



**MESSAGE FROM FR MICHAEL:** On this 'Rejoice Sunday' in the midst of Lent we are reminded that Lent is a journey into the light. The scriptures today reflect on the experience of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the deportation of the people to Babylon and their longing to return home to Jerusalem. Lent for us is a journey within our home in the love of God.

Nicodemus was a man who was interested in Jesus and wanted to know more about him and his teaching. He would come to Jesus under the cover of darkness because he was a public figure and did not want to be seen with Jesus. Jesus challenges him and us to come out into the light because Jesus is that light who has come into the world that all might be saved and have eternal life.

Our journey of Lent is towards God and challenges us to let go of the darkness and to live the truth in the light of God's presence. God wants all to be saved and to have eternal life. When we were Baptised, we received a candle symbolising the enlightenment we have in Christ. The instruction that goes with the candle enjoins the newly Baptised to "Walk always as a child of the light and when the Lord comes go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom." Let us prepare well for our Easter Renewal of our Baptismal Promises and bear the light of the Lord in a world that needs people of faith and hope.

Yours, in the Lord Jesus Christ, Fr Michael

### *Prayer for your family*

Dear Jesus, we invite you into our family.  
May our home be shrines of peace,  
purity, love, and faith.

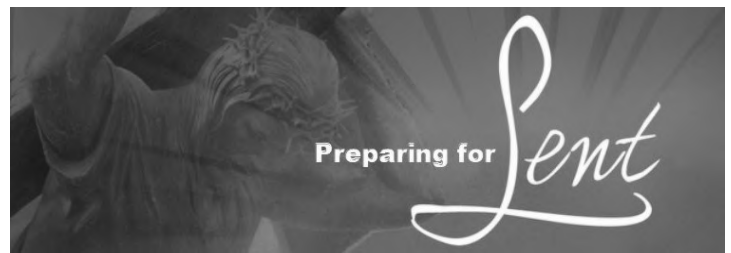
Protect and bless all of us, absent and present,  
living and dead.

O Mary, loving Mother of Jesus,  
bring our prayers for our family  
and all the families of the world to your Son, Jesus.  
Keep us close to your merciful heart.  
That our family may grow to Love you.  
Amen

## God Bless My Family

# Laetare Sunday

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



### WEDNESDAY LENTEN GROUP:

*Repent & Believe Lenten Group*

**Hosted by Lyn** 7:00pm upstairs in the Parish Centre, enter by the side door, a lift is available.

**Next Gathering 13 March**

### THURSDAY LENTEN GROUP:

*Repent & Believe Lenten Group*

**Hosted by Matthew** 7:00pm upstairs in the Parish Centre. **Next Gathering 14 March**

### FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS:

Every Friday following 8:00am Mass at St Mark's Church.

### FRIDAY TWILIGHT CANDLELIGHT REFLECTION

Prayer and Silent Reflection with the opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance. **Every Friday during Lent 7:00pm**



Collect from the Church foyer your  
*Easter at St Mark's*

*With Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Times.  
We invite you to join us as we commemorate these  
Sacred Liturgies.*

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

### Entrance Antiphon

Cf Isaiah 66:10-11

**(All)** Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

### First Reading

2 Chronicles 36:14-17a, 19-23++

A reading from the second book of Chronicles.

*Steadfast kindness of the Lord are shown by the exile and restoration of the people.*

All the leading priests and the people were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations; and they polluted the house of the Lord that he had consecrated in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, persistently sent his messengers to them, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord against his people became so great that there was no remedy. Therefore the Lord brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. The king took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years. In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in fulfilment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom and also declared in a written edict: "Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him! Let him go up."

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 137:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (R.6)

**(R.) Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

1. By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. **(R.)**
2. For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" **(R.)**
3. How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! **(R.)**
4. Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy. **(R.)**

### Second Reading

Ephesians 2:4-10

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

*Even when we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive.*

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come God might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. This is not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

### Gospel Acclamation

John 3:16

**Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son, that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

**Glory and Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

### Gospel

John 3:14-21

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that we may have eternal life.*

Jesus said to Nicodemus: Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

### Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

### Prayers of the Faithful

**Leader:** With confidence let us place our needs and the needs of the world before God who is rich in mercy.

**Reader:** We pray that the Holy Church will welcome all who repent and seek forgiveness. *(pause)*. **Lord hear us:**

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

**Reader:** We pray that our support of Project Compassion will help people around the world find the opportunity to use their talents to support their families and communities. *(pause)*. **Lord hear us:**

