

<b>Date:</b>	<b>9th/10th March 2024</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Lent</b>		
<b>Mass Time:</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>
<b>Vigil: 5:00 PM</b>	Ed Junis	Colleen Baker	Felix Kobus	Tanya Baldwin
<b>8:00 AM</b>	Marek Grus	Vicky Walker	Ros Comfort	Tom Horsfall
<b>9:30 AM</b>	Richard Merchant	Anne Willis	Steve Bishop	Peta Sparkes
<b>Music</b>				Chris Wilson
<b>Streeters</b>				
<b>Date:</b>	<b>16th/17th March 2024</b>	<b>Fifth Sunday of Lent</b>		
<b>Mass Time:</b>	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Prayer of the Faithful</b>
<b>Vigil: 5:00 PM</b>	Ian Miles	Anne Maureen Scarff	Wilhelmina de Raadt	Margaret Smith
<b>8:00 AM</b>	Randall Noney	Cecilia Hunt	Jim Gresser	Kim Crawford
<b>9:30 AM</b>	John Belfanti	Phil Saville	Margaret Hickey	Matt Aldous
<b>Morning Tea:</b>	Passionist Family Group			Chris Wilson

### St Thomas Aquinas Parish

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777  
 PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777  
 Phone: 02 4754 1052; Emergency ONLY: 0474 631 168

**Parish Email:** email: [springwood@parracatholic.org](mailto:springwood@parracatholic.org)  
**Parish Website:** [www.stachurchspringwood.org.au](http://www.stachurchspringwood.org.au)  
**Parish Facebook Page:** St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood  
**Parish Administrator:** Rev Christopher del Rosario (E: [christopher.del-rosario@parracatholic.org](mailto:christopher.del-rosario@parracatholic.org))  
**Parish Pastoral Council:** Email suggestions to [springwoodparishpc@gmail.com](mailto:springwoodparishpc@gmail.com)  
**Parish Office Hours:** Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm



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**Weekend Masses:** Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am and 9:30 am  
**Weekday Mass:** Monday - Saturday 9:30 am  
**Adoration:** Monday - Saturday from 8:15 am - 9:15 am  
**First Friday Adoration:** Every first Friday of the month 7:00 pm  
**Reconciliation:** Saturday after 9:30 am Mass and 4:00-5:00 pm before the Vigil Mass  
**Children's Liturgy:** 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am  
**Baptisms:** 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11:00 am and by appointment  
**Weddings:** By appointment  
**Funerals:** Please Contact the Parish Office

*We respect the Darug people and their elders both past and present, as the traditional custodians of this land on which we celebrate the Eucharist.*

### Kid's Corner

#### Gospel

John 3:16-17

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

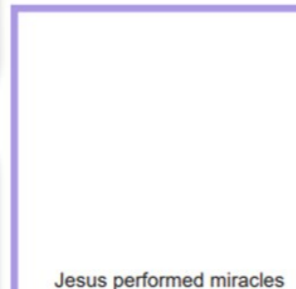
'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.'



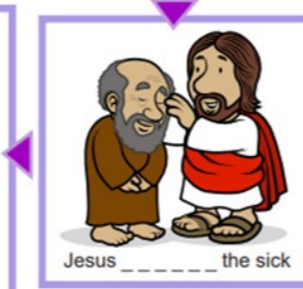
Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ in a stable



When he grew up he proclaimed the Good News



Jesus performed miracles



Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the sick



Jesus' disciples joined him for the Last \_\_\_\_\_



Jesus was nailed to a cross and died



\_\_\_\_\_ days later, Jesus was raised to \_\_\_\_\_

Draw or write some of the ways we can see God's love in the world today.

