girl, Saint Bernadette Soubirous.

### † Sat 10 | Sun 11 February - World Day of Prayer for the Sick

World Day of the Sick is a Church awareness day, or observance, aimed at praying and sharing, sacrificing one's suffering for the welfare of others.

### † Sat 10 | Sun 11 February - Lunar New Year

Beginning the Year of the Dragon - the wood Dragon to be precise!

### † Sat 10 | Sun 11 February - Project Compassion

As we prepare to celebrate once again the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter, Project Compassion gives us the chance to act as Jesus did. To reach out to those in some of the most challenging situations.

### † Tuesday 13 February - Shrove 'Pancake' Tuesday

Observed by many Christians through participating in confession and absolution, as well as eating pancakes.

### † Wednesday 14 February - Ash Wednesday

The Wednesday after Quinquagesima Sunday, which is the first day of the Lenten fast.

### † Friday 23 February - Catholic Women's League

St Mark's Catholic Women's League will be holding its opening meeting for the year at 1:00pm upstairs in the Parish Centre after a casual lunch together commencing at 11:30am. BYO Lunch. Come along and meet our branch members who participate in the spiritual and practical aspects while also supporting the work of the Catholic Women's League Australia. The League is a work of faith, and our members are looking forward to welcoming new members. Come along to our meeting and say 'hello'.



### † Sunday 25 February - Year 1 Family Mass

St Mark's community invites all Year 1 families to celebrate 9:00am Mass followed by Morning Tea. All Welcome.

### † Friday 1 March - Autumn Ember Day

This is a special day of prayer and Penance the Australian Bishops recommends penitential practices such as prayer, self-denial and helping others.

### † Friday 1 March - World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action," and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. This year hosting the Inner West Community is **Five Dock Drummoyne Uniting Church, Garfield Street, Prayer service at 10:00am**, followed by Morning Tea. All Welcome to join parishioners from all Churches in the area.

## JOB VACANCIES" DIOCESAN OUTREACH ASSISTANTS AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED (ACN)

Could you share the stories of suffering Christians? Are you looking for flexible part time work? Aid to the Church in Need is recruiting for a number of Diocesan Outreach Assistants who will deliver monthly presentations in parishes across Sydney, Broken Bay, Perth and Maitland-Newcastle.

For more information and to view the full job ad go to [www.aidtochurch.org/work](http://www.aidtochurch.org/work)  
Or scan the QR code



Aid to the  
Church in Need

ACN AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND





*In your love and concern, please pray for all the sick and vulnerable members of our St Mark's community:*

Brian Gallagher, Dante Ferzoco, Egidio Ettorre, Looi Im Heok, Christiane Biady, Anne Johnson, Lucie Betteto, Isobel Bocalatte, Pat Crowe,

Fay O'Halloran, Santa Iacono, Bishop Peter Ingham, Pat Kenna, Wendy Madden, Lina Giannandrea, Patricia Ryan, Patricia Ficarra, Milly Di Blasio, Immaculata Di Palma, Giuseppina Pinto and Rocco Zoccali.

*God of all goodness, Look with mercy on all who suffer any kind of infirmity, sickness or injury, that they may be comforted. Let your hand of healing and protection be upon them. When they are afraid, give them strength and courage. ~Amen~*



**Remembering those who have gone before us.**

Fr Terence Purcell, Giuseppe (Pino) Lorzio, Annie Nicholson, Cecilia Chye, Michele and Margherita Maldarella, Agnes Fernandez, Lily Conaghan, Frank Hanvey and Jim La Gerche.

**Recently Deceased.** Fr Kevin Bates SM, Rev Michael Kelly, Olga Garufi, Rodrick McWade and Margurite Anne Turner .  
*May all the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.*

**Pray Pope Francis Intention for the month February**

*Each year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. You are invited to answer the Holy Father's request and to join with many people worldwide in praying for this monthly intention.*

**For the terminally ill**

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment. Amen.