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

**Reader:** We pray that we in this community, already forgiven by God, will shine forth as witnesses to God's abundant mercy. *(pause)*. **Lord hear us:**

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

**Reader:** We pray for our kindergarten children as they begin their learnings. May their hearts and their families be filled with the love of God. *(pause)*. **Lord hear us:**

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

**Reader:** We pray for those who have died, that they will dwell in God's mercy forever. *(pause)*. **Lord hear us:**

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

**Leader:** God our Father, we are saved through your son Jesus Christ. Hear our prayers and help us to remember his sacrifice for us as we journey to eternal life with you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **All: Amen.**

### Communion Antiphon

Cf Psalm 121:3-4

**(All)** Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together. It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.

## St Mark's Lenten Schedule

### † Wednesday 13 & 20 March

#### Repent & Believe Lenten Group

Hosted by Lyn Put aside some time to gather with family and reflect the mystery of Jesus' suffering, death and Resurrection. 7:00pm upstairs in the Parish Centre, enter by the side door and a lift is available.

### † Thursday 14 & 21 March

#### Repent & Believe Lenten Group

Hosted by Matthew Bring a friend and be filled with the love of God when you gather and reflect the mystery of Jesus' suffering, death and Resurrection. 7:00pm upstairs in the Parish Centre, enter by the side door and a lift is available.

### † Friday 15 & 22 March

#### Twilight Candlelight Reflection

Begin with Evening Prayer and Adoration, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Silent Reflection, with the Sacrament of Penance available, ending with Prayer of the Night. 7:00pm - 8:00pm St Mark's Church

### † Friday 15 & 22 March

#### Stations of the Cross

Every Friday during Lent following the 8:00am Mass.

### † Saturday 16 & 23 March

#### The Sacrament of Penance

Confession | Reconciliation will be offered on Saturdays from 11:00am - 11:55am prior to 12 noon Mass.

### † Sunday 17 March 2024

#### A Lenten Conversation

Looking in depth into the scriptures of Lent will help to renew your conversation with God. Following 9:00am Mass upstairs in the Parish Centre, enter by the side door and a lift is available.

### † Thursday 21 March - Italian Stations of the Cross

Via Crucis in Italiano Giovedì 21 Marzo 2024 alle 14:00 Tutti benvenuti - St Mark's Church Thursday 21 March 2024 at 2:00pm All Welcome

### † Tuesday 26 March - 2nd Rite

The Sacrament of Penance "second rite" combines a common preparation with individual confession and absolution. 7:00pm St Mark's Church



The Sacrament of Penance (Confession | Reconciliation)

1st Rite: Fridays at Twilight Candlelight Reflection  
7:00pm - 8:00pm

1st Rite: Saturdays from 11:00am - 11:55am

2nd Rite: Tuesday 26 March at 7:00pm

# PROJECT COMPASSION

## FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS



We have all lived through a great deal of change. Even young people have seen plenty. ChatGPT is a recent development and so are electric cars. Older people can remember having a phone plugged into a socket that you couldn't carry around with you. Sometimes we have discussions about the good old days. They are often tinged with nostalgia for things we miss and gratitude for improvements. We no longer need to buy film for our cameras or change typewriter ribbons. Climate change is deeply troubling. Many medical improvements are inspiring. Change can certainly be frightening. It can also be an occasion of great hope. Jesus seems to have understood this. Nicodemus comes across as a character who is looking for change in his life, but he is nervous about it, so he comes to see Jesus under cover of darkness. Earlier in the chapter, Jesus uses the image of being born again. Of starting all over again. It is a dramatic description of change. Jesus says that the light has come into the world and that people prefer the same old darkness. They are set in their ways. Every Lent, through Project Compassion, Caritas Australia asks us to help bring light into the world and to make positive change. An example is presented to us this week in the story of Memory, a young woman from rural Malawi, the eldest child in a family living at the level of subsistence farming.

Listen to some of Memory's words: 'Growing up in the village was not easy. My parents don't have a job, so they depend on farming. When the season goes wrong, we suffer a lot and become food insecure. Sometimes we need to bathe without soap. Sometimes we need to walk without shoes.'

