



# ONE MISSION, TWO PARISHES

Saint Timothy's & Saint Luke the Evangelist  
Catholic Parishes, Forest Hill & Blackburn South

Parish Office for both Parishes: 17 Stevens Road Forest Hill Vic 3133

Parish Office tel: 03 9412 8499; Presbytery tel: 03 9877 2292

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**WEEKLY BULLETIN: SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2024**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR B**

**REACH OUT IN LOVE AND MERCY: MARK 6: 32 - 34**



Readings this week: Genesis 9:8-15; Psalm 24; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15.

## Gospel Reflection ~ Greg Sunter

The First Reading, from Genesis, and the Gospel this week need to be looked at together. In the Genesis reading, God has just wiped clean the earth and is ready to re-establish the relationship with humanity through Noah and his family. In the short gospel passage, Jesus enters the wilderness as a time of preparation and renewal, ready to embark on his mission of re-establishing the relationship between God and humanity. In both readings there is a sense of a fresh start – a clean slate – for humankind. It is a clear indication of God's commitment to humanity, even when we have totally distanced ourselves from God and forgotten about keeping up our part of the relationship, God is willing to make a clean start of it all again. Both readings offer a reminder of God's constant desire for us to be in right relationship with God and with the world. The presence of Jesus in the world was as clear a signal as the rainbow in the sky that God was willing to give us another go – give us a chance to again see God with new eyes and new understanding.

In the gospel passage, we have a picture of Jesus preparing himself for his public ministry. He takes himself out into the wilderness, away from all that he has known until this time, to reflect on his life so far and this next vital stage that he is about to enter. In the wilderness, Jesus is tempted. He has to face his own doubts and demons before he sets off on the road of his public ministry. When he leaves the desert wilderness and enters back into Galilee he immediately begins to preach and, in the first words accredited to him in this gospel, Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is at hand and it's time to repent and believe. It's a call to open your eyes and get with the program!

**Have you thought? Temptation?** When we adopt a view of Jesus as the Son of God, it is hard to imagine him even facing temptation, let alone the possibility of him giving in to it. However, when we see Jesus as also being fully human, we realise that he was just as likely to face temptation as we are. But what might have tempted Jesus? Was he tempted to simply go back to his life in Joseph's carpentry business and not respond to God's call? Was he tempted to display his power in flashy demonstrations for all to see? Was he tempted to despair at what lay ahead of him?

**Living the Gospel – Change of heart:** Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God is a call to live out God's transformative dream of right relationship with one another and with our world. To accept this call requires a change of heart and mind (a metanoia) and the adoption of a new orientation, a new worldview based on living the kingdom of God. This is a challenge to be counter-cultural – to go 'against the flow' of the majority attitudes at times. It is certainly not an 'easy option' that we are called to live. Jesus' call to 'repent and believe' is a very appropriate call to begin the Lenten season.

**Historical Context – The Wilderness:** The Jordan Valley was a relatively fertile area. However, Jesus would not have had to travel too great a distance to find himself in very arid, desert-like wilderness. Crossing the River Jordan and climbing out of the Jordan Valley to the east, Jesus would have emerged onto the northern part of the TransJordan Plateau and the edge of the Syrian Desert. The area was not only geographically rough but it was also full of bandits and rebels. It was a dangerous place to be. However, the desert wilderness holds great significance in the Bible as a place of preparation for a new stage of life or a new relationship with God.

## REACH OUT IN ...

Whitehorse Deanery  
Eastern Region  
Archdiocese of Melbourne

T.B.A.

Parish Priest

Sonya O'Farrell

**Part-time Parish Secretary**  
**Wednesdays,**

**Thursdays & Fridays**  
**10.00am – 2.00pm**

**SUNDAY MASS**

**ST: & SL: Saturday Vigil @ 6.00pm**

**Sunday ST: @ 10.30am Australian**  
**5.00pm – Vietnamese**  
**& SL: @ 8.30am**

**WEEKDAY MASS & SL: ROSARY**

**ST: Weds. & Thurs. @ 9.15am**  
**Fri. @ 10.00am**

**1st Wednesday of the month**  
**@ 10.00am Mass of Anointing.**

**SL: Tues. @ 5.00pm**  
**Wed., Thurs. & Fri. @ 9.30am**  
**Sat. Mass @ 9.00am**

**RECONCILIATION**

**SL: Saturday 9.30am – 10.00am &**  
**5.30pm – 5.50pm**

**SL: EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION**  
**The Blessed Sacrament is exposed**  
**for Adoration Wednesday**  
**Start: 7.00pm | End: 8.00pm**

**MACS Catholic Primary School**  
**21 Stevens Road, Vermont, 3133 Vic**  
**Tel: (03) 9878 4188**

Ms. Anne Maree Jones **Principal**

Email: [principal@sttims.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sttims.catholic.edu.au)

