

OUR VISION:

“WE ARE CONTINUALLY ATTRACTING PEOPLE TO ST LUKE’S AND EVERYONE WHO COMMITS TO BEING A MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY IS TRANSFORMED IN EVERY AREA OF THEIR LIFE BY HAVING A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.”

First Reading

Is 11:1-10

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (The fear of the Lord is his breath.) He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay, but judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land. His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless, his sentences bring death to the wicked. Integrity is the loincloth round his waist, faithfulness the belt about his hips. The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them. The cow and the bear make friends, their young lie down together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The infant plays over the cobra's hole; into the viper's lair the young child puts his hand. They do no hurt, no harm, on all my holy mountain, for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters swell the sea. That day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples. It will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 71:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17. R. cf. v.7

Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

Second reading

Rom 15:4-9

Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God. And may he who helps us when we refuse to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It can only be to God's glory, then, for you to treat each other in the same friendly way as Christ treated you. The reason Christ became the servant of circumcised Jews was not only so that God could faithfully carry out the promises made to the patriarchs, it was also to get the pagans to

give glory to God for his mercy, as scripture says in one place: For this I shall praise you among the pagans and sing your name.

Gospel

Mt 3:1-12

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said: A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

Reflection: THE WAY OF SURRENDER

What God wants from us is not a million acts of virtue, but a million acts of surrender, culminating in one massive surrender of soul, mind, and body. When we have given up everything and are completely helpless to give ourselves anything, as we will all eventually be when we face death, then salvation can be given us.

Salvation can never be taken, earned, or possessed by right. Hence nothing we have or can accumulate in this life – fame,



fortune, health, good looks, a good name, or even moral virtue, religious fidelity, personal sanctity, or the practice of social justice – tips God's hand towards us. What tips God's hands is helplessness, surrender in grace.

C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce* makes this point in a very simple way. He has a fantasy of some (ten) interviews between someone in heaven trying to coax someone not there to come to heaven. Each of the ten persons seeking entrance into heaven is blocked by some major flaw, pride, anger, idolatry, the incapacity to forgive, shame, lust, and the like. In each case, irrespective of the flaw, the person in heaven keeps telling the other: "All you have to do is to give me your hand and let me lead you there. All you have to do is surrender!"

In the ideal order of things, surrender is for the mature, for the flower that has come to bloom and needs to give off its seed. That is less true of us during the first half of our lives, for we are still building, but it becomes the deepest truth of the second half of life. After forty, understood religiously, life is not about claiming worthiness, or about building things, especially our own egos, but about getting in touch with helplessness.

Age brings us physically to our knees and more and more everything we have so painstakingly built up begins to mean less and less. But that is the order of things: Salvation is not about great achievements, but about a great embrace and, as C.S. Lewis puts it, all we have to do is surrender.

- Fr Ron Rolheiser, OMI

We welcome this week as our Celebrant: Fr Mick O'Callaghan

OUR COMMUNITY PRAYER

O God, You show us in St Luke, our patron, a person of faith who desired all people to come to know and love you in the community of your Church. Teach us to embrace what St Luke pioneered: discipleship of Jesus Christ. Trusting in your love and grace and nourished by Word and Sacrament may we grow in our relationship with you and together make our Catholic Faith Community a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Luke, pray for us.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, pray for us.

Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

15th December

MINISTRY ROSTER

Welcomers:

Charles Emerson

Acolyte:

Arvin Joya

Servers:

Ava, Gab, Denver

Readers:

Meli (1), Luanshya (2), Elvie Reyes (1)

Eucharistic Min:

Varuni Emerson

Hospitality:

International Food day

Children's Liturgy

Sinta, Sindhu, Annette

Positions Vacant

*Facilities Maintenance Officer - Diocese of Parramatta (Applications close 16 Dec)

*CatholicCare Mamre Creche volunteers
More details parracatholic.org/employment

*Faith Formation Team Leader – St Agatha's, Pennant Hills (Diocese of Broken Bay) For more details, please visit <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/people/positions-vacant>

