



**St John
Vianney**
Parish Morisset



SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR B 21 JULY 2024

Every page of the Gospels shows that Jesus cared about people.

In today's Gospel we see Jesus, the Good Shepherd in action. Firstly, we see his care for the Twelve, who have just returned from their missionary work, and need a break. Secondly, we see his care for the ordinary people, whom he teaches at length. There is a great contrast between Jesus and the official leaders of his time. Little wonder that the people flocked to him. In Jesus we see divine compassion in action.

Neglect is a sad thing. God accused the leaders of Israel of not caring for the people.

Often caring is not easy. But a Christian who doesn't care is like a lamp who doesn't give light. Yet all of us are capable of caring. All that is required is an open heart. When we care, we are living the Gospel.



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

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(We ask that you make an appointment to come to the office)
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Morisset Parish Web site: www.vianneymorisset.org
Morisset Parish Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/stjvparish>

UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :

- Saturday 20th July 5pm
Family Mass—Morisset
- Sunday 21st July 9.30am
Mass—Morisset
- Tuesday 23rd July 9.30am
Liturgy—Morisset
- Friday 26th July 10.30am
Mass—Morisset
- Saturday 27th July 5pm
Mass—Cooranbong
- Sunday 28th July 9.30am
Mass—Morisset
- Tuesday 30th July 9.30am
Liturgy—Morisset
- Friday 2nd August 10.30am
Mass—Morisset
- Saturday 3rd August 5pm
Family Mass—Morisset
- Sunday 4th August 9.30am
Mass—Morisset
- Tuesday 6th August 9.30am
Liturgy—Morisset
- Friday 9th August 10.30am
Mass—Morisset
- Saturday 10th August 5pm
Mass—Cooranbong
- Sunday 11th August 9.30am
Mass—Morisset

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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME Year B — Reflection 21st July 2024

“Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of my pastures to be destroyed and scattered – it is the Lord who speaks.” Strong words indeed from the prophet Jeremiah and they probably resonate with many of us today. It seems every day we have media reports of corruption and exploitation by our business leaders or workers’ unions; we see our politicians putting much more effort into scoring points off their opponents and playing the blame game, rather than looking after the urgent needs of our people. We have seen the terrible sins of abuse by a few, tarnishing the reputation of our whole Church and, even worse, we have seen the hierarchy seeking to protect the reputation of the institution rather than caring for the victims. No wonder so many are feeling disaffected and disillusioned!

However, there is hope and that hope lies in Christ!

Jeremiah’s prophecy points to the coming of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, an upright and just shepherd, while Paul’s letter refers to him as the “peace between us,” the one who removes barriers between different people, Jews and Gentiles, people of different races and creeds. Furthermore, Christ’s actions reported in Mark’s Gospel, really demonstrate His love. The crowd was searching for the what they believed Christ could give them and “he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd and he set himself to teach them at some length”. He put their needs ahead of his own and those of his disciples. Today there are still many people in need, searching for answers. Christ relies on us to continue his mission – we can give hope when people are in need.

We can find hope, too, in the servant leadership advocated by Pope Francis, who sees that the role of the Church and its people is to do as Christ did: it is to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, to heal divisions between people, to care for our planet.

The image of the Good Shepherd, who cares for his flock, occurs frequently in the Gospels and would be very familiar to the people of his time, but the message to us remains clear: we have a duty of care and a responsibility to anyone we are mentoring or even encountering. Whether priest or lay leader, teacher or parent, friend or neighbour, the responsibility is there – to do our best for them.

Christ’s compassion and care is shown in his concern for the need of his disciples for rest and refreshment. We often feel drained by the demands of our lives but, in his concern for his disciples, Christ shows us that we all need to take time out, sometimes, to retreat from our busy lives to engage in quiet prayer and reflection; only then will we be better able to meet the needs of others; only then will we hear what God has to say to us. Fortunately, we have an opportunity every time we attend Mass, to reflect on God’s word, to share intimately the body and blood of Christ

Pam Melvey

Coffee & Chat

Coffee and Chat Sunday After Mass this Sunday-21st July, A ‘cuppa, chat and biscuits’ will be held in the Callinan Centre – All welcome

Sacramental Team News

The next session for those involved in the Sacramental Process will be Saturday 20th July in the Callinan Centre at 4pm. It is important that children are ready to commence their sessions at 4pm, and then remain for 5pm Mass. Bishop Michael Kennedy will confer the Sacrament of Confirmation Friday 20th September.