### Laetare Sunday

It hasn't been long since the Church celebrated Gaudete Sunday, a day of rejoicing during the Advent season. This day the Church sports rose as a sign of the light of Christ bursting forth from the penitential violet in expectation of the Birth of Our Lord. Rose is a striking colour in the Church as it is only used twice a year (the Priest also has the pleasure of looking like a giant easter egg twice a year). Today, for the fourth Sunday of Lent the Church celebrates Laetare Sunday. 'Laetare', Latin for 'rejoice' comes from the prophet Isaiah who prophesies that the coming Messiah will liberate the Israelites from their pending exile and restore them to glory. Today we are called to rejoice we edge ever closer to the Easter festivities where Christ, through the Paschal Mystery, conquers sin and death, and paves the way for our salvation. With all this in mind our Gospel for Laetare Sunday doesn't exactly invoke rejoicing. Our Lord is visited by the Pharisee Nicodemus in the cover of night as the latter is intrigued by Jesus' words and actions. In the Gospel of John 'night' or 'darkness' usually refers to a period of evil, a time where the dark forces of Satan enact their malicious plans (e.g. Jn 13:30: Judas leaving the Last Supper). As such our Gospel, placed in the context of night, at a cursory glance doesn't evoke joy... or does it? Why then has the Church chosen this Gospel for Laetare Sunday as we look forward to the Paschal Mystery?



I've always been very impressed at Protestants who easily quote scripture verses like their favourite songs. I recall early in my seminary formation speaking with a Protestant friend of mine who quoted verse after verse regarding a topic we discussed. Quoting verses are difficult as there are so many. Today we are presented with probably the most famous and well-quoted verse in the Scriptures:

'Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.' - Jn 3:16

This verse, etched into the minds of many, sums up the mission of Jesus Christ in a nutshell. We don't need to delve deeper into this verse as it already speaks volumes of how incredible our God is. The love of God is undying, unyielding, and relentless that God goes into the depths of human misery to save mankind. Despite the constant rejection he faces, not limited to first century Israel, Christ continues to provide humanity a way to the Father. That way is Him - He is the way to the Father as through his willing sacrifice he opens the way to Paradise. In short, salvation is possible through Jesus Christ. Whilst the dark setting of Jesus and Nicodemus' conversation may confuse the reader Our Lord's words bring joy to the event. We are a people not left alone to our own devices, but one eternally loved by God who gives his life for our salvation.

Dear friends, with Easter drawing ever closer may we express our joy towards God through our continued resolve for our penances and sacrifices. Our penances at present may be a struggle but know that it is temporal. In only a few days' time we celebrate the Paschal Mystery where we rejoice in Christ's victory. Bearing this in mind may we ask for the grace to persevere in Lent; to rejoice for Christ is our victor and Saviour.

With every blessing in this Lenten season,

Fr. Chris

**Entrance Antiphon** Cf Isaiah 66:10-11

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.  
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;  
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

**First Reading** 2 Chronicles 36:14-16. 19-23

A reading from the second book of Chronicles

*The wrath and the mercy of the Lord are revealed in the exile and liberation of his people.*

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation.'

And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up."

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 136. R. v.6

(R.) Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

1. By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung our harps. (R.)
2. For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. 'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion's songs.' (R.)
3. O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! (R.)
4. O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! (R.)

**Second Reading** Ephesians 2:4-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

*When we were dead through sins, he brought us to life.*

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ – it is through grace that you have been saved – and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he has meant us to live it.

**Gospel Acclamation** John 3:16

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!  
God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son, that all who believe in him might have eternal life.  
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

**Gospel** John 3:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

*God sent his Son into the world that we might be saved through him.*

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,

because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son.

On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil.

And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

**Communion Antiphon** Cf Psalm 121: 3-4

Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one together.  
It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.



**Sick:** Aurea Hernandez, Julie Somerville, Fr Bob Bossini, Dane San Pedro, Marama Watson, Margaret Munro, and all  
**Private Intentions.**

*Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.*

**PARISH AND DIOCESAN NEWS****FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING OUR PARISH AND ITS WORKS:**

There are a variety of ways you can support our Parish and its Mission:

- **QR Code:** located on the Bulletin Front Page.
- **EFTPOS Machines:** located at the back of the Church.
- **Direct Debit:** Please contact the Parish Office for more details.
- **Direct Deposit:** Details are as follows:  
Bank Account Name: Springwood  
BSB: 067-950  
Bank Account Number: 00000560  
Reference: Your name in full.  
All donations go to maintaining our Church and supporting the various ministries associated with our Parish.

