



**St John  
Vianney**  
Parish Morisset



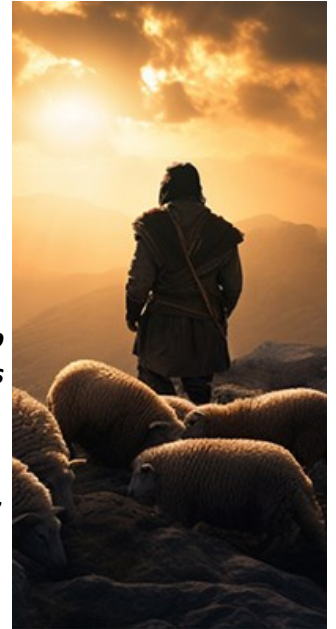
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER YEAR B 21 APRIL 2024**

*Today is known as Good Shepherd Sunday because, each year on this 4th Sunday of Easter, Jesus speaks of himself as the "good shepherd". Traditionally, it is also known as "Vocations Sunday".*

*We may sometimes wonder where we "belong" in a fractured world, that seems so wrought by division.*

*In today's Gospel, Jesus uses the ancient, but still powerful image of the good shepherd, who knows and protects his flock. Easter celebrates that we have been made one people, by his death and resurrection.*

*We should listen to those whose lives reveal the qualities of Jesus: love, compassion, justice, self-sacrifice.*



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:** Uta France  
John France

**PRIEST SUPERVISOR:** Fr Joseph Figuardo

**SACRAMENTAL PRIESTS:** Fr Greg Barker VG  
Fr Darryl Mackie  
Fr Raphael Madukwe  
Fr John Purnell

**PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL:** Juliet Hutchins  
Mal Melvey  
Pam Melvey  
Kerry Lendon  
Rod Hay

**PARISH SECRETARY:** Rosanna Suckling

PARISH 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)  
(We ask that you make an appointment to come to the office)  
Morisset Parish Office email: [morparish@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:morparish@mn.catholic.org.au)  
Morisset Parish Web site: [www.vianneymorisset.org](http://www.vianneymorisset.org)  
Morisset Parish Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/stjvparish>  
Morisset Parish Instagram : [https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish\\_morisset/](https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish_morisset/)  
(Please submit all Bulletin Notice requests to the parish office by 2pm Wednesdays)

**UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :**

Saturday	20th April 5pm Mass—Morisset
Sunday	21st April 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Thursday	25th April 9.30am Anzac Day Mass—Morisset
Saturday	27th April 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	28th April 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Tuesday	30th April 9.30am Liturgy—Morisset
Saturday	4th May 5pm Family Mass—Morisset
Sunday	5th May 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Tuesday	7th May 9.30am Liturgy—Morisset
Saturday	11th May 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	12th May 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Tuesday	14th May 9.30am Liturgy—Morisset

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## **Reflection for Fourth Sunday of Easter Year B — 21st April 2024**

The image of Jesus as the good shepherd is such a familiar image that it can sometimes become over-familiar and cease to engage us. Countless works of art have presented this image literally, picturing Jesus as a shepherd with a crook and surrounded by sheep or even with a lamb draped around the back of his neck. The image from this week's gospel often gets merged with the image from the parable of the lost sheep that appears in the gospels of Luke (15:1-7) and Matthew (18:10-14) where artists frequently place Jesus as the hero of his own parable and portray him as the 'good shepherd' going out to retrieve the one lost sheep. Such amalgamations of different gospel images can become very confusing. Some of this confusion and literal interpretation stems from the gospel writer's choice of metaphoric language. In the gospel, Jesus says, 'I am the good shepherd', not 'I am like the good shepherd'. The writer's use of metaphor, rather than simile, provides a much more compelling image but can result in a more literal interpretation.