Website: <https://sttims.catholic.edu.au/>

**MACS Catholic Primary School**  
**46 Orchard Grove,**  
**Blackburn South Vic 3130**  
**Tel: (03) 9877 4023**

Mrs. Clare Ryan: **Principal**

Email: [principal@slblackburnstn.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@slblackburnstn.catholic.edu.au)

Website: [slblackburnstn.catholic.edu.au](http://slblackburnstn.catholic.edu.au)

**Prayer to Saint Timothy**

O God, who adorned Saint Timothy with apostolic virtues, grant, through his intercession that, living justly and devoutly in this present age, we may merit to reach our heavenly homeland. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Patron Saint of stomach and intestinal disorders.*

**Prayer to Saint Luke the Evangelist**

O St. Luke, you were chosen to reveal in preaching and writing God's love for the poor. Moved by the heavenly Spirit of Love, you detailed the life of Jesus, showing His divinity and His genuine compassion for all human beings. Help those who already glory in God's name to persevere in one heart and one mind and inspire all people that they may hear the Good News of Salvation. Amen

*Patron Saint of artists, physicians, surgeons, students and butchers.*

**WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER** this weekend all who are sick, especially Maura Varese, Kit Bing Fan, Tony Keaney, Kathryn Holmes, Therese O'Donoghue, Stewart Davis, Mark, Jerry Donoghue, Margaret Hayes, Kevin Bolton and all those Parishioners unable to be among us this weekend. For all who have died recently, especially Chris Sekula and Rajaletchumi Chelliah, for the casualties of war in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Tony Alexander, Isabella Young, Ann Dempster, Lex Strohaker, Tom Macrory, Harold Leach, Frances McGrath, Giovanna Di Totto, John Byrne, Maddalena Iaccarino, Paul Blanchfield, Errol Flynn, Mary Miller, Carlos Arciaga, Clem Rabel, Lulu Oracion, Francis Dalmau, and Augusto Monzon. May they rest in peace.

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR THIS WEEK: Lent 2024 ~ Wednesday:** St Peter Damian, bishop, doctor; **Thursday:** The Chair of St Peter, apostle; **Friday:** St Polycarp, bishop, martyr; **Masses this weekend:** Preface of First Sunday of Lent, Eucharistic Prayer I; Eucharistic Acc. No. I.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS** the citizens of Victoria who are currently navigating the ongoing consequences of the devastating bushfires, calamitous storms, extended power outages of last Tuesday and the subsequent refrigerated food wastage on Wednesday throughout the state.

**SL RITE OF PRESENTATION AND WELCOME:** We formally welcome Hon (Richard) & Meiling Yeung and their children Jayden and Sofie among us this weekend. The Yeung family have been and are preparing for Christian Initiation in our Parish Community. Please make them welcome.

**POPE FRANCIS 2024 LENTEN MESSAGE** for this year urges us to: "Slow down, then, and "pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies."

**LENTEN DEVOTIONS: ST** Lenten devotions = Stations of the Cross on Friday mornings at 9.30am throughout Lent; **SL** Lenten devotions = Stations of the Cross on Friday afternoons at 3.00pm throughout Lent.



**THIS YEAR, PROJECT COMPASSION** brings you the stories of three resilient women: Ronita from the Philippines, Leaia from Samoa and Memory from Malawi. While from three different corners of the world and facing vastly different challenges, they are all united by one dream: to create a better world for all future generations. You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your parish, by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or by calling 1800 024 413.

**PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES** are available in the Church foyer/narthex for you to please take with you this weekend.

**MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: Heartfelt prayer: the key to Lent**

**ANOTHER TIME OF TRANSITION FOR OUR 'ONE MISSION TWO**

**PARISHES':** The Archdiocesan machinery will take time to move for the next Parish Priest to be appointed by the Archbishop. In the meantime, the Vicar General has advised that a Temporary Priest will be appointed to serve our blended family of families, *One Mission Two Parishes*. Please make him welcome, assist him to understand how things are done in our respective parishes and any support you might like to offer will be in everyone's best interests.

**A VOCATION VIEW:** In order to hear a call from the Lord, our hearts must be opened to receive His Word. Lent begins with a call to repent so that all which clouds our ears might be stripped away to hear His voice clearly. (Mark 1:12-15)

**STEWARDSHIP CORNER:** "After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God...." Mark 1:14 Have you ever thought about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to go to Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that He was proclaiming. It took great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, living a stewardship lifestyle takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that He will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us. (ST: Weekly First Collection Presbytery Envelopes: \$177; Thanksgiving Stewardship Envelopes this week: \$342; Vietnamese Donation: \$295.10; SL: Last week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$382; Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Envelopes: \$341).

**WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS** who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

## WEEKEND PARISH MINISTRY ROSTER

### MINISTERS OF THE WORD

**SATURDAY**      **6:00 PM SL**  
**6:00 PM ST**  
**SUNDAY**      **8:30 AM SL**  
**10:30 AM ST**  
**5.00PM ST**

### 17 AND 18 FEBRUARY

Lucy Ferris  
 Hubert Lobo  
 May McKeown  
 Ryan Yee  
 Youth Group

### 24 AND 25 FEBRUARY

Shirley Prabha  
 Rachel Greal  
 Peter McKeown  
 J Rousetty & S Chin  
 Ha Cao & Thu Ngo

### EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

### 17 AND 18 FEBRUARY

**SATURDAY**      **6:00 PM SL**  
**6:00 PM ST**  
**SUNDAY**      **8:30 AM SL**  
**10:30 AM ST**  
**5.00PM ST**

Olive Hammill  
 Peter Naughtin  
 Melina Barcellona  
 Laura Cigana  
 Youth Group

### 24 AND 25 FEBRUARY

Godfrey Thong  
 Mary Italiano  
 Margaret Gearon  
 Anico Yee  
 Hoang Nguyen

### SLIDE OPERATORS

**SATURDAY**      **6:00 PM SL**  
**6:00 PM ST**  
**SUNDAY**      **8:30 AM SL**  
**10:30 AM ST**  
**5.00PM ST**

### 17 AND 18 FEBRUARY

Choir  
 Volunteer  
 Megan McLean  
 Manny Gonzalez  
 Theresa Nguyen

### 24 AND 25 FEBRUARY

David Prabha  
 Volunteer  
 Paul Tierney  
 Lee Min Yee  
 Toan Tran

### SL WELCOMERS 17/18 FEB

**6:00 PM** Libby Theodore  
**8:30 AM** Joe Brogno  
**10:30 AM** Volunteer  
*HOSPITALITY*

### THE BASIC LITURGICAL MINISTRY

### SL WELCOMERS 24/25 FEB

**6:00 PM** Tony Fernandez  
**8:30 AM** Marie Pekish  
**10:30 AM** Volunteer

### SL CHURCH CLEANING

24<sup>th</sup> Feb – Sonya's Team  
 Sonya O'Farrell, Rose Knight,  
 Joe Brogno & Netty Solomon

### ST CHURCH CLEANING

24<sup>th</sup> Feb @ 8am  
 Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee,  
 Dzung Vu & Trong Nguyen

### SL CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers during Lent

### ST CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers during Lent

### ST COUNTERS

This week Team 2:  
 Raj & Violet Fonn  
 Next week Team 3:  
 Peter Deayton & Kelvin Chen

**SL LITURGICAL ROSTERS** are now available for collection after Mass in our Church Foyer/Narthex this weekend please.

**THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK:** We begin our Lenten reflection series with Sr Katherine Stone MGL. This week Sr Katherine says Lent leads us into the wilderness to face the wild beasts of our life. Mother Hilda tells the story of Archbishop Thuc of Saigon and how he handled humiliation. Fr Tony Percy says that like Jesus in the Gospel, we too experience catapulting events. Darren McDowell and Sr Mary Helen Hill give their Lenten reflections from our Pietà Lenten series. Plus, more great music!

**LENT** is a time of conversion and penance that the Catholic Church offers to believers to prepare for and live the Easter triduum — the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is a time of **spiritual renewal**, a chance to direct our hearts and minds to live our radical discipleship. During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; we serve by **giving alms**; and we practice self-control through **fasting**. We are called to a true **inner conversion of heart** as we seek to follow Christ's will more faithfully. We recall the waters of baptism in which we were also baptised into Christ's death, died to sin, and began new life in Christ.

**LENTEN RETREAT AT ST DOMINIC'S**- Saturday, 16 March. St Dominic's Parish invites everyone for a day-long Advent Retreat focusing on theme 'Sacrifice, Suffering, Salvation'. Time: commences with 9:00am Mass and concluding with Adoration, Confession and Benediction from 4-5pm. Venue: St Dominic's Parish, 816 Riversdale Road, Camberwell Cost: \$20.00, includes morning/afternoon tea and lunch To register: <https://www.trybooking.com/CPJAH> or contact Carlo on [pastoral.associate@stdominics.org.au](mailto:pastoral.associate@stdominics.org.au)

**MAJELLAN FAMILY MEDIA: Ash Wednesday**

**THE BRIDGE** is the bi-monthly newsletter of the **National Centre for Evangelisation**, an agency of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. **Stories of inspiration and faith formation**

**LITURGY BRISBANE:** The latest edition of LITed entitled "A Co-Responsible Church" is now available to view **Liturgical Education Newsletter from Liturgy Brisbane**

**SAFETY STATEMENT:** We are committed to a safe and nurturing culture for all children and vulnerable persons in our Church. Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Blackburn South holds the care, safety, wellbeing of children and vulnerable persons as central and fundamental responsibilities of the Church. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.

