

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 49:3. 5-6

The Lord said to me, ‘You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified’; I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord, my God was my strength. And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him: ‘It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.’

Second reading

1 Cor 1:1-3

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, send greetings to the church of God in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

Gospel

Jn 1:29-34

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, ‘Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.’ John also declared, ‘I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit.” Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.’

Reflection: Some of us remember the provocative and frightening 1991 film *Silence of the Lambs*. The image in the title refers to a childhood memory of CIA agent, Clarice Starling. In her interviews with the psychopath Dr Lecter, he gets her to talk about how she still wakes at night hearing the cry of the lambs as they were led to

slaughter on her uncle’s farm. This is a pivotal moment in Thomas Harris’ book and the film. It is the leverage Dr Lecter needs to unsettle and unravel Clarice’s well-formed defences. Clarice is revealed as vulnerable, because of the grief she carries from the violent deaths she has seen. I remember empathising with Clarice’s memory of the lambs. When I was a child I saw many sheep slaughtered on my family’s properties. I can still see my uncle selecting one of them, holding it in the pen before its execution and then watching him do the deed. The scene should have been enough to turn me into a vegetarian! Alas, I got over my pity for the animal and enjoyed roast lamb a few nights later. John’s use of the metaphor of the sacrificial lamb in reference to Jesus in today’s Gospel is meant to engender a similar empathy to that of the childhood memories of Clarice Starling. While there are many jokes about the stupidity of sheep, lambs still claim a spot in the hardest heart. They are pure, white, fluffy and defenceless. They demand nurture. And like their parents they don’t seem able to smell danger very easily. They follow where they’re led, even to execution.

For the agrarian Jews of Jesus’ time the sacrifice of a lamb demonstrated how serious they were about atoning for their sins. Jewish law dictated that a lamb had to be killed at least once a year, at Passover. Such a sacrifice cost the shepherd big time. Lambs were currency. Saying Jesus is the Lamb of God is a shorthand way of telling us two things. The first is that Jesus is God’s most precious gift; God’s own self, given to the world that we might know how serious God is about us. God can give us nothing more than Jesus. As a result of Jesus’ innocent suffering and death there is no need for any lambs to be religiously slaughtered ever again. We need to keep hearing this message because some Christians get caught into glorifying Jesus’ suffering so much they get trapped in their own world of pain and go looking for more. Jesus never sought out suffering. He bore what came his way. And the same must be true for us. Christians are not meant to be smiling masochists. Most of us don’t need to look for more suffering in our lives



because we share in the Lamb of God’s sacrifice in the ordinary downs of our lives. Secondly, John would have known that ‘talya’, the Aramaic word for sheep, is the same word used for servant. The first hearers of this Gospel would have known it too. Jesus, then, is the servant who brings us the truth we need for life, who answers our deepest desires to know that our existence has meaning and purpose and he opens up for us the life beyond this one, where there will be no more weeping or sadness. Jesus shows us that when we are baptised into his death and enter his service we also share in his resurrection and glory because he bears, and bears away, the sins of the world.

• Richard Leonard SJ

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

26th January
MINISTRY ROSTER
Welcomers:
Vol Req’d
Acolyte:
James Irudayaraj
Servers:
Gab, Rohit, Ava
Readers:
Meli (1), Luanshya Naidoo (2), Vol Req’d
Eucharistic Min:
Ana Connol
Hospitality:
Vol Req’d

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.

Positions Vacant

*CatholicCare Mamre Creche volunteers

*Office Manager – Tribunal of the Catholic Church (NSW and ACT), Diocese of Parramatta – Applications close 3 February
More details parracatholic.org/employment

Bushfire Response:

Australia is currently facing an unprecedented bushfire crisis in many parts of the country. The Australian Bishops have announced that special collections will be taken at Masses on Australia Day weekend to support affected communities. They have also urged Catholics to pray constantly for those affected, for those fighting the fires and for an end to the bushfires. To access prayer resources or for more information, visit www.catholic.org.au/bushfires

Catholic Healthcare

Government-funded Home Care Packages. Catholic Healthcare's local Care Advisors can work with you to create a customised support plan. Their in-home services include gardening, shopping, meal preparation, transport and nursing. Get a quote on 1300 734 350

Office for Worship Liturgical Ministry Formation Courses

The Office for Worship's Liturgical Ministry Formation Courses will be held again next year, in early February 2020. If you are interested contact the Office for Worship on 8838 3456 or anne.alimangohan@parracatholic.org

Plenary Council 2020 Diocesan Delegate Expressions of Interest

Have you been a part of the Plenary Council process of listening, prayer, dialogue and discernment? Do you feel called to express your interest in being a delegate from our diocese? Download an Expression of Interest form at www.parracatholic.org.

Expressions of Interest due by 25 January 2020. For further information contact the Pastoral Planning Office on 8838 3441 or pastoralplanning@parracatholic.org

Annual Red Mass: 28 January

Bishop Vincent Long and Fr Bob Bossini warmly invite members of the judiciary and legal community, public service officials, law students and their families to the annual Red Mass on 28/1 at St Patrick's Cathedral at 7.30pm. Refreshments will be served after Mass. RSVP 20/1 8839 8411 or events@stpatscathedral.com.au.

Greystanes Parish Biblical Studies Part 2: February 2020

Throughout the month of February, Fr Joseph Lam from Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish, Greystanes, will run a series of biblical studies on Prophetic Literature in the Old Testament. Sessions held every Thursday in February and on 5 March from 7.30-9pm. parishoffice@olqp.org.au for registration and where to obtain the recommended reading list.

Pastoral Planning Alpha Team Training Workshop: 9 February

The Pastoral Planning Office is running a training day in the Alpha Catholic program at the IFM Blacktown, Sunday 9 February, 9.30am – 4.30pm. To register, and for more information, please contact Lisa in the Pastoral Planning Office on 8838 3497 or lisa.bright@parracatholic.org

World Day of the Sick Mass: 11 February

A Mass for the World Day of the Sick will be celebrated on Tuesday 11 February 2020 at Mary, Queen of the Family Parish, St Patrick's Church, Blacktown at 10.30am. The Mass will include the Sacramental Rite of Anointing of the Sick and Prayers for Healing. RSVP Marisa VanderHout at marisa.vanderhout@parracatholic.org or 88383460.

The Carcoar Camino Walking Retreat: 14 – 16 February

The Shalom House of Prayer in Carcoar, NSW, is inviting participants to a two-day retreat following the Way of the Pilgrim, walking the Shalom Labyrinth and around the beautiful Carcoar Valley. The retreat starts on 14 February at 6pm and finishes Sunday 16 February at 3pm. Cost is \$200, which includes all meals and accommodation. For bookings, call (02) 6367 3058, shalomcarcoar@gmail.com or visit www.shalomcarcoar.com/events

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)

Youth Corner

Our first 'Saints-in-Training' youth group meeting for 2020 will be on Friday 31st January. We will no longer be providing dinner at the start of the meeting, but will begin our activities at the usual time of 7pm-8.45pm at 2 Springdale St.

The first Youth Mass for 2020 will be on Sunday 16th February. If you are aged 12-35 and would like to participate in any of the ministries in this Mass please email us! Rehearsal date for musicians will be announced shortly.

Email: saintlukesyg@gmail.com

We need You!

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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