



Weekly Bulletin

Mary, Queen of the Family Parish

St. Michael's Church - 58 Orwell Street, South Blacktown. & St. Patrick's Church - 51-59 Allawah Street, Blacktown.

We acknowledge the Darug people, the traditional custodians on whose land we worship

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ YEAR B

10TH DECEMBER 2023

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Mary Queen of the Family (MQOF) parish strives to live as a faithful and committed Catholic community, continuing to deepen in understanding the Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture of the Catholic Church and to grow as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, evangelising and responding to the needs of the family in the Blacktown community and beyond.

LITURGY TIMES

Weekday Masses

St Michael's: 8am Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri
7.30pm Wed only

St Patrick's: 9am Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat and
7.30pm Fri only.

Sunday Masses

5.30pm Sat Vigil (St Patrick's)
7.00am Sun (St Patrick's)
8.00am Sun (St Michael's)
9.30am Sun (St Michael's)
10.00am Sun (St Patrick's)
11.00am 4th Sun - Filipino Mass (St Michael's)
2:00pm - Sudanese Mass (St Patrick's)
1.00pm - Syro-Malabar Mass (St Michael's)
5.30pm Sun (St Patrick's)
6.00pm Sun (St Michael's)

RECONCILIATION

St Michael's: Wed 6:30pm-7:20pm

St Patrick's: Fri 6:30pm-7:20pm &
Sat 9:30am-10:30am

HOLY HOUR

St Michael's: Wed 6:30pm-7:30pm

St Patrick's: Fri 6:30pm-7:30pm

Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals & Anointing of the Sick
by appointment.

SUNDAY CONNECTION

Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' birth. Instead Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the salvation that he would bring to us.

Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John.

Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him.

In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his baptism of repentance with the baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was not yet a Christian baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

John the Baptist is presented to us as a model during Advent. We, too, are called upon to prepare a way for the Lord. Like John the Baptist, we are messengers in service to one who is greater than we are. Our Baptism commissions us to call others to life as disciples of Jesus.

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Parish Directory

St. Michael's Church - 58 Orwell Street, South Blacktown &
St. Patrick's Church - 51-59 Allawah Street Blacktown.

Parish Office: At St. Patrick's Church. **Office Hours:** Mon-Fri: 9am-4pm
Telephone: 02 9622 1125 **A/H:** 02 8705 0830.
Website: www.mqofblacktown.org.au **Email:** admin@mqofblacktown.org.au

Parish Team:

Parish Priest: Fr. Regie Lavilla, MSP.

Assistant Priests: Fr. Ever Bernaldez, MSP & Fr. Andrew Rooney

Deacon: Rev. John Cinya.

Finance Officer: Sarah Canete-Damole **Email:** accounts@mqofblacktown.org.au

Secretaries: Ann Hart (Wed-Fri) & Gerald "Ged" Oblea (Mon & Tues)

Email: admin@mqofblacktown.org.au

Sacramental Coordinator: Gerald "Ged" Oblea. **Mobile:** 0422 724 008

Email: sacraments@mqofblacktown.org.au

Catechist Coordinator: Sandra Baker

Parish Pastoral Council: **Chair:** Cecil Fernandes; **Asst Chair:** Joshua Carr **Secretary:** Savita Surendra
Members: Beato Pudadera, Ekhas Ambili, Erica Luiz, Harlane Petersen, Helena Vea, Tony Fernando, Sidney Lazum, Fr. Regie Lavilla, Fr. Andrew Rooney, Fr. Ever Bernaldez, Rev. John Cinya.

Parish Schools:

St Michael's Primary:
P : 8869 6200 <https://www.stmichaelsblacktown.catholic.edu.au>

St Patrick's Primary:
P : 8869 6000 <https://www.stpatsblacktown.catholic.edu.au>

Nagle College:
P : 8887 4507 <https://www.nagleblacktown.catholic.edu.au>

Patrician Brothers College:
P : 8811 0300 <https://www.patsblacktown.nsw.edu.au>

Catholic Early Learning Centre (St Michael's):
P : 8814 8406 <https://www.ceclblacktownstn.catholic.edu.au>

Nursing Homes:

Opal Nursing Home (37 Kildare Rd, Blacktown NSW 2148) P : 9852 9600
Mulluana Retirement Village (61 Bungarribee Rd, Blacktown NSW 2148) P : 8822 2100
Catholic Healthcare St Hedwig Village Blacktown (140 Reservoir Rd, Blacktown 2148) P: 8822 9920

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

FORMED - PARISH FORMATION RESOURCE



WELCOME TO MARY, QUEEN OF THE FAMILY PARISH, BLACKTOWN

We are a welcoming parish... you are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected by the Catholic Community of Mary, Queen of the Family. If you are not an active member of this Community, consider partaking in what we have to offer. We serve the Community through outreach, education, social activities, sacramental preparation, youth and comfort to the sick and mourning. In addition to our spiritual and outreach organisations, perchance you have an interest in joining one of our many liturgical ministries such as: Minister of Holy Communion, Reader/Commentator, Welcomer, Collectors, Minister of DVP/Power Point, Catechists etc. Volunteers are formally registered by filling out a *Join a Ministry* form that is then entered into the parish data system (information supplied remains confidential). These forms are available from the parish office or in the church foyer, or for further information call the Parish Office on 9622 1125 ~ *The Parish Team*

Mary Queen of the Family ~ Parish Mission...