*Love and Mercy: Mark 6: 32 - 34*

### Parish Groups & Contacts

Lectors, Registrars, Collectors,  
 Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist,  
 Slide Projector Operator & Rosters

**ST:** Corrie Quimbo 9412 8499

**SL:** Margaret Gearon 0409 807 135

### Baptism Preparation

**ST:** Mary Italiano 9412 8499

### Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen 0422 400 116

Andy Tran 0422 382 109

### Vietnamese Youth

John Dinh 0448 977 037

### Parish Collection Preparers

**ST:** Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalevski

### Stewardship Counters

**SL:** Dale Dixon - 0433 885 087

Steve Kilroe-Smith - 0404 864 232

### Parish Pastoral Council

*As we are one Mission now, it has been suggested that we require only one Chair?*

### Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

Janette Clark - 9877 2292

Fr Gerard - 9877 2292

### Parish History

**SL:** Margaret Gearon - 0409 807 135

**Whitehorse Deanery** - Fr Gerard

### Finance Committee

Bernard Negline

Parish Accountant

### SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office - 9877 2292

### Church Sacristan

**ST:** Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

**SL:** Greg Grant - 0401 644 474

### Church Housekeeping

**ST:** Margaret King 9412 8499

### Church Cleaning & Flowers

**SL:** Megan McLean - 0419 347 693

### Church Linen

**SL:** Beryl Kanagalinggam

### Parish Garden Maintenance

**ST:** Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

**SL:** Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

### Holy Communion to the

**housebound** - Fr Gerard

### Parish Choirs

**ST:** Mary Italiano & Theresa Nguyen

**SL:** Lina & Maria Mafi

0411 136 043

### Parish & School Fete Committee

**SL:** Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

### School Advisory Council

**ST:** Ms. Anne Maree Jones 9878 4188

**SL:** Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

### School Parents' Association

**ST:** Ms. Anne Maree Jones 9878 4188

**SL:** Mrs. Clare Ryan - 9877 4023

### St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

*(Freecall: Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)*

### Parish Contacts:

**ST:** John McCoy

**SL:** Tony Lobo &

Steve Kilroe-Smith



**Raise your voices ... Entrance Antiphon:** When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

**Response to the Psalm:** Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

**Eucharistic Acclamation:** We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

**Communion Antiphon:** One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

**YEAR OF PRAYER – 2024** & [Pray.Com.Au](http://Pray.Com.Au) -- [Madonna Magazine/Australian Jesuits](http://Madonna Magazine/Australian Jesuits)

**YEAR OF PRAYER:** [Creating a Sacred Site \(space\) in your home](#)

## Forty days in the desert



1st Sunday of Lent, Year B



The season of Lent is a special time when we prepare for the events of Holy Week and Easter. What things can you do to try and be more like Jesus during the forty days of Lent?

After he was baptised, Jesus was sent into the desert by the Holy Spirit. Draw Jesus in the desert.



## Resist the Temptation

Place ticks ✓ next to what you think are the right things to do.  
Place crosses ✗ next to the things you would be tempted to do.

You see money lying on the ground at school



### What do you do?

- ☐ You pick it up and take it to a teacher.
- ☐ You use it to buy icecreams and chocolate for all your friends.
- ☐ You leave it where it is.

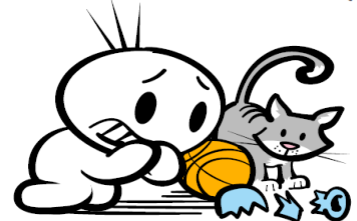
You forget to do your homework



### What do you do?

- ☐ You tell the teacher that you left it on the bus.
- ☐ You pretend to feel sick so that you can get out of class.
- ☐ You tell the teacher that you forgot to do your homework.

You break your mum's favourite vase when playing basketball in the hallway



### What do you do?

- ☐ You tell your mum that the cat knocked it over.
- ☐ You tell her that you knocked it over with your basketball.
- ☐ You glue it back together and hope that no-one notices.

