

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

PARISH OF SEVEN HILLS

"Still a wonderful place to pray & stay."

7 Grantham Road, Seven Hills. NSW. 2147

Ph. 9622 2920

Email: secretary@lol7hills.com.au

Parish Priest: Fr Henry Huu Duc Tran
Parish Deacon: Deacon Thong Nguyen
Parish Office Team: Rosie Sadipoor, Kim Dang Jane Nguyen
Office Hours: Monday-Friday: 9am - 3.00pm
WEEKDAY MASS: Tues, Wed, Fri. 8.00am
Thursday 9.00am
WEEKEND MASS: Saturday Vigil 6pm
Sunday 8am & 9.30am

Parish School: OLOL 8869 6800
Principal: Ms Keiran Byrnes
Reconciliation: Saturday 4:30-5:30pm
Baptismal Preparation: 17th April 2024
Baptism: 28th April 2024
Sacrament Co-Ordinator: Mrs Artelle Lenthall
Parish Website: www.lol7hills.com.au
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LOL7Hills/>

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT 17 March 2024 • Year B



Let us Pray for the Sick

Rico Valentine Abadam, Leonila Ahillon, Mary Attard, Marija & Family Barclay, Rosella Booth, Penny Briscoe, Para Dias, Florence & Roslyn, Ronald Fountain, Julian Gasperini, Ronald Gomez, Anthony Janicska, Paul Leong, Bob & Therese Marini, Blago Milicevic, Carlos Moreno, Debra Price, Camy Ratnam, Eustace Ratnam, Sue Tipaldo, Sr Colleen O'Sullivan, Wally Villanueva.

If you would like to add to our Sick List or know of any Parishioner who is unwell please contact Father Henry or email the Parish Office: secretary@lol7hills.com.au

We can also arrange for Holy Communion or a visit if required.

Let us Pray for the Deceased

Recently Deceased: Mila Acosta, Emma Barriom, Barrie Chamberlain, Lila Bate, Ben Benjabutr, Dulcie Duraisamy, Michael Ellis, Jasmin Fernando, Alberto Fernandez, Charlie Gauci, Mally S. hatch, Fr Tony Kelly, Marie Marchand, Jossie Marie Manalac, Angela Michael, Mario Mirador, Gloria Momblan, Vinh Hoa Nguyen, Joemar Noquera, Alaoma Okoro Ogbulachi, Perl Perera, Antonio Solis Palmos, Lorna Wettasinha.

Anniversaries: Beena Abraham, Fe Licup Carmen, Catherine Chandra, Rosario Cabasa, John Fernando, M.A Fernando, Mr C Francis & Mrs J Francis, Francisca Garcia, Zoltan Gartner, Sr Gizella Gartner, Josephine Gomez, Rita Leon, Apolinario Maglaya, Irene Moroney, Thomas Morrissey, Joseph Nguyen, Gil Opina, Cordula Paiva, John Francis Ratnam, Jose Reyes, Cornelio & Iluminada Rondario, Maria Trinh, Alison Vella, Melchor Usman, Pastora Villarta.

Remembrance: Neil Amaratunga, France Angseeing, Carmen Attard, Roy, Mary & Des Barney, Frank & Fortunata Baiada, Sam Borg, Rolily Burac, Saviour Caruana, Fe Licup Carmen, Tania McGove, Sam & Silvia Debbattista, Carmen, Jimmy, Tony, Tania, Vivian, Joe & Lancer De Guire, Nevis Fernando, Maximilian & Julian Epondulan, Pru Famcomb, Melvyn Fernandes, Mary & Sam Galea, Sam Gabo, Selvam Irudayaraj, Flordeliza Limguangco—Labancz, Pauline Meilak, Mangion Family, Sashin Patrick Manamperi, Mary Mifsud, Emilia & William Mifsud, Anton & Lourda Motha, Mary Muscat, Mary & Francis Muscat, Ngan Pin, John & Roseline Ratnam, Eamon & John O'Sullivan, Jonathan Tek Kie, Shane Vaz, Vinnie Zahra, The Holy Souls in Purgatory.

**Names are to be submitted to the Parish Office on or before a Thursday and will be*

Funeral Notices

May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen



THE PILGRIM STATUE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

The Statue of Virgin Mary is available for home visitation and will reside with you for a week, being Sunday to Saturday. If you are wishing to participate, please leave your name and address at the Parish Office or contact Maryse Augseesing on 0467 701 010.

Our Lady of Lourdes

Ever Immaculate Virgin, Mother of mercy, health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comfort of the afflicted, you know my needs, my troubles, my sufferings; cast on me a look of pity. By appearing in the grotto of Lourdes, you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary, from which you dispense your favours, and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and physical.

I come, therefore, with the most unbounded confidence to implore your maternal intercession.