The emphasis of the image is on the adjective. Jesus is the good shepherd. Shepherds generally were not regarded as particularly good people – more like the scum of the earth! – so the choice of image is a deliberate one to unsettle the listeners. Unlike their normal expectation of shepherds – cut-throats who would run away at the first sign of danger – Jesus is the good shepherd: the one who does not abandon his flock; the one who has concern for his sheep; the one who will lay down his own life for his sheep. The final verses of the passage make an interesting extension to the image of shepherd and sheep. Unlike the 'sacrificial lamb', the good shepherd chooses to lay down his life and also has the power to take it up again.

### **Historical Context – The GOOD Shepherd?**

The John gospel writer's use of the image of Jesus as the good shepherd would have been a confronting image for the initial audience. Shepherds in first century Palestine were far from the idyllic pastoral image that we generally associate with the image. They occupied one of the lowest steps on the social ladder – men of such poor reputation that they could only be trusted to herd sheep; they certainly couldn't be trusted around other people! Jesus' use of the image cut two ways: it was a confronting image for the audience; but it was also a challenge to those leaders who had been charged to 'shepherd' their people and behaved no better than thieves – Jesus was giving them an image of what it means to be a good shepherd.

### **Scriptural context – The Shepherd Messiah:**

The gospels go to great lengths to affirm the lineage of Jesus and associate him with the house of David, the first great Jewish king. David began life as a simple boy tending his father's flock of sheep. When the line of kings was instigated through David they were charged with being 'shepherds' of their people. However, down through the line of kings, this care for the people was lost and they ceased to be 'shepherds'. Jesus' claim to be the good shepherd is his claim to be in the line of the true kings of Israel – a shepherd of the people.

### **Different View – The Australian Shepherd:**

Australian audiences can tend to struggle a bit with the image of Jesus as the good shepherd. The Australian image of sheep is one of huge flocks of sheep that number in their hundreds and thousands and roam freely over enormous open plains. I guess we also tend to look on sheep as pretty stupid animals that will follow anything anywhere. It doesn't seem to work to put Jesus into this image of vast sheep stations. The idea of a shepherd knowing his sheep individually seems a bit ridiculous in this context.

### **Questions for us today:**

- 1/. How does the image of the good shepherd speak to your life and experience?
  2. Have you ever seen yourself as needing to be the good shepherd for someone else?
  3. Are there times you have acted more like the 'hired man' – fleeing in the face of threat or difficulty?
- (From Greg Sunter – adapted by Dan Joyce)

### **St John Vianney's Knitting Group**

Will be holding a Raffle to raise funds to purchase wool used to knit our "Wrap with Love" rugs. Our group was established in the Parish quite a few years ago & is a member of this International Organisation which donates the rugs to needy recipients worldwide as well as local Communities, wherever the need arises.

The Raffle Prize will be a beautiful handmade rug- the perfect Mother's Day Gift!

Tickets -\$2 each or \$5 for 3- will be sold after the weekend Masses for the next few weeks & will be drawn prior to Mothers Day on May 12th. Thank you for your support.

### **ANZAC DAY**

Next Thursday 25th April, as a nation we will stop to commemorate Anzac Day. On Thursday, we will pay grateful respects to those who sacrificed their own lives for our country, and ultimately for the sake of a better world. We will remember the pain of those who grieved, their deaths, and whose lives were changed forever by their wounding.

Convinced that war is the greatest human misfortune, we pray for its elimination from the world. We pray for those who have died in the theatres of war, whether they are on "our side" or the "enemy".

**To help us commemorate Anzac Day, Mass will be celebrated at 9.30am in the Morisset Church.**

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.**

**Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.**

**At the going down of the sun and in the morning**

**We will remember them.**

**Lest we forget!**

### **Parish Assembly-Claim the Date**

A Parish Pastoral Assembly, to which all parishioners are invited, will be held after Mass on Sunday 2nd June. It is several years since an Assembly was held in our Parish. (Covid etc.)

A Parish Pastoral Assembly is a body of faith-filled parishioners and the ordained, through which everyone works together as co-responsible partners in furthering the mission of Christ in our Parish.

