



ST. MARY OF THE CROSS MACKILLOP PARISH  
UPPER BLUE MOUNTAINS



5TH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR B 21 MARCH 2021

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:** Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

**FIRST READING:** Jeremiah 31:31-34

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’ No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Create a clean heart in me, O God.

**SECOND READING:** Hebrews 5:7-9

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! If you serve me, follow me, says the Lord; and where I am, my servant will also be. Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

**THE GOSPEL:** John 12:20-33

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, ‘Sir, we should like to see Jesus.’ Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them: ‘Now the hour has come for the Son of Man

to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!’

A voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, ‘It was an angel speaking to him.’ Jesus answered, ‘It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. ‘Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself.’ By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON:** Amen, Amen, I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.

**COMMENTARY:**

St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444)

As the firstfruits of our renewed humanity, Christ escaped the curse of the law precisely by becoming accursed for our sake. He overcame the forces of corruption by himself becoming once more “free among the dead.” He trampled death under foot and came to life again, and then he ascended to the Father as an offering, the firstfruits, as it were, of the human race.

“He ascended,” as Scripture says, “not to a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the real one, but into heaven itself to appear in God’s presence on our behalf.”

Christ is the life-giving bread that came down from heaven, and by offering himself to God the Father as a fragrant sacrifice for our sake, he also delivers us from our sins and frees us from the faults that we commit through ignorance.

We can understand this best if we think of him as symbolised by the calf that used to be slain as a holocaust and by the goat that was sacrificed for our sins committed through ignorance. For our sake, to blot out the sins of the world, he laid down his life.

Recognised then in bread as life and the giver of life, in the calf as a holocaust offered by himself to God the Father as an appeasing fragrance, in the goat as one who became sin for our sake and was slain for our transgressions, Christ is also symbolized in another way by a sheaf of grain, as a brief explanation will show.

The human race may be compared to spikes of wheat in a field, rising, as it were, from the earth, awaiting their full growth and development, and then in time being cut down by the reaper, which is death. The comparison is apt, since Christ himself spoke of our race in this way when he said to his holy disciples: “Do you not say, ‘Four months and it will be harvest time?’ Look at the fields I tell you, they are already white and ready for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving his wages and bringing in a crop for eternal life.”

Now Christ became like one of us; he sprang from the holy Virgin like a spike of wheat from the ground. Indeed, he spoke of himself as a grain of wheat when he said: “I tell you truly, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains as it was, a single grain; but if it dies its yield is very great.” And so, like a sheaf of grain, the first fruits, as it were, of the earth, he offered himself to the Father for our sake.

For we do not think of a spike of wheat in isolation, any more than we do of ourselves. We think of it rather as part of a sheaf, which is a single bundle made up of many spikes. The spikes have to be gathered into a bundle before they can be used, and this is the key to the mystery they represent, the mystery of Christ who, though one, appears in the image of a sheaf to be made up of many, as in fact he is.

Spiritually, he contains in himself all believers. “As we have been raised up with him,” writes Saint Paul, “so we have also been enthroned with him in heaven.” He is a human being like ourselves, and this has made us one body with him, the body being the bond that unites us.

We can say, therefore, that in him we are all one, and indeed he himself says to God, his heavenly Father: “It is my desire that as I and you are one, so they also may be one in us.” *Commentary on Numbers 2.*

**REFLECTION ON THE READINGS** by Fr John:

All three texts for today’s Liturgy of the Word speak of a dying to the old ways in order to begin something new:

- \* From an Old covenant to one now written in our hearts
- \* Through His Obedience, Christ’s death leads to new life and eternal salvation for us
- \* Unless the grain of wheat dies, it cannot become something new...

As Christians we are continually asked by the Lord through the Scriptures and His Church to die to the old ways and begin a new way of living. Indeed, our Lenten Season is all about dying to sin and thus being prepared to experience a rising to a sinless existence in Christ.

And the best way that we can imitate the Lord in his Death and Rising again is to move from self-centred existence to a life lived for others. The Lord was someone whose whole existence was ‘other-directed’ - to the Father of us all and to His neighbours. Christ is the embodiment of the New Covenant written in our hearts; he is the one willing to be obedient to the Father’s will and serve his friends - even unto Death!

As for us: let’s ponder on the Lord’s words:

“If someone serves me, they must follow me; wherever I am, my servant will be there too”!

