



**St John
Vianney**
Parish Morisset



PALM SUNDAY YEAR B 24 MARCH 2024

Today on Palm Sunday, we commence the great week of the liturgical year called Holy Week, and each year on this Sunday, the Church reads an account of the Passion of Jesus.

As we listen to it, we are reminded of the cowardice of the followers, and also the apostles, who abandoned him in his hour of greatest need.

It is easy to witness to Jesus here in church, were we are among our own. But it is not easy to witness to him out in an indifferent and sometimes hostile world.

May the Lord take pity on us, his timid and fearful disciples, and give us courage so that our lives may bear witness to the faith we profess.



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 PRIEST: Fr John Purnell

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

PARISH SECRETARY: Rosanna Suckling

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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
(Please submit all Bulletin Notice requests to the parish office by 2pm Wednesdays)
Email the Parish Office to Subscribe for an Electronic Bulletin .

UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :

Saturday	23rd March 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	24th March 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Thursday	28th March 7pm Holy Thursday—Morisset
Friday	29th March 3pm Good Friday—Morisset
Saturday	30th March 6pm Easter Vigil— Morisset
Sunday	31st March 9.30am East Sunday—Morisset
Tuesday	2nd April 9.30am Liturgy—Morisset
Saturday	6th April 5pm Family Mass—Morisset
Sunday	7th April 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Tuesday	9th April 9.30am Liturgy—Morisset
Saturday	13th April 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	14th April 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Saturday	20th April 5pm Family Mass—Morisset
Sunday	21st April 9.30am Mass—Morisset

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Reflection for Palm Sunday Year B — 24th March 2024

At the end of World War 2, an international military tribunal was set up at Nuremberg to try the leading members of the Nazi regime, who were charged with crimes against humanity. These were the men who made the whole of Europe shiver with fright.

Yet they weren't devils incarnate. They were just human beings making evil choices. One observer, on being asked what the accused looked like, replied, 'They looked like ordinary men who had sat up all night in a second-class railway carriage.'

The people who put Christ to death, were not a uniquely evil bunch of people either, acting from the vilest possible motives. They were ordinary people who belonged to the same human family as we do.

Evil has the potential to sleep in all of us. Unfortunately, often we are good at blaming others for our faults. We must accept responsibility for our own wrongdoing.

On Passion/ Palm Sunday, Jesus chose nonviolence, humility, and simplicity to challenge the illusion of power.

As Christians we have a positive role to play in the world. We have something to offer, something the world desperately needs, even though it may not always welcome it. A religion of commitment is a religion of challenge, of risk, of unselfishness.

Christianity is never something to keep to oneself. It always involves an outreach to others. Without that dimension it would not be Christianity.

Holy Week, the most solemn week in the Church's year, celebrated all over the world, provides us with an opportunity, to enter more deeply into the life of Christ, which is our vocation, from birth and baptism.

If we do not imitate Jesus, our world will not know Easter.
John France.

Ecumenical Way of the Cross

About 200 people gathered last Sunday at St Josephs Toronto for the annual Diocesan Ecumenical Way of the Cross. This site in the bush, has been place where each year since 2007 the Diocesan Stations of the Cross has taken place.

This year 14 different cultural groups from around the Diocese, led those gathered through the 14 stations, in their language and songs.

Afterwards people gathered with Bishop Michael Kennedy for a 'cuppa and chat.'

Parish Assembly

Recently Fr Greg Barker VG met with the Parish Leadership, and the PPC. Much discussion was held around the Synodal Model of Church and Parish, and the path and direction that our Parish might pursue moving forward.

To this end, it was proposed that a Parish Pastoral Assembly, to which all parishioners are invited, 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.

More on this event in the coming weeks.

The Chrism Mass

This coming Tuesday evening at 7pm, the Chrism Mass, one of the most significant events on the Liturgical Calendar will be held at the Sacred Heart Cathedral Hamilton. At this mass, the bishop gathers with the priests and all the faithful.