Pastoral Guidelines-Confirmation

The review of our current Pastoral Guidance for the Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation was intended to take place in 2020. It was delayed first by COVID and then by the death of our late Bishop, Bill Wright. It is nearly 12 months since Bishop Michael Kennedy was installed and he has now experienced a ‘Confirmation season’ here in Maitland-Newcastle. We are, therefore, ready to undertake our long-awaited review. In fact, the timing of this review is ideal, as there has been significant change in our life and mission since 2017.

Any review is an opportunity to do more than consider the practicalities of our procedures and processes. A review invites us to reflect deeply, firstly on the understanding and appreciation of the Ministry of Christian Initiation that we bring to the Sacrament of Confirmation. We find the Church’s best understanding in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA). It is the Church’s intention that this understanding inform and shape the Sacraments of Initiation for children. The following reflection summarises the vision of Christian Initiation articulated in the RCIA.

Parish Pastoral Council News

The PPC met_during the week, and further discussion was held around the outcomes from the Assembly, and what it means for the parish moving forward in 2024.

From discussion it became evident, that before we move forward, and a questionnaire presented to the parish, more clarity and explanation is required around governance. This will be undertaken in the coming weeks.

Hunter Community Alliance

___On Wednesday our Parish Leaders met with Leaders from the Morisset Uniting Church, Morisset Anglican Church, and the HCA. This meeting was to plan a listening session with Local council candidates and the Federal Member Daniel Repacholi, to be hosted **by Morisset Uniting Church, 10 Stockton St, Morisset Monday 26th August, 3:30pm-5:30pm**

Our parish is taking a leadership role locally, and you are invited to meet our neighbours, share, and listen, and how we can act.

At the session, we meet each other over refreshments, **listen** and **share** our stories about key pressures impacting our families across generations.

Growing cost of housing, and homelessness

The changing energy market and climate.

A safe, prosperous Hunter with a sustainable future with good jobs for future generations.

Other issues impacting our families here in Morisset

Note this is not a candidates’ forum (the polies are listening to us!)Gatherings are carried out in a respectful manner to a tight time frame.

‘Booing and heckling’ are not permitted.

(All ages encouraged – children under 18 will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult).

Bishop Michael Kennedy – 25th Jubilee of Ordination to Priesthood

Bishop Michael Kennedy invites the People of the Diocese to join him in celebrating his 25th Jubilee of Ordination to the Priesthood at a concelebrated Mass commencing at 11am in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton on 14 August 2024.. All are welcome.

Why Acknowledging Country is Important

You may have attended an event or meeting and heard a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country. These practices aren't new – they've been part of Indigenous cultures in Australia for many thousands of years and are of great significance to many Indigenous people. Both a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country recognise the continuing connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to their land.

Welcome to Country - is a ceremony performed by [Indigenous Traditional Custodians](#) to welcome visitors to their traditional land. It can only be done by Traditional Custodians of the land that you are on and usually given by an Elder. An Elder is not necessarily an older person, rather someone in the community who holds wisdom and knowledge and is responsible for sharing that wisdom and knowledge.

Acknowledgement of Country - is a statement that shows awareness of and respect for the Traditional Custodians of the land you are on and their long and continuing relationship with the land. Unlike a Welcome to Country, it can be delivered by anyone – Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

"Welcome to Country and Acknowledgment of Country are very important ways of giving Aboriginal people back their place in society...It's paying respect, in a formal sense, and following traditional custom in a symbolic way. It also helps non-Aboriginal people learn more about the way that Aboriginal people feel about the land, and their relationship to the land, which is a very spiritual and sacred connection." Wurundjeri Elder, Joy Murphy Wandin

St Vincent's Health Australia as part of its commitment to reconciliation encourages that at the beginning of all meetings and events, the starting with either a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country.

Fr Darryl Mackie

Appointment

Bishop Michael Kennedy has appointed Fr Darryl Mackie as Episcopal Vicar with responsibility for matters relating to sick and retired clergy. As episcopal vicar, he has the same ordinary power as the universal law gives to a Vicar General but limited to the specific group of people as determined by Bishop Michael, that is, to the sick and retired clergy of the Diocese

aMeN Camino-2024

Once again Diocesan pilgrims will be visiting the Church of St Patrick & St Bridget Cooranbong, as a part of the aMeN Camino 2024. Their visit will include celebrated prayer and liturgy, afternoon tea, and stories about the history of the church. The expected arrival is around 3pm on Monday 5th August

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?