**Notes from Fr John:**

1. Next Sunday is PALM SUNDAY, and the Commencement of HOLY WEEK. Please note the Mass and Celebration times in the Bulletin. There may be a few changes from past years.

We are having difficulty during these COVID times sourcing Palms; and, in any case, in order to be COVID safe, we cannot allow people to put their hands in a basket and take a palm. So, we are asking that you bring your own ‘palm’ for next Sunday - whether this is truly a palm branch (hard to find up here), or an inculturation of the Tradition by bringing a branch of a native plant. The people of Jerusalem cut branches native to their area... we can do the same in these unusual times.

2. CONFESSION TIMES are in the Bulletin. There is a Second Rite of Reconciliation at Blackheath on Tuesday evening. First Rite Confessions in the Upper Blue Mountains Parish are as normal, with the addition of Confession after weekday masses on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week.

Please Note: although there will be Confessions after the Way of the Cross on Good Friday at Katoomba, this is by way of EXCEPTION. The Church encourages EVERYONE to make their Confession before the Easter Triduum commences - that is, before the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday evening. This is so that we are all prepared for these important days beforehand; and the Church wishes the Church’s Ministers (the priests) to have the time and space to pray and reflect during this most holy of days. God bless you all

**HOSPITAL/HOME VISITS:** If you or your love ones are sick and would like a visit please contact the parish office or Barbara Davidson 0417 490 103

**BISHOP’S GOOD SAMARITAN APPEAL:** Help CatholicCare chaplains bring comfort, faith and hope to the sick and isolated. Your compassionate gifts and prayers will help CatholicCare chaplains provide spiritual, sacramental and emotional support in the footsteps of the Good Samaritan. Please give generously to the Bishop’s Good Samaritan Appeal [yourcatholicfoundation.org.au/appeal](http://yourcatholicfoundation.org.au/appeal). Thank you for accompanying them on their journey.

**PARISH FUNDRAISING:** "Easter hamper raffle". Tickets for the Easter Raffle will be available after weekend Masses. There are seven prizes to the value of approximately \$300.00. Tickets are \$5.00 each. Phone Barbra on 47842473 or Matalena 0459656657 if you would like more tickets. Raffle to be drawn Palm Sunday after 10am Mass at St Canices.

**ADORATION CHAPEL:** Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Monday shifts. Dear Adorers, your adoration shift will be impacted on the above days. Adoration will finish at 7pm, on Holy Thursday night. There will be Mass at 7:30pm at Katoomba, followed by adoration in the hall until midnight. The chapel will remain closed until 10:30am Easter Monday, following the 10am Mass and continue as usual (to sum it up, all shifts from 7pm Holy Thursday, all Good Friday, and all Saturday are cancelled. First shift back is 10:30am Easter Monday) ☹️Please find a replacement as usual if you will be away, and let me know if you have any questions. Have a blessed day!

**SUNDAY MASS:** Due to an easing of covid-19 restrictions you no longer need to book to come to Sunday Mass. You will still, however, need to sign on when you arrive and observe social distancing requirements. Attendance is on a first come first served basis. Masks are recommended but no longer required.

**ROSARY AND OTHER DEVOTIONS: Ad Jesum per Mariam.**  
SAT and SUN: 4:10pm, Leura.  
MON: after 8:30am Mass, Katoomba.  
TUE: 4:30pm Divine Mercy, Rosary and Exposition, Leura.  
WED: after 8:30am Mass, Wentworth Falls.  
THU: after 8:30am Mass, Leura.  
FRI: 11:30am before Mass, Katoomba.  
FRI: 5pm Divine Mercy Hour, Leura.  
SAT: 8:30am before Mass and also after Benediction following Mass, Katoomba.  
ADORATION CHAPEL: 9am Monday - 9am Saturday, Katoomba.



SUNDAY MASS TIMES	WEEKDAY MASS TIMES	CONFESSION TIMES
Leura 5pm (Saturday) Wentworth Falls 8am Katoomba 10am (1st Sunday: High Mass. 4th: w/ choir) Leura 5pm *10am on public holidays	MON: 8:30am* Katoomba TUE: 5:15pm Leura WED: 8:30am W-Falls THU: 8:30am Leura FRI: 12pm Katoomba SAT: 9am Katoomba	TUE 4:45-5:00pm Leura SAT: 9:30am Katoomba SAT: 4:30-4:45pm Leura  Confessions are always available on request.