From this Assembly, a Pastoral Plan will be developed. This Plan is a set of goals and objectives embraced through a process of shared decision-making, which will direct the parish in its activities and decisions for the next 12 months.

### **Baptism Preparation Program**

Baptism is a happy event and a time to ponder God's loving gifts in our lives. For those seeking baptism for their children our baptism preparation programs will usually run in the evenings on the second Tuesday of the Month starting at 7pm, bookings are essential. Our next Program will be held on **Tuesday 14th May 2024**. Bookings can be made online at the link at: <https://forms.office.com/r/wZtatkt01V> or by contacting our Parish Office.

**Thank you for Supporting Project Compassion boxes and envelopes need to be bought in by Sunday 21st April 2024.**

### Points to Ponder

Traditions have always been an important dimension of celebrating faith. Each age is a time of special grace, including our age of high technology.

#### Did You Know?

**Vocation Sunday.** Christian people are called in baptism to bring the light of Christ to all the world. Those who hear and seek that call do so from their own situations in life. The concept of vocation, then, is not so much what we do as how we go about our day-to-day lives. Those who are single or celibate, married or widowed, each have a place among God's people. One's vocation might be to raise children in a marriage, to seek a cure for cancer, to protect and serve the public in uniformed service. Priests and religious have vocations but are not alone in hearing God's call to serve. One has a vocation if one declares or believes that one does. So, a bookstore clerk who seeks to serve customers kindly and efficiently may see her work as a vocation: a clerk working next to her may see his work simply as a job. One has a vocation: the other does not.

### With A Light Heart.

A little old woman who is a devout Catholic lives next door to a loud-mouthed atheist. Every morning the lady goes to her front porch and shouts, "Praise the Lord."

Every day the atheist neighbour can't help himself and shouts back, "There is no God!"

The lady begins to experience financial hardship with cost-of-living rises and buying her weekly groceries becomes more difficult. However, every morning she continues to go out on her front porch and asks God for help with her groceries and shouts, "Praise the Lord!"

One morning she discovers three bags of groceries on her porch and immediately yells, "Praise the Lord!"

At that moment the atheist jumps out from behind some bushes and says, "Ha, got you. There's no God. I bought those groceries for you."

The lady looks at him and smiles. Then she shouts even louder. "Praise the Lord! Not only did you provide for me, Lord, you also made Satan pay for the groceries!"

### Farewell to Teresa Brierly

Several hundred people gathered last Friday afternoon in the Southern Cross Hall at Hamilton, to farewell Teresa Brierly.

After almost 20 years as a leader in the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle, Teresa resigned from her current role as Director of Pastoral Ministries.

Throughout her time at the Diocese, Teresa played a vital role in many areas and brought to life many valuable initiatives around faith formation, parish life and ministry, mission and outreach, pastoral planning, synodal processes, and community engagement, all while our Diocese and the wider Church has faced many significant challenges.

Many times over the years our parish had a need to contact her with an issue, and she never let us down when it came to finding the right contact help.

She was a mentor, and a guide to us, but most of all she was our friend. Morisset Parish will certainly miss her.

### Watagan Deanery News

The Diocese of Maitland /Newcastle consists of several Deaneries. Our Morisset Parish belongs to the Watagan Deanery, with Fr Joseph Figurado as the Dean. Other Parishes in the Watagan Deanery are Shortland, Wallsend, Glendale, Boolaroo, Warners Bay, Booragul, and Toronto.

The Deanery Leaders met last Friday evening. Items of interest raised at the meeting were: The recent Deanery Lenten Journey was very successful. The symbolism used was very powerful, and the Taize carried through each session was exceptional. Everyone agreed that it was a good experience.

### Weekday Liturgy

There will be no Liturgy this Tuesday 23rd April. Tuesday liturgies will recommence Tuesday 30th April 9.30am in the Morisset Church.

### Anointing Mass

This Sunday 21 April during 9.30am Mass. Fr John Purnell will administer the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Anybody with an illness, serious or otherwise, who needs healing, may receive the sacrament.