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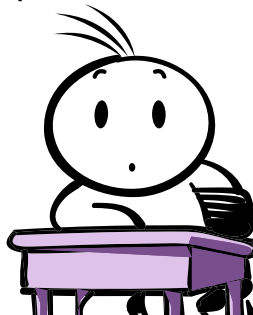
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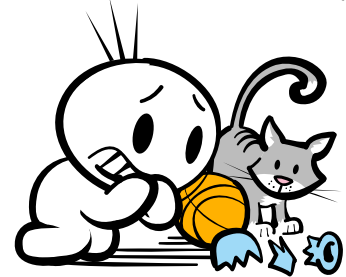
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# SUNDAY READINGS

## READ AT HOME

First Sunday of Lent

Year B

18 February 2024



### Collect

Grant, almighty God,  
through the yearly observances of holy Lent,  
that we may grow in understanding  
of the riches hidden in Christ  
and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

### Readings and Commentaries

Mark offers no detail of the temptations with which Satan plied Jesus. Where, then, does Satan appear again in this gospel? Firstly, in the dispute Jesus has about driving out demons (3:22-27). Later, in explaining the parable of the sower, Jesus portrays Satan as a thief stealing the word away from people (4:15). But the most telling instance comes further on. When Simon Peter reacts with “human thinking” to Jesus’ talk of suffering and death, Jesus bluntly rebukes him: “Get behind me, Satan!” (8:33). This highlights the key temptation faced by the crowds, the authorities and the disciples – their entrenched resistance to the true nature of Jesus’ messiahship. In a word, their denial of the cross. Lent places it squarely before us.

## **A reading from the book of Genesis 9:8–15**

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: nothing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.'

God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

## **Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 24:4–9**

**R.** Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth  
to those who keep your covenant.

Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:  
for you are God my saviour. **R.**

Remember your mercy, Lord,  
and the love you have shown from of old.  
In your love remember me,  
because of your goodness, O Lord. **R.**

The Lord is good and upright.  
He shows the path to those who stray,  
he guides the humble in the right path;  
he teaches his way to the poor. **R.**

## **First Reading**

The story of Noah unfolds through four chapters of the book of Genesis (6-9), with the flood occupying centre stage in the telling of the tale. Scholars observe that, not only have two accounts been woven together to create the biblical version, but quite similar flood stories were common enough in the literature of the ancient near east.

Today's reading presents the happy outcome of the flood. The world has been purged of its wickedness and God establishes a new relationship with the whole of creation. Just as the waters were tamed at the birth of creation (Gen 1), so now, God says, they will never destroy the earth again. Every living thing originally created by God is encompassed by the covenant announced to Noah. The rainbow which could be seen as a divine weapon firing bolts of lightning (Psalm 17/18:14) is now a sign of universal and everlasting peace.

The form of the reading is a solemn pronouncement by God. As it conveys good news from start to finish, it lends itself to being proclaimed with positive energy, but at the same time with dignity and authority. There's every reason for readers to find this a satisfying text to deliver.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

While the first reading is global in scope, Psalm 24/25 is the prayer of an individual appealing to God for help in a time of trial. The verses of the whole psalm alternate between heartfelt pleas for divine assistance and expressions of confidence in God's proven faithfulness. The three verses selected for use today all fall into the latter category. Along with the response, they reinforce the message of hope affirmed by the "rainbow covenant" with Noah.

Each of the three verses has a character of its own. The first is a petition by the psalmist to be taught God's ways, with the repetition and variation that is a feature of Hebrew poetry. Words like "ways," "paths," and "walk" go hand in hand. The second is a plea for God's mercy that hints at some failure on the psalmist's part. The third is a confession of faith in God who "shows the path," "guides the humble," and "teaches his way."

In sum, the psalmist consistently acclaims the goodness of God. A trusting tone is set by the response and is maintained throughout. Care, however, will need to be taken with the relatively long and unfamiliar response. In the first line, the address "O Lord" calls for a moment's pause before and after, and the phrase "love and truth" should be given a slight upward inflection, followed by another momentary pause, to alert the assembly there is more to come. Once this is attended to, readers should find it easy enough to lead the assembly in this confident and positive prayer.

### **A reading from the first letter of St Peter 3:18–22**

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

### **Second Reading**

In his second letter, Peter complains that Paul's letters can be hard to understand (3:16). It has to be said that today's passage from Peter's first letter is equally difficult. Even if we can draw a clear message out of it – that by his death, resurrection and return to God Christ has gained authority over all powers, that salvation is offered to all, and that baptism is our way of sharing in that salvation – much remains obscure.

While there is a direct connection with the story of Noah and the flood, no-one is sure what is meant by "the spirits in prison" or by Christ's going to preach to them. There may or may not be a connection with Christ's descent into hell that we confess in the Apostles Creed. Even Peter's description of baptism as "a pledge made to God from a good conscience" is puzzling.

This means that readers face a double challenge. Not only are the contents of the reading opaque, but the way they are expressed – in sentences that become longer and more convoluted as the text progresses – is a further hurdle. In that respect Peter is on a par with Paul!