- * Grow as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.
- * Deepen our understanding of the Sacred Tradition & Scriptures of the Catholic Church.
- * Strive to live as a faithful & committed Catholic community.
- * Evangelise and respond to the needs of the family in the Blacktown community and beyond.



Objectives To Meet Our Mission at Mary Queen Of The Family Parish...

- WORSHIP ~ Practice the right forms of Worship.
- WORD ~ Increase the Biblical literacy in the Parish.
- WALL ~ Building our community.



Christmas Closure Dates

Closed 23rd December 2023

Reopening 8th January 2024

Please note that the parish office will be closed from the 23rd December 2023 until 8th January 2024 for it's Christmas break.



Watch, listen and read. Anywhere, anytime.

FORMED provides the very best Catholic content from more than 60 organizations to help parishes, families and individuals explore their faith anywhere. Supporting thousands of movies, children's programs, eBooks, audio, parish programs and studies direct to your browser, mobile or connected device.

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Now free for our Parishioners

Follow the steps below to get access



1. Scan the QR code - to go to the FORMED website;
2. In the Parish search field - type "2148" - to find our Parish name;
3. Select "Mary Queen of the Family" and press "Next";
4. Enter your Name and your Email address to register a new account and press "Sign Up";
5. Download the FORMED app on your phone and "Sign In" using your email address in step 4;
6. Browse, Watch, Listen, Read, and Study - to form your catholic conscience.

SUNDAY FLOCK



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"Prepare the way of the Lord ... he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Sheepish Question:

How can I recognize and follow the urging of the Holy Spirit within me?

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ YR B

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: ISAIAH 30:19,30

O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 40:1-5. 9-11

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: PS 84:9-14. R. V.8

Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

SECOND READING: 2 PETER 3:8-14

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: LUKE 3:4. 6

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL: MARK 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; He will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.

John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Baruch 5:5; 4:36

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

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ELEMENTS OF THE CATHOLIC MASS

Episode 14 : What is the Collect?

"Collect" is the official term for what is generally known as the Opening Prayer of the Mass. This term is significant because it suggests how we ought to approach the opening oration.

The prayer is preceded by the invitation of the priest: "Let us pray." Note that these words do not mean "Bring me the book" or "Please stand," or "Watch while I turn through the pages," or even "Listen to this prayer." The invitation means first and foremost "Let us formulate the intentions we want to offer at this Mass."

In silence, the entire assembly is joined in prayer. The Collect gathers these silent prayers. At the Preparation of the Offerings, let the silence be an opportunity for each to say, "Lord, I offer myself to you, completely and entirely."

After Holy Communion, let it be "O Lord, thank you for this great gift of yourself; unite me to yourself." In the end, every participant in the Mass should learn to pray in silence.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

The prayers addressed to God by the priest who presides over the assembly in the person of Christ are said in the name of the entire holy people and of all present.

IN THE TRADITION

"Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation." *St Justin Martyr Apology, I, 65*

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

'In the name of the whole Church' does not mean that priests are the delegates of the community. The prayer and offering of the Church are inseparable from the prayer and offering of Christ, her head; it is always the case that Christ worships in and through his Church. The whole Church, the Body of Christ, prays and offers herself through him, with him, in him,' in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to God the Father.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), n°. 1553.

IN THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Attend to the pleas of your people with heavenly care, O Lord, we pray, that they may see what must be done and gain strength to do what they have seen. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Elements of the Catholic Mass Study Guide. © 2015 Douglas Martis

<https://watch.formed.org/the-elements-of-the-catholic-mass> - FREE Subscription to formed see pg 2.

FEAST DAYS

Wednesday 13th December - **St Lucy, Virgin, Martyr**

Thursday 14th December - **St. John of the Cross, Priest, Doctor**

DAILY READINGS

Monday 11th Dec: Isaiah 35:1-10 ; Luke 5:17-26 .

Tuesday 12th Dec: Isaiah 40:1-11 ; Matthew 18:12-14 .

Wednesday 13th Dec: Isaiah 40:25-31 ; Matthew 11:28-30 .

Thursday 14th Dec: Isaiah 41:13-20 ; Matthew 11:11-15 .

Friday 15th Dec: Isaiah 48:17-19 ; Matthew 11:16-19 .

Saturday 16th Dec: Sirach 48:1-4. 9-11 ; Matthew 17:10-13 .

Sunday 17th Dec: Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 ; John 1:6-8. 19-28 .

PRAYERS FOR THOSE IN OUR COMMUNITY

DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Michael Debono, Patricia Byrne, Elizabeth Pinter.

IN MEMORIUM

Limun & Frugal Families, Purificacion Sumagui, Elizabeth Dravet, Noel D'Cruz.

