



# ST JAMES' PARISH

St James Muswellbrook  
St Thomas Aberdeen



We acknowledge the traditional owners who cared for this land for thousands of years  
and their descendants who have maintained these spiritual connections and traditions.

## PARISH CONTACTS

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**Phone:** 6543 1167  
**Office Hours:** Tue, Wed & Fri 9.00am – 3.00pm

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR B

10th March 2024

### Entrance Antiphon

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

The Gloria is not said.

### First Reading

**2 Chronicles 36:14-16. 19-23**

A reading from the second book of Chronicles

*The wrath and the mercy of the Lord are revealed in the exile and liberation of his people.*

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation.'

And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and

to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up."'

### The Word of the Lord.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 136. R. v.6**

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

1. By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung our harps. (R.)
2. For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. 'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion's songs.' (R.)
3. O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right-hand wither! (R.)
4. O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! (R.)

**Second Reading Ephesians 2:4-10**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

*When we were dead through sins, he brought us to life.*

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ – it is through grace that you have been saved – and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come,

through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.

### The Word of the Lord.

**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 sent his Son into the world that we might be saved through him.*

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.'



No one who believes in him will be condemned;  
 but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,  
 because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son.  
 On these grounds is sentence pronounced:  
 that though the light has come into the world  
 men have shown they prefer darkness to the light  
 because their deeds were evil.  
 And indeed, everybody who does wrong  
 hates the light and avoids it,  
 for fear his actions should be exposed;  
 but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light,  
 so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

### The Gospel of the Lord.

#### Communion Antiphon

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.

#### REFLECTION by Fr Victor

The person in the gospel on the 4th Sunday of the Lent, with Jesus is called Nicodemus. He is a Pharisee. He comes to see Jesus at night because he is afraid that someone might see him talking with Jesus. He would have had a very set and fixed idea of who God was. However, Jesus offers him a very different image of God. He reveals a much bigger sort of God that Nicodemus cannot even begin to imagine. The God of the Pharisees tended to be angry and judgmental. The God that Jesus offers is one who does not judge or condemn. The God of Jesus is God who loves us, who does not punish us, but deeply wants a personal and intimate relationship with us. The God of Jesus is one who does not destroy us but lifts us up.

God loves each of us so much and so deeply that he sent Jesus so that we might have eternal life. God loves us so much and so passionately that he sent Jesus so that we may not be lost but found. God sent us Jesus so that we will be saved, not condemned. Jesus comes not only to show us how to live but how to live fully in the light.

Being a Christian is not just about following rules and regulations; it is about following a person. It is about following Jesus Christ. Being a disciple of Jesus is not just or even a matter of the head; it is a matter of the heart. God, through the words, actions, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus offers us the gifts of reconciliation and eternal life. God through the person of

Jesus reaches out to each of us; God through Jesus speaks to us. To see Jesus is to see God. To hear Jesus is to hear God. To experience Jesus is to experience God.

Jesus invited Nicodemus out of the dark into the light. As we take another step on our Lenten journey, Jesus does the same for us. We are people of the light, not of the darkness. We are a people who are on a journey with Jesus to the cross and crucifixion. As Jesus asks us to walk with him to the cross, he also invites us to share in his resurrection. Through the new life of Easter, we will be renewed and restored to new life in Jesus.

**Stay Healthy, Stay Safe, Stay Joyful and Stay Blessed!**

### Parish News!

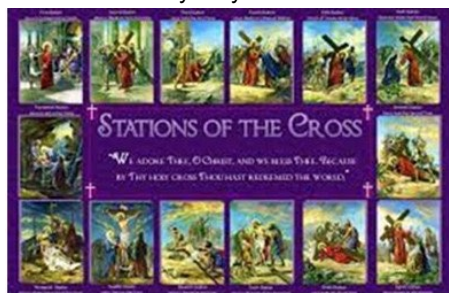
#### 2024 Sacramental Program

Children in Year 3 or above who are interested in receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Holy Communion are asked to contact the Parish Office and leave your details so you can be notified of the upcoming information session.

#### Parish Office

All feedback on the new layout of the bulletin is welcome.

This layout will allow for more diocese and safeguarding notices which should be included however, some weeks unfortunately they don't fit.



#### LENTEN DEVOTIONS

The Stations of the Cross  
 During Lent Praying the Stations of the Cross is a wonderful way to focus our mind on the Passion and Death of Jesus. Fr Victor is saying the Stations in Aberdeen or Muswellbrook every week in Lent.