With the support of Caritas Australia and its partner the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), Memory was able to enrol at a technical college where she learnt practical skills in carpentry. A new life became possible. She can now realise her full potential and offer more to her family and her community. Today, the letter to the Ephesians reminds us that every person is 'God's work of art.' God is the artist who never signs off on a painting but is always trying to make it better. Perhaps we can see the world in the same way. © Project Compassion Reflection 2024



Memory graduated with an Advanced Certificate in Carpentry and Joinery becoming the first female carpenter from her village.  
Photo: Tim Lam/Caritas Australia.



# St Mark's Parish Community

## REPENT AND BELIEVE

*Be Filled with the Love of God*



Sessions at 7:00pm Wednesday and Thursday evening upstairs in the Parish Centre  
All Welcome

### 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.*



### Nicodemus: A Journey of Faith in the Gospel of John

For the 4th Sunday of Lent Year B, John 3 introduces Nicodemus, who visits Jesus at night, recognizing Him as a divine teacher due to His miracles. Jesus tells him about the necessity of being "born again" to see God's kingdom, explaining it as a spiritual rebirth beyond the physical. This conversation, including the analogy of Moses and the serpent, foreshadows Jesus' crucifixion and the salvation it offers. Jesus emphasizes belief in Him as essential for eternal life and warns of judgment on disbelief. This passage highlights the transformative concept of rebirth through the Spirit and the pivotal role of faith in salvation. © young-catholics



### The Midpoint of Lent

**What if I'm at the midpoint of Lent and not much is going on?**

I began with the best of intentions, but I am not sure what I'm doing or what I want to be doing. Can my Lent be rescued?

Can a six week journey be completed in the remaining next few weeks, waiting for my heart to be open?

Of course, the answer is "yes."  
It doesn't take long for God, when we are ready.



16.03 2024  
**EAS TER FETE**  
**ST MARK'S**

**SATURDAY  
16TH MARCH  
9AM-3PM**

**MAKE SURE YOU  
HOP ALONG**

ALL DAY RIDES • BBQ AND CAFE  
BARISTA COFFEE • MULTIPLE STALLS  
STAGE PERFORMANCES • RAFFLE  
SILENT AUCTION • LIVE MUSIC  
FLOWER STALL • CAKE STALLS

**31 TRANMERE STREET  
DRUMMOYNE**



## Wordsearch

Try to find these words:

- |          |           |       |
|----------|-----------|-------|
| condemn  | love      | save  |
| eternal  | never     | send  |
| everyone | Nicodemus | Son   |
| faith    | people    | world |

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

# St Mark's Parish

Our CWL gathered with parishioners for the World Day of Prayer an international ecumenical Christian Service, followed by Morning Tea at Five Dock Uniting Church. Hosting next year will be All Hallows Catholic Church Five Dock.



## A LENTEN CONVERSATION:

A gathering to go deeper with the readings and to reflect together was held on Sunday 18 February with Fr Michael 9am Mass. Join him for his next conversation on Sunday 17 March



# St Mark's Parish Diary

## † Thursday 14 March - St Matilda

Matilda, Queen of Germany was raised by her grandmother, the Abbess of Eufurt convent. She was known for her considerable almsgiving. In her final years, she devoted herself to the building of many churches, convents and monasteries. She spent most of the declining years of her life at the convent at Nordhausen which she had built.

## † Saturday 16 March - St Mark's Primary School Easter Fete

St Mark's community are invited to come and enjoy rides stalls and food at our annual Easter fete. All Welcome.

## † Sunday 17 March - A Lenten Conversation

An opportunity to go deeper with the readings and enable us to reflect together on the scriptures following 9:00am Mass.

## † Sunday 17 March - Australian Catholic Historical Society.

A talk on Our Catholic heritage. St Patrick's Cemetery. Sunday afternoons at 2.00pm in the Crypt of St Patrick's at Church Hill Grosvenor Street, The Rocks. Guest Speaker: Judith Dunn OAM Vice-president, Friends of St Patrick's Cemetery. Attendance is free but a gold coin donation for afternoon tea is welcome.