SPECIAL INTENTION

Barbara Flick, Joan Pena

SICK

Peter Delange, Natalia De Jesus Dionisio, Manolito Aguilar; Christel Gonzalez Faustina Sandot, Teresita Alston, Michael Flanjak, Angela Mikhael, Cristina King, Edna Canete, Jonathan Nucup, Barbara Greany, Meghan De Vos, Mila Alforque.

Names submitted to Parish for the sick list will be published for 4 weeks at a time.

Mass intentions can be requested online by following the link below:
<https://www.mqofblacktown.org/mass-intention-or-offering-request>

2023 Parish Annual Report



Prepared by

Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Committee

MQOF Parish – A Pastoral Report for 2023

Rites of passage with our Mission

Brothers & Sisters in Christ. My name is Cecil Fernandes – I have been a parishioner in MQOF for the last 25 years and am also the Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). It is my pleasure to be able to present our Parish's 2023 annual Pastoral report. The PPC has a charter to support our Priests and shares with them the responsibility for the development of the Parish Community of faith, and the Mission of the Church within the Parish.

Our Parish mission is – To strive to live as a faithful and committed Catholic community, continuing to deepen in understanding the Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture of the Catholic Church and to grow as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, evangelising and responding to the needs of the family in the Blacktown community and beyond.

A Pastoral evaluation

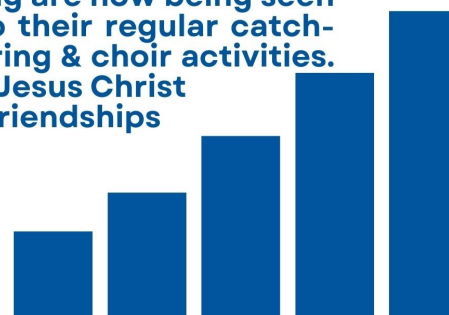
Firstly, we are so blessed to have such a good Parish Priest in Fr. Regie Lavilla – who true to his title is a missionary at heart. It is through his missionary zeal & prompting that the seeds of missionary discipleship are being sown. Supported by Fr. Ever Bernaldez & Fr. Andrew Rooney (we love their homily's too – explaining the Word (our daily bread) within the heart of the Sacramental sacrifice of the mass – in obedience to the Sacred Tradition) – they continue to be committed to the Sacramental life of the Parish, with 2 masses daily, 7 masses on the weekends, confessions & adoration twice a week in both the churches of St. Michaels & St. Patricks. Of-course we also have 10 ministries within the umbrella of the parish.

We pray & hope that the members of these various ministries continue to grow as active missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. The Legion of Mary in both St. Michael's & St. Patricks keep the devotion/s to our Lady – with the rotation of 3-5 statues to different homes in the Parish for 2 week durations. They also door knock and meet people in their home, share their faith with them & invite them to our church.

This year we re-started the Children's liturgy program during both the 9.30am and 10am masses on Sunday's and the Lord has blessed us with 4 young teachers – who look after nearly 60-70 children below the age of 11 that attend these programs. A PPC sub-committee has chalked out their faith learning plan for them for the next one year.

These children we hope will go onto our various Sacramental programs of 1st Holy Communion, Reconciliation & Confirmation. These programs are planned & executed throughout the year with 6 weeks of preparatory activity that involves educating not only the children, but also their parents in the Sacraments they will receive.

We have received very positive feedback from the Parents on the content & format of the programs. A big thank you to Ged for that. This year 79 children received their first Holy Communion, 79 had their first reconciliation and 142 were confirmed in their faith. However sadly, our reality is that for quite a few of these children it will also be their last encounter with the sacraments. More prayer & work for us as a Parish in this space. Of course last year we were all praying and watching to see if we could muster enough youth to gather regularly, this year sparked by our World Youth Day – the Parish was able to partially support over 10 youth to go to World Youth Day and the fruits of those seeding are now being seen as they gather not only at their Monthly adoration, but also their regular catch-ups, Guest speakers (Theology of the body series), faith sharing & choir activities. Please pray that they may grow deeper & deeper in love with Jesus Christ through the friendships that they forge, knowing that these friendships will remain with them through their lives.





MQOF Parish – A Pastoral Report for 2023 - ‘CONT

I would also like to thank the Parish Team – that includes not only the clergy, but also Deacon John, and all the support staff – who keep the rosters for the daily & Sunday masses, organise the various gatherings, making sure that all who seek to encounter the Parish for various needs, feel welcome and are served appropriately. Special mention to Sarah our Business Manager for helping to organise the logistics & food for the various Parish gatherings. It is at these events that we begin & continue to feel a sense of brotherhood, fellowship and belonging. Special mention also to Ged our Sacramental coordinator who ensures that the families who come for Baptisms understand what they are asking for.

Thanks also to our Priests, Deacon John & then Deacon Tom– who performed all these Baptisms week after week on Sundays. This year 153 people were baptised including (102 – below 1, 56 – between 1 & 7 years, 3 – over years, 2 – Adults).