Aberdeen: St Thomas Tuesday  
 Stations of the Cross 4.30pm  
 Mass at 5pm

Muswellbrook (changed):  
 Mass 9am  
 Stations of the Cross 5.30pm

#### Keegan/Wood Family Group



The next event is a train trip to Honeysuckle in Newcastle for lunch.  
 Leaving Muswellbrook on the train at 10.09am and returning at 6.05pm. Please have an Opal Card ready for the day.  
 Lunch will be at Kingfish Honeysuckle Seafood Restaurant.  
 Lunch prices start from \$22. If you have any family or friends that would like to join us for lunch, please let us know when you RSVP.  
 For more information or to RSVP contact Margaret (65431238 or Robyn (654254326) before Friday 15th March.

#### Choir Practice for Easter Services

Choir practise will be held at 7pm on Thursday 14th March and Thursday 21st March in the Church.  
 New and existing members are most welcome.

### A Lenten Day of Recollection and Reconciliation



**When:** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024.  
**Time:** 9am Mass until 12 Noon.  
**Where:** St Thomas Church Aberdeen  
**Who:** Combined Parishes of St James Muswellbrook, St Thomas Aberdeen, St Marys Scone and St Joseph's Murrurundi.

A Day of Recollection is a time set aside specifically for a Christian to seriously go deeper into his or her relationship with God.

It is an opportunity to spend a couple of hours in prayer and conversation with God guided by meditation, spiritual reading, and an examination of conscience and Reconciliation..

Following the service a Cuppa/Cold drink will be available.  
 Please bring a plate to share.

### Microphones and their problems!

Hi Everyone!

Well if you have been at Mass over the last couple of weeks you will have noticed we are having some fine tuning problems with, yes you guessed it! The Microphones.

We have had a specialist come in and do an audit of the Mics and we have some ongoing problems with balancing the level of sound. Before we had problems not hearing people and now the Mic on the pulpit it mostly too loud!

We are working to get a good balance but it may well require us spending quite a deal of money to get new auto sound level adjusting equipment.

In the meantime we ask you to be patient while we figure it out.

If you haven't done a reading from the pulpit in the last couple of weeks – be prepared to adjust your distance from the mic and your sound level. Your voice will now be picked up further back than before and if you normally project well into the old mic you may have to turn your volume down.

1. Be prepared to step back from the mic.
2. If it still seems too loud lower your voice please.

We were complaining we couldn't hear readers before but now we have the reverse problem.  
 Hang in there!!!

## Weekly Mass Diary

Monday 11 March	Tuesday 12 March	Wednesday 13 March	Thursday 14 March	Friday 15 March	Saturday 16 March	Sunday 17 March
						<b>5th Sunday Lent</b>
<u>9.00am</u> <b>Private, Personal Prayer, and Adoration</b> St James Muswellbrook		<u>9.00am</u> <b>Mass</b> St James Muswellbrook	<u>11.30am</u> <b>Adoration and Benediction</b> <u>12.05pm</u> <b>Mass</b> St James Muswellbrook	<u>9.00am</u> <b>Mass</b> St James Muswellbrook <u>5.30pm</u> <b>Stations of the Cross</b> St James Muswellbrook	<u>5.30pm</u> <b>Mass</b> St James Muswellbrook	<u>10.00am</u> <b>Mass</b> St James Muswellbrook
	<u>4.30pm</u> <b>Stations of the Cross</b>  <u>5.00pm</u> <b>Mass</b> St Thomas Aberdeen				<u>9.00am</u> <b>Mass</b> St Thomas Aberdeen  <b>Day of Recollection and Reconciliation</b>	<u>8.00am</u> <b>Mass</b> St Thomas Aberdeen

## Minister Roster Sunday 17th March 2024

3rd Sunday of the Month	Readers	Cantors	Musicians	Gifts	Counters	Altar Servers	Sacristan
<b>5.30pm Saturday Muswellbrook</b>	S. Bernard J. Jacobs	C. Hayes	Sr. Dorothy			R. Panis	C. Hayes
<b>8am Sunday Aberdeen</b>	J. Dallah	T. Hobbs	K. Mason				M. Hamilton
<b>10am Sunday Muswellbrook</b>	C. O'Brien T. Furlong	M. Kelly	C. Kelly		Joel & Therese Bristow		K. Goodwin

### MASS AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

**We remember and pray for those who are ill at home and in hospital at this time, may they know the healing presence of Christ:** Judy Chlebowicz, Mick Chisolm, David Curran, Pat Hogan, Abbie Sweeper, Kym Mason, Melanie Hoch, Kim Goodwin, Anne Hugo, Helen Tumbers, Anne Rawson, Vinitia Fernando, Kirsty Munn, Kellie Shaw, Michael Dolahenty, Jenny Paul, Danielle Camilleri and Sebastiammal

**Recently Deceased:**

**Anniversary:** Rhonda Minch, Hilda Minch, Dinny O'Driscoll, Betty Daley and Cynthia Daley.

**Baptisms:**

**Privacy Laws.** All parishioners are encouraged to pray for the sick. Masses will be offered on request. Due to privacy laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.