Parish Courses for Liturgical Ministers in 2024

To register contact the Parish Office

Courses	Dates	Venue
Readers	15 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024 6pm-9pm Thursday	St Charles Borromeo, Ryde
Readers	17 <sup>th</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 9:30am - 12:30pm Saturday	St Joseph, Belmore
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion – Refresher	21 <sup>st</sup> February 2024 6:30pm - 9:30pm Wednesday	St Therese, Denistone
Acolytes	28 <sup>th</sup> February, 6 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 6:30pm - 9:30pm Wednesday	St Therese, Denistone
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	29 <sup>th</sup> February, 7 <sup>th</sup> and 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 6:00pm - 9:00pm Thursday	St Thomas More, Brighton-Le-Sands

*St Mark's Parish*

*United in Baptism,  
Nourished by the Eucharist,  
Guided by the Holy Spirit,  
We Form a Vibrant and Caring Community,  
Living and Proclaiming the Gospel,  
Reaching Out to Those in Need,  
Journeying Together,  
Growing in Faith.*

**St Mark's Drummoyne Masses**

Monday & Friday 8:00am  
Tuesday & Thursday 9:30am  
Wednesday 7:30am



Saturday 12 noon  
Saturday Reconciliation 11:30am - 11:55am  
Saturday Vigil 5:30pm  
Sunday 9:00am & 6:00pm

Scan the QR code to donate to support the Ministry and Mission of our Parish.

*Baptism*

*We welcome into our faith community this Sunday through the Sacrament of Baptism at St. Mark's Frankie Joe & Luca Finn D'Acuzzo, Mason Robert Carroll, & Romeo Cruz Onofaro and we congratulate their parents. God bless you.*



**RCIA**  
*A Journey of Faith*

**AN INVITATION THAT NEVER ENDS**

\* Have you been worshipping with us, but never officially taken the step to become Catholic?

\* Have you been away from the Church, and have now returned, but want to know more?

\* Have you been a Catholic all your life, but never celebrated all the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)?

\* Have you been baptised; but have not received the sacraments of Confirmation and/or Holy Communion?

\* Have you joined us from a different background and would like to find out more about the Catholic Church?

If you ("or someone you know") answers YES to any of these questions, you are invited to find out more through process called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

It is a journey that begins with your questions.

The invitation is open.

On behalf of the Catholic community of St. Marks, we look forward to welcoming you. For more details email [pa@stmarksdrummoyne.org.au](mailto:pa@stmarksdrummoyne.org.au)

**St Mark's Catholic Parish**

33 Tranmere Street, Drummoyne NSW 2047  
Tel: (02) 9181 1795

Email: [admin@stmarksdrummoyne.org.au](mailto:admin@stmarksdrummoyne.org.au)

Parish Website: [www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au](http://www.stmarksdrummoyne.org.au)



**St Mark's Church Hearing Loop installed**

Parish Bulletin: we ask that you take home your bulletin, do not put it back for others or leave it on the pew for others to pick up.

Parish Priest: Fr Michael McLean PP  
Priest in Residence: Fr Denis Minns OP  
Pastoral Associate: Sr Antonia Nedu ISR  
Chair Parish Pastoral Council: Ms Celine Cheng  
School Principal: Mrs Melissa Lentini

Masks are recommended, thank you for social distancing, please respect the sacredness of our church and remember to turn off your phone during the Mass.

St Mark's Parish, Drummoyne acknowledges the Wangal people, one of 29 tribes of the Eora nation and the traditional custodians of the land on which we stand. We pay our respects to them and for their care of the land. May we walk gently and respectfully upon the land.



# The Living Word

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

11 February 2024

**Gospel Reflection:** It is hard to imagine a person in 1st Century Palestine who would be more of an outcast from society than the leper. Unfortunately, any form of skin disease was categorised as leprosy (known as Hansen's disease today). It was regarded as one of the greatest forms of uncleanness and seen as a physical manifestation of God's punishment on the person.

For a person like this to even approach Jesus is a huge risk and an enormous act of faith. He trusts that Jesus will not reject him like everybody else in his life has done. His request to Jesus is almost a demand; it is certainly filled with an utter conviction of Jesus' ability and good will: 'if you want to, you can cure me'. Jesus' reaction is one of equally strong emotion – he is so moved by this man's plight that he reaches out his hand and touches the man. To touch a person with leprosy was to break every rule of the clean or unclean social structure that dominated Jewish society. In this one action, Jesus challenges the entire basis on which Jewish society is constructed – the purity code. For Jesus to touch this man, according to the purity code, is to become unclean himself. But Jesus ignores these social rules and responds out of love and heals the man with word and action. However, Jesus knows that if the man is to be accepted back into society he needs to conform to the rules that dominate his world. He must present himself to the local priest who is the only one with the authority to declare someone cured of their disease and thus able to become ritually clean and welcome back into worship and back into everyday life.