## † Monday 18 March - St Patrick

O God, who choose the Bishop Saint Patrick to preach your glory to the peoples of Ireland, grant, through his merits and intercession, that those who glory in the name of Christian, may never cease to proclaim your wondrous deeds to all. Mass at 8:00am



## † Tuesday 19 March - St Joseph

The Solemnity of St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grant, we pray, almighty God, that by Saint Joseph's intercession your Church may constantly watch over the unfolding of the mysteries of human salvation, whose beginnings you entrusted to his faithful care.

## † Friday 22 March - CWL Meeting

Join us at the Parish Centre for our CWL meeting. Bring your lunch to share from 11:30am with our meeting at 1:00pm. All parishioners and friends welcome. **NOTE:** Due to Good Friday this meeting is one week earlier.



## Pope to children: Changing the world starts with 'please' and 'thank you' and prayer.

Pope Francis sends a message to all the children of the world to encourage them to be united and listen to advice from grown-ups because, he says, their "pleases" and "thank yous" are the first step towards a better world. In his message, Pope Francis writes that he wants to speak to "each" of them because each individual is precious. At the same time, he continues, the message is addressed to "all" of them, because all children, everywhere, "are a sign of every person's desire to grow and flourish".

The Holy Father goes on to remind the children they are a source of joy for their parents and families "but also for our human family and for the Church" in which we are all connected. For this reason, the Pope encourages the children to pay attention to the stories grown-ups tell them.

Pope Francis then discloses what he describes as a "secret" to the children: the secret of prayer. He says that "prayer fills our hearts with light and warmth" and invites the children to pray to the Father just as Jesus did. In his language, Jesus called the Father 'Abba', which means 'Daddy'. Let's do the same thing, says the Pope, adding that in this way we will always feel Jesus close to us.

© Vatican News

*"Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in the faces of children all over the world. Come, Jesus, you who make all things new, who are the way that leads us to the Father, come and remain with us always. Amen."*



# IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

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

Alison Whitlock, Rosemary Brooker, Nawal Boulos, Pat Crowe, Joanna McGill, Margaret Smith, Pat Kenna, Brian Gallagher, Dante Ferzoco, Looi Im Heok, Christiane Biady, Anne Johnson, Lucie Betteto, Isobel Boccalatte, Fay O'Halloran, Santa Iacono, Bishop Peter Ingham, Wendy Madden, Rocco Zoccali. Lina Giannandrea, Patricia Ryan, Patricia Ficarra, Milly Di Blasio, Immaculata Di Palma and Giuseppina Pinto.

*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.**

Rocchina Ciampa, Shirley Hofman, Mary Hofman, Giuseppe Ziino, Rita Rota, Norma Cornford, Guistina Russo, Giuseppe, Gennaro, Michele, Giacomo & Umberto Ferraro.

**Recently Deceased.** Egidio Ettore, Beres Bowry, Don Fitzpatrick, Laurence Paul Hoolahan and Dr Catriona Ann Orlando (Paterson). *May all the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.*

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

*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 Martyrs of our Day, Witnesses to Christ.**

"Let us pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive" Amen.



## 4th Sunday of Lent Laetare Sunday

Rejoice, Jerusalem. and all who love her.  
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;  
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.



**BISHOP TERRY BRADY  
AUXILIARY BISHOP EMERITUS**

warmly invites you to  
St Patrick's Feast Day Mass  
Monday 18 March 2024  
10.00am  
St Mary's Cathedral  
2 St Mary's Rd, Sydney

## 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

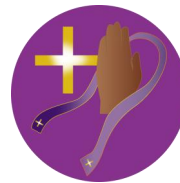
Scan the QR code to donate to support the  
Ministry and Mission of our Parish.

## The Stations of the Cross



**FRIDAYS DURING LENT  
Following 8:00am Mass**

This Lenten devotion offers witness to Jesus' Passion and Death, at each station we use our senses and our imagination to reflect prayerfully upon Jesus' suffering, Death, and Resurrection, and to experience the visual images to reflect on Christ's love for us.