Thank you to donors like you, we were able to meet the cost of the restoration of the candle holders but we still have a long way to go. We will need your generosity to continue to collect funds that will go towards the purchase of our new Atar Crucifix. We are so grateful for your continued support.

**HELP WANTED:** Readers for Palm Sunday (Vigil & Sunday Masses), Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter (Vigil & Sunday Masses). Anyone interested please contact the parish office on 02 4754 1052 or email us: springwood@parracatholic.org. Thank you.

**ENTERING HOLY WEEK RETREAT:** A mini retreat day will be held on the 23rd of Mar from 9am to 3pm at St Canice's, Katoomba. The day will start with 9am Mass. See Parish Noticeboard for details.

**2024 ST THOMAS AQUINAS CONFIRMATION SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM****Parent Information Sessions:**

Tuesday 21st May at 7:00 pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church  
Tuesday 28th May at 7:00 pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church

**Children & Parent Information Sessions:**

Saturday 8th June at 11:00 am, St Thomas Aquinas Church  
Saturday 15th June at 11:00 am, St Thomas Aquinas Church (and practice)

**Confirmation will take place on Wednesday 19th June 7:00pm at St Thomas Aquinas Church**

For any enquiries please contact our parish office on 02 4754 1052 or email: springwood@parracatholic.org

**PLEASE DONATE TO PROJECT COMPASSION:**

As the eldest child in a low-income farming family in rural Malawi, **Memory** faced many barriers to her education. But, with the support of Caritas Australia, she enrolled in a technical school and became the first female carpenter in her village.

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow **for all future generations.**

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your parish, by visiting: [caritas.org.au/project-compassion](http://caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or by calling 1800 024 413.



**STATIONS OF THE CROSS** is held every Friday during Lent at 6pm. All are welcome to participate.

**ST THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH CHOIR** is currently looking for more singers, of ALL VOICE TYPES. Do you enjoy singing? So, if you enjoy singing and would like to join this happy group, we practice most Monday nights weekly in the church at 168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood at 7.30pm to 9 pm. You will be made very welcome. We sing on the first Sunday of each month. All music is supplied free. St Augustine said: "... who sings prays twice". So come and join us in praising the Lord (twice). Enquiries Chris Wilson 0425 290 952 or Margaret Hickey 02 4751 2343 (*answering machine if unattended*).

The STA Ladies Fellowship will be meeting on Friday 15th March in the Parish Centre after 9:30am Mass. The guest Speaker is long time Parishioner JOHN SYMANSKI. John will talk about his experiences as a refugee from post-war Poland. Come along and hear his story.



A **big thank you** to our outgoing PPC members: **Dennis Farrar, Elizabeth Matulewicz and Vicky Walker** for their years of service and dedication to our Parish Pastoral Council. Your contribution of ideas, energy and enthusiasm have been invaluable and continue to be deeply appreciated!

Anyone interested in Australian Church history, particularly the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, are invited to join a pilgrimage which begins on Tues 14<sup>th</sup> May and concludes on Fri 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Accommodation is at St. Joseph's Convent Heritage and Conference Center Perthville. For any enquiries please contact: [perthville.coordinator@sosj.org.au](mailto:perthville.coordinator@sosj.org.au) or phone 6337 2946. Bookings close on 7/4/24.

**MUSIC FOR EASTER TRIDUUM**

**WORKSHOP: 12TH MARCH:** Join us for another Music Workshop led by Eric Grella to learn more about Music for the Easter Triduum. This event will be held at the Bishop Bede Heather Centre, Blacktown on 12 March from 7-9pm. This workshop is for all who are involved in the music ministry of their parish, and anyone interested in diving deeper into the world of liturgical music! RSVP to [lucy.woodbury@parracatholic.org](mailto:lucy.woodbury@parracatholic.org) or call 0460 037 795 by 8 March.