



SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Religion is intended to be a guide to life, choosing good, so that we can lead fulfilling and joyful lives. Much of the challenge in our time involves helping people to see that faith offers them positives, rather than negatives.

Today's Gospel tells of the dispute between Jesus and the Pharisees on the question of their false religious observance.

We live in challenging times. If we follow the example of the early Church in being an alternative society, a community of justice, inclusivity, and support, then it is a future worth dedicating our lives to.

Living the Christian life requires a deep sense of responsibility and a desire to go beyond the minimum. We are given the freedom to act responsibly. We pray for the wisdom to discern what that means, and to live accordingly.



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Awabakal People who, long before us lived, loved, educated and raised their children on this Country. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and we recognise the young people who are our future. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our communities. We respect their deep physical and spiritual connections to Country through their stories, traditions and living cultures.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Foundation	Leader	In Office
1. Identity and Community		
2. Worship and Prayer.	Uta France	Mon
3. Formation and Education		
4. Mission and Outreach.		
5. Leadership and Structure.	John France	Sat & Sun

If you have any concerns or questions you can also talk to any member of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) who are: Juliet Hutchins, Mal and Pam Melvey, Kerry Lendon, and Rod Hay.

PRIEST SUPERVISOR:	Fr Joseph Figuardo
SACRAMENTAL PRIEST:	Fr John Purnell
Parish Secretary:	Mrs Rosanna Suckling

OFFICE: 60 Yambo Street, Morisset, PO Box 87, Ph: 02 4973.6859
 Office Hours: 9.00 am to 2.00pm—Monday to Friday (except public holidays)
 (Due to COVID we ask that you make an appointment to come to the office)
 Morisset Parish Office email: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au
 Morisset Parish Web site: www.vianneymorisset.org
 Morisset Parish Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/stjvparish>
 Morisset Parish Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish_morisset/
 Morisset Parish Bulletin Items: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au

UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :

Saturday	11th February 5pm Mass— Cooranbong
Sunday	12th February 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Tuesday	14th February 9.30am Liturgy— Morisset
Saturday	18th February 5pm Family Mass— Morisset
Sunday	19th February 9.30am Mass— Morisset
Tuesday	21st February 9.30am Liturgy— Morisset

We are back to walk in at all services.

We are still recording our Sunday Services and placing them on our Website and Facebook page for you to view if you are sick and unable to attend services.

TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE WE ENCOURAGE :
MASK WEARING ,
PHYSICAL DISTANCING,
HAND SANITISING,
And STAYING HOME IF SICK

REFLECTION FOR SIXTH SUNDAY O/T YEAR A 12TH FEB 2023

At the core of Matthew's teachings is the Law & the Prophets, to show the continuity of the revelation of God's will running through History up to the appearance of Jesus. The expression of God's will is now centred on Jesus Christ, who is the heart of the Law, & today's Gospel certainly makes that point!

The full version takes in verses 5-17 and is sometimes referred to as the "Sermon on the Mount". It presented quite a challenge to the disciples but it also challenges us to take a closer look at it's content.

He gives precise details of the Law - in particular, the laws regarding Anger, Adultery, Divorce & Oaths. Earlier, He announced to his disciples that He had not come to abolish the Law & the Prophets, but in fact to fulfil them.

The Torah, the Jewish Law, is not fulfilled by the interpretations of the Jewish rabbis but only through Jesus & his community, whose actions definitely needed to surpass that of the scribes & Pharisees!

Jesus "fulfills" the Law & the Prophets - NOT by the literal following of minute regulations--in fact, there were occasions when He violated the Sabbath day of rest & dispensed of the ritual cleanliness! In Jesus there has dawned what the Law & the Prophets only announced-- in him has come the fullness that is intended in them but not attained. In this fulfilment, there is continuity & further deepening. However, He asks them to go a bit further than the basic letter of the law.

He uses examples, such as killing, name-calling, swearing, to illustrate the differences between the virtues of the others & those to whom He was preaching.

We could perhaps describe his attitude as taking a more HOLISTIC approach to life & his 'virtue ethics' mean that specific choices of actions taken come from a wider perspective of the heart.

In our world today, we, too, should be striving, as far as possible, to adopt ETHICAL decision-making by using these same guidelines- just taking a few examples -

How does "do not kill" sit in the face of harmful emissions or extinction of species in the animal & plant world?