After Mass, a 'cuppa and biscuits' will be held in the Callinan Centre – All welcome

### Nominations open for Magdalene Award

Nominations are now open for the 2024 Mary Magdalene Award!

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE PUBLISHED APRIL 09, 2024

Established in 2015, the award aims to celebrate and honour local women who demonstrate exceptional leadership within our Diocese and embody the spirit of Mary Magdalene.

This Award is being relaunched this year, after last being presented in 2020, to coincide with the Feast Day of Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene is a symbol of courage, strength, resilience, empowerment, and leadership, and inspires us to recognise and uplift the remarkable women among us.

Nominations can be made by filling in this form and emailing it to [kate.crncevic@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:kate.crncevic@mn.catholic.org.au)

Important dates to take note of are:

**Monday 3 June – Nominations close**

**Sunday 28 July - 9:30 am Mass and Awards Presentation with Bishop Michael Kennedy, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle.**

The official award presentation will follow in the Toohy Room with morning tea in the Davis Courtyard.

For more information visit the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle website at: <https://www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/mission-and-outreach/council-for-women/magdalene-award-2024/>

Diocesan employees are eligible if they have an active voluntary role in their parishes or the diocesan community. Their paid work is not eligible for consideration for this award.



**LAUDATO SI'  
WEEK 2024**

Is from May 19 to 26, meaning from Pentecost Sunday to the Feast of the Holy Trinity.

This year, the theme that summons us is "Seeds of Hope", inspired by Laudate Deum which exhorts: "There are no lasting changes without cultural changes [...] and there are no cultural changes without personal changes" (LD 70). In addition, the symbol of the Season of Creation 2024, "The first fruits of hope," also aligns with the theme, so that we may be seeds of hope in our lives and in our world, rooted in faith and love.

**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, Diocese App, Bank Account Name: CCF BSB: 062815 No: 00328161 Ref: 5016 1st Collection or set up a direct debit contact the parish office for this option.

**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 BSB:062815 Account Number: 00328161 one of the following Payment References are required by CCF for all deposits: 5004 or 5004 + SURNAME or 5004 + PG + your Giver Number, or 5004 + PG + SURNAME, or you can use the Online Payments or Planned Giving 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 or set up planned giving please contact the Parish Office.

<b>WEEKEND ROSTERS</b>			
		<u>THIS WEEK</u>	<u>NEXT WEEK</u>
<u>PRESIDERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	Mass Mass	Mass Mass
<u>PROCLAIMERS:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey H White	J Vipan M Melvey
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey D Joyce	P Melvey R Hay
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	B Cox K Amon J Hutchins	G & L Hutchinson D Whitten S Matthews
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J Lawandos V Paulo	M Melvey C Lawandos
<u>AV</u>	5PM 9.30AM	U France M Fowler	U France T Alexander
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey P Melvey	K Lendon C Lawandos
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	XXXX C Lawandos K Lendon	P MacIntyre R Hay C Hay

***Our Parish supports The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle in its zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Every one of us must each day commit ourselves individually and collectively to safeguard each child and every vulnerable person to whom we minister and interact with. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding P:02 4979 1390 or email: [childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au), or visit their website for further information [www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au).***

**UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMINITIES**

- ANZAC DAY—25TH APR
- SAINT MARK (F) - 26TH APR
- SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA (M) - 28TH APR
- SAINT ATHANASIUS (M) - 2ND MAY
- SAINTS PHILIP AND JAMES (F) - 3RD MAY
- THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD— 12TH MAY
- SAINT MATTHIAS (F) - 14TH MAY
- PENTECOST— 19TH MAY
- OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS (S) - 24TH MAY
- THE MOST HOLY TRINITY—26TH MAY
- THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (F) - 31ST MAY

**Please pray for all those who are sick: in hospital or at home, especially those living with a life threatening disease:**  
 Brenda Hutcheson, Koby Smith, Mick Styles, Sr Patricia Adams rsm, Annette Boyd, Mary Monaghan, Clare Wallington, Donna Hazzard, Pam Mullaly, Tintumol Thomas, Pat Findley, Les Findley, Peter Martyn, Bernadette Martin, Joan Gillett, Bruce Gillett.