The bishops of the Catholic world constitute a 'college'. In his priestly role the bishop has the responsibility for the proper celebration of the liturgy and administration of the sacraments in the diocese. As shepherd, the bishop is the chief pastor and the spiritual father of the church in the diocese where he has been appointed to serve. One of the symbols of his office is the shepherd's staff. To his brother priests his duty is to be a friend and support, advisor and counsellor. The primary role of the priest is to proclaim the Gospel. He is to reflect on the word, and to help people discover its relevance for them in today's world.

With A Light Heart

An atheist was seated next to a little girl on an airplane, and he turned to her and asked, "Do you want to talk? Flights go quicker if you strike up a conversation with a fellow passenger."

The little girl, who was drawing some pictures, replied to the total stranger, "What would you like to talk about?" "Oh, I don't know," said the atheist ... "how about why there is no God, or no heaven or hell, or no life after death?" as he smiled smugly.

"Okay... those could be interesting topics. But, first, let me ask you a question. A horse, a cow, and a deer, all eat the same stuff ... grass. But a deer excretes little pellets, while a cow turns out a flat patty, and a horse produces clumps. Why do you suppose that is?"

The atheist, visibly surprised by the little girl's intelligence, thinks about it a moment and says, "Hmmm, I have no idea." To which the little girl replied, "Do you really feel qualified to talk about God, Heaven or Hell, or life after death, when you obviously don't know Crap?"

Did you ever wonder where these sayings came from? Passing the buck or the buck stops here

Most men in the early West carried a jackknife made by the Buck Knife Company. When playing poker, it was common to place one of these Buck knives in front of the dealer so that everyone knew who he was. When it was time for a new dealer, the deck of cards and the knife were given to the new dealer. If this person didn't want to deal, he would "pass the buck" to the next player. If that player accepted, then "the buck stopped there." **Riffraff**

The Mississippi River was the main way of traveling from north to south. Riverboats carried passengers and freight, but they were expensive, so most people used rafts. Everything had the right of way over rafts, which were considered cheap. The steering oar on the rafts was called a "riff," and this transposed into "riffraff," meaning low-class

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 13th August 2024**. Bookings can be made online at the link at: <https://forms.office.com/r/wZtatkt01V> or by contacting our Parish Office.

Parish Safeguarding Networking Day

On Thursday the Parish Leadership Team, together with Rosanna the Parish Secretary, attended the PSN Day held at the Easts Leisure and Golf Club East Maitland.

This Diocesan Safeguarding gathering, was held to refresh those gathered of their understanding of what constitutes a 'vulnerable adult, and their reporting obligations when dealing with alleged abuse.

Another matter dealt with at some length was financial abuse. At times religious leaders, including Catholic priests, have been accused of financial abuse when people bequeath or make a gift of some, or all their estate. It is an adult's right to dispose of their wealth, as they chose. But it is important that the parish leader, seeks advice from the Diocesan Legal Team to proceed so that there is evidence that the parishioner was competent and free to make an informed choice about the disposal of their wealth.

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, Electronic Funds Transfer Only Bank Account Name: Morisset Parish Presbytery BSB: 066739 No: 100004062 Ref: 1st Collection, SURNAME or Donation or contact the parish office to set up a direct debit.

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 our Parish Electronic Funds Transfer Only Account the details are: Account Name: Morisset Parish Church BSB:066739 Account Number: 100004064 please use one of the following Payment References PG + your giver number or PG + SURNAME or SURNAME you can also 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.

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	M Lawrence J Vipan	P Robertson M Melvey
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	F Pascoe M Melvey	K Lendon J Vipan
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey D Whitten S Matthew	L Hutchinson G Hutchinson A Walker G Walker
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	R Lawandos C Lawandos	M Melvey V Paulo
<u>AV</u>	5PM 9.30AM	E Lawandos M Foo	M Foo D Peterson
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey J Hutchins	P Melvey K Amon
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	XXXX R Hay C Hay	P MacIntyre A Walker G Walker

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.