The first two sentences (in the standard lectionary – the NRSV joins sentences two and three) are relatively straightforward. As statements built up from short phrases, they call for measured delivery that allows each component to be heard. The third sentence is a little longer and less intelligible, so more care is needed. The fourth sentence poses the greatest difficulty. Readers will need to study it closely, rehearse it thoroughly, and do their best to engage the assembly in its unfolding thought. In sum, this is a text to test readers' skills.

### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark**

**1:12–15**

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

### **Gospel**

Some episodes in Mark's gospel are described at length and in great detail. That's not the case today. His account of Jesus' temptations and the start of Jesus' mission could hardly be more succinct. No word is wasted. It's as if Mark has his foot on the accelerator. The verses are action-packed, peppered with dynamic verbs such as "drove," "tempted," "arrested," "proclaimed," and "repent."

Unlike Matthew and Luke, he doesn't elaborate on the temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness (John, of course, makes no reference to the event). Mark devotes a lot more space to the preaching of John the Baptist (1:2-8) than he does to that of Jesus. And it's only much later in his gospel that he explains why John has been arrested (6:17-20). Everything is stripped down to its essentials. Unlike the dense reading from 1 Peter, this is clear and concise. We are propelled into the season of Lent with a sense of urgency.

This is not to say this short reading should be hurried through. It calls for energy and drama rather than speed of delivery. Mark is setting the scene for the life-and-death struggle that will follow - Jesus' battle with the demonic and with unbelief. It's a drum-roll that calls us to attention.



An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

## **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

### **FIRST READING (NRSV)**

#### **A reading from the book of Genesis**

**9:8–15**

God said to Noah and to his sons with him,  
"As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you  
and your descendants after you,  
and with every living creature that is with you,  
the birds, the domestic animals,  
and every animal of the earth with you,  
as many as came out of the ark.  
I establish my covenant with you,  
that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood,  
and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."  
God said,  
"This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you  
and every living creature that is with you,  
for all future generations:  
I have set my bow in the clouds,  
and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.  
When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds,  
I will remember my covenant  
that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh;  
and the waters shall never again become a flood  
to destroy all flesh."

### **SECOND READING (NRSV)**

#### **A reading from the first letter of Peter**

**3:18–22**

Christ suffered for sins once for all,  
the righteous for the unrighteous,  
in order to bring you to God.  
He was put to death in the flesh,  
but made alive in the spirit,  
in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison.  
In former times these did not obey,  
when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,  
during the building of the ark,  
in which a few, that is, eight persons,  
were saved through water.  
Baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—  
not as a removal of dirt from the body,  
but as an appeal to God for a good conscience  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God,  
with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

## **GOSPEL (NRSV)**

### **A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark 1:12–15**

After Jesus was baptized,  
the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness.  
He was in the wilderness forty days,  
tempted by Satan;  
and he was with the wild beasts;  
and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested;  
Jesus came to Galilee,  
proclaiming the good news of God, and saying,  
"The time is fulfilled,  
and the kingdom of God has come near;  
repent,  
and believe in the good news."

## **Concluding Prayer**

### **Prayer over the People (First Sunday of Lent)**

May bountiful blessing, O Lord, we pray,  
come down upon us, your people,  
that hope may grow in tribulation,  
virtue be strengthened in temptation,  
and eternal redemption be assured.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

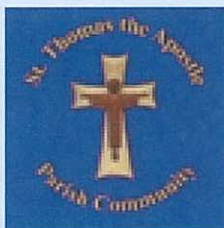
**Amen.**

(Adapted from the Prayer over the People for the First Sunday of Lent, Roman Missal p. 243)

PRAYER IS LIFE



majellan media  
*family*



## ***You are cordially invited to St. Thomas The Apostle Parish & Primary School's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

Past and present parishioners, staff and students, and families –  
Join us for a day of celebration and thanksgiving. The day begins with morning mass, followed by lunch and an afternoon of entertainment for all. It's St. Patrick's Day so come with a touch of **green!**

- *School tours*
  - *Kids' activities*
  - *Video presentations*
  - *Roving MC*
- 



### **Event date:**

Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### **Location:**

St. Thomas The Apostle Parish & Primary School  
57 Central Road, Blackburn VIC 3130

### **Time:**

Mass commences at 10:30am  
Lunch & activities start at 12:00pm

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Please confirm your attendance and number attending for catering purposes by **14<sup>th</sup> February 2024** at <https://www.trybooking.com/CLTUA> or a sign up sheet has been provided in the narthex.