**Please pray for those who have been called to eternal life may they always be in our prayers.**  
 Recently Deceased: Anne Ferris  
 Remembrance: Jason Wismer.



**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**

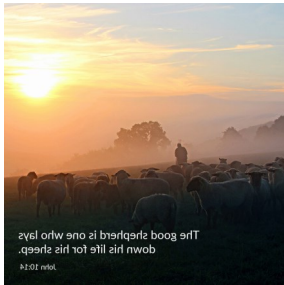
My Jesus,  
 I believe that You  
 are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
 I love You above all things,  
 and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
 Since I cannot at this moment  
 receive You sacramentally,  
 come at least spiritually into my heart.  
 I embrace You as if You were already there 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](http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream)**



**SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE**  
**Fourth Sunday of Easter Year B**  
**Sunday 21 Apr 2024**



**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, live and learn. Especially the Awabakal and Darkinjung nations who are the traditional owners of the land our Parish encompasses. 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, and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

**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 Christ who has redeemed us and raised us to new life.

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.  
United with the whole Church,  
we celebrate the joy of Easter  
and keep 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 who has raised us to new life.

A brief period of silence follows.

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you are the good shepherd who lays down his life:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you gather your scattered children into one flock:  
Christ, have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you have lavished us with gifts of love: 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:

Amen.

**Opening Prayer**

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

Loving God,  
you lead your faithful flock  
along the Good Shepherd's path.  
Help us to follow Jesus  
so that one day we may reach our eternal home  
and share in the joys of heaven.  
We make this prayer through Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

All:

Amen.

**The Liturgy of the Word**

**First Reading**

**Acts of the Apostles 4:8-12**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles  
This is the only name by which we can be saved.  
Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said: 'Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence, today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved.'

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

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

**Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 117:1. 8-9. 21-23. 26. 28-29. R. v.22**

**(R.) The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.**

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,  
for his love has no end.  
It is better to take refuge in the Lord  
than to trust in men:  
it is better to take refuge in the Lord  
than to trust in princes. (R.)
2. I will thank you for you have given answer  
and you are my saviour.  
The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the corner stone.  
This is the work of the Lord,  
a marvel in our eyes. (R.)
3. Blessed in the name of the Lord  
is he who comes.  
We bless you from the house of the Lord;  
I will thank you for you have given answer  
and you are my saviour.  
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good;  
for his love has no end. (R.)

## Second Reading

### 1 John 3:1-2

A reading from the first letter of St John

We shall see God as he is.

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us,  
by letting us be called God's children;  
and that is what we are.

Because the world refused to acknowledge him,  
therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God  
but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed;  
all we know is, that when it is revealed  
we shall be like him  
because we shall see him as he really is.

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 John.

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

### John 10:11-18

The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

Jesus said:

'I am the good shepherd:  
the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his  
sheep.

The hired man, since he is not the shepherd  
and the sheep do not belong to him,  
abandons the sheep and runs away  
as soon as he sees a wolf coming,  
and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep;  
this is because he is only a hired man  
and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd;  
I know my own  
and my own know me,  
just as the Father knows me  
and I know the Father;  
and I lay down my life for my sheep.  
And there are other sheep I have  
that are not of this fold,  
and these I have to lead as well.  
They too will listen to my voice,  
and there will be only one flock  
and one shepherd.  
The Father loves me,  
because I lay down my life  
in order to take it up again.  
No one takes it from me;  
I lay it down of my own free will,  
and as it is in my power to lay it down,  
so it is in my power to take it up again;  
and this is the command I have been given by my Father.'

Reader:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All are seated.

## Reflection on the Word

A short period of reflection may be observed.