What does "do not commit adultery" mean - in the face of widespread pornography & human trafficking?

What does "do not break your oath" mean- in the face of fake news? Indeed, in ALL of these situations, it will depend on OUR relationship with God to strengthen & support us & guide us forward.

The response to the Psalm today is uplifting & encouraging -- "Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord".

When we share some "sign of peace" with each other during Mass, just that small action demonstrates our desire to be reconciled with one another & together move towards a closer relationship with God.

St Mary McKillop's words of encouragement to us in 1893 -- "Let no obstacle deter us from proceeding with courage". Heather White

2023 LENTEN REFLECTION: FINDING LIGHT WITHIN THE DARKNESS

Pastoral Ministries has prepared a Lenten resource for our diocese, *Finding Light within the Darkness*. Every Lent there is a fresh invitation to retreat from the noise and busyness of daily life. To listen with our heart, to contemplate our humanness so we can actively focus on humanity. We are invited to turn to God dwelling within us and consider how we can find light in the darkness and how we can be light to others. This resource provides opportunities for prayer, faith-sharing, and outreach in our local community. To access this resource, go to:

www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/liturgy/leden-2023/

WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

February 11 is World Day of the Sick, an observation started by Pope John Paul II as a way for believers to offer prayers for those suffering from illnesses and for the caregivers. The day coincides with the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes. People around the world take the time to pray for the sick and for those who work very hard to alleviate the sufferings of the sick on this day. As Fr Greg Barker is away at that time, he will celebrate World Day of the Sick on Friday 17 February with Mass commencing at 12pm at the Cathedral including anointing of the sick. All are welcome.

INTRODUCTORY CPE (CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION)

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of pastoral/spiritual care. It is a qualification required by NSW Health for those wishing to become hospital visitors. It covers such topics as listening skills, empathy, grief and loss, self-awareness, and hospital procedures. It is conducted over six days from 9am to 4pm. A certificate is awarded on completion.

Commencing 20 February, registration is due by 13 February.

MacKillop Parish Charlestown For more information contact Fr. Roger Zohrab - Pastoral Care Coordinator

Mob 0408 151 481 | E roger.zohrab@health.nsw.gov.au

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR 2023/2024 CHRISTIAN FORMATION COURSE ARE NOW OPEN

Are you wanting to know more about Christianity and develop a deeper understanding of the Catholic Church?

The Christian Formation Course (CFC) is a learning experience that allows participants to explore the foundational elements of the Catholic Faith Tradition. This one-year course introduces participants to scripture, theology, church history, sacramental life and liturgy.

The Course runs across twelve (12) months and comprises eight (8) units All who complete the Course are awarded a diocesan Certificate in Christian Formation By engaging in the course, it is hoped participants will:

- become more confident in understanding the Catholic faith
- grow in their capacity to reflect on their life's journey
- realise that Christian faith is nurtured in community
- be affirmed in their gifts for participating in the life of the faith community
- grow in awareness of what it means to be a responsive member of the faith community

Commencing on Tuesday 2 May 2023, no prerequisite formation or qualification is required to enrol. To find out more about the Christian Formation Course, visit: www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/faith-formation/christian-formation-course/

BECOME AN SRE VOLUNTEER

Did you know that some 50% of Catholic children are in state schools? Have you ever thought of spreading the Good News of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ with children? Have you ever thought about becoming a Special Religious Educator?

This could be an opportunity for you to meet new people, discover new friendships and build quality relationships whilst mastering skills and confidence in Catechetics. You can make a difference in the schools within our parish! For people of faith, knowing you are participating in Christ's call to share the Good News to all is a great source of joy and meaning.

If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please contact the Pastoral Ministries Team.

Rose McAllister: Manager Formation & Education 0414 962 922

Nicki Graham: Officer Formation & Education 0417 773 444



POPE FRANCIS NAMES NEW BISHOP OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

The Holy Father has appointed Bishop Michael Kennedy, currently the Bishop of Armidale, as the ninth Bishop of the

Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 03, 2023

Pope Francis made the official announcement at noon in Rome (10pm local time) on Thursday 2 February 2023.