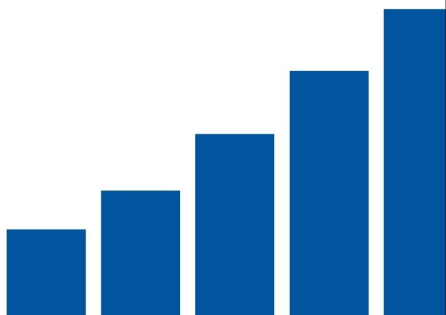
Our RCIA team have over the past 3 years put together a program that the 12 candidates that attend loved very much. Last year we had 4 candidates & this year there are 5 in the pipeline.

Our Parish Bible class which is held every Thursday – ably led by Richard & Marina Dsa – continue to grow faithful disciples (over 30 strong) of our Sacred Scripture. Thanks to them we have attendances (on an average) of 70-150 parishioners at each of the various Advent, Lenten & special international speaker programs. These programs we hope have helped deepen our community’s understanding of our Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture. Of course for those who wish to study & grow in their faith, without being a part of the ministries – we would encourage you to use the FORMED App which we have made available for free to all. This FORMED APP is considered the NETFLIX of catholic content and includes audio books, children’s movies, lives of the saints to name but a few.

Our hope The number of people that attend mass on the weekends (approx. 2000) is just 12.5% of the those who professed to be catholic, or just 3% of all people within our Parish geography. We pray and hope that our larger gatherings on feast days & our other outward professions of faith - sends a message to all, that we are striving to be a faithful, united catholic community within Blacktown, where they should always feel welcomed. Our hope is also that of the 2000 that do attend weekends & the hundreds that attend daily mass, grow deeper in the understanding of our faith & in our own fellowship within the body of Christ. If you feel you are being called to contribute to the mission of this parish by offering your gifts – please feel free to reach out to us.

Yours in Christ


Cecil Fernandes
Parish Pastoral - Chairperson



Mary Queen of the Family Parish Blacktown (MQOF)

Finance Report for the Financial Year 2022 - 2023

INCOME/EXPENDITURE

	2021-2022 F/YR	2022-2023 F/YR	CHANGE
Income	\$ 551,065	\$ 587,542	6.6% (Increase)
Expenditure	\$ 497,028*	\$ 594,207	19.6% (Increase)

OUR COLLECTIONS

	2021-2022 F/YR	2022-2023 F/YR	CHANGE
First Collection (Diocese)	\$ 32,851*	\$ 62,689	91% (Increase)
Second Collection (MQOF)	\$ 280,158	\$ 354,772	27% (Increase)
Average 1st Collection	\$ 632 per week	\$ 1,206 per week	91% (Increase)
Average 2nd Collection	\$ 5,388 per week	\$ 6,823 per week	27% (Increase)

*Audited

The parish needs to generate \$50K per month of income, to meet our obligations and expenses. At present we generate an average of \$48K per month, a shortfall of \$2k per month. Our yearly insurance premium alone is \$52K.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS – TOP 4

FUNDRAISING EVENTS – Amount raised

Bishop's Fathers Day Appeal	\$ 4,583	Parish Fiesta Aug 2022	\$ 4,133
Bishop's Christmas Appeal	\$ 2,647	Parish Golf Day Sep 2022	\$ 5,470
Bishop's Good Shepherd Appeal	\$ 3,749	Parish Hoyts Movie Nights	\$ 6,296
Caritas/Project Compassion	\$ 4,475	World Youth Day 2023	\$ 10,540

TOP MAINTENANCE WORKS that were carried out in both churches during the financial year.

St Patrick's Church (SPC)		St Michael's Church (SMC)	
Relocation/Renovation of New Sacristy	\$ 15,500	Garden of Remembrance Fence	\$ 5,250
St Pat's Paintwork	\$ 4,000	Note: Roof/Guttering/Down piping/New Doors and Painting = FY 2023 to 2024	
Renovation of St Pat's Sanctuary	\$ 20,800		

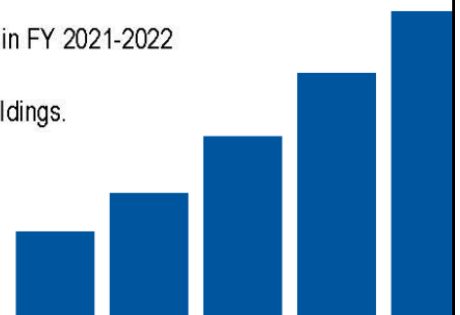
PARISH FINANCIAL STATUS AS OF 30 JUNE

	2022	2023
Our bank account balance was	\$ 238,887 (CR)	\$ 205,226 (CR)
Our outstanding loan balance was	\$ 221,407 (DR)	\$ 203,731 (DR)
Our debt to the PCF* was	\$ 67,743 (DR)	\$ 71,216 (DR)

* Parramatta Catholic Foundation (PCF)

MQOF NINE (9) INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

- Net rental income generated for FY 2022 - 2023 was \$ 129,688 compared to \$135,643 in FY 2021-2022
- 8 were leased as at the close of 30 June 2023, one tenant provides disability services.
- Maintenance cost of these properties continues to be an issue due to the age of the buildings.