## 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.**

## Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: Brothers and sisters, with faith in Jesus the good  
shepherd, we turn to God with our prayers.

Reader: That our Holy Father, Pope Francis, may  
continue to guide the church as a shepherd  
cares for his sheep. In your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That Christians all over the world will be united  
in Christ as one true flock. In your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That our parish community may always  
remember the love God has for us. In your  
glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That armed conflicts will cease, particularly  
where the homes and lives of civilians are  
being destroyed. In your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That those suffering mental illness will receive  
effective and compassionate treatment and  
not be burdened by pain, loneliness, and  
stigma. In your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That those who have wandered from the flock  
will be returned with a strengthened spirit. In  
your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That all who are sick will be comforted through  
God's merciful love. In your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: That everyone who has died will be granted  
eternal life. In your glory:

All: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: God our Father, you lead us and we listen to your voice.  
Hear our prayers and help us to trust that we are always  
in the care of our true Shepherd. 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:

Through the resurrection of his Son  
God has redeemed us and made us his children.  
May the Lord bless us with joy  
and fill us with fruits of the Spirit.

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

### Dismissal

Leader:

Let us go in peace. Alleluia.

All:

**Thanks be to God.**

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## **FAITH MATTERS: War and Spirituality**

Every year as we approach Anzac Day my thoughts are with all those who have experienced war, be they combatants, victims, or those on the periphery. In 2024 there are two major conflicts at the forefront of the news cycle, with others happening and not receiving much media attention.

MARY O'CONNOR PUBLISHED APRIL 16, 2024

Whilst Australian defence personnel are not directly involved in these conflicts, there are Australians being affected by these, they have family and friends living in the war-torn areas, they are aid workers, or like me a family member is part of the UN (Irish) Peacekeeping force in the Middle East.

The fear for people's physical health and safety is ever-present, more focus is now placed on the mental health of all those affected by war, but what of the spiritual health? I have read numerous academic articles in relation to war and spiritual health, but I have questions. For me to gain a greater understanding of this topic is through relationship, I learn and understand through story.

Those who fought in World War One, World War Two, and Korea are mostly deceased. Whilst some of these veterans told their story and were willing to participate in discussions, many

could not. I know that my mother-in-law knows little about her father's involvement in World War Two, he just wouldn't talk about it, and this was true of so many of that era, fathers, uncles' brothers who just never spoke of what they had seen, heard, smelt, and felt. I know of a family story from the Vietnam era, and the experience with the conscription "lottery". The subsequent visits by military police to the family home, the son who was peace loving, an altar boy, named for a saint, the lad who to this day does not speak of this part of his life. He avoided becoming a "nasho", but at what cost to his spiritual life? I can't ask him, for fear of creating angst, disrupting the peaceful existence he has created of wife, children, grandchildren, rural property, cattle and gardens.

Sixteen years ago, this month, I traveled through Europe with my husband and baby daughter. With both my husband & I being history buffs we visited many battlefields, war memorials and museums. I, being a new mum and pregnant with child number two was often teary with the sight of fertile fields in Belgium and northern France. I was walking on ground that had soaked up the blood of innocent women and children living in farms and towns that were in the way of the war machines, of young men far from home, praying and crying out for their mother, their God, as they died surrounded by the mud, the sounds of battle and the cries of others. I found in one of the small graveyards at Fromelles a list of the names and addresses of the soldiers thought to be buried there and I cried for the family of the lad who came from Macquarie Street, Merewether, a street I drove through each day. I thought of the impact his death had on his family, so very far away. Did they lose the baby of the family? Was he betrothed? Did they ever know what really happened to him? Were they ever able to believe in a loving God, when they had lost so much in a war fought in a distant place?

I can't ask those questions as that family is long gone, (I know, because I went looking for information about them when we came back to Australia). There are many stories of war and the impact on people's lives, there are books, diaries, newspaper articles and even oral history projects that have recorded these stories. How many times have you read or listened to such a story and had questions? Did you need more detail to understand more fully? Did you feel the need to offer comfort to the storyteller? Did you want to interact with the story in a more meaningful way?