Obtain most loving mother, my requests, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.



REGULAR COLLECTIONS - First and Second

FIRST COLLECTION and Matt's Point is for the support of Priests throughout the Diocese.

ON-LINE BANK DONATIONS

Account name: Parramatta Diocesan Clergy

BSB: 067 950

ACC: 00 00 4265

Reference: Seven Hills - 6035

SECOND COLLECTION or Planned Giving Program

On behalf of the Parish Community, I would like to thank you very much for your ongoing support, which has been absolutely vital in keeping our Parish going strong. Projects completed include the Hall Kitchen renovation, Parish Meeting Room painting, Parish Office and Meeting Room Roof painted, Church roof cleaned and ceiling repaired and painted.

ON-LINE BANK DONATIONS

Account Name: Seven Hills Catholic Church.

BSB: 067 950

ACC: 000552

Reference: (Your *Planned Giving envelope number* or for a one off donation, 'DONATION')

IN-PERSON BANK DEPOSIT (at a Bank Inst / Branch)

Account Name: Seven Hills Catholic Church

BSB: 062 315

ACC ID # 00901486

AGENT # 660



KEEP UP TO DATE

By visiting our parish website with news, the bulletin, prayers and much more - a great way to stay up to date with what's on in our parish Visit www.lol7hills.org.au

FIRST READING A reading from the prophet 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.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(R) Create a clean heart in me, O God.

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offence.
O wash me more and more from my guilt.
and cleanse me from my sin. **(R.)**

3. Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervour sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you **(R.)**

2. A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **(R.)**

SECOND READING A reading from the letter to the 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.

The Word of the Lord.

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!

GOSPEL A reading from the holy Gospel according to 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.





Dear friends,

'A time to be born and a time to die', many of us perhaps are familiar with this quote from the book of Ecclesiasticus (cf. Eccle 3.1-8). This is part of the whole passage highlighting some of the key moments in human lives aimed to remind us of this truth that God is in control of our destiny and every moment in our lives is in God's providential hands. For this reason, this particular passage has become the popular choice for funeral occasions.

This 'time' concept helps us understand better and connect us with the 'hour' concept Jesus mentions twice in the Gospel today to indicate his coming Death like a wheat grain fallen on the ground, Crucifixion through the uplifting of his body and glorious Resurrection to bear the fruits of salvation and life in eternity for all peoples.

By talking about his hour, Jesus perhaps means to say to the disciples, Andrew and Philip in this case, that the Passion and Death that he was going to go through and his glorious Resurrection is not something that will happen accidentally, but belong to God's world-saving plan. More significantly Jesus also used the symbolic image of the wheat grain fallen on the ground, broken and died to yield a rich harvest of souls for God to convey his teaching.

From the symbol of the wheat grain dying and bringing for new life, Jesus goes a step further in encouraging us his followers not to attach to this passing world and not to be fearful even of death, since all earthly things will not last forever and the matter of life or death is not ours to decide, but God's.

This spirit of detachment allows us to take the next step to be a committed disciple, the one who is prepared to follow and serve him wholeheartedly as a servant. Consequently, our service will be recognised by the Father and we shall be honoured by Him for our faithful service to Jesus, His Son.

Let us ask Jesus to grant us the grace to completely entrust ourselves into God who is in control of all things in our lives and generously serve Him in whatever way we can and through whatever talents we receive, so that we will receive the highest honour from the Father, which is a share of the life in eternity.

Have a service-filled week,

Fr Henry

PARISH NEWS...

ALTAR SERVERS INSTALLATION MASS

Congratulations to our new Altar servers who are installed to serve in the Altar Serving ministry in our parish at 9.30am Mass this Sunday 17th March, 2024. Please join them for a special morning tea after Mass.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday during lent at 7.30pm.

LOURDES LUMINATE YOUNG ADULTS GROUP NIGHT

All are welcome to join us on Thursday 21 March 2024 6:30pm-9pm in the Parish Meeting Room. Featuring guest speaker: Christine Woodward sharing with our young adults about forgiveness and penance. We will also join the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (CSFN) via Zoom in the Stations of the Cross at 7:30pm.

CATHOLIC YOUTH PARRAMATTA (CYP): GOOD FRIDAY NIGHT WALK STATIONS OF THE CROSS FRIDAY

On the 28 March, 11.30pm 1000+ young pilgrims across the Diocese are due to arrive at our parish and walk 21km passing through other parishes ending at St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta (expected finish 6am Holy Saturday). All are welcome to join at Seven Hills and volunteers are needed for various roles like roleplay re-enactment of the Stations, ushering, holding candles, musicians and singers. Please contact Ian Epondulan: 0401161264 / ian_ube@hotmail.com

EASTER VIGIL MASS CHOIR

Any choir members or parishioners are welcome to come and join the Easter Saturday Vigil choir please. New parishioners are most welcome to join in the singing. Christine Clarke has kindly made herself available for any cantors or choir to practice for that mass on the Saturday 30th of March in the church 10.30am—12noon.