The bishop, priests and the faithful participate together to bless the oils that are going to be used in the ministry of various sacraments throughout the year from Easter to Easter.

There are three oils blessed at the Chrism Mass - the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of the Sick, and the Oil of Chrism.

Parishes send representatives who collect the oils and present them to the bishop for blessing and consecration. These oils are then taken back to their parishes where they are received at mass on Holy Thursday night.

Because of this important Mass, there will be No Liturgy Tuesday at 9.30as-in our Parish

Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD)

As you are aware the "Voluntary Assisted Dying Act" came into effect on 28th November 2023.

During the week Bishop Michael Kennedy, together with clergy, parish leaders and people involved in pastoral ministry, gathered to listen to Fr Kevin McGovern. Fr Kevin is an ethicist and a member of the Department of Moral Theology and Canon Law.

Fr Kevin offered advice to those who are called to the spiritual and pastoral needs of patients who access or seek to access services that are designed to terminate a person's life.

When Christians accompany a patient who is considering euthanasia, they recognise that euthanasia would be an erroneous choice, but also see the patient's emotional and spiritual needs Christian pastoral ministers respond to and live out their belief in the intrinsic value of all human persons.

Even in circumstances when the sacraments cannot be celebrated and although a pastoral minister must not be present at the moment of administering a lethal substance, the compassionate Christian always seeks to accompany people who are sick and suffering.

Christian accompaniment is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ, who reached out to the sick, the outcast and the sinner. He never condoned evil. He did not condemn the wayward, but he always called them to conversion.

With A Light Heart.

A priest was selling olives at the local market to raise funds for his parish, but business was slow. As a woman passed by, he tried to sell her some olives. She shook her head and told him she didn't have any money on her.

"No problem, the priest replied. "You can pay me later."

The woman was still hesitant, so he offered her an olive to taste.

"Oh no, I can't, I'm fasting today for Lent," she responded.

"Fasting? But Lent was six months ago!

"Well, yes, but I missed a day and I'm making up for it now. But I'll happily take a kilo of the black olives."

"Forget it!" said the priest. "If it took you 6 months to pay back a debt you owed God, who knows when you'll pay me back!"



Project Compassion



As Project Compassion 2024 comes to an end, we want to thank you for your incredibly generous support throughout Lent.

This year, we shared with you the story of three inspiring women from across the globe, who overcame challenges to complete their education, access water and find secure employment. With the support of compassionate people like you, they are now forging a path to a better future for their families and their communities.

There is still time to donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from the back of the church, or by visiting our parish Project Compassion fundraising page at: <https://parishes.projectcompassion.org.au/o/morisset-catholic-parish-2264> or by calling 1800 024 413.

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? Good Friday.

The origin of the term 'Good' in the title of this day is unknown, but probably emphasizes the saving value of this historical event of the crucifixion of Jesus. Another theory is a corruption of 'Gods Friday'. The theme of this day throughout history, has been one of quiet sadness and mourning, for the crucified Christ. The church's Good Friday liturgy takes place in the afternoon or evening hours.

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 9th April**. Bookings can be made online at the link at: <https://forms.office.com/r/wZtatkt01V> or by contacting our Parish Office.

Sing to the Lord

Sing to the Lord is a cantor training and formation opportunity for all members of the faithful. We are looking for everyone who loves to sing and would like to have a go. To find out more and express Interest use the following link: <https://forms.office.com/r/7CGYdeXGZw>

Music teachers and musical teachers in our school system use this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/kNi51xLrsb>

Fishing Weekend: God for Blokes

If you're looking for an opportunity to think about God, hear from other men, do some fishing, and relax you should attend the God for Blokes Fishing Weekend from 3 to 5 May. You will travel from Newcastle to Forster, food and accommodation are included in the cost. For more information or to book, visit <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1092382> or call Wayne Caruana on 0466 631 394.

Easter Services

Holy Thursday

28th March 7PM

Good Friday

29th March 3PM

Easter Vigil

30th March 6.30PM

Easter Sunday

31st March 9.30AM

all services are in our

Morisset Church

60 Yambo St

Morisset



Hunter Community Alliance Founding Assembly

The Hunter Community Alliance brings together diverse communities, environmental groups, unions, and religious organisations to advance the common good and achieve a fair, just and sustainable future for the region.