**MASS OFFERING INTENTIONS: DECEASED and ANNIVERSARIES:** NONI ROWLAND, MORAN WILLIAM HALLIDAY, BILL CLIFFORD, FR MICK O’ CALLAGHAN, STEPHANNIE JEAN MURPHY (2nd April) MARIE THUEZ, BISHOP BEDE HEATHER, MITCHELL GALE, and all the faithful departed especially those for whom you requested prayers and masses AND THE FORGOTTEN SOULS IN PURGATORY. **SICK LIST:** Eleanor Hagor, Monique Haulber, Mary Sullivan, Kathleen Hayes-Gilson, Evelyn Maw, Wanda Heffernan, Mary Roberts, Jacqueline Singh, Kath Paine, June Way, Robert Sullivan, Natale Assanti, Susan Keegel, Eugenio Natonton, Emiliania Santiago, Pat Coyne, Inga Morphett, Amanda Peters, Alison Michaels, Aimee De la Motte, Lorraine Russelle, Margaret Murphy, Joan Nolan, Pat Wolthers, Tricia Hogan, Shiela Page, Sr Jeanie Heiningner, Michelle Scully, Julie Walss, Edwin Wulff

**PARISH OFFICE:** 158 Katoomba Street, Katoomba 2780  
Postal Address: P.O. Box 526, Katoomba NSW 2780  
Phone: (02) 4782 2804 Hours: 10am-3pm Tuesday-Friday.  
Parish Email address: [bluemountains@parracatholic.org](mailto:bluemountains@parracatholic.org)  
After Hours Emergency Number: 0428 878 810 Calls only; no

ALTAR SERVERS: If you would like to serve contact Hugh Jones on 0402 904 681.

**PERPETUAL ADORATION CHAPEL:** If you are a parishioner (or visitor) who would like a rostered holy hour each week or to be on the temporary fill in list, please contact Jacquie on 0405 600 155 to register your details, many thanks!

**ST. CANICE’S SCHOOL NEWS:** St Canice’s would like to wish all the candidates the best for this Sunday when they will receive their first Reconciliation. We keep in mind the students during our prayer times. It is a beautiful Sacrament and yet another welcoming into the Church.

**FINANCES:** If you would like to contribute to the 2nd Collection for the parish: Bank Transfer: BSB 067 950 Account 000 00594 Name: Mary MacKillop Parish Reference: Surname and envelope number or Parish Donation (with or without surname if preferred).

If parishioners would like to contribute to the First Collection for the clergy of the diocese: BSB 067 950 Account No 00004265 Account Name Diocesan Clergy Reference either the Parish Name or the parish code 6038

**AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS’ CONSULTATION FOR WOMEN SESSION:** Catholic women are being invited to participate in a national consultation via Zoom on March 27. The event invites women to articulate and celebrate their contribution to and vision for the mission of the Catholic Church in Australia. The event is being organised by the Australian Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry. Find more information at [www.nce.catholic.org.au/catholicwomen](http://www.nce.catholic.org.au/catholicwomen)

**PROJECT COMPASSION 2021 - “Be More”:** Support Caritas Australia this Lenten season by taking home a Project Compassion box and/or a set of donation envelopes. Through your generosity, you are assisting some of the world’s most vulnerable people build better futures for themselves, their families and their communities. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, or by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.

**PONTIFICAL HOLY LAND FRIDAY COLLECCTION:** 2 April: The annual Pontifical Good Friday Collection will be held on Friday 2 April around Australia. The collection will continue to support the works of the Holy Land Custody through the generosity of the Australian Church. Your donation is a direct way to make a difference in the lives of those who are keeping alive the Christian presence in the land of Jesus in the face of great odds.

**GLOBAL CAMPAIGN "END CCP"** (Eliminate the Demon Chinese Communist Party), <https://endccp.com>, which now has more than 0.7 million signatures outside China. Please visit the website above for more information and to sign the petition.

**SAINTS THIS WEEK:** Ora pro nobis.  
TUE St. Turibius of Mongrovejo, Bishop.  
THU: The Annunciation of the Lord. (solemnity)  
  
NEXT SUN: Palm Sunday

Weddings: Please call Parish Office for details. Baptisms: upon request.  
Parish Website at: [www.bluemountainscatholic.org.au](http://www.bluemountainscatholic.org.au)  
Parish Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bluemountainscatholic](http://www.facebook.com/bluemountainscatholic)  
Parish School: St Canice’s Catholic Primary School, Katoomba.  
Principal: Ms. Miriam Meaney