

**27 August 2023**  
**TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY OF**  
**ORDINARY TIME YEAR A**



"I will give you the keys  
of the kingdom of heaven."

### Entrance Antiphon

Turn your ear, O Lord, and  
answer me; save the servant  
who trusts in you, my God.  
Have mercy on me,  
O Lord, for I cry to you  
all the day long.

**First Reading** from the  
prophet Isaiah 22: 19-23

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 137:1-3. 6. 8. R. v.8

(R.) Lord, your love is  
eternal; do not forsake the  
work of your hands.

**Second Reading** from the  
letter of St Paul to the  
Romans 11: 33-36

### Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!  
You are Peter, the rock on  
which I will build my Church;  
the gates of hell will not hold  
out against it. Alleluia!

### Communion Antiphon

The earth is replete with the  
fruits of your work,  
O Lord; you bring forth  
bread from the earth and  
wine to cheer the heart.

### NEXT WEEK

**3 SEPTEMBER 2023**  
**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY**  
**IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A**

**First:** Jeremiah 20:7-9

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 62:2-6. 8-9. R. v.2

**Second :** Romans 12:1-2

**Gospel:** Matthew 16:21-27

*We acknowledge and respect the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we stand,  
the elders, past and present and all the Dharawal people. May we too be good stewards of this land.*

## Bishops' statement calls for 'new engagement' with First Peoples

### MEDIA RELEASE

**August 17, 2023**

Australia's Catholic bishops have called on the nation to seek "a new engagement" with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their annual Social Justice Statement launched today.

Since the 1940s, the bishops have published annual statements that urge the Catholic community to reflect and act on social, economic and ecological issues. The statements are published as a focal point for Social Justice Sunday, which will be marked on August 27 this year.

This year's statement, Listen, Learn, Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, was launched in Western Sydney on Thursday morning by Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service.

"One of the objectives of this statement is that we want Catholics to understand that Catholic social teaching and Catholic social action are not simply theoretical and academic exercises," he said.

"We hear what God is saying to us about justice by being with our sisters and brothers on the peripheries of society."

While the Social Justice Statement is a teaching document of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, a large part of this year's statement was written by members of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council. It is part of the message's exhortation to "listen".

Listening is hard. Hearing about young people taking their lives, about so many people ending up in jail, of children still being taken away from their parents and grandparents and about the ongoing racism is tough," Bishop Long said.

"It must be so much more difficult for these people to tell us about their painful experiences. We are deeply grateful to those who shared their stories of pain with us."

The theme for this year's statement was chosen in May 2022, well before the Voice to Parliament referendum was mooted and before the timing of a vote was proposed. While the bishops don't suggest how people should vote, Bishop Long said "whatever the outcome of this year's referendum, we ask the Church in Australia to make efforts to lead the way for our fellow Australians" in pursuing reconciliation.

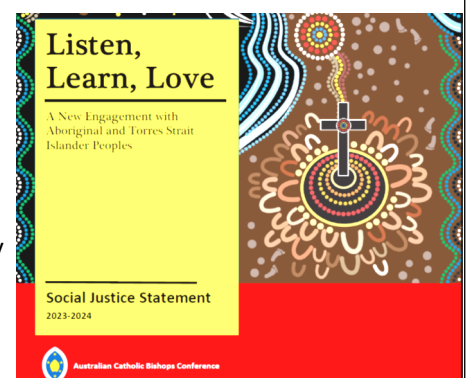
"Our attitudes and actions towards First Nations Peoples need to be grounded in justice, love and humility," he said.

"We need to listen with deep respect and learn from them about what needs to be done to improve their situations. We need to walk with them, day by day, and work with them to bring about change for the better – for their people and for all of us.

"Strengthening our relationship with our First Peoples is integral and indeed critical to the strengthening of the whole nation."

Watch the launch at: [https://www.youtube.com/live/jz\\_5pam7nBs?si=XV-ox6EyCatkD98J](https://www.youtube.com/live/jz_5pam7nBs?si=XV-ox6EyCatkD98J)

Access the statement at: <https://bit.ly/SJS2023-24>



## Worship: Mass and Devotions

Sunday Mass	Weekday Mass	Devotions
Saturday Vigil: 6pm	Mon, Tues, Wed Mass at 9am	Adoration with the Rosary: Saturday 9.30am
Sunday: 9.30 am & 5pm	Thursday - Mass at 7.30pm	Divine Mercy Devotion: Third Sunday at 3pm
Filipino Mass: Third Sunday at 11.15am	Fri & Sat Mass at 9am	Alliance of the 2 Hearts Mass and Devotion: First Friday of each month from 7.30pm
Samoan Mass: First Sunday of even months at 12 noon		
Maori Mass: First Sunday at 2pm		Reconciliation: Saturday 11 am—12