The Founding Assembly is the next milestone of the HCA's four-year journey of listening, training, preparing, and organising. We are encouraging representatives from every Parish to come along so the broader community can witness our commitment to the common good, the dignity of the human person, solidarity, the preferential option for the poor, stewardship of creation and subsidiarity.

The Founding Assembly will take place April 10th, 6:30pm-8:30pm at the University of Newcastle Great Hall, Callaghan. Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/hca-founding-assembly>

Women of the Well: Weekend Retreat

Rest, reflect, release and reconnect at the next Women of the Well Weekend Retreat. It starts on Friday 19 April (ending Sunday 21 April) and will be hosted at St Joseph's, Kincumber. Cost is \$125. For more information or to register, visit www.womenofthewell.com.au/events/gatherings-at-the-well

Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital Auxiliary Cancer Carers Fashion Parade

Join the Cancer Carers for their next Fashion Parade on Friday 5 April from 11am. It will be hosted at St Columban's Church Hall on Church Street in Mayfield. Admission is \$15 and includes a light lunch. RSVP by Tuesday 2 April to Evelyn 4950 9440 or Suzanne 4950 8235.

Pope Francis' prayer intention for March 2024

That those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive.

Children, young people's and
vulnerable adult's
safety and wellbeing
are of primary importance.

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.

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	L Hutchinson D Peterson	TBA L Hutchinson
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	H White K Lendon	TBA J Vipan
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	B Cox P Robertson D Whitten S Matthews	H White P Melvey K Lendon M Melvey
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey V Paulo	M Melvey R Lawandos
<u>AV</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J Vipan T Alexander	M Foo E Lawandos
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey A Dussin	H White C Lawandos
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	F Dunn C Lawandos K Lendon	A Dussin 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, or visit their website for further information www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au .

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMNITIES

- PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD - 24TH MAR
- THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER - 28TH MAR
- FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD - 29TH MAR
- PASCHAL VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT - 30TH MAR
- SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION - 31ST MAR
- THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD (S) - 8TH APR
- SAINT STANISLAUS (M) - 11TH APR
- ANZAC DAY—25TH APR
- SAINT MARK (F) - 26TH APR
- SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA (M) - 28TH APR
- SAINT ATHANASIUS (M) - 2ND MAY

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




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.

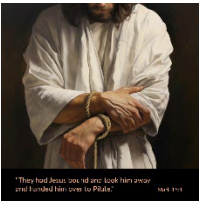
An Act of Spiritual Communion

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
Palm Sunday Year B
Sunday 24 Mar 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 God
who has reconciled us through Christ
and renews us by his grace.

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.

In union with the whole Church,
we call upon the mercy of the Lord
in this season of repentance and renewal.

Opening Rite

PENITENTIAL ACT

Leader:

As we prepare to hear the Word of God,
we confess that we are sinners.
Let us ask the Lord for pardon and strength.

A brief period of silence follows.

**I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,**

And, striking their breast, they say:

**through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;**

Then they continue:

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,

**all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

Leader:

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

All:

All: Amen.

The Kyrie is sung.

Cantor or Leader:

Kyrie, eleison.

All:

Kyrie, eleison.

Cantor or Leader:

Christe, eleison.

All:

Christe, eleison.

Cantor or Leader:

Kyrie, eleison.

All:

Kyrie, eleison.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

Almighty God
Your Son, Jesus, was welcomed as a king
but suffered and carried a cross.
As we begin this Holy Week,
help us draw close to Jesus
and place our lives in his hands.
We make this prayer through Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

I did not cover my face against insult and I know I will not be ashamed.

The Lord has given me
a disciple's tongue.
So that I may know how to reply to the wearied
he provides me with speech.
Each morning he wakes me to hear,
to listen like a disciple.
The Lord has opened my ear.
For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.
I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.
The Lord comes to my help,
so that I am untouched by the insults.
So, too, I set my face like flint;
I know I shall not be shamed.