**Sacrament of Penance  
(Reconciliation | Confession)  
Available every Saturday during Lent  
11:00am - 11:55am**

**TWILIGHT CANDLELIGHT  
LENT REFLECTION**  
Friday's during Lent - 7:00pm - 8:00pm  
St Mark's Church

Evening Prayer  
Adoration  
Silent Reflection  
The Sacrament of Penance  
is available  
Prayer of the Night

*Stillness and motion during the weeks of Lent offers us rich moments to strengthen our commitment and our faith.*

**ALL WELCOME  
Friday 15 & 22 March**

**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  
**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

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year B

10 March 2024

**Gospel Reflection:** To fully understand this week's gospel passage, it is important to take the first reading into consideration as well. The account from 2 Chronicles describes the way in which the people began to neglect their relationship with God. Despite prophets and messengers being sent to them, they turned their backs on God. At about this time the Israelites were conquered, the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed and the survivors taken into exile in Babylon. For many, this was seen as a punishment from God because of their neglectful and selfish behaviour. But the reading demonstrates God's infinite patience with humankind. God gives the people another chance and calls on them to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. God is willing to wipe the slate clean and start afresh. It is in this context that we must understand the gospel passage. In yet another attempt to demonstrate love and forgiveness, God's only Son the Word made Flesh is sent into the world to lead the people from darkness to light. Despite the many, many attempts by God to demonstrate love and foster a relationship with humankind, the people have repeatedly rejected the relationship with God and preferred to live a life of selfishness and darkness. Yet we see through both of these readings the unquenchable nature of God who keeps giving humankind one more chance.

In our day to day relationships, it is true that we often seek to test the limits of the love that is expressed. Young people in particular often test the boundaries of their parents' love and the boundaries of others who care for them. It is often a test to reassure themselves of this love – will you still love me, even if I do this? Today's readings portray the people of God as adolescents constantly testing out the limits of God's love. In a remarkable act, God's own Son is sent into the world to die as a sign of the lengths to which God will go to assure humanity of the love that is theirs for the taking.

**Have you thought? God in popular culture:** Think for a moment of the last time you saw or heard a reference to God on a television program, in a song, or some other popular medium. Chances are, the reference was one of a judging, vengeful, punishing God. This sort of image plays particularly well with a modern audience. It's easier to dismiss God as irrelevant if we can paint God in that sort of image. TV sitcoms do it particularly well with thunderclaps, bolts of lightning and booming, disapproving voices from above. It's much harder to dismiss a God of love who will go to extremes to demonstrate that love.

**Gospel Focus – Not to condemn:** The gospel passage tells us that God's Son was not sent into the world to condemn it, but rather, 'so that through him the world might be saved'. It also tells us that whoever refuses to believe 'is already condemned'. God does not condemn the world, nor individuals within it. Indeed, God is absolutely determined to save the world. However, we do sometimes condemn ourselves. When we turn our back on love; when we hide from relationships; when we wallow in selfishness we shut ourselves off from relationship with God and condemn ourselves. We only have to open our eyes to see the alternative!

**Historical Context – Babylonian Exile:** In the book of Leviticus (25:4), it is commanded that every seventh year, the land was to be allowed to have a 'Sabbath year' – no tilling soil, no planting, no harvesting. The people failed to observe this command and the prophet, Jeremiah, interprets the destruction of the Temple and exile into Babylon as God's opportunity to enforce the period of Sabbath rest for the land. The people were in exile in Babylon for 70 years, ending about 537 BCE when the Persian emperor, Cyrus, conquered the Babylonians and agreed to return the Israelites to their land. He also returned to them all of the treasures looted from the Temple so that it may be rebuilt.

#### Questions?

- Q. Why were the Israelites so ready to see their Babylonian exile as God's punishment of them?
- Q. What other Biblical examples do you know of where God forgave and gave people another chance?
- Q. Why do people continue to test the boundaries of love in relationships?

**Learning moments:** Make a list of relationships in your life that 'need some attention'. What actions can be taken during this Lenten season to get things back on track? © Greg Sunter



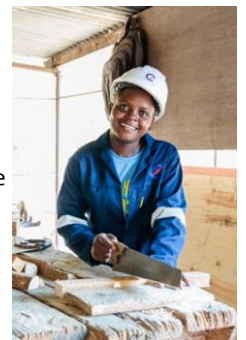
Fourth Sunday of Lent  
9 & 10 March



Memory is 26 years old and lives in rural Malawi. As the eldest child in a low-income farming family, Memory had to take on many household chores and farming activities to support her parents. They struggled to pay for Memory's school fees and school supplies, and Memory often had to walk to school barefooted.

With the support of Caritas Australia and its partner the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), Memory was able to enrol at a technical college where she learnt technical skills in carpentry. She undertook a three-year carpentry course, with CADECOM supporting part of her tuition and boarding fees.