***We look forward to seeing you!***





# Our Lady of Sion College

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our website  
to book



**APPLICATIONS FOR YEAR 7, 2026**

close 16 August 2024

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Talk and Tour Mornings for Term 1

**MONDAY 26 FEBRUARY, 9.30 AM**

**FRIDAY 19 APRIL, 9.30 AM**

Our Lady of Sion College  
Catholic Girls' College Years 7-12  
1065 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill 3128

**P** 9890 9097  
**E** [info@sion.catholic.edu.au](mailto:info@sion.catholic.edu.au)  
**W** [sion.catholic.edu.au](http://sion.catholic.edu.au)

## FOR THE INFORMATION OF PARISHIONERS

### LENT 2024

109. *The Lenten season has a twofold character:*

- 1) *it recalls baptism or prepares for it;*
- 2) *it stresses a penitential spirit.*

*By these means especially, Lent readies the faithful for celebrating the paschal mystery after a period of closer attention to the Word of God, and more ardent prayer. In the liturgy itself and in the liturgy-centred instructions, these baptismal and penitential themes should be more pronounced. Hence:*

- a) *Wider use is to be made of baptismal features proper to the Lenten liturgy.*
- b) *The same approach holds for the penitential elements.*

110. *During Lent, penance should not be only internal and individual but also external and social.*

*In any event, let the paschal fast be kept sacred. It should be observed everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection may be visited on uplifted and responsive spirits.*

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Vatican II

#### **Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of Fasting and Abstinence from meat.**

On all other Fridays, except solemnities, the law of the common practice of penance is fulfilled by performing any one of the following:

- (a) **Prayer** - for example, Mass attendance; family prayer; a visit to a church or chapel; reading the Bible; making the Stations of the Cross; praying the Rosary; or in other ways.
  - (b) **Self-Denial** - for example, not eating meat; not eating sweets or dessert; giving up entertainment to spend time with the family; limiting food and drink so as to give to the poor of one's own country or elsewhere; or in other ways. Project Compassion is a major means of expressing our self-denial in Australia.
  - (c) **Helping Others** - for example, special attention to someone who is poor, sick, elderly, lonely or overburdened; or in other ways.
- All who have completed their eighteenth year and have not yet begun their sixtieth year are bound to fast. All who have completed their fourteenth year are bound to abstain (Canon 1252).
  - The Season of Lent is a time of penance. During this season the faithful are exhorted to devote themselves in a special manner to prayer, to engage in works of piety and charity, and to deny themselves.
  - Each of the faithful is obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled between Ash Wednesday, 14 February 2024 and Trinity Sunday, 26 May 2024 unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time during the year.
  - The wonderful gift of the Lord's merciful love is offered in a special way in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Lent is a most appropriate time to receive this Sacrament.  
All the faithful who have reached the age of discretion are bound faithfully to confess their grave sins at least once a year.

**HOLY WEEK** - The 2024 Ordo contains instructions for the Rites of Holy Week.

**FUNERALS** – On Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday all Masses for the Dead, including Funeral Masses, **are forbidden**. Funerals on these days are celebrated with the Liturgy of the Word and without the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

**WEDDINGS** - Weddings should be discouraged during the Easter Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday. Should a couple be particularly insistent on a wedding for one of these days, then please indicate that no decorations (including flowers), no music nor Nuptial Mass will be permitted.



Father Joe Caddy AM  
**VICAR GENERAL**

## ***170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia, 1854 - 2024***

Fr Gerald Ward arrived in Melbourne in 1850 from England where he was familiar with the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. After serving a number of parishes, he was appointed parish priest of St Francis's in the city.

Fr Gerald Ward established the first conference in Australia at St Francis church in Melbourne on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1854. He became the Conference's first president and set about addressing problems such as the increasing number of homeless and deserted children roaming the streets as a result of people leaving for the Gold Rush fields. In 1855, he became responsible for five orphaned children, and after discussions with the government, he witnessed the laying of the foundation stone for the St Vincent de Paul Orphanage in South Melbourne, where the first children were accepted in 1857. This was considered the first "Special Work" of the Society in Australia.

Fr Gerald Ward told the Victorian Government *that "the new conference aims to provide relief for the destitute, in a manner as much as possible permanently beneficial and the visitation of poor families"*. He died in 1858 and was known as "one in whom many a widow and orphan had found a good friend".

Fr Ward's enduring legacy is the continuation of his early work through the Society's 242 conferences, 3632 members, 6434 volunteers, and 113 stores across Victoria. The works of the Society have evolved over the past 170 years to cater for on-going changes in our communities. Nevertheless, its Mission and Vision remain the same with the on-going relief to disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and households which are economically and socially marginalized. The continuing story of the Society in Australia relies on the Vincentian community which gathers in conferences in many different venues. The volunteer members of the conferences at Blackburn South and Forest Hill, both of which have been operating for more than 60 years, provide a range of material aid to those in our communities who are unable to afford essential daily necessities. In addition, the children at St Luke the Evangelist Primary School have a Mini Vinnies group which raises donations to assist the conference work.

Please join us in celebrating this milestone birthday, the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.