*St James and St Thomas – Pray for Us*

### BULLETIN

Please contact the Parish Office on 6543 1167 if you have any notices for the bulletin, or alternatively email:

[muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au)

The Parish bulletin can be accessed on our website: [muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au](http://muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au).

or on our Facebook page: **Catholic Parish of St James Muswellbrook**

Please email [muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:muswellbrookparish@mn.catholic.org.au) if you would like the bulletin emailed to you each week.

### SAFEGUARDING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Please visit our 'Safeguarding' page to access a range of safeguarding resources: [muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au](http://muswellbrookcatholicparish.org.au)

Have a complaint or wish to provide feedback? Visit: [officeofsafeguarding.org.au/feedback/](http://officeofsafeguarding.org.au/feedback/)

**“Our mission is to spread the Kingdom by being an alive and informed Community, united as one family in care and consideration for each other in the love of God.”**



## Updates from the Diocese

### Review of Confirmation Guidance and Procedures

All parishioners, parents and sponsors, ministers, and anyone else involved in the preparation and celebration of Confirmation over recent years, is invited to participate in our review process. Ideally please read '[Liturgy Matters: It's Time – Christian Initiation and Confirmation Review \(13 Feb 2024\)](#)' where everything is explained and the 'Review Document' is available. You can access the Review Document directly by using the following link: <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/media/6754/confirmation-review-process.pdf>

Otherwise, you can access the questionnaire but NOT the background information via this QR code. The closing date is 17 March.

With thanks, Louise Gannon RSJ



### Chrism Mass

Each year during Holy Week all the faithful of the Church of Maitland-Newcastle are invited to gather with Bishop Michael Kennedy for the Chrism Mass. Here we bless and consecrate the Sacred Oils that will be used for ministry during the year.

Join us on Tuesday 26 March from 7pm at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

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## SAFEGUARDING AUDIT REPORT FOR THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE



A rigorous safeguarding audit of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has assessed a 98 per cent compliance with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) according to the audit report published by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd (ACSL) today.

Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle, the Most Reverend Michael Kennedy asked that the audit be particularly rigorous. ACSL partnered with Prolegis Lawyers, an independent legal firm, in the audit. Thirty-four per cent of the Diocese's parishes were visited as were three schools and the Diocese's head offices. Over 100 people were also interviewed.

The ACSL-Prolegis audit of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle found that 96 (98 per cent) out of the 98 relevant indicators were 'Developed and Embedded' or 'Developed'.

The auditors made seven recommendations to improve safeguarding practices within the Diocese. These recommendations were accepted in full by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, and work has already commenced on implementing them. Audit recommendations are classified according to priority and urgency for remediation. There are no Priority 1 (high priority) recommendations for the Diocese.

ACSL Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ursula Stephens, said that the audit demonstrated that the Diocese has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures. She acknowledged the efforts of the Diocesan safeguarding personnel to ensure that policies were being met in practice.

"Without doubt, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle demonstrates it is committed to addressing the Church's sad history in this area. Across the Diocese and in every Ministry, strong safeguarding practices are evident. Our recommendations for improvement reflect the contemporary aspects of safeguarding regulation, and, given the far-reaching commitment to safeguarding demonstrated, I expect these protocols will soon be addressed," said Dr Stephens.

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle comprises 38 parishes in the Hunter-Manning region with 66 active or retired clergy, over 5,500 paid staff operating from more than 100 locations and more than 5,000 volunteers undertaking a variety of ministries within the Diocese. The Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle is Michael Kennedy, installed on 17 March 2023.

Bishop Kennedy said that he was particularly pleased with the auditors' summary judgement that said that "the Diocese is successfully implementing and embedding a culture of safeguarding throughout its organisation."

Bishop Kennedy also said "There is more to do. As Bishop, I assure you that over the coming years the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will maintain its current momentum and will continue to refine and improve our safeguarding knowledge and practices, so that the safeguarding of each child and every vulnerable person is a wholly integrated and intrinsic part of everything that we do in our Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle."

The NCSS, based on recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, provide the framework for Catholic Church entities to build child-safe cultures and to advance the safety and dignity of children and vulnerable people across the Catholic Church in Australia.



### Fourth Sunday of Lent 9 & 10 March



As the eldest child in a low-income farming family in rural Malawi, **Memory** faced many barriers to her education. But, with the support of Caritas Australia, she enrolled in a technical school and became the first female carpenter in her village.

#### **Please donate to Project Compassion.**

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **for all future generations**.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your parish, by visiting [caritas.org.au/project-compassion](https://caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or by calling 1800 024 413.