UPDATE ON ST PATRICK'S CHURCH (SPC) ROOF ISSUE and Raise the Roof Appeal (RRA)

- Despite a previous view to not take this option (by the committee) - the Diocese are steering us towards resolving our roofing issue through the laying of a new membrane over the existing roof and through improving the guttering and downpipes (as they have not ruled out the plan for a new Cathedral to be built in Blacktown in the future.
- Funds raised through the 'RRA' amount to \$79,197 as at 30/06/23. Refer to the bulletin for the latest figure.
- Thanks to Jun Rule, Ray Francica and Charbelle Aboumelhem for their assistance on the Roof Sub- committee.
- Please refer to the 'Church Maintenance Update' section of the bulletin each week for the latest news on this matter. We will keep you updated via this channel as things progress.

OUR TOP 4 PRESSING NEEDS/FINANCIAL ISSUES

- The SPC church roof continues to be our number one issue. We will ultimately need to borrow the expected shortfall between what we have raised and what we will need to fund this major maintenance work.
- Our car parks continue to be things we need to keep an eye on with regards to upkeep and safety.
- Entrance doors at SPC may need replacing eventually (last quote was \$35,930).
- High plumbing maintenance cost on both churches – clearing of piping blockages.

FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS

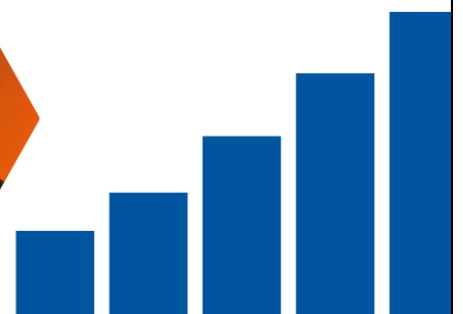
- We helped send ten (10) pilgrims to WYD 2023 in Madrid (at a net cost to the parish of approx \$21k after allowing for funds that were raised through the efforts of our youth).
- The 'Collections Appeal' made by Michael at all Masses on 6-7 May saw a modest increase in giving.
- Received a total of \$7,000 Government Volunteers Grants which were used to purchase 3 laptops for office use.
- Sales through our Piety Stores have contributed \$12k net to our parish. Thank you to those involved in this Ministry.
- The Parish Audit for 2023 was completed and gave our financial administration a tick of approval.
- Parish Movie Nights at Hoyts Blacktown have been a major success, raising \$6k towards WYD23.
- We donated \$5K to our sister Parish – St Anthony de Padua, Nissan Island, Bougainville, PNG.
- We refurbished the Sanctuary of both our churches and the new SPC Sacristy

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!

- Thank you to everyone who supports our parish through the loose collections, Planned Giving, Fund-Raising Events and Appeals.
- We appreciate that there are many costs of living pressures and that it's becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet for many.
- All we can ask is that you support your parish, to the best of your ability, based on your situation at the time, knowing that the parish too has obligations and commitments it must meet each month for us to remain operating and serving you.
- If you do have the capacity to increase your giving, even modestly, through any of the options available to you, then please consider doing so.
- Thank you also to **our Clergy Team, to Sarah, our Business Manager** for her prudent management of the parish's finances and assets, **to our Collectors** at all our Masses for your service to this ministry each week, and, to all those who have assisted with or sponsored our Fund-Raising Events, such as the Parish Golf Day, Fiesta, and Movie Nights. It's very much appreciated.
- A big thank you also to our generous **Parish Bulletin Advertisers. Please support these businesses that support us.**
- And, finally, thank you to all currently serving members of the Parish Finance Committee for your continued efforts and support.

If you have any questions with regards to any of the information in this report, then please contact Sarah at the parish office on 02 9622 1125 or via email at accounts@mqofblacktown.org.au. Thank you.

Michael Zerafa
Chairman - Parish Finance Committee
Mary Queen of the Family Annual Parish Report





MARY,
QUEEN
OF THE
FAMILY
PARISH, BLACKTOWN

SCAN ME
FOR TICKETS



<https://www.mqofblacktown.org/event-details/christmas-gala-2023>

Please join us for the annual

Christmas Gala

Carols - Food & Drinks
and Christmas Play

16th **DECEMBER** 2023

Saturday | from 5.00 pm

Nagle College School Grounds & Hall
58A Orwell Street Blacktown

FOR TICKETS PLEASE CONTACT PARISH OFFICE

PH: 02 9622 1125 OR

EMAIL: ADMIN@MQOFBLACKTOWN.ORG.AU

Ticket pricing - \$25.00ea - 12 years old and above - (Adult Ticket)

\$15.00ea - 5 - 11 Years (Child Ticket)

\$50.00 - FAMILY TICKET - (2x Adults) & (2x Children)

***\$10.00 PER ADDITIONAL CHILD**

CHILDREN 4 YEARS OLD & BELOW FREE!