# Ten ways to Celebrate Lent at Home

**In the early Church Lent began as a period of intense preparation for those preparing for baptism. Today it is celebrated as a period of repentance and renewal for all Christians as they prepare to celebrate Easter.**

## 1. Talk it over

On Ash Wednesday gather as a family or household for a simple meal (in keeping with the Lenten fast). Table topic: What does Lent mean to you and what practical steps will you take in your Lenten observance this year?

## 2. Set up a sacred space

Set up a sacred space in a corner of your home. Spread a purple cloth on a small table. Add a bible and a candle, a bean bag or chair nearby. Make it a restful and inviting place where members of your household can go, whether alone or in company, to read the scriptures.

## 3. Pool family funds

As a family or household adopt a Lenten project. This might be Project Compassion or a particular project such as the building of a hospital or school in an impoverished town. Invite household members to contribute a portion of their income or pocket money each week during Lent towards this cause. Give from your substance not just your surplus.

## 4. Hold simple meals

Come together for the simplest of meals during the week. Invite a different family member to prepare the meal each week. Discover joy and creativity in plain foods: bread, rice, water. Be mindful of those who hunger. Talk about how your Lenten plans are progressing.

## 5. Organize a family action

Pool your talents and resources to assist someone in your local neighbourhood. This might involve mowing the lawn of an elderly person or serving meals at a shelter for the homeless.

## 6. Make Sundays special

Sunday is the Day of the Lord. During Lent make an effort to celebrate it well, uncluttered by work and activities of your regular week. Include rest, prayer, Mass, time for family and friends.

## 7. Celebrate the saints

Buy a book on the saints (or search the internet) and read a short excerpt each night, perhaps just after dinner and while everyone is still seated at table. This needn't be a long reading, just enough to spark a few thoughts and comments. Close with a short prayer, calling on the chosen saint of that evening to pray with you.

## 8. Gaze upon the cross

Take a special cross or crucifix (the kind designed for hanging on a wall) and give it in a prominent place in your home. If you don't have such a cross, buy or make a rustic one out of two bits of wood. During Lent stop to touch or look at the cross as you go about your day. At family prayer time, bring it down and pray with it. Use it to bless or commission a member of your family before an important event.

## 9. Gather your friends

Invite some friends to your home for a couple of hours each week during Lent. Use that time to reflect and pray together. [See also: "Ten Ways to Hold a Lenten Group."]

## 10. Say sorry

Make forgiveness a natural part of your Lenten journey. Look for everyday ways to say 'sorry'—in word and gesture—for the ways we have hurt one another.

Helpful Hint

Translate terms like 'repentance' and 'renewal' into specific challenges tailored to your life situation. E.g., this Lent you might decide to work at an aspect of your marital relationship or pray each day for a particular intention. A Lenten commitment has more chance of success when it is specific and practical, challenging but achievable.

TeresaPirola.net

Text: Teresa Pirola

Design: Sarann Ryan

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# PROJECT COMPASSION

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# 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.

# WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

**Genesis 9:8–15 | 1 Peter 3:18–22 | Mark 1:12–15**

*Written by Michael McGirr*

Mark's Gospel is bold and challenging. It doesn't beat around the bush. Throughout this year, there will be many Sundays when we really need to tune in because Mark's Gospel doesn't wait for the reader to be ready. It is right in your face, to use a modern expression. Sometimes Mark reminds us of the wise old person who doesn't use many words, but every one of those words counts. There can't be many books of so few pages that have had such a mighty impact on the world.

Today, a few lines tell us that Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and 'was tempted by Satan.' He was 'with the wild beasts', meaning he was vulnerable as he was immersed in the natural world. This was surely an experience of struggle and growth. Then suddenly Jesus discovers that John the Baptist has been arrested. In a few lines, Mark creates the impression of a challenging time.

How did Jesus respond? He seems to have been enlivened, to have decided to create change. He is full of energy and purpose. 'The time has come,' he says. In his vulnerability, he has discovered that 'the kingdom of God is close at hand.'

This year, through Project Compassion, Caritas Australia will ask us to consider several stories of vulnerability and hope in action. Over the coming weeks, we will meet a number of extraordinary women: Ronita from the Philippines, Leaia from Samoa and Memory from Malawi. They remind us that in many situations around the world, women are the heart of the community and the drivers of change. In each case, a partnership involving Caritas Australia and local agencies has led to new opportunities not just for an individual but for families and communities. The kingdom of God is, indeed, closer than we think. Together with Ronita, Leaia and Memory, our decisions help to bring it to reality around the globe.

Perhaps we might spend time with the words of today's Psalm: 'God guides me in the right path; God teaches the Lord's way to the poor.'



**Ronita (Philippines)**



**Leaia (Samoa)**



**Memory (Malawi)**