With a Human Library we have the opportunity to hear the story and ask the questions that arise as we interact with living books. Human Libraries are a worldwide movement aiming to create a real connection between people, facilitate a greater acceptance, tolerance and social cohesion in the community and cultivating empathy and respect for others. On Friday, April 26, the Diocesan Library will hold the first Human Library event, the theme being War and Spirituality. Our books are 2 members of our Diocesan family, each has experienced war and the effects of war. One in the military and one as an innocent person living in a war zone. They are both people of faith. How have they maintained their faith in a space that can be so destructive to our belief in God? Did they ever struggle with their faith in the face of what they experienced? Do they ever feel fear now when they are safe from the physical aspect of war? What impact did their experience of war have on their family?

We invite you to come and listen to their stories, to ask the questions, to share and create relationships and forge empathy. For in empathy, we can help to create peace in our world, one small moment at a time.

Date: Friday 26 April, 2024 Time: 10.30am -12.30pm  
Place: Diocesan Resource Centre Library - 12 Tudor Street, Cnr Parry Street, Newcastle West Bookings Encouraged: <https://forms.office.com/r/1GEzWxaDq>

## **A spirit of joy, simplicity and reconciliation**

Anna Hill has been involved in the Ecumenical Prayer Services in the spirit of Taizé in Newcastle for over 30 years. She tells us how these services came to be and how you can get involved.

ANNA HILL PUBLISHED APRIL 02, 2024

Pope John Paul II many years ago now said, "One passes through Taizé as one passes close to a spring of water".

Pope Francis more recently, ahead of the 2023 Synod on Synodality, presided over an ecumenical prayer vigil organised by the brothers of the Taizé community. It was by his special request that the service took place and had been some months in the planning.

What is this all about? Why are so many drawn to it and where did it have its beginnings?

Taizé is a small village in the Burgundy region of France, not far from Lyon. During WW1, a young man, Roger Shultz, became aware of the numbers of displaced persons who had nowhere to call home and no one to turn to. He established his own home as a place of refuge and welcome. It was from these early beginnings that the present-day Taizé community has its roots.

The Taizé community developed into an ecumenical monastic order with a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. Today the 100-strong community of Roman Catholic and Protestant monks is drawn from more than 30 countries across the world.

I have been involved in the Ecumenical Prayer Services in the spirit of Taizé here in Newcastle for over 30 years now.

### **How did I become involved?**

My introduction was through Brother Matthew, an English-speaking Brother from the Taizé community when he was visiting Sydney and Newcastle on his overseas mission. He dropped in to our College in Hamilton and invited, challenged really, some of us to bring a group of students down to Sydney for a weekend pilgrimage of Taizé services. I was working with senior students at the Catholic college, and we were able to meet his challenge. It was obvious how those present were affected by the experience and it left a longing to recreate this experience. I was drawn to organize and conduct services here in Newcastle and, so, with the support of my late husband, John, and members of the Redemptorist community here in Mayfield it was all in place and underway.

Shortly afterwards, there was an opportunity for both John and I to spend time in Taizé itself. We travelled there with specific intentions of living with the Taizé community for a little while in retreat style. Our experiences at first seemed to overwhelm us and it took a few days to feel we were fitting in after our travel-weary, rushed and consumer-orientated world-view. By the end of our time there we were very sorry to have to leave.

### **What was the experience like for us?**

It was late August, one of the last days before the European academic year was to begin. In that small village were at least 5,000 other worshippers – mostly young and mostly resolved to participate to the max. Three times a day the services were announced by the continuous ringing of the five bells positioned outside the church courtyard. Their peels echoed across the valley; a flood of worshippers left what they were doing and gathered.

During the services, the overriding and unexpected experience was that of the absolute silence, no chatter, no cameras; no photos; no phones – just an absorbing, all-encompassing peace and stillness enveloping the entire community of worshippers – there were hundreds stretching past and beyond the walls of the church; their singing, their harmonising, their prayer postures, their connectedness... It was a palpable synergy of trust, vulnerability and strength.