Ticket price includes sausage sizzle & drink

<https://www.mqofblacktown.org/event-details/christmas-gala-2023>

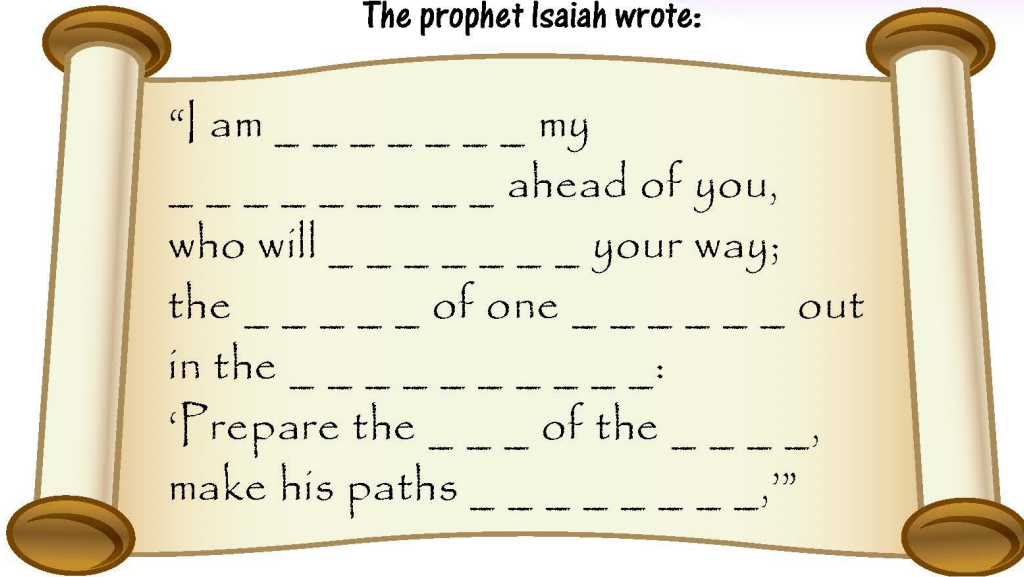


Make a straight path for the Lord



2nd Sunday of Advent, Year B

The prophet Isaiah wrote:



crying
straight
way
voice
sending
prepare
wilderness
messenger
Lord



What are three things you can do to be ready for Jesus during this second week of Advent?

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by telling people to turn back to God and baptising them. He wore clothes made from camel's hair and wore a leather strap around his waist. For food he ate grasshoppers and wild honey. Draw a picture of John baptising someone in the Jordan River.



exploring the word

2nd Sunday of Advent Year B



gospel Mt 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way.
A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight,

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

reflection

This week's gospel captures beautifully the spirit of preparation and waiting that characterises the liturgical season of Advent. John the Baptist is portrayed as fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah and others as the one who comes before the Lord preparing the way. He is a messenger, sent by God to 'do the groundwork' preparing the people for the coming of the Christ. Although this passage is used during Advent as preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we know that John was a contemporary (indeed cousin) of Jesus and the time of preparation was immediately prior to Jesus' public ministry.

John appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism for forgiveness of sins. It may seem odd to think of going to the wilderness to try to influence people. Today we might think that the city centre or street corner might be the better venue to preach something. What is it about the wilderness? Reference is made to the wilderness several times in scripture. It is used as a place of preparation and encounter with God. The wilderness referred to was a vast expanse of emptiness on the eastern side of the Jordan River. It was not uncommon for wandering preachers like John and Jesus to go out into the wilderness as a way of making a break from their previous life and getting themselves ready in body and spirit to begin their ministry. The wilderness to the east of the Jordan was also the place in which many of the rebels based themselves. There was a sense that challenge and unrest came out of the wilderness. In many ways that is what Jesus – heralded by John – brought out of the wilderness as well.

Historical context

A Baptism of Forgiveness

The understanding that we generally have of baptism today has not always been the case. At the time of John and Jesus, the Jewish tradition used baptism as a ritual bath to cleanse a person who had become ritually unclean and make them able to participate in religious rituals. What John was preaching was a baptism for the forgiveness of sins – a new interpretation at the time. He emphasised that repentance was essential for forgiveness and that there needed to be a conscious returning to God. John's baptism was a symbolic act to signify the willingness of the person to renounce their sins and make a more conscious return to God.

Scriptural context

The gospel of Mark is sometimes portrayed as a 'no fuss' gospel. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in this week's passage. We have the first eight verses of the gospel and the author wastes no time in announcing the purpose, 'The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' The gospel of Mark does not give any infancy narrative or genealogy like Matthew or Luke, nor a theological foreword like John. It jumps straight in with a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God and almost immediately begins to explore his ministry.

- Q Why would John have gone out into the wilderness to conduct his ministry?
- Q What do you think people found attractive about John's baptism of forgiveness?
- Q Why is the first sentence of the passage significant, given it is the very first sentence of the gospel of Mark?
- Q What would followers of John have thought about his prediction of someone coming after him?
- Q How can we continue to prepare the way for the Lord?

THE SACRAMENTS & MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

SACRAMENT OF INITIATION



Parents wishing to have their children baptised are to contact the parish office prior to attending a Baptism workshop. The next workshop will on Saturday 20th January 2024 - St. Patrick's Church.