*Our Parish supports The Diocese 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 interact with. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.***

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding by Phone: 02 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 SOLEMINITIES

- SAINT MARY MAGDALENE (F) - 22ND JULY
- SAINT JAMES (F) - 25TH JULY
- SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE (M) - 26TH JULY
- SAINTS MARTHA, MARY AND LAZARUS (M) - 29TH JULY
- SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA (M) - 31ST JULY
- SAINT ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI (M) - 1ST AUGUST
- SAINT DOMINIC (M) - 3RD AUGUST
- SAINT JOHN VIANNEY (M) - 4TH AUGUST
- THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD (F) - 6TH AUGUST
- ST JOHN VIANNEY— 6TH AUGUST
- SAINT MARY OF THE CROSS (S) (MARY MACKILLOP) - 8TH AUG

Please pray for all those who are sick: in hospital or at home, especially those living with a life threatening disease:

Anna Dussin, Mary Carapiet, Monica Gray, Koby Smith, Annette Boyd, Mary Monaghan, Clare Wallington, Donna Hazzard, Pam Mullaly, Tintumol Thomas, Peter Martyn, Bernadette Martin, Bruce Gillett.

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

Recently Deceased: Greta de Meyer.



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.

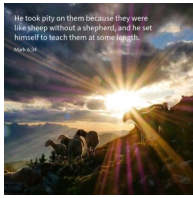
An Act of Spiritual Communion

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 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B Sunday 21 Jul 2024

The Introductory Rites

Acknowledgement of Country

We Acknowledge the Awabakal and Darkinjung nations as the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land our parish encompasses for thousands of years, and honour and pay respect to, Elders past, present and emerging. 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.

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 who has raised us to new life.

A brief period of silence follows.

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you came to bring the good news of peace: Lord, have
mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd who cares for his flock:
Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you have united us with your Spirit: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

Almighty God

in your heavenly kingdom
you tend the soil and help the good seed to grow.
May your Word bear fruit in us
so that we will become
messengers of your good news.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

Lord Jesus,

lead us along the true path,
so that we, through our faith,
may come to know the Father.
We make this prayer through
our Risen Lord Jesus.

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Jeremiah 23:1-6

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

The remnant of the flock I will gather to me, and bring them back to their pastures.

'Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock of my pasture to be destroyed and scattered – it is the Lord who speaks! This, therefore, is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds in charge of my people: You have let my flock be scattered and go wandering and have not taken care of them. Right, I will take care of you for your misdeeds – it is the Lord who speaks! But the remnant of my flock I myself will gather from all the countries where I have dispersed them, and will bring them back to their pastures: they shall be fruitful and increase in numbers. I will raise up shepherds to look after them and pasture them; no fear, no terror for them any more; not one shall be lost – it is the Lord who speaks!

'See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will raise a virtuous Branch for David, who will reign as true king and be wise, practising honesty and integrity in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel dwell in confidence. And this is the name he will be called: The Lord-our-integrity.'

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

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22. R. v.2

(R.) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)
2. He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff,
with these you give me comfort. (R.)

3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing. **(R.)**
4. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever. **(R.)**

Second Reading

Ephesians 2:13-18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

Christ, our peace, has made us one.

In Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far from us have been brought very close, by the blood of Christ. For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the Law. This was to create one single New Man in himself out of the two of them and by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single Body and reconcile them with God. In his own person he killed the hostility. Later he came to bring the good news of peace, peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near at hand. Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father.

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 **Mark**

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Mark 6:30-34

They were as sheep without a shepherd.

The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, 'You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while'; for there were so many coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat. So they went off in a boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But people saw them going, and many could guess where; and from every town they all hurried to the place on foot and reached it before them. So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at some length.

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.

Q. What experiences have you had of engaging in reflection / prayer / meditation?

Q. Where do you find it convenient / appropriate / helpful to take reflective time?

Q. What impact can be made by taking time out of a busy life to reflect and pray?

Q. How can you better create time for quiet and reflection?

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

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

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That Christians all over the world will be united
in Christ's one true pasture.

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who have wandered from the flock
will find inspiration in the teachings of Christ.

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those working in preparation for the
Second Session of the Synod on Synodality in
Rome will listen to the voices of God's people
and be guided by the Holy Spirit.

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That charitable agencies will receive our
prayerful and practical support as they care for
the homeless and those who are struggling,
particularly in the depths of winter.

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That our parish community may find time to
rest in the silent peace of Christ.

