

Date:	2nd/3rd March 2024	Third Sunday of Lent			
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading	Second Reading	Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ian Miles	Cheryl Kirby	Neil Kirby	Margaret Smith	Andrew Wilson
8:00 AM	Randall Noney	Cecilia Hunt	Tanya Graham	Jim Gresser	
9:30 AM	Phil Saville	Anne Edwards	Brian Edwards	Matt Aldous	Chris Wilson
Morning Tea:	Catechists/St Vincent de Paul				
Date:	9th/10th March 2024	Fourth Sunday of Lent			
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading	Second Reading	Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ed Junis	Colleen Baker	Felix Kobus	Tanya Baldwin	Chris Wilson
8:00 AM	Marek Grus	Vicky Walker	Ros Comfort	Tom Horsfall	
9:30 AM	Richard Merchant	Anne Willis	Steve Bishop	Peta Sparkes	Streeters

Kid's Corner

Jesus was not pleased when he found people selling things in the temple. Some people sold cattle, sheep and doves for sacrifice and some people changed Roman coins for temple coins. Draw some traders and money-changers in the temple and write down what Jesus said to them.



Gospel

John 2:13-22

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.



There are times when things make us angry; even Jesus got angry and upset sometimes. But there are good and bad ways of dealing with anger. Complete the statements below by using words and/or pictures.

When I'm angry I sometimes do the wrong thing by...

When I'm angry I can do the right thing by...

St Thomas Aquinas Parish

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Parish Email:	email: springwood@parracatholic.org
Parish Website:	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)
Parish Pastoral Council:	Email suggestions to springwoodparishpc@gmail.com
Parish Office Hours:	Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

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.



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Understanding God's Laws

I recall vividly telling my friends from Macquarie University of my decision to leave my course and join the seminary... suffice to say it wasn't met with joy and elation. Coming from a Catholic school that celebrated both priestly and religious vocations to a secular university generally concerned with forming professionals focused on high income it wasn't surprising to hear the worry from my peers. I was immediately bombarded with a plethora of questions: 'How will you support yourself? Will you earn enough to feed your family? Does that mean you've been religious this whole time?' These questions were easy enough to answer. However, one particular question stumped me, one I wasn't able to answer that day: 'If you become a priest you'll have to follow all these laws: does that mean you can't live an interesting life? Are you bound to be boring forever?' It is hard not to be stumped with a question like that when our first reading for today concerns the law. On Mt. Sinai God gives to the Israelites, through Moses, the Ten Commandments; these laws were to govern their lives from that point onwards. Like my peer who questioned my decision, and somewhat my sanity for joining the seminary, so too our topic for discussion concerns the law; are the commandments detrimental to our freedom? Do they restrict us from living an interesting and wholesome life?



Prior to God delivering the law to Moses he promises a covenant with the people of Israel. A covenant is not simply a promise or contract between two parties, it is a sacred family bond. We recall last week hearing of Abraham's fidelity to God resulting in him being named the father of a great nation; in short God has specifically chosen the Israelites, from all the nations of the world, to be his promised people; they are not another nation among many, but God's chosen people. This means they are set apart from all nations - they are called to be Holy. As such God gives to the Israelites his Law. When examining the Ten Commandments it is clear that Our Lord is very thorough: the first three commandments concern love and devotion of Himself, the remaining laws highlight love and respect of one's neighbour. With this in mind we return to our initial inquiry: Are the laws given by God detrimental to human freedom? Do they restrict our lives? If one pursues a life surrounded by sin then yes, if one seeks to live a virtuous life then no. The law is provided to safeguard one's life from falling into the traps of sin and despair. God, in his wisdom, provided the law to distinguish his people from the surrounding nations who frequently committed sinful acts to appease their gods; human sacrifice, sexual promiscuity, and vengeance were common amongst the surround nations. Through the law God liberates Israel from the effects of sin in order to pursue a life virtuous life focused on Him.

My brothers and sisters, how easy it is to view our Church doctrine and laws like my peers. We must never see them as restrictive but liberating. In Christ we are able to pursue true freedom as we are not tainted or bogged down by the effects of sin but made free through the grace of God. May we each have the courage and humility to face our own struggles and temptations with the grace of God, recognising that it is only through him that we have the victory.

With every blessing in this Lenten season,

Fr. Chris

Entrance Antiphon Cf Psalm 24:15-16

My eyes are always on the Lord,
for he rescues my feet from the snare.
Turn to me and have mercy on me,
for I am alone and poor.

Or Cf Ezekiel 36:23-26

When I prove my holiness among you,
I will gather you from all the foreign lands;
and I will pour clean water upon you
and cleanse you from all your impurities,
and I will give you a new spirit, says the Lord.

First Reading Exodus 20:1-17

A reading from the book of Exodus

The Law was given through Moses.

God spoke all these words. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

'You shall have no gods except me.

'You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me; but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

'You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God to misuse it, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.

'Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, not your animals nor the stranger who lives with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred.

'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given to you.

'You shall not kill.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.'

Responsorial Psalm Ps 18:8-11. R. Jn 6:68

(R.) Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

1. The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple. (R.)
2. The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes. (R.)

Responsorial Psalm (Continued)

3. The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just. (R.)
4. They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

*We are preaching a crucified Christ, a scandal to many,
but to those who have been called, the wisdom of God.*

While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Gospel Acclamation John 3:16

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son,
that all who believe in him might have eternal life.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Gospel John 2:13-25

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

Communion Antiphon Cf Psalm 83: 4-5

The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.



Recently Deceased: Simone Mitrevski

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.

WELCOME KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS! Let us all come together in giving a warm welcome to our joyful and charming St Thomas Aquinas Kindergarten students. They are joining us in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the 9:30 am Sunday Mass, 3rd March. May Our Lord watch over these children in every area of their lives and keep them safe we pray, Amen.



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.

NEW CLEANING ROSTER: Our new cleaning roster (in a yellow envelope at the back of the church) is now available for pick up. Thank you to all our energetic volunteers!

PLEASE DONATE TO PROJECT COMPASSION:

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available at the back of the church, by visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion or by calling 1800 024 413.

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



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*).

STA EARTHCARE GROUP invites you to participate in a **CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA** day activity on **MARCH 3rd** from **10.30am, after SUNDAY MASS has concluded.**

You will be able to help clean up the larger church environment. Simply come along with closed-in shoes, a hat, gloves and collection bags are available. This was a successful activity last year – you can do as much or as little as you choose.

An extra **INITIATIVE THIS YEAR** is that if you have some **unwanted spectacles and glasses frames**, you can donate them at the EARTHCARE gazebo and they will be sent to an optometry organisation for re-use in third world countries. **Simply bring them along on March 3rd.** Any enquiries call Dennis Farrar 0425 209 840.

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.

*"Do you wish your
prayer to fly toward
God? Make for it two
wings: fasting and
almsgiving."*

—Saint Augustine of Hippo