For more information please logon to our website:
<https://mqofblacktown.org.au/sacraments/#baptism>

SACRAMENTAL PROCESS AT THE PARISH

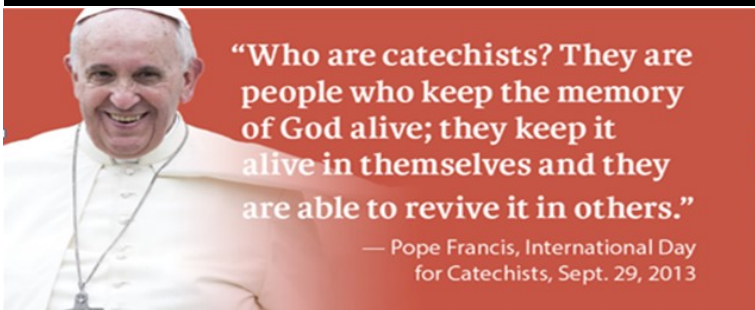
Follow the below link for more information about our sacramental process: <https://mqofblacktown.org.au/sacraments/>

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our sacramental coordinator on the details below:
 Gerald "Ged" Oblea (Sacramental Coordinator)
 Mary Queen of the Family Parish Blacktown.

Email: sacraments@mqofblacktown.org.au
 Ph: 02 9622 1125 – option 4 Mobile: 0422 724 008



CATECHISTS WANTED



SO WHAT IS A CATECHIST AN SRE VOLUNTEER! WHO? ME? YES... WHY NOT YOU? IF NOT YOU... THEN WHO?

What is an SRE? SREs are parish volunteers who:

- Teach and share their faith with children of their parish who attend government schools.
- Have a passion for sharing the gift of faith with young people.
- Have an hour per week to prepare and share their time and talents with young people.
- Are people who respond to the central mission of the Church to make Jesus known and loved.



In this parish Special Religious Educators, SREs, (also known as Catechists) go into five state primary schools. New volunteer SREs will be given support, training, teaching materials and will start as a classroom helper. To register your interest or make further enquiries visit or call the Parish Office on 96221125 and ask for Sandra.

PASTORAL CARE FOR THE HOMEBOUND

Our clergy and pastoral care ministers bring the sacraments of Eucharist, reconciliation, and anointing of the sick to members who are unable to participate because of illness or aging. For more information and to arrange receiving of the sacraments, please contact the Parish Office on 9622 1125 or after office hours number 02 8705 0830.



PARISH GROUPS

BIBLE STUDY GROUP



Bible Study Ministry has finished for 2023 and will resume on Thursday January 25th 2024.

HOLY FAMILY FELLOWSHIP PRAYER GROUP

Contact: Charles Hyson, 0412 631 602,
www.holyfamilyfellowship.com

Meeting Time and Venue: Every 2nd Saturday 6:30pm-9:30pm at Sid Mosley Centre, St Michael's Church.

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS



Contact: Antoinette Mangion, 0414 735 943

Meeting Time and Venue: Every 3rd Monday of the month, 10:00 am at Cardinal Clancy room, St Patrick's Church

LEGION OF MARY ST MICHAEL'S



Contact: Noemi Romero, 0475 798 770 (for statue bookings)

Meeting Time and Venue: Every Thursday, 1:00pm – 2:30pm at Sid Mosley Centre, St Michael's Church.

LEGION OF MARY ST PATRICK'S



Contact: Maurice Bru 0419 626 583 (for statue bookings)

Meeting Time and Venue: Every Monday, 6:30pm at Cardinal Clancy room, St Patrick's Church.

MARIAN MOVEMENT OF PRIESTS



Contact: Max Rosario, 0490 137 533

Meeting Time and Venue: Monday 9:30am-10:30am at Sid Mosley Centre, St Michael's Church. All are welcome!

MQOF SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP



Contact: Jude Besterwitsch, 0435 588 309

Meeting Time and Venue: 2nd Sunday of every month, 12pm—2pm at Cardinal Clancy room, St Patrick's Church

ROSARY GROUP



Contact: Diane Zerafa, 0403 554 566

Meeting Time and Venue: Every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday after the 8am Mass, at St Michael's church.

CATECHIST MINISTRY



Contact: Sandra Baker

admin@mqofblacktown.org.au

For More Information please contact our the parish office.

TEHILLAH COMMUNITY



Contact: Ash & Rozario Fernando , 0416 861 976 or 0412 195 916

Meeting Time and Venue: Every 2nd & 4th Saturday (school term) between 2pm - 4pm at the Cardinal Clancy Room, St Patrick's Church.

TRUE LIFE IN GOD PRAYER GROUP



Contact: Diane Zerafa, 0403 554 566

Meeting Time and Venue: 3.00pm every second Saturday of the month at Sid Mosley Centre St Michael's Church

YOUTH MINISTRY



Contact: Parish Office

admin@mqofblacktown.org.au

For More Information please contact our Youth Minister through the parish office.