### Contact us

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday 9.30am-12.30pm

Phone: 9603 7373 / 0434 705 176

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Website: [varroville.dow.org.au](http://varroville.dow.org.au)

Parish Priest: Fr. Shane Kelleher OCD

Assistant Priest: Fr “Sam” Ransom Rapirap OCD

Parish Associate: Sr “Jill” Girle Sudario, CM

### Prayer intentions

**For the sick & homebound:** Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Amanda & John Meredith, Reg Gardner, Sr Heather Burke, Marie & Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, Joe Spinnato, Susan Mella, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Francisco Carmona, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys.

*May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.*

**For our recently dearly departed:** Diana Antilla, Gladys Bergicourt, Dolores Doyle, Petar Petrinovic, Catherine Crawford, Shirley Chitty,

**Those whose anniversaries occur at this time:**

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.*



### Our Community: Rosters

3 September	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
<b>Welcomers</b>	Myra, Paul & Lori	Gerry & Margaret	Beatrix & Stuart
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Michelle, Austin & Christian	Orly, Fisolose & Claire	Robert
<b>Readers</b>	Candice & Michael	Irene & Lee	Sheenalyn & Leah
<b>Refreshments</b>	Emmarie, Suzanne & Berna	Steve & Sarah	
<b>CLOTW</b>		Rebecca & Volunteer	
<b>Flowers</b>	Vai & Jacinta	<b>Church Vacuuming</b>	Loretta & Gerard
<b>Counters</b>	Margaret & Aida	<b>Foyer Cleaning</b>	Estela & Allan

### Our Community Notices



**Readers Proclaiming the Word:** Christ is present in the Word proclaimed at Mass. The Readers in our Parish are encouraged to proclaim the Word with all the depth of life in the text. The Readings present the gathered community with the story of our identity; a reminder of who we are and where we come from.

Those who proclaim the Word are invited to study, reflect, and practise their Readings before they come to Mass on Sunday. They are encouraged to use verbal and non-verbal skills to bring out the meaning of the text. To the best of their ability they bring out the colour of the text so that Christ can speak to each one of us with a message for today. To be able to have full, conscious, active participation during the Readings it is necessary that we all actively listen with openness so that Christ present in these Readings may flourish in us.



# Bulletin Notices



**Pastoral Care in our Parish** Our parish is blessed with a Pastoral Care Team who seek to spiritually support those in our parish who may not be able to attend Mass for a number of reasons; eg, illness, bereaved, living in a nursing home, grieving or lonely.

We aspire to be visible signs of God's loving and caring presence in the life of a person who feels they need or will benefit from prayer and spiritual support. Prayer and a kind listening ear is often balm that promotes healing. This ministry is able to celebrate the Eucharist on such visits if requested. If you or anyone you know would like more information please contact the parish office.

**The Liturgy Committee** will be meeting on Wednesday at 7.30pm in the parish meeting room. All those involved in Liturgy are welcome to attend this meeting.

**Fundraising event; Save the date: 23 September at 7pm.** Campfire and Open Mike Night. Come along for a relaxed family evening with a campfire and entertainment. The cost will be \$20 pp or \$50 per family. For more information contact the parish office.

**On The Journey This Week** Fr Chima Ofor says Peter's declaration about Jesus also forms the foundation of our call to social justice. Mother Hilda tells how the Word of God has power to change your life. Plus, Fr Tony Percy and Bishop Vincent Long on Social Justice Sunday. The Journey podcast available at [www.jcr.org.au](http://www.jcr.org.au).

**Raising Fathers: Fathering from the Front Line:** Speaker: Robert Falzon; Monday 28 August 2023 Level 1, Micah House Resource Centre; 7:00pm-8:30pm Cost: Free; Join other dads and father figures for this special evening event as Robert Falzon unpacks practical advice and shares stories that are powerfully important, impacting, informative and instructional

for fathering in today's world. RSVP by 27 August. Enquiries: [jude.hennessy@dow.org.au](mailto:jude.hennessy@dow.org.au). Register: [dow.sh/RF2023](http://dow.sh/RF2023)

**MenALIVE Macarthur Regional Weekend**, 9-10 September, Micah House, Campbelltown. Cost \$70 per person (\$50 concession). Come along to our menALIVE weekend and be impacted by an encounter with the Gospel in the presence of other good men seeking to be renewed in faith and life. So many men have had their faith transformed and renewed by the experience of menALIVE, and this is an opportunity for men who have attended a menALIVE regional weekend in the past, and men who haven't, to come together to affirm the words of St Irenaeus all over again: "God is glorified when men are fully alive!" Register: [dow.sh/MACampbelltown2023](http://dow.sh/MACampbelltown2023)

**Mary in Scripture:** You are invited to discover the unique role of Our Lady, as the Ark of the Covenant, New Eve, and Queen Mother in this eye opening in-service presented with Mr Daniel Saliba (CCD Wollongong) revealing the deep theological connections between Mary and her ancient biblical types. Whether you are a catechist, or someone seeking to deepen their understanding of Mary's role in salvation history, this short in-service will provide invaluable insights into the profound symbolism and theological depth of Catholic teaching on Mary. Campbelltown - Monday 18th September: 9:30am - 12:00pm; Level 1, Micah House; 35a Cordeaux Street, Campbelltown; To register for the Campbelltown seminar, please visit <https://dow.sh/marybiblectown>

**A women's opportunity to experience a Cursillo three-day weekend;** A Cursillo weekend will be held at Carmel House, Varroville from Thursday evening 5 October to Sunday afternoon 8 October 2023. To view brochure and find out more, please email [cursillo3dayweekend@hotmail.com](mailto:cursillo3dayweekend@hotmail.com) or ring Geraldine Dayball on 0421 329 365.

**Growing Good Men Father and Teenage Son Weekend Experience** 20-22 October 2023 Cataract Scout Camp Appin. One of the most important influences in the lives of men is the relationship they had with their father or significant father figure. The encouragement and affirmation that this relationship could, and should, provide, is a key ingredient for how young men view themselves and embrace their faith and gifts as they take their place in the world. Don't miss this life-changing father and son weekend! Spots are limited to just 25 fathers with their sons aged between 12-and 16 years. This is a unique opportunity for dads and their sons to embark on a quest of discovery with Robert Falzon and the team from menALIVE. Register online <https://www.dow.org.au/events/menalive-growing-good-men-weekend/> or contact Jude Hennessy on 42222407 [jude.hennessy@dow.org.au](mailto:jude.hennessy@dow.org.au)

**Marriage Enrichment Weekend** An opportunity for you to learn to become the best version of yourselves together and live your best life in love! Come and join us on 27-29 October 2023 at a Marriage Encounter Weekend in a Covid safe environment at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, a stunning & tranquil oasis on the edge of Sydney.



## Holy Gospel according to Matthew 16: 13-20

*You are Peter, to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put this question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But you,' he said 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said, 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.' Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.



The Gospel of the Lord.

### SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY by Pope Benedict XVI

The Gospel we have just heard (cf. Mt 16:13-20) suggests two different ways of knowing Christ. The first is an impersonal knowledge, one based on current opinion. When Jesus asks: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?", the disciples answer: "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets". In other words, Christ is seen as yet another religious figure, like those who came before him. Then Jesus turns to the disciples and asks them: "But who do you say that I am?" Peter responds with what is the first confession of faith: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God". Faith is more than just empirical or historical facts; it is an ability to grasp the mystery of Christ's person in all its depth.

Yet faith is not the result of human effort, of human reasoning, but rather a gift of God: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven". Faith starts with God, who opens his heart to us and invites us to share in his own divine life. Faith does not simply provide information about who Christ is; rather, it entails a personal relationship with Christ, a surrender of our whole person, with all our understanding, will and feelings, to God's self-revelation. So Jesus' question: "But who do you say that I am?", is ultimately a challenge to the disciples to make a personal decision in his regard. Faith in Christ and discipleship are strictly interconnected.

And, since faith involves following the Master, it must become constantly stronger, deeper and more mature, to the extent that it leads to a closer and more intense relationship with Jesus. Peter and the other disciples also had to grow in this way, until their encounter with the Risen Lord opened their eyes to the fullness of faith.

Dear young people, today Christ is asking you the same question which he asked the Apostles: "Who do you say that I am?" Respond to him with generosity and courage, as befits young hearts like your own. Say to him: "Jesus, I know that you are the Son of God, who have given your life for me. I want to follow you faithfully and to be led by your word. You know me and you love me. I place my trust in you and I put my whole life into your hands. I want you to be the power that strengthens me and the joy which never leaves me".

Jesus' responds to Peter's confession by speaking of the Church: "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church". What do these words mean? Jesus builds the Church on the rock of the faith of Peter, who confesses that Christ is God.

The Church, then, is not simply a human institution, like any other. Rather, she is closely joined to God. Christ himself speaks of her as "his" Church. Christ cannot be separated from the Church any more than the head can be separated from the body (cf. 1 Cor 12:12). The Church does not draw her life from herself, but from the Lord.