Noting the appointment follows the untimely death of Bishop Bill Wright in November 2021, Bishop Kennedy said, 'I willingly and heartily accept this new appointment, knowing that like all new endeavours, it will hold both joys and challenges. To be the chief pastor leading a Diocese in worship, teaching, evangelisation, and governance is an awesome privilege and responsibility.'

'I am now looking forward to meeting and getting to know the priests and the people of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.'

Bishop Kennedy was born in Wagga Wagga and educated in Catholic schools. He gained a Diploma in Education from the Sydney Catholic College of Education and taught for several years at Xavier Catholic College in Albury, before commencing seminary studies at Vianney College in rural New South Wales. In 1994 he continued his academic studies in Rome, attaining a Licentiate in Sacred Theology and a Diploma in Mariology.

Ordained a priest in 1999, Bishop Kennedy has held a variety of positions across New South Wales, most recently serving as the Bishop of Armidale, a position he has held since 2011. Bishop Kennedy has also previously served in roles across education and as the Director of Vocations, reflecting his commitment to his motto 'Euntes Docete' (*Go out and teach*).

In announcing this appointment, it is noted Fr Greg Barker stays on in the position as the Diocesan Administrator until Bishop Kennedy is installed in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Read a statement from Bishop Michael Kennedy - <http://armidale.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/20220203-Statement-from-Bishop-Michael-Kennedy.pdf>

Read a statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference - <https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/bishop-kennedy-appointed-bishop-of-maitland-newcastle/>

A date for the Oath of Office, Profession of Faith and Taking of Possession has not yet been set.

SISTERS IN FAITH DINNER

The Diocesan Ecumenical and Interfaith Council would like you to join us for our Sisters in Faith Dinner to mark International Women's Day. It's an opportunity for all women of faith to come together to form friendships.

Date: Wednesday 8 March Time: 6pm to 9pm Location: Victor Peters Suite, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle West

Cost: \$30 per person RSVP by: 1 March Registration is open now:

www.eventbrite.com.au/e/sisters-of-faith-dinner-tickets-513511305137



POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY 2023

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.



PROJECT COMPASSION LAUNCH

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will launch Caritas Australia's Project Compassion on Shrove Tuesday, 21 February 2023. The Theme *For All Future Generations* reminds us that what we do today can have a significant impact on our future generations. As part of the Liturgy, students, parishes and agencies within the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese* will be called forward to receive their 2023 Project Compassion Box and Commissioning from Diocesan Administrator, Fr. Greg Barker.

Complimentary pancakes will be served at the Southern Cross Hall, following the Liturgy.

To register, visit: <https://PC2023.eventbrite.com.au> For more information, please contact Kate on 4979 1329 or kate.crncevic@mn.catholic.org.au

MIDDLE EAST EMERGENCY APPEAL

Caritas Turkey and other Caritas agencies are responding to a series of powerful earthquakes in southeast Turkey and Syria, where thousands of lives have been lost already and the death toll increases by the hour.

Caritas Turkey are on the ground coordinating with local authorities and other organisations to see how they can best assist. Your generous support can help provide emergency relief to help families recover and rebuild from disaster. Visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/turkey-and-syria-earthquake/ or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support to the Middle East. by donating to our Middle East Emergency Appeal.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER.

Is held on the first Friday in March each year, people in over 170 countries, join in a service prepared by of a different country, to celebrate both unity in Christ and our diversity in culture. This year Bonnells Bay Salvation Army 188 Station St Bonnells Bay are hosting the World Day of Prayer Service on Friday March 3rd, 2023 at 10am The host country for 2023 is Taiwan.

ANOINTING MASS

An anointing Mass will be held at 11am on Thursday 16th February 2023 at St Joseph's Toronto 140 Wangi Rd Toronto, followed by morning tea. All Welcome.

ART AND SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

Creation of art provides an opportunity for a deepening awareness of oneself and the world, and can act as a catalyst for evoking the Spirit. Art is a means to see-to-re-search and find the living meaning of what it means to open the heart. Everyone has the ability to create art, but in order for it to be theological, the artist needs to explore ways that it makes sense of faith. Opening the heart through art involves making meaning through the creation, then reflecting on the art itself and the unfolding the moment-to-moment direct experience of the process.

This workshop will provide an opportunity to awaken the Spirit through the beauty of God's creation, prayer, and reflection. Participants will engage in art making experiences which will nourish their faith.