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

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 21:8-9. 17-20. 23-24. R. v.2

(R.) My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

1. All who see me deride me.
They curl their lips, they toss their heads.
'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him;
let him release him if this is his friend.' (R.)
2. Many dogs have surrounded me,
a band of the wicked beset me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet.
I can count every one of my bones. (R.)
3. They divide my clothing among them.
They cast lots for my robe.
O Lord, do not leave me alone,
my strength, make haste to help me! (R.)
4. I will tell of your name to my brethren
and praise you where they are assembled.
'You who fear the Lord give him praise;
all sons of Jacob, give him glory.
Revere him, Israel's sons.' (R.)

Second Reading

Philippians 2:6-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

He humbled himself to become like us and God raised him on high.

His state was divine,
yet Christ Jesus did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are,
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God 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 15:1-39

First thing in the morning, the chief priests together with the elders and the scribes, in short the whole Sanhedrin, had their plan ready. They had Jesus bound and took him away and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate questioned him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'It is you who say it' he answered. And the chief priests brought many accusations against him. Pilate questioned him again, 'Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations they are bringing against you!' But to Pilate's amazement, Jesus made no further reply.

At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone they asked for. Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rioters who had committed murder during the uprising. When the crowd went up and began to ask Pilate the customary favour, Pilate answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?' For he realised it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. The chief priests, however, had incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead. The Pilate spoke again. 'But in that case,' he said to them 'what am I to do with the man you call king of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' 'Why?' Pilate asked them 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, having ordered Jesus to be scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away to the inner part of the palace, that is, the Praetorium, and called the whole cohort together. They dressed him in purple, twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed and spat on him; and they went down on their knees to do him homage. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the purple and dressed him in his own clothes.

They led him out to crucify him. They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. Then they crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should get. It was the third hour when they crucified him. The inscription giving the charge against him read: 'The King of the Jews.' And they crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said, 'Aha! So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself: come down from the cross!' The chief priests and the scribes mocked him among themselves in the same way. 'He saved others,' they said 'he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, for us to see it and believe.' Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood by heard this they said, 'Listen, he is calling on Elijah'. Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink saying, 'Wait and see if Elijah will come to take him down.' But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

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.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: Brothers and sisters, let us make our prayers before
God, the Father of our Saviour.

Reader: That through compassion and self-giving,
Christians everywhere will follow the suffering,
death and resurrection of Christ during Holy
Week. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who are unjustly condemned may
live in the truth, and trust in the hope that they
are favoured in the Lord's eyes. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That Christians may embrace the sacredness of
Holy Week with a commitment to repent of
their sins and strive for true holiness in Christ.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That, through our support of Project
Compassion, we can help vulnerable
communities face their challenges today and
build a better tomorrow, for all future
generations. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That people struggling with the long term
consequences of fires, floods, earthquakes and
other disasters will receive ongoing support. In
your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That family homes will be a place of love and
safety, and that families will have the support
of their parish communities. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all who deny Christ or live with spiritual
distress may become faithful witnesses of
Jesus' love for all humanity. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That everyone who is sick will be shown mercy
and compassion, especially those who are
members of our family and community. In your
mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all who have died will live forever with
Christ Jesus, especially those who were
members of our family and community. In your
mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God our Father, you gave us your Son as life for the
world. Hear our prayers and help us unite ourselves with
the Passion of your Son and so rise to new life with you.
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 bless us in all things through Christ
so that we may work together in loving service.

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

Leader:

Let us go in peace.

All:

Thanks be to God.

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FAITH MATTERS: A Journey to the Diocesan Library

My hope for our Diocesan library – a space that is safe, welcoming and a place to create community connections, a place of formation and education, that shows the light of Christ's love through the work of his people.