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all the sick will be comforted through
God's merciful love, especially.

In your goodness:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all those who have died will dwell forever
in the house of God, especially.

In your goodness:

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 with confidence
that we are always in the care of our true Shepherd. We
ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

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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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Pastoral Guidelines-Confirmation

The review of our current Pastoral Guidance for the
Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation
was intended to take place in 2020. It was delayed first by COVID
and then by the death of our late Bishop, Bill Wright. It is nearly
12 months since Bishop Michael Kennedy was installed and he
has now experienced a 'Confirmation season' here in Maitland-
Newcastle. We are, therefore, ready to undertake our long-
awaited review. In fact, the timing of this review is ideal, as there
has been significant change in our life and mission since 2017.

Any review is an opportunity to do more than consider the
practicalities of our procedures and processes. A review invites

us to reflect deeply, firstly on the understanding and
appreciation of the Ministry of Christian Initiation that we bring
to the Sacrament of Confirmation. We find the Church's best
understanding in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA).
It is the Church's intention that this understanding inform and
shape the Sacraments of Initiation for children. The following
reflection summarises the vision of Christian Initiation
articulated in the RCIA.



What soil do you bring to the liturgy?

Jesus referred to faith as a
seed. A mustard seed. All plants
begin as seeds. However, to
germinate and grow and develop
and be productive, the seed needs to be placed in good soil. In
the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 13:3-9, Mark 4:2-9 and Luke 8:4-
8) we read Jesus' Parable of the Sower. I am utilising poetic
licence with using this parable where the seed is representing
faith and not directly the Kingdom of God, but bear with me. It
will all make sense.

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So, what does this all have to do with the liturgy?

As we read in Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC) it is the desire
that when we, the faithful, the People of God, the assembly,
attend a liturgical celebration, our participation is full, conscious
and active, and "this full and active participation by all the
people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the
primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to
derive the true Christian spirit" (SC n.14). We turn up because of
God's desire for us. Our faith only needs to start the size of a
seed. However, we need to consider what the soil is like in which
we are growing the seed?

Reflecting on the Parable of the Sower, the four 'soils' we are
told about are hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground and
rich soil.

Many events in life may impact how we turn up to liturgy
and what state our soil might be in, God knows that. For
example, if faith is planted in hard ground the seed is likely to be
eaten up by birds and no longer exist. Sin can create this hard
ground. The word of God's kingdom can then make no sense,
the heart is not open to understanding and no impression is left
by the Word. If faith is planted in rocky ground, there is some
soil to begin the germination, some active participation with the
Word, but without the depth of soil and roots to assist in its
growth it too will wither and die when times get tough. Thorny
ground allows the seed to grow up until a point, but the seed is
always competing with weeds for what soil there is. Ultimately,
thorns eventually choke other plants. There are many pushes
and pulls competing for this planted seed. The Word is replaced
with other things of the world, the heart is torn, and faith
struggles to get a hold.

Fortunately, there is rich soil. Rich soil provides all that the
seed needs to grow and develop, and it produces much fruit.
This fruit is a result of full, conscious and active participation in
the liturgy. Hearing, understanding and receiving the Word. God
desires us. Liturgy gives us a way to show that we desire God. It
is a grace that helps us draw near to God and be planted in the
depths of the Kingdom.

Pictured below:

My photo taken of the mustard seeds that Jesus is referring
to in the Gospel. Much smaller than we are used to which makes
the parable even more powerful.

Tutoring program boosts confidence at CatholicCare Refugee Hub

Every Tuesday afternoon during school terms, CatholicCare Hunter-Manning's Refugee Hub is full of smiles as students attend the team's Tutoring Program.

The service gives students from refugee backgrounds an opportunity to receive extra support from volunteer tutors.

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Lately, the team has seen great results from the program with students excelling both academically and socially.

"Two of our high school students proudly showed us several academic merit awards at the end of last term, as well as their badges for special leadership roles at the school," Team Leader Mirja Colding-Moran said.

"Their proud smiles are just wonderful to see!

"We also have a few primary and secondary students who were very shy, quiet, and unsettled when they first joined the program, but they have now really come out of their shell and are laughing, joking, and being cheeky.

"It is lovely to see them so comfortable and at home when attending our Refugee Hub."

The program involves volunteer tutors providing one-on-one or small-group tutoring to help with homework, assignments, general study, and improving their English skills.