DRIVING CONCERNS

One of our neighbours has sent to our Parish Office an email reminding our parishioners of two important matters as following: 1/ Please put the indicators on to indicate which way to go when we exit the carpark, 2/ Elizabeth Lane is a NO STOPPING area, so we should never stop there. Thank you all for your co-operation. Fr Henry

PARISH FIRST RECONCILIATION

Congratulation to the 29 children in our parish who made their First Reconciliation on Wednesday. Please remember them in your prayers this week.

PARISH LENTEN RECONCILIATION

Please spare your time to join the community for the Second Rite of Reconciliation at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 26.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING

Members of the PPC spent some time to discuss the needs of our parish based on the data gathered from our last survey. Amongst your many suggestions, the wish for more Adult Faith Education seems to stand out. In response to the issue, we have made various attempts to provide support to the community via our annual retreats, the Young Adult meetings, Prayer Group meetings, Lenten book club meetings, especially our occasional hand-outs and weekly bulletins. Please pay more attention to these initiatives. The Council also dedicated time to study the Family Group Movement.

HOLY WEEK & EASTER PROGRAM MARCH		
24	Palm Sunday	Vigil, 8.00am, 9.30am
26	Parish Reconciliation 2 nd Rite	7.30pm
27	Individual Confession	8.30-9.30am
28	Individual Confession Practice for Acolytes, Readers, Altar Servers Holy Thursday Mass	8.30-9.30am 3.00pm 7.30pm
29	Good Friday Stations Practice for Acolytes, Readers, Altar Servers Celebration of the Lord's Passion	10.00am 11.30am 3.00pm
30	Individual Confession Practice for Acolytes, Readers, Altar Servers Holy Saturday Mass	9.30-10.30am 2.00pm 6.00pm
31	Easter Sunday Masses	8.00am, 9.30am

Pontifical Holy Land Good Friday Collection: 29 March

Every year on Good Friday, a collection is taken up in every Catholic church to support the people and places of the Holy Land. The Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land have the unique responsibility of caring for the Holy Places as well as caring for the Christians living in the Holy Land. Your donation is a direct way to make a difference in the lives of people who are keeping alive the Christian presence in the land of Jesus, often in the face of great difficulty in recent years. Make your donation this Holy Week via the envelopes in your parish or donate directly via Commissariat of the Holy Land, 47 Victoria St. Waverley NSW 2024 or holyland@franciscans.org.au.

Synod 2023 Update:

Decree issued and Development of Diocesan Plan Begins

In January, the Synodal Decree from our inaugural Diocesan Synod was issued, enabling us to move forward in the development of a Diocesan Plan. Join us in the next phase of our journey, as we discern a new path forward for our local Church in Western Sydney and Blue Mountains. The Diocesan Plan for a Synodal Church will launch at the Diocesan Gathering Saturday 10 August. Learn more at parracatholic.org/synod

Diocesan Lent & Holy Week Scripture Reflection Evening: 20 March

Looking for a way to reflect on your experience of Lent as we enter Holy Week or interested in praying with the Scripture readings for Holy Week? Register for the Diocesan Lent & Holy Week Scripture Reflection Evening Wednesday 20 March 2024 6:30PM to 8:30pm. RSVP via QR or get in touch with the team via met@parracatholic.org



Penrith Parish Stations of the Cross for Cancer Patients, Families and Survivors: 22 March

St Nicholas of Myra Parish, Penrith, warmly invites cancer patients, survivors and families who have lost loved ones to cancer to participate in an Outdoor Stations of the Cross on Friday 22 March at 7pm at the Parish. You can bring along a small cross / candle along with their names to be prayed for or join us to carry the big wooden cross. For further details, contact the parish office on (02) 4721 2509.



Fifth Sunday of Lent 16th & 17th March Please donate to Project Compassion

The work of Caritas Australia is only possible with generous supporters and the dedication, passion and tenacity of our local partners who implement the programs. They are the heroes on the ground working tirelessly behind-the-scenes every day to create a better future for their communities.

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 or by calling 1800 024 413.