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS



MARY,
QUEEN
OF THE
FAMILY
PARISH, BLACKTOWN

Christmas & New Year's Mass Times

SUNDAY 24TH DECEMBER 2023

5:30 PM (CHILDREN'S MASS) AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
6:00 PM (CHILDREN'S MASS) AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
8:30 PM (YOUTH MASS) AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH

MONDAY 25TH DECEMBER 2023

12:00 AM AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
7:00 AM AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
8:00 AM AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
9:30 AM AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
10:00 AM AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH

MONDAY 1ST JANUARY 2023

12:00 AM AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
8:00 AM AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
9:00 AM AT ST PATRICK'S CHURCH



PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

ST.MICHAEL CHURCH - DEDICATION MASS

On the 23rd December our parish will be celebrating the 44th anniversary of the dedication of St. Michael's Church. To celebrate this event there will be a vigil Mass at 7.30pm, followed by fellowship at St. Michael's Church on 22nd December. Please note that the scheduled reconciliation, adoration and Mass at St. Patrick's will be move to St. Michael's Church. All welcome to attend.

ST VINCENT de PAUL - GIVING TREE

Christmas Giving Tree

St Vincent de Paul Society invites parishioners to take a tag from the Christmas Tree in the church to meet the needs of the disadvantaged in our local community, with gifts and non-perishable food.

It would be appreciated if all gifts could be returned by **Sunday 10th December.**

If you are donating a present, please do not wrap it, instead leave it in a bag with the gift tag from the tree.

Please note the annual St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal will take place on **Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th December 2023**

God bless, and thank you for your help.
SVDP Blacktown Conference

CHURCH MAINTENANCE UPDATE

St Patrick's Church – Raise the Roof Project



We have received a couple of quotes and waiting for 2 more quotes from roofers recommended by the Diocese, and then we will meet with the Head of the Property section of the Diocese to finalise the roof and ceiling refurbishment of our St Patrick's church. We have also received the cash settlement from Catholic Church Insurance, which amount augment our roof and ceiling repair funding, (inclusive of donation), to \$193,789.15.

We are thankful to CCI, our donors and to those who are still considering... only your continued support can make the roof of the House of God refurbished!

St Michael's Church – Maintenance Projects

We are waiting from a volunteer architect the design and costing of our Sanctuary lightings. Once available we will post it here – if you are in the position to help financially, please talk to one of our priests or call the office on 02 9622 1125. All donations are welcome!

HOW TO DONATE: Scan the QR code to donate or logon to the following link (<https://www.mqofblacktown.org/make-a-donation-or-payment>) Please type in the description field what you are making the donation towards. E.g. Roof

If you wish to make a donation through another method of giving please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office on 9622 1125.



ST VINCENT de Paul - CHRISTMAS APPEAL

SUPPORT FAMILIES STRUGGLING WITH THE ESCALATING COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS THIS CHRISTMAS.

Help provide food, clothing, living expenses and crisis support for vulnerable people in Australia like Anna and her family.

DONATE NOW

Next weekend there will be a third collection for the St. Vincent de Paul Christmas appeal. Supporting families struggling with the cost of living crisis this Christmas. Thank you for your ongoing support!

2024 ENROLMENTS ~ ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY

St Patrick's Primary School



Blacktown

2024 Enrolments Now Open!

Don't Miss

Enrolments OPEN for ALL GRADES



Call to book a tour of our beautiful school
PH: 8869 6000

PLEASE CONSIDER ONLINE GIVING

You can also support the parish by using our **Tap & Go Machine**. The machine is set at \$10, to donate more than \$10 simply tap your credit card as many times as you like. It also accepts Apple Pay, Google Pay and Pay Wave. All contributions go to the maintenance and development of the Parish as does the second collection at weekend Masses.



Planned Giving (Direct Debit or Credit Card) is also an option if you wish to do cashless donation to the parish, forms are available in the foyer and on our parish website or contact the parish office on 9622 1125.

Setting up a one-time or recurring donation/Planned Giving is quick and easy. Just go to: www.mqofblacktown.org.au/donations.

You can also send your offerings/donations thru bank transfer:

FIRST COLLECTION: For the Diocesan Clergy

Account Name: Diocesan Clergy
Bank: CBA BSB: 067 950 Account Number: 0000 4265
Reference: 6004 - Donor's Name

SECOND COLLECTION: For the Parish

Account Name: Blacktown Catholic Church
Bank: CBA BSB: 067 950 Account Number: 0000 0677
Reference: 6004 ~ Donor's name

If you encounter any issues signing up, please email Sarah at accounts@mqofblacktown.org.au. Thank you so much for your continued support our parish. We are grateful!

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

LITURGICAL MINISTRY COURSE

Liturgical Ministry Course

BEGINS FEBRUARY 2024

This is formation for anyone interested in serving within the Liturgical Ministries as Readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Communion to Sick and Dying and Ministers at the Altar.

To register or find out more contact mary.gale@parracatholic.org or 0460 037 795



FROM OUR PARISH PIETY STORES

Come & Visit our Parish Piety Stores to see some new items! Also available; Baptism Presents; Holy Communion; Confirmation; Rosary Beads; Cards and Wrapping papers/bags; Children books Bibles; Mass missals – Daily and Weekly; Statues; Medals ... and much much more

For Christmas...



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*We can help you with information to meet NDIA, Aged Care, ATO and our Company Policy standards.
**Monday and Wednesday ONLY.



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kerwin.abinoja@gmail.com | 0468355399

<https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/filipino-professionals-in-sydney-and-canberra-australia/>

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www.fccau.org

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