MARY O'CONNOR PUBLISHED MARCH 19, 2024

I have very clear memories of my childhood. Family, faith, fun and education factor highly in those memories. I am the oldest of 4 children from an Irish father and a Sydney born mother. We travelled and lived across NSW until 1979, when we settled in Lake Macquarie. Our "home base" was my grandmother's house in Mortlake, Sydney. Going to Sunday Mass, saying bedtime and morning prayers, wearing a Miraculous Medal and/or a scapular, lighting the oil/kerosene lamp under the picture of the Sacred Heart or the statue of Our Lady and making sure that when you were playing football at Nanna's house you didn't damage the flowers that were being grown especially to decorate the altar were just a regular part of that childhood.

It wasn't until I was in upper primary school that I realised that not all my classmates in our suburban catholic school shared these experiences. They did not know the words to the Our Father, did not know how to use a Sunday Missal and thought that Rosary Beads were jewellery not prayer beads. At this point in my life, I had to make a decision, openly practice my faith, or hide my faith. My mother had taught me that being a non-conformist wasn't necessarily easy, but your conscience rested easier at the end of each day. I continued to openly practice my faith.

I did not blindly follow in my faith journey. I questioned why things were done in a particular way in the Catholic Church. I read The Catholic Weekly & Annals – let's be honest – I read everything I could get my hands on – even The Land newspaper and the Encyclopedia set on the family bookshelf!! I read pamphlets, I read the parish bulletins and the reflections on the weekly readings. I participated in the Mass at Randwick Racecourse celebrated by Pope John Paull II in 1986, alongside 250,000 other people. In this Mass I heard the message that our love for God must not grow cold. I developed my faith through my reading, my experience and through reflection (often sitting in a tree).

My reading habit was well acknowledged by all in my family circle, as were my feminist beliefs and strong social justice leanings. I remember one uncle questioning how I could be a feminist and a good Catholic girl; I couldn't understand how he couldn't see that equality was part of the teachings of Jesus. My argument back was that the political structure of the Catholic church did not truly reflect the teachings of Jesus. We agreed to disagree, however even in later years he wanted to know why I was still working, as I was a married woman and should be at home cooking and cleaning and looking after my husband!!!!

I followed the path of HSC and starting university in Sydney. I lived in a share house with other Catholic students from Cooma, Wollongong, and Narrabri, from Croatian, Polish and Australian backgrounds. One housemate was a young nun, studying for a Masters in Theology. I experienced their ways of expressing their faith, some were similar, some not so much. My understanding of my faith changed in this time. I felt my faith grow into a greater personal relationship with God, but I was also very uncomfortable in the world in which I was living – was it my "Guardian Angel" nudging me, the Holy Spirit trying to re-awaken my sense of social justice or my conscience pricking? Obviously, I didn't listen to the messages that were being sent through as a health crisis around this time created some changes in my life. I left Sydney & returned to Newcastle. In my favourite books the heroine would be able to recuperate in Bath, taking the waters, or in a health retreat in the mountains resting, reading and recovering over a period of many months. Not so for 1990's Australia. A quick trip to Queensland for some sun and a few dinners and chats with a family friend, a doctor, who had worked hard driving taxis to pay for his education, had kept his faith and was a man whose spirituality was decidedly practical was the recuperation I required. And of course, reading many books!

After rethinking my career and education plans and considering and discarding social working, psychology, counselling/therapy, teaching and the Convent I kept myself fed and clothed waitressing and working in sports centres. I volunteered at Newcastle Pregnancy Help Service one day a week and I waited for the next nudge from the Holy Spirit. It came in the form of a very small job ad – Casual Library Assistants wanted.....

I began working in libraries in 1992, starting with Lake Macquarie City Library and moving to Singleton Shire Library and then Newcastle City Library. I had found my calling. I worked full-time and studied either part-time or full-time, whilst continuing to explore what my faith meant to me. I went to Mass at various parishes, depending on mass times, whether I was back visiting my childhood home, staying with family or friends in Sydney or if I had work or study commitments on a Saturday or Sunday. I felt included in some parishes and excluded in others. My faith journey was lonely in this time and often dispiriting as I saw the many gaps between what was preached from the pulpit and what was lived in the world.