Glenbrook Parish Lenten Biblical Studies: 19 March

St Finbar's Parish, Glenbrook, is hosting two Biblical Studies sessions on the Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark on Tuesday 19 March at the parish hall from 7.30pm. Parish Priest Fr Joseph Lam OSA will lead the sessions. To RSVP and for more information, please contact secretary@stfinbars.org.au

Safeguarding Face-to-face Training Opportunity for Cycle 1

Have you had a chance to complete your first three Mandatory Safeguarding Modules as yet?
Module 3: Tuesday 19 March (10.00am – 11.30am)
To register, please visit <https://parracatholic.org/connect/events/?topic=safeguarding>

MET FaithLIFE Theology Short Course: from 16 April

Considering learning about theology? Wanting to expand your language for expressing your faith? Seeking ways to deepen the way you put your faith into practice? Sign up now for the 3-session FaithLIFE Theology short course with Dr John Collins on Tuesdays 16 + 23 + 30 April! Registration and more dates and details via QR or get in touch with the team via met@parracatholic.org



St Finbar's 17 Days Central Europe Tour in May 2025

St Finbar's 17 Days Central Europe Tour from 8-24th May 2025, please register your interest with the St Finbar's Parish office (secretary@stfinbars.org.au). The tour includes stops in **Germany** (Frankfurt - Weimar-Berlin, Nuremberg-Munich), **Polen** (Poznan, Warsaw-Ausschwitz-Krakow), **Hungary** (Budapest), **Slovakia** (Bratislava), **Austri**(Vienna), **Czech Republic** (Prague): 5079 AUD, excludes flights (ca 1500-1800AUD). June Bouche, who is a St Finbar's parishioner and director of RubyTravels, organises and manages the trip on St Finbar's behalf.

Free Online Formation on Synodal Spirituality

Dive into 'Synodal Spirituality' with this FREE online short formation course, taught by Sr Patty Andrew OSU. Part of the FaithLIFE series hosted by the Mission Enhancement Team, the course discusses communal discernment, active engagement, and creative faith responses to challenges in the mission of the Church today. Enrol now and take part in Pope Francis's vision for a synodal Church:

<https://pfparra.thinkific.com/courses/synodal-spirituality/>

Peace Justice Ecology Table Talk – “Harmony Week: Everyone Belongs”: 21 March

This Table Talk is an opportunity to hear inspiring stories, engage in meaningful conversations, ask questions, and play a vital role in creating positive social change. Thursday 21 March, 6.30pm - 9pm at Catholic Care Mamre House & Farm, 181 Mamre Rd, Orchard Hills. Register by 14 March. Information at www.tinyurl.com/harmony-week-table-talk

Christ the King Primary Jubilee Celebrations

Staff, students, families and parishioners past and present are invited to celebrate the golden jubilee of Christ the King Primary School, North Rocks.

- A Jubilee Family Picnic will be held on Sunday 19 May at Don Moore Reserve, NorthRocks, from 11.30am. You can RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/k6hua7LiwZKBMP3o6>
- A Jubilee Dinner (over 18s) will be held on 29 June at The Epping Club, Epping, from 6pm. Cost is \$99 per person and includes food and beverages. Tables are of 10-12 attendees. You can RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/hmeBwoEM9qusMhG87>

For any further information, please contact Erin Wynne, at ewynne@parra.catholic.edu.au or the school office on (02) 8846 2700 or email northrocks@parra.catholic.edu.au



POPE FRANCIS' ANGELUS

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

On this fourth Sunday of Lent, the Gospel presents us with the figure of Nicodemus (cf. *Jn* 3:14-21), a pharisee, "a ruler of the Jews" (*Jn* 3:1). He saw the signs Jesus performed, he recognized in Him a teacher sent by God, and he went to meet Him by night, so as not to be seen. The Lord welcomes him, converses with him and reveals to him that He came not to condemn, but to save the world (cf. v. 17). Let us pause to reflect on this: *Jesus came not to condemn, but to save*. This is beautiful!

Often in the Gospel we see Christ revealing the intentions of the people He meets, at times unmasking their false attitudes, such as with the Pharisees (cf. *Mt* 23:27-32), or making them reflect on the disorder of their life, as with the Samaritan woman (cf. *Jn* 4: 5-42). There are no secrets before Him: He reads them in the heart. This ability could be disturbing because, if used badly, harms people, exposing them to merciless judgements. Indeed, no-one is perfect: we are all sinners, we all make mistakes, and if the Lord were to use His knowledge of our weaknesses to condemn us, no-one could be saved.

But it is not like this. Indeed, He does not need them in order to point the finger at us, but to embrace our life, to free us from sins and to save us. Jesus is not interested in putting us on trial or subjecting us to judgement; He wants none of us to be lost. The Lord's gaze upon every one of us is not a blinding beacon that dazzles us and puts us in difficulty, but rather the gentle glimmer of a friendly lamp, that helps us to see the good in ourselves and to be aware of the evil, so that we may be converted and healed with the support of His grace.

Jesus came not to condemn, but to save the world. Think of us, who very often condemn others; many times, we like to speak badly, to go in search of gossip against others. Let us ask the Lord to give us, all of us, this merciful gaze, to look at others as He looks at