Date: Thursday 23 March, 9am-3pm Venue: Kilaben Bay Community Centre Cost: \$25 per person To register go to:

www.eventbrite.com.au/e/art-and-spirituality-workshop-march-2023-tickets-532521174167

SUPPORTING THE CLERGY / 1ST COLLECTION

If you would like to make contributions to support the Clergy / 1st Collection please do so at Mass in the BLUE bucket or electronically using the Online Payments button on the Parish Website Home page, the Diocese App, Bank Account Name: CCF BSB: 062815 No: 00328161 Ref: 5016 1st Collection or set up a direct debit arrangement (contact the parish office for this).

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH / 2ND COLLECTION

If you would like to make contributions to support our Parish please do so at Mass via the RED bucket or deposit directly into the Parish Account our details are: Account Name: CCF 96014 Morisset Parish BSB:062815 Account Number: 00328161 Ref: 5004 2nd Collection or 5004 PG and your Giver Number or Surname, or you can use the Online Payments button on the Parish Website Home page or the Diocese App. If you are considering taking up **planned giving** you may like to know that **a percentage of the contributions are tax deductible**. If you would like to know more on how planned giving works please contact the Parish Office.

WEEKEND ROSTERS

		<u>THIS WEEK</u>	<u>NEXT WEEK</u>
<u>Presiders</u>	5PM 9.30AM	Mass Mass	Mass Mass
<u>PROCLAIMERS:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J Vipan R Hay	L Hutchinson H White
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	K Lendon D Joyce	U France M Shamley
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	F Dunn K Dunn A Walker G Walker	J Vipan Jo Patrick P Melvey A Dussin
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey V Paulo	M Melvey J France
<u>AV</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J France M Foo	J France J Vipan
<u>SOUND / VIDEO</u>	5PM 9.30AM	U France J France	L McArdle U France
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	TBA TBA	J Andersen TBA
<u>COVID TEAM</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Herbert P Melvey K Amon B Hutcheson	P Herbert K Lendon A Walker G Walker
<u>COVID CLEAN- ING</u>	5PM 9.30AM	All available Covid team members	All available Covid team members
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	J Scully P Herbert T Alexander	XXXX R Hay C Hay

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding (ph: 4979 1390 or email: childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au), or visit their website for further information (www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au).

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMNITIES

SAINTS CYRIL AND METHODIUS— 14TH FEBRUARY
ASH WEDNESDAY— 22ND FEBRUARY
SAINT POLYCARP— 23RD FEBRUARY
RITE OF ELECTION— 26TH FEBRUARY
EMBER DAY— 3RD MARCH
SAINTS PERPETUA AND FELICITY— 7TH MARCH
SAINT PATRICK— 17TH MARCH
SAINT JOSEPH— 19TH MARCH
THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD— 25TH MARCH
PALM SUNDAY— 2ND APRIL

Please pray for those who are sick, in hospital or recovering at home:

Peter Martyn, Brian Grogan, Fiona McAlinden, Stephen McKay, June Purcell, Jeremy McMullen, Harry Goldman, Yvonne Beecroft, Bernadette Martin, John Francisco, Joan Gillett, Bruce Gillett, Koby Smith.

Please pray for those who have been called to eternal life may they always be in our prayers.



PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE BULLETIN

If you would like the parish to pray for a family member who is sick, recently deceased or you would like remembered please call or email the parish office or complete a prayer card for each person and place in the mail box near the parish office door. Cards are available at the back of the church and at the Parish Office.

All prayer requests require permission from a family member or the person. Due to Australian privacy laws.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite
myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.



Live stream Mass every Sunday at 9.30am at
www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream





SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year A
Sunday 12 Feb 2023

The Introductory Rites

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we work and live. Our Parish of St John Vianney Morisset is located on the traditional lands of the Awabakal and Darkinjung people. We honour and pay respect to, Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the spiritual culture of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

Gathering

The Lectionary/Roman Missal or a Bible may be placed on a table together with a candle and a cross.

Sign of the Cross

Leader:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

Greeting

Leader:

Blessed be Jesus who makes us one,
and strengthens us
by the power of his Spirit.

All:

Blessed be God forever.