Memory became the first female carpenter from her village. Today, she works as a carpenter at one of Malawi's largest hydroelectric power stations. With the income from her job, she can provide financial support to her family and inspire other young women in her community so that they may have the opportunity to succeed in a male-dominated industry.



THE Catholic Weekly

- \* Hollywood A-lister Mark Wahlberg spotted at St Mary's Cathedral
- \* Conscientious objection played down in ACT dying law report.
- \* Gender report shows Catholic workplaces nurture women.

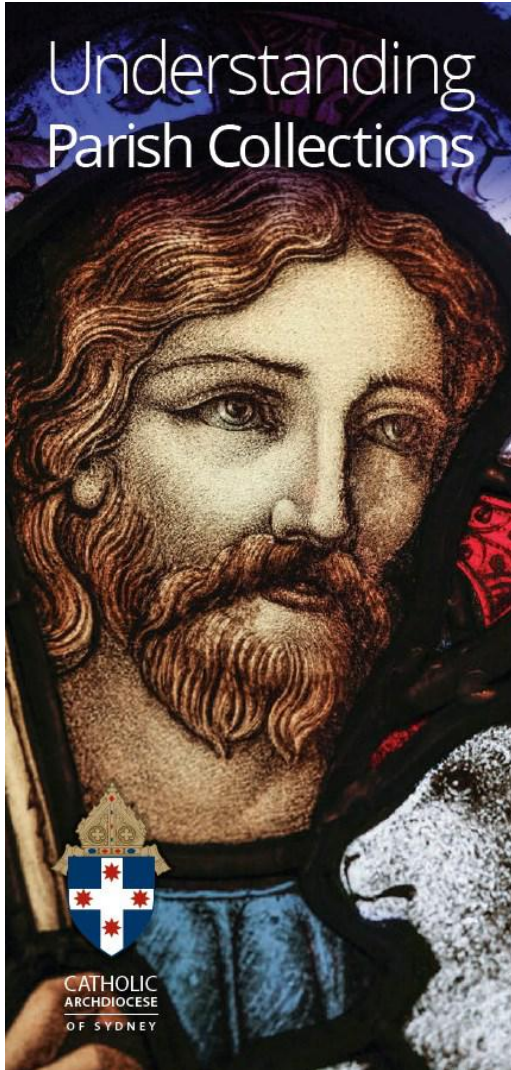
\$2



Available in the Church foyer

# Register Now!

## To become part of the Parish



We don't live in a purely spiritual world, we need financial resources to both advance and maintain our spiritual momentum. Some presume that this is a wealthy parish with large resources. We are not.

Our Parish and Church benefit only from what is given by the people who contribute through the St Mark's Parish Planned Giving Program.

The Planned Giving program within the Parish is an opportunity for parishioners to support with a commitment to donate funds at regular intervals. Parishioners can join our traditional envelope donation system or can donate through direct debit card donations.

**The Parish is required to fund:**

- \* Everyday expenses of administration, wages, utilities and insurances.
- \* Pastoral expenses Sacramental, Catechists and Pastoral care.
- \* Maintenance for 3 buildings for compliance.

For continued financial viability please register and we thank you in advance for your generous contributions.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

PHONE.....

EMAIL.....

PLANNED GIVING NO:

(office use only)

<b>I PROMISE</b>	Weekly	or monthly (card only)	or annually
	\$	\$	\$
	I require weekly envelopes	I require tax deduction	One off donation to be received by 25 June
	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

SIGNATURE.....

'IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE'

*In the spirit of giving,  
we thank you for  
your generosity!*

Many of our parishioners are already on Planned Giving and their generosity does not go unnoticed. We thank them for their continued support of St Mark's Parish.



Please tick [  ] [  ] [  ] Print clearly

Expiry date  
..... / .....

CSV .....

PLEASE DEBIT MY MASTERCARD / VISA CARD / ACCOUNT FOR THE SUM OF \$..... EACH MONTH

*(deductions are made around the 15th of each month)*

*I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS AUTHORITY MAY BE CANCELLED IN WRITING AT MY OPTION*

CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE.....

YOUR GENEROSITY IN SUPPORTING OUR CHURCH IS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE

Complete & return to Fr Michael, a Census form may be required, if so we will contact you.



**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)