My constant mulling over how I could live a "good life", a Christian life was answered with the motto of SFX College "Christus Lux Mea" - Christ

My Light – the blazer I had worn, and at the time that it was revealed to me, was being worn by the youngest of my siblings, one who would turn up at my house after school or sport, with a crumpled blazer and a need to be fed! I realised one way that I could practice my faith was by shining my light – not keeping it under a bushel – to paraphrase the Gospel of Matthew 5: 13-16. I went about my library work and my personal life trying to shine my light, it wasn't always easy, but I saw that on the days I was shining bright – I brought light to others, they would connect with me, smile with me and work with me to do good in the world, either through promoting children's literacy, teaching technology skills to aid employment opportunities or creating library spaces that were safe havens for the more marginalised in society.

I spent the years from 2007 to 2022 working outside the library field and raising my two children. These years were spent running our family-owned and operated small business, The Fresh Ingredient. This was a food store located in Georgetown and my husband and I brought to life our vision of a community space that allowed people to shop for local and fresh food in a safe, welcoming and relaxing manner. We encouraged people to stop, rest, talk and form community ties. Our children sat at a communal table to eat afternoon tea and complete homework, older people came and sat with a cup of coffee and the newspaper, had a chat with one another and formed friendships. Young mothers brought restless babies in for me to cuddle and soothe as they had moments of respite. Community support workers brought their companions in to sit at the table, complete a jigsaw puzzle, learning to knit, colour-in and have some lunch. We ensured that nothing went to waste, we had care for the earth – unsold food went to various food rescue charities, food scraps and off-cuts went to various worm farms and neighbourhood chickens, guinea pigs and rabbits. The use of recyclable boxes was actively encouraged rather than plastic bags. I felt my faith grow at this time; it became a faith of outreach. I was very open about my Catholicism, if I had been to Mass that day and what the Gospel reading and homily had revealed to me, that our children attended a Catholic school, and we were active in our faith journey. We had working relationships with many Catholic and Christian organisations; I was invited to speak at spiritual meetings and social justice groups. We were honoured to be invited to the commissioning of Rev Bryce Amner as Priest-in-charge of the Anglican parish of St. Matthew's Georgetown.

During this time, we employed and trained many young people (& a few older people too), providing them with life skills, a safe first step into the world of employment and assistance with school and university assignments when required! Instead of continually declaiming the "youth of today" we were celebrating them and helping to form them for their life as adults.

When asked by people why we had chosen this path of a very hard hand to mouth small business, my husband Peter and I would explain that we needed to not just talk about making change in the world, we had to be the change!!

So how did I end up in the Diocesan Librarian position? By 2020 I was ready to move back into library work, my children had reached high school age and did not need me or their dad on hand every afternoon. Our business had become financially unsustainable and rather than becoming a franchise and losing the soul of the business, we closed, a very hard decision. I took up two part-time jobs, both of which were jobs, rather than vocations or careers. I brought my light to these jobs, I made a difference in people's lives and provided support and inspiration to my colleagues, but I wasn't feeling fulfilled. I also knew that I wanted to find the "right" library environment to return to my vocation. Then it appeared – Position Vacant – Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Librarian – I nearly didn't apply, I thought I wasn't "good enough". My husband was adamant it was the right job for me. Who else did I know in library-land who had the right mix of religious understanding, management skills and a breadth of library experience. The application went in, at the absolute last minute, sent with a prayer. I was invited for an interview where I was very careful about not just speaking about shining my light, but also showing how I shine. Here I am.

My hope for our Diocesan library – a space that is safe, welcoming and a place to create community connections, a place of formation and education, that shows the light of Christ's love through the work of his people. I hope to meet you in this space at some point in the future.

The Library is open Monday and Friday's 10am to 6pm and Saturday 10am-2pm.

To access the digital library or sign up to become a member go to: library.mn.catholic.org.au.

Contact details: domnlibrary@mn.catholic.org.au or call on 0409 033 449.