**Historical Context – Leprosy:** To be a leper in 1st Century Palestine was to be utterly rejected from society. They were not permitted to engage in religious practice as they were permanently regarded as being ritually unclean and, indeed, unable to become clean as long as their disease lasted. The book of Leviticus, quoted in today's first reading, contains two whole chapters of rules regarding lepers. Lepers were forced to live outside of any village for fear of contamination and even had to call out a warning of 'Unclean! Unclean!' if anyone came near them. They were forced to beg for food and money because no-one would hire them. They were literally on the very edge of society.

**Gospel Focus – What's in a word?** Verse 41 of this week's reading begins, 'Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand.' This translation is from the Jerusalem Bible but if we were to consider other translations of the Bible we would find other phrases used such as: moved with pity; filled with pity; moved with compassion; filled with compassion; or even, filled with anger. By comparison, 'Feeling sorry for him' seems a weak translation. Jesus' reaction is a fully human one of indignation at what this man is forced to endure. It is a gut-wrenching response from the very core of Jesus' humanity.

**Living the Gospel – Who is your leper?** There is a story of Francis of Assisi in which he encountered a horribly disfigured leper. Initially, Francis was repulsed by the man but remembered that this man too was a child of God and made in the image and likeness of God. Overcoming his fears, Francis ran forward and embraced the man. Rather than seeing the disease, Francis saw the person. We can ask the question, Who is your leper? Who is the person in your life that you need to embrace rather than reject? Who would benefit from you viewing them with different eyes? Soft eyes! Eyes of compassion!

#### Questions?

- Q. Why was purity and cleanliness so important in Jewish society?
- Q. What are the equivalent taboos today?
- Q. Who are the 'lepers' of your community? Why?

**Learning moments:** Research the life and work of Fr Damien of Molokai – a priest who served the people of the leper colony on the Hawaiian island of Molokai in the second half of the 19th Century. (His life and work was dramatically portrayed in the 2000 film, Molokai – The Story of Father Damien.)

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Project Compassion Sunday  
10 & 11 February



Please take home a Project Compassion box or set of donation envelopes to support Caritas Australia this Lenten season and help support vulnerable people around the world, now and **for all future generations**.

With your support, Caritas Australia has been able to support communities around the world to tackle poverty, food security, education, water and sanitation and disaster risk reduction.

Project Compassion 2024 reminds us that the good that we do today will extend and impact the lives of generations to come. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **for all future generations**.

THE Catholic Weekly

\* Prepare for Lent 2024: Ash Wednesday times and how to get ready.

\* Cathedral college and choir go co-ed.

\* Simcha Fisher: Give patience another chance.

\$2



Available in the Church foyer

# Jesus has the power to heal



6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

What did Jesus say to the man after he cured him of leprosy? Use the words below to find out!

Say \_\_\_\_\_ of this to anyone; but go and \_\_\_\_\_ yourself to the \_\_\_\_\_, then make an offering at the \_\_\_\_\_ as Moses \_\_\_\_\_, then all will know you are \_\_\_\_\_.



temple show  
commanded  
healed nothing

## Wordsearch Jesus has the power to heal

Try to find these words:

begged	hand	sorry
disappear	kneel	tell
everywhere	leprosy	temple
gift	priest	towns



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

Sydney Catholic Schools Week

# OPEN DAYS

**Tuesday 5 March**  
8.30am-11.00am

**Wednesday 6 March**  
2.00pm-5.00pm

**Thursday 7 March**  
2.00pm-3.00pm

**Friday 8 March**  
8.30am-11.00am

## ST MARK'S PRIMARY

## ENROLLING NOW FOR 2024 & 2025



**St Mark's**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
DRUMMOYNE

Apply online: [stmarkdrummoynesyd.catholic.edu.au](http://stmarkdrummoynesyd.catholic.edu.au)  
 Email: [info@stmarkdrummoynesyd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:info@stmarkdrummoynesyd.catholic.edu.au)  
 Phone: 9181 3042

# ST MARK'S PLAYGROUP

JOIN IN THE FUN!  
 EVERY FRIDAY 9.00-10.30am  
 Children from 0-5 years and parents please meet us in the school hall

**ALL WELCOME!**

For further information call the school office: (02) 9181 3042



**A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney:** Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at **(02) 9390 5810** [safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org). You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police. **Website:** [Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding and Child Protection](http://Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding and Child Protection)