Introductory Remarks

Leader (in these or similar words):

Friends in Christ,
although we cannot celebrate the Eucharist this day,
we gather in God's name
for when two or more come together
God is always with us.

We worship in union with the whole Church
keeping this day of the Lord holy.

Opening Rite

LITANY OF PRAISE

Leader:

Before listening to the Word of God
let us praise the Lord Jesus Christ.

A brief period of silence follows.

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you call us to proclaim your kingdom: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, Your spirit strengthens every disciple in every age:
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you command us to love God and one another: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader:

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All:

All: Amen.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

God our Father
you gather us together
to hear your holy Word.
Help us to listen with open hearts
so that we will obey your will.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Sir 15:15-20

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

He never commanded anyone to be godless.

If you wish, you can keep the commandments,
to behave faithfully is within your power.
He has set fire and water before you;
put out your hand to whichever you prefer.
Man has life and death before him;
whichever a man likes better will be given him.
For vast is the wisdom of the Lord;
he is almighty and all-seeing.
His eyes are on those who fear him,
he notes every action of man.
He never commanded anyone to be godless,
he has given no one permission to sin.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 118:1-2. 4-5. 17-18. 33-34. R. v.1

(R.) Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

1. They are happy whose life is blameless,
who follow God's law!
They are happy those who do his will,
seeking him with all their hearts. **(R.)**
2. You have laid down your precepts
to be obeyed with care.
May my footsteps be firm
to obey your statutes. **(R.)**

3. Bless your servant and I shall live
and obey your word.
Open my eyes that I may consider
the wonders of your law. (R.)
4. Teach me the demands of your statutes
and I will keep them to the end.
Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart. (R.)

Second Reading

1 Cor 2:6-10

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

God in his wisdom predestined our glory before the ages began.

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Reader:

From the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Mt 5:17-37

Such was said to your ancestors; but I am speaking to you.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven.

'For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

'You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court; if a man calls his brother "Fool" he will answer for it before the Sanhedrin; and if a man calls him "Renegade" he will answer for it in hell fire. So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. Come to

terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye should cause you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body thrown into hell. And if your right hand should cause you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; for it will do you less harm to lose one part of you than to have your whole body go to hell.

'It has also been said: Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a writ of dismissal. But I say this to you: everyone who divorces his wife, except for the case of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

'Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all, either by heaven, since that is God's throne; or by the earth, since that is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, since that is the city of the great king. Do not swear by your own head either, since you cannot turn a single hair white or black. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

Reader:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All are seated.

Reflection on the Word

Q. Why does Jesus speak about not only keeping commandments but also teaching others to keep them?

Q. How do you feel about the interpretations of the Law that Jesus cites as examples?

Q. When has a particular interpretation of scripture helped you with a difficult literal passage?

Q. Where in your life are you called to be someone who fulfils or completes the Law and the Prophets?

Profession of Faith

Leader:

In union with the whole Church
let us profess our faith.

All:

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.

**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: Brothers and sisters, with faith in God's law let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

Reader: That our Holy Father Pope N. will continue to lead all Christians in the teachings of Christ.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That people affected by war and combat will find peace and security.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That parents and teachers will instil the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in children and young people.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That our parish community will find happiness and wisdom in the words of Christ.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That the sick will find healing through the Holy Spirit, especially those in our community and families.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who have died will live forever in God's kingdom, especially those who were members of our community and families.

(pause)

In your kindness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God our Father, you teach us wisdom through your law.
Hear our prayers and help us to follow your commands
as we live in praise of your name. We ask this through
Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader:

At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

All:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

The Concluding Rite

Blessing

Leader:

May the Lord be with us, and protect us, now and for ever..

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

Leader:

Let us go in the peace to love and serve the Lord.

All:

Thanks be to God.

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LITURGY MATTERS: New year... New opportunities...

Perhaps the most exciting opportunity is the appointment of our new bishop, Michael Kennedy. It is an opportunity for us and for him as we begin to journey together.

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A new year is always an opportunity and invitation to reimagine how we live and renew who we are personally and communally. Some of us make new year's resolutions that last anywhere between a matter of days to the whole year.

A new year is also a sign of hope. Probably like many of you, I have friends and colleagues who are desperate for 2023 to be better than 2022, because the latter was marked by loss, serious illness, death, financial insecurity, separation ...