Bishop's Christmas Appeal

Help vulnerable people in crisis turn their lives around, recover and thrive. Your compassionate gifts and prayers will help CatholicCare to connect people with support and services to build strong foundations for self-sufficiency, fulfilling family relationships and brighter futures. Please give generously to the Bishop's Christmas Appeal via yourcatholicfoundation.org.au/appeal

Gifts of Faith

This Christmas give a gift with faith at the centre. The Catholic charity *Aid to the Church in Need* has produced a Gift of Faith catalogue in support of suffering and

persecuted Christians. Copies can be found on the Welcome Table in the foyer. Or visit www.aidtochurch.org/GiftsofFaith or phone 1800 101 201. Order by 9 December to receive your Gift of Faith cards and envelopes in time for Christmas.

Handel's Messiah at St Patrick's Cathedral: 17 December

To end their inaugural year, River City Voices is proud to present an intimate performance of Handel's *Messiah* for Western Sydney audiences. The performance will be held at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta, on 17 December at 7.30pm. For information and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.classikon.com/concert/river-city-voices-parramatta-2019-december-17/>

Glenbrook Parish Christmas concert: 22 December

St Finbar's Parish, Glenbrook's tradition Christmas concert will be held on Sunday 22 December at 7.30pm. Join the great organ in singing carols with the choir and congregation and rejoice in the Hallelujah Chorus with trumpets and timpani. Entry via donations – families \$34 and individuals \$15. Bring family, friends and neighbours. For enquiries, please contact (02) 4754 1780.

Kellyville Parish Mass of the Holy Innocents: 28 December

Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Kellyville, is holding their annual Mass of the Holy Innocents on 28 December at 11am. Fr David Blowey OFM Conv will celebrate Mass, followed by a Rosary procession to the Shrine of the Holy Innocents. Lunch will be available and please bring a plate to share. For enquiries, please contact the parish office on (02) 9629 2595.

Local Christmas Mass Times

The Good Shepherd Plumpton

Vigil 24th 6pm & 8pm, Midnight Mass, Christmas Day 7am & 9am

Reconciliation every Saturday 11am-12

Mary Immaculate Quakers Hill

Vigil 24th 5.30pm & 9.30pm, Midnight Mass, Christmas Day 8am & 10am

Reconciliation every Saturday 4pm-5 and 12/12 7pm-8

St John the Evangelist Riverstone

Vigil 24th 6pm & 9pm

Christmas Day 7am & 9am

Reconciliation 21/12 10am-11, 4pm-5.30, 24/12 10am-11

St Luke's Marsden Park

Vigil 24th 7pm

Christmas Day 10am

St Luke's Local News

Mother of Perpetual Help Novena

Will be held every Wednesday from 7.30-8.00pm at 2 Springdale St (opposite St Luke's Catholic College)

Alpha Reunion Dinner

Saturday 14th December at 6.30pm at the office 2 Springdale St. Please bring a plate of food to share.

Youth Corner

Email: saintlukesyg@gmail.com

Saints-in-Training - High school Youth Group

We need You!

Meal preparation

We currently have some wonderful parent helpers who provide meals for the youth group. However, we still need further assistance. If you are able to assist next year either as a one off or be part of a roster (however regularly you are able to contribute) please contact the Youth Team.

Youth Leaders

We currently have a small team of leaders who plan, run and organise the youth group evenings twice a month. However, with the growth of the youth group, we need more volunteers to assist and become part of the team. If you have experience in youth ministry or would like to be involved in youth ministry please contact us! You must have a current working with children check but further training can be provided if needed. Please contact the youth team for further information.

WEEKEND MASS

Sunday 10.00am

St Luke's Catholic College (Enter via Frontier Ave Marsden Park)

Baptisms available most Sundays after Mass. Apply via email.

CONTACT US

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