The atmosphere was heightened by candles, their light shimmering through the darkness surrounding the Christian symbol of redemption, the cross; this one styled on the San Damiano cross icon of St. Francis of Assisi.

There were noticeably people there in our own age group (not so young) but there were also many, many young people – the sort of crowd you might expect to see on a university campus anywhere in the world.

During our stay in Taizé, I had occasion to spend time with Br Roger, the founder of the community. I shared my experiences of setting up the services in Newcastle. His response was very quiet and his voice was a

whisper; I needed to listen carefully. He told me he could do nothing for me in a practical way from where he lived in the Taizé monastery, but he could pray with me and he wanted to do so. He raised his arms over my head and holding open his palms he continued to pray gently, sincerely and powerfully. There was nothing hurried and I allowed this prayerful experience to wash over me like a warm embrace.

I left that encounter reassured that everything would be just fine because his prayer was for that very purpose. Well, over thirty years have passed now and that's the way it's been.

In the meantime, there have been changes in the venues for us from where we first started holding the services. The Redemptorist monastery closed as did some of the other churches; there were deaths of loved ones and losses; it was difficult to find the motivation to continue...

Within the community in Taizé there too were deaths and losses. Within a few years of our meeting, Br. Roger was knifed by a deranged woman at one of the services - a shocking attack. There was no harmony or peace or justice that day just total forgiveness for someone so unwell as was that woman from Bulgaria.

The community continued under the leadership of Br. Alois and now more recently Br. Matthew. The structure and liturgy remains the same and is replicated wherever the services are conducted.

Over the decades the Taizé movement has remained resolutely ecumenical and encompasses a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. It continues to bring together people from all denominations and cultures.

"It is a sign of hope in a divided world..." Brother Roger.

Prayer and silence are at the heart of the Taizé experience. As part of the service, we are encouraged to live out the Christian gospel in a spirit of joy, simplicity and reconciliation.

The cross icon, which is at the centre of the devotional service, is an adaption of the San Damiano cross of St. Francis of Assisi. It is used in ecumenical prayer services conducted in Taizé, France and anywhere where prayer services in the Spirit of Taizé are conducted, including here in Newcastle. The cross icon that is used in services in Newcastle came from Taizé at the time of our visit so many years ago. It was bought as a large poster and then later enthusiastic participants through workshops for candle making and cross construction were able to paste the poster onto a cross cut-out pattern on sturdy wood to replicate what is used in Taizé and, what now still remains the centre of our devotion during the services.

The singing of repeated prayer chants by candlelight are a trademark of the Taizé experience. Taizé music highlights simple phrases, usually lines from the Psalms or other pieces of scripture, repeated or sung in canon. The repetition is designed to help meditation and prayer.

The service is not led by a celebrant, but includes many symbols, ritual, silence, and a lot of stillness. Prayers from the heart, music, readings, candlelight, and petitions combine to create a meditative, reflective atmosphere and a spiritual connectedness.

*One passes through Taizé as one passes close to a spring of water,"*  
Pope John Paul I.

So what draws people to this kind of service? Over the years, I've asked this question of those who attend. This is how the question was answered:

I like the simplicity...there's time for your heart and your mind to be open to the Lord.....I find it very spiritual...very peaceful.

The attraction for me is the linking into chants in various languages...this brings with it a connectedness...it's non-passive...and it creates in me a quietening of the heart.

Shared supper allows time to adjust to going back to our regular lives. Whether only a few are there...the same blessings are received...I accept with great gratitude that the services are still happening.

Now I extend an invitation to you to experience Taizé prayer. Until then, may we, through the way we live our lives, "Da pacem cordium – Give peace to every heart".

Services are conducted at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Tighes Hill church at 5-6pm on the first Sunday of each month followed by a shared supper. Everyone is welcome. Please come.