The opportunity and hope we experience in a new year is something we share with all our brothers and sisters. However, for those of us who are Christian there is always more going on. For us the new year functions something like a sacrament, reminding us that as disciples of Jesus and the church community, the invitation to reimagine, to change and to hope is a critical dimension of our Christian DNA. To be Christian is to embrace change and renewal in Christ.

Our prayer as we waited for the appointment of a new bishop echoed this deep truth. We prayed:

that as we wait with joyful hope for a new Bishop, we will be cleansed and renewed by the Word of God so that we will be ready, our lamps lit, when a new Bishop is announced.

We pray ... **Lord hear our prayer.**

This new year, this new moment in our diocesan journey invites us into this deeper, perpetual renewal and conversion. The year will be studded with a rich variety of opportunities to support us in this. Specifically, there is one special opportunity that looms large.

60th Anniversary of Vatican Council II

One of the blessings of our Catholic faith is that we belong to a big church. Belonging to this universal church is a constant invitation to look out and beyond our own beautiful, though limited, horizons.

Here we find a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council which began on 11 October 1963 and ended a little over three years later on 8 December 1965.

The Council promulgated sixteen major documents. The reception of those documents, and all that flows from them, continues to be the work of the Church in every place and through every unfolding year and decade. Today it is our work as the Church of Maitland-Newcastle.

I love several things about our particular Church of Maitland-Newcastle. We are a church who has endeavoured to receive the Council and live its imperatives; to be open to the constant renewal and reform that challenges us to shine with the light of Christ, a light that rises in the darkness for all the world. (cf Readings 5th Sunday Ordinary Time A)

In the late 1980s we boldly stepped out on a synodal path being one of the first dioceses in Australia to prepare for and celebrate a post Vatican II Synod. There were two sessions over 1992 and 1993. We are a church whose checked history has pushed us to look honestly and critically at who we are and how we live. We are a church who engages in the struggle to acknowledge baptism as the foundational sacrament incorporating us all into the community of the faithful by which we share a common dignity, a common call to holiness and a common responsibility for mission; a community strengthened by our diversity of orders, charisms and ministries.

I believe we are a church ready to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Vatican Council II.

Document Club Invitation

There will be a variety of ways we can mark this event. The Diocesan Liturgy Council (DLC) is offering one way. Everyone is invited to form and/or join a 'document club' drawing on the great tradition of book clubs! (Yes, there will need to be drinks and nibbles!)

This year the focus is ***The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy***, (CLS) the first document promulgated by the Council on 4 December 1963. View a copy of the Constitution is available [here](#).

In keeping with our rich Catholic understanding of the ongoing process of reception, you are invited to read this document with attentiveness to the wisdom it reveals to us in our 2023 context: a context that is universal, global, national, diocesan, parish, family, community, personal ... We read with an experience and wisdom the Council fathers did not have. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the Council, continues to inspire us in our discernment today.

The CLS famously says that the liturgy is the primary and indispensable source from which we the faithful derive the true Christian spirit and calls us all to become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy. (a. 14) A 2023 reading of the constitution presents us with an opportunity to enrich the liturgical life of our parishes and diocese and to deepen our capacity to be full, conscious and active participants.

The DLC has prepared a reading plan that anyone can use to guide their 'document club'. You can download the plan [here](#). If you are interested in forming a 'document club' and would like the support of a member of the DLC please contact sharon.murphy@mn.catholic.org.au who will help organise this.

To get the ball rolling the DLC is offering a 'document club' on Zoom which will be hosted by Fr Andrew Doohan. The flyer with details to join is available [here](#). There is a limited number of places available so get in quickly.

To bring our 'document clubs' to a close the DLC is looking forward to hosting an in-person 'fun' gathering on **Monday evening, 4 December 2023**. To ensure you receive an invitation, you may like to send the names and email addresses of your 'document club' to Sharon.

Finally

Our brother, friend and colleague Richard Lennan published a new book last year. It is called *Tilling the Church: Theology of an Unfinished Project*. I hope the invitation to form and participate in a 'document club' focused on *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* provides a way by which we can all continue to till the church. I recommend his book. It's a wonderfully rich, formative and informative read.

Let's seize this new year, this new moment in our diocesan pilgrimage, and step out and into a 'document club'.

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