The Refugee Hub is currently looking for more volunteers to help run the service.

The roles would be perfect for current or former teachers and university education students; however, anyone who would like to support our clients academically and socially can volunteer.

Mirja encourages people who are interested to reach out. She says it is very rewarding to watch the students grow.

"To witness how much the support from our wonderful volunteers mean to them is just incredible," she said.

"It's so nice to know we are making a real difference in their lives."

Another area where the Hub is looking for support is their Driving Program. Volunteers help the clients to learn to drive, get professional lessons and undertake the required tests to receive their driver's licence. As a volunteer/mentor, you support, guide and encourage the client through the process.

If you are interested in volunteering with Refugee Hub, please complete this short EOI form: Volunteer Enquiry Form - CatholicCare Social Services Hunter-Manning and include notes about which program you are interested in. A member of the Refugee Hub team will then get in touch with you

Artificial intelligence and the war on creativity

In June 2023, Aurora ran an article on the AI Revolution. Since then, AI has continued to evolve rapidly across various domains, including but not limited to its use in healthcare, autonomous systems, business, regulation and policy, research and collaboration and even being utilised as a tool to address climate change.

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The latest annual McKinsey Global Survey confirmed that 2023 was the breakout year of generative AI tools.

Less than a year after many of these tools debuted, one-third of survey respondents say their organisations regularly use generative AI in at least one business function.

This rapid integration signals a transformative shift in how industries perceive and utilise artificial intelligence, ushering in an era where AI's influence on creativity and our daily lives is profound and increasingly indistinguishable from human effort.

This reality hit home recently when images appeared online of Pope Francis atypically wrapped up in a stylish white puffer

jacket and silver bejewelled crucifix. The image, first published on Reddit, was generated using the AI software Midjourney.

Pope Francis, acknowledging that he was a victim of a deepfake photo, weighed in, stating the technology "becomes perverse when it distorts our relationship with others and with reality."

AI has continued to be a point of interest to Pope Francis.

In his message for the 58th World Day of Social Communications, the Pope spoke of the power of AI to give rise to new forms of exploitation and inequality, or on the flip side, the potential to lead to greater equality by promoting correct information and greater awareness of individuals and peoples.

He says it is up to us to decide whether we will become fodder for algorithms or whether we will nourish our hearts with the freedom of being able to source wisdom beyond our means.

Manipulation using AI can go far beyond false images, too. The challenge of AI-generated audio extends to the music industry, where an AI-generated version of Taylor Swift's latest single "Fortnight" became a fan favourite before the artist's actual release.

When the real song debuted, some fans even preferred the artificial creation. "After I listened to the real version, I sat there and thought, 'oh... the AI version is so much better than this,'" one fan lamented.

AI technology has also seen rapid advancement in video generation.

OpenAI, the trailblazers behind the well-known generative language tool ChatGPT, recently unveiled their latest product: "Sora."

This innovative program transforms simple text prompts into elaborate video sequences, heralding a significant advancement in content creation.

OpenAI is candid about the dual-edge nature of this innovation. "We cannot predict all of the beneficial ways people will use our technology, nor all the ways people will abuse it."

While it remains uncertain when, or even if, Sora will be made available to the public, OpenAI assures that if released, the program will include a robust filtering system designed to reject any text prompts that call for content against its ethical guidelines, including extreme violence, sexual content, hateful imagery, exploitation of celebrity likenesses, or violations of intellectual property rights.

These instances all underscore a growing trend: AI is not just a collaborator but sometimes a competitor—in creative processes. The ease and efficiency of AI can enhance our capabilities but also risk diminishing the value we place on the uniquely human touch.

AI's power to create believable narratives can mislead the public and distort our understanding of truth, bringing into question the future of many creative professions.

Microsoft's Chief Scientific Officer Eric Horvitz recently predicted that if technology isn't developed to enable people to easily detect computer-generated content within a decade or so, "most of what people will be seeing, or quite a lot of it, will be synthetic. We won't be able to tell the difference."

His warning resonates at a time when AI's ability to replicate and innovate can both enrich and complicate our interactions. The challenge now is to harness this powerful technology responsibly, ensuring it augments rather than undermines human efforts.

As we navigate this new landscape, we must decide how to integrate these tools in ways that uphold our values and enhance human experiences. The question isn't merely what AI can do, but what we should do with AI.