



Palm Sunday

It is only once in every three years that we publicly share together Matthew's full account of the arrest, trial and death of Jesus.

Today is that day.

Matthew's passion is rich in every sense of the word. It is the longest account of what Jesus endured, and it also has the most diverse cast of characters. Only Matthew devotes attention, not only to the tragic fate of Judas

who was filled with remorse, but also to the thirty pieces of silver which were used to buy a cemetery for foreigners called the Field of Blood. Only Matthew tells us about the dream of Pilate's wife which leads her to send a message to her husband that he should have nothing to do with Jesus. Matthew's Gospel features several dreams.

Joseph is told in a dream to take Mary as his wife, to flee with his family to Egypt and later to return from Egypt. Dreams are one of the many links between Matthew's Gospel and the Hebrew Scriptures.

This is by no means to say that Matthew's Gospel is merely an interesting piece of literature. It is only to suggest that, in Holy Week, Matthew's Passion is a wonderful encounter to enter slowly as we spend time with the Lord, allowing the mystery of the cross to deepen within us. One commitment we might make is to take a section each day this week and stay with it for ten minutes.

The trial and death of Jesus reminds us of the tragedy of injustice that continues to this day in so many places around the world. Throughout Lent, Caritas Australia, through Project Compassion, has attempted to draw our attention to many important issues in our world. We have been invited to take up the cross and follow Jesus in our own time, as we Unite Against Poverty. We can pray, with Jesus, 'Let it be as you, not I, would have it.' God's desire is for peace, healing and unity in the face of all the challenges facing humanity. Let us help Jesus carry the cross in our time.

For those coping with humanitarian emergencies in many countries around the world, that our donations to Project Compassion this Lent make a positive difference to people in need

Project Compassion boxes and envelopes can be returned to the parish during April.

29 March 2026
Palm Sunday
Year A

First Reading from the prophet Isaiah 50:4-7

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

Response: Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Second Reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel Acclamation
Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
Christ became obedient for us even to death dying on the cross.
Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Holy Gospel according to Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

Communion Antiphon
Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it,
your will be done.


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 **CARITAS AUSTRALIA** | **PROJECT COMPASSION**

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.

The
Season
of
Lent



Mass and Devotions

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil: 6pm

Sunday: 9.30am & 5pm

Samoan Mass:

1st Sunday at 12 noon

Maori Mass:

1st Sunday of each month at 2pm

Filipino Mass: 3rd Sunday of each month at 11.15am

Children's Mass: 5th Sunday of the month at 9.30am

Weekday Mass

9am each day except Thursday;

Thursday at 7.30pm

Healing Mass on the 1st Saturday of each month at 9am.

Reconciliation

every Saturday at 11am

Devotions & Prayer groups

Adoration with the Rosary:

Saturday at 9.30am

Alliance of the 2 hearts Mass

& devotion: 1st Friday of each month at 7.30pm

Divine Mercy Devotion: 3rd Sunday of each month at 3pm

Faith Circles: every Monday at 2pm & 7pm via zoom

Holy Family Fellowship: every 4th Saturday at 7pm.

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every 4th Saturday at 7pm.

Book Club: meets on the 3rd

Wednesday at 10am.

Friendship Group: is on the

1st Tuesday of the Month

Bible Study & Reflection

Group: meets Monday at 10am.

Children's Ministry

Gathering will meet on the 4th Sunday from 3– 5 pm

Ascent Youth Ministry:

meets on the 2nd & 4th Friday from 6.30pm.

Parish Notices

Diocesan Survey Update

Last year Bishop Brian asked us to fill in a survey about his vision for our parish. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. We truly appreciate your time, honesty, and care for our parish community.

Your feedback has been reviewed by the Diocesan team. The action points cover a wide range of areas, including our Liturgy and Worship, community engagement, discipleship formation, hospitality, and our shared spiritual journey.

We are pleased to let you know that the Parish Leadership Team has received the survey results and is now thoughtfully and prayerfully reviewing the recommended action points as we discern the way forward together. We will keep you updated.

Our Pastoral Care Team visit people who cannot attend Mass any longer due to ill health and age. If you know anyone who would like to have a home visit and Holy Communion please call the parish office and submit the persons contact information.

Life in the Spirit Seminar The Monday Bible Study & Reflection Group invites you to attend a 9 week series commencing on Monday 13 April at 10 am in the parish meeting room. The topic for week 1 is "For the love of God". For more information and to register please call Nellie on 0411 965 526.

Grief and Loss Support Group will meet on a monthly basis for people who have experienced grief and loss in their lives and who would like an opportunity to connect with others in a gentle environment.

Please come along at 10am till 12 on Tuesday 14 April.

2026 Sacramental Preparation

As first teachers in faith you as parents are in the best place to judge when your child is ready to participate in the sacramental life of the parish community.

Preparation classes for the children

At least 1 parent/guardian must attend all sessions with their child.

First Holy Communion: For children in year 4 & above

For children who have already completed First Reconciliation

Sessions: 5 x Saturday sessions starting 2 May at 4pm followed by Mass at 6pm

Ceremony: Weekend Masses on 6/7 June 2026

Retreat Day: Friday 5 June 2026: 9am-3pm

Practice: Friday 5 June 2026 at 7pm

Confirmation: For children in year 6 & above

Sessions: 5 x Saturday sessions starting 15 August at 4pm followed by Mass

Ceremony: Sunday 20 September 2026 at 9.30am

Retreat Day: Friday 18 September 2026 9am–3pm

First Reconciliation: For children in year 3 & above

Sessions: 4 x Saturday sessions starting 24 October at 4pm followed by Mass

Ceremony: Saturday 21 November 2026 at 4pm

There is a Parent Formation Session on Saturday 25 July at 4.30pm for all parents to attend.

If you or your children are not currently baptized Catholic, but wishes to be involved in the sacramental life of the church, there is a separate process. Please call the parish office to discuss your individual circumstances.



There's a seat for you at the table and You're Invited

Come & See night: ALPHA is starting in our Parish on Tuesday 21 April at 6:45 for 7pm dinner

Invite family, friends, work colleagues & neighbours

We encourage everyone to pray this prayer:

“Lord, today is there someone You want me to connect with outside the Church?”

You will be surprised what God can do!

For those that have already been to an Alpha come again and share your experience in a safe welcoming environment.

For more details: Contact Paul & Loriana on 0412 216 589 or Martin & Violeti on 0404 949 474

Over a million Australians have already tried Alpha. This Easter, let's set the table for thousands more.

All it takes is a simple invitation: “Would you like to come to Alpha with me?”

Holy Lands Collection The annual collection for the support of the church in the Holy Land will take place on Good Friday, April 3rd. This collection promotes the missionary work of the Church in the Holy Land by providing welfare assistance to local Christians in areas such as health, education, employment and housing. Parishes, schools, orphanages and medical centres throughout the Holy Land also rely on assistance from this collection. It is also used to maintain over 70 churches and shrines associated with the life of Jesus. Due to the Covid pandemic, the war in Gaza and now the war with Iran, recent years have been and continue to be extremely difficult for the Church and people of the Holy Land with much reduced income due to fewer pilgrims and visitors. Last year, Australian Catholics donated \$1.7 million through the Good Friday Collection, a wonderful effort that went a long way to assist the Church of the Holy Land. But this year, the Holy Land continues facing an income shortfall in funds due to the ongoing effects of the Pandemic, the war in Gaza and now the war with Iran, all of which discourage or totally prevent pilgrims coming to the Holy Land. And so, we again urge Catholics around the world to be as generous as possible. Please remember the Christians of the Holy Land on Good Friday and please keep them in your prayers. Thank you.

Appin Massacre Memorial This year is the 210th Anniversary of the Appin Massacre which occurred on 17 April 1816. Our annual memorial service will be held on Sunday, 19 April at Cataract Dam from 11:00am – 3:30pm. We would like to encourage everyone to come to the Appin Massacre Memorial as a sign of respect for the Dharawal people who were killed in the Massacre on the 17 April 1816, and to the descendants of the survivors. It is a family friendly day. The day begins with a free sausage sizzle.

Marriage Enrichment Weekend We are offering 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 19-21 June 2026 at a Marriage Encounter Weekend at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville. Book online at www.wwme.org.au or contact Christine & Terry on 0490 774 419 or nswbookings@wwme.org.au

Prayer intentions

For the sick and homebound:

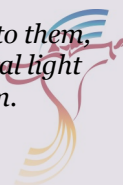
Pat Cullen, Mary Ponnalam, Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Reg Gardner, Sr Heather Burke, Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, Susan Mella, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys, Pat Stewart, Allan Marquinez, Richard Scolyer, Vladdy Mher Peralta, Pausumu Olaaiga, Bill Scibberas, Vernie Briscoe

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

For our recently departed Shirley Wrightman

Anniversaries that occur at this time Anne La Spina

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



The Journey is the weekly podcast for parishioners in the Diocese of Wollongong. Each week it brings you great music, formation in faith, with an array of fantastic presenters from our Diocese and around Australia. www.jcr.org.au

What's on around the Diocese? Check out upcoming Diocesan events and courses - too many to list in one place. Subscribe here and we will keep you in the loop dow.sh/stayingconnected



Contact Us

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Deacon:
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Easter Triduum Timetable

- Holy Thursday Mass at 7.30pm
- Good Friday Stations of the Cross at 10am
- Passion of the Lord at 3pm
- Holy Saturday Liturgy of the hours at 9am
- Easter Vigil at 7pm
- Easter Sunday Mass at 9.30am & 5pm.
- Divine Mercy Sunday 12 April from 2pm for Rosary & Chaplet, Adoration, Reconciliation and Mass at 3pm.



Rosters

5 April 2026	Saturday 7pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
Welcomers	Gabriel & Myra	Sarah, Jeanne & Jessica	Geoff, Margaret & Beatrix
Altar Servers	Andrew, Diane, Sebastian & Eliana	Orly	Michael & Nathan
Readers	Louise & Candice	Irene & Lee	Gloria & Leah
Refreshments	Tracey, Richard & Patricia	4th Sunday Choir & Karen	Fev & Maree
Altar Linen	Margaret McD	CLOTW:	
Flowers	Lorraine & Effie	Church Vacuuming	Feiloakitohi Family & Margaret
Counters	George & Digna	Foyer	Feiloakitohi Family & Maritas
Choirs	Holy Thursday 2 April at 7.30pm	Grace & Karen's Group	
	Good Friday 3 April at 3pm	Nick & Maria's Group	
	Saturday 4 April Easter Vigil at 7pm	Samoan Group	
	Easter Sunday 5 April	Varroville Gospel Choir	5pm Grace Choir

Gospel reflection by Greg Sunter

The Passion narrative, as described in the gospel of Matthew, is keen to drive home two particular points. Firstly, throughout this gospel, the gospel writer is at pains to demonstrate Jesus as fulfilling the prophecy of scripture. At the time of the arrest and the use of the thirty pieces of silver, we are reminded that these things took place to fulfil scripture. Secondly, this particular gospel emphasises the innocence of Jesus throughout the passion narrative: he is 'sold out' by one of his followers; his trial before the Sanhedrin is a farce; his most loyal follower denies association with him; Pilate declares himself innocent of Jesus' blood and the crowd accepts the consequences of their actions. At no point is any hint of guilt cast over Jesus. He is an innocent whose fate has been manipulated by others. In this gospel there is no conversation between Jesus and the criminals between whom he is crucified. There is no suggestion that Jesus too is a criminal who is deserving of his fate. His innocence is manifest.

These two themes merge together in this gospel. The manner of Jesus' arrest, trial and death are all in accordance with the prophecy of scripture (i.e. in accordance with God's will), and yet it is emphasised throughout that Jesus is innocent. There can be no accusation that Jesus is in any way deserving of his treatment and yet what befalls him is in keeping with God's plan. It emphasises the sacrificial act made by Jesus: a proven innocent giving his life for the good of others. The actions of those who plot against Jesus to seek his downfall actually serve to bring about his purpose. No other outcome was possible. The writer assures the audience that the death of Jesus was no accident; it was intended from the very beginning.

Towards the end of the 19th Century, the German scholar, Martin Kähler, described the gospels as 'passion narratives with lengthy introductions'. Over time, this description was more commonly applied to the gospel of Mark, but it is quite true of all four gospels. The passion elements are the climax of each gospel narrative and were probably written first to establish the unique interpretation of each of the gospel communities. The remainder of the gospel was written to 'set the scene' for the culmination of the message in the passion. Reading the four accounts of the passion reveal the unique styles and themes of the different gospel writers.

This Passion narrative has been used in the past as justification for persecution of Jews. The text has the people of Jerusalem calling out, 'his blood be on us and on our children!' This has been interpreted (poorly) as reason to condemn all subsequent generations of Jews for the death of Jesus. However, this gospel was written in the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The gospel writer sought some explanation for this disaster in the story of Jesus' life and death: it is the children of the crowd at Jesus' death who suffered in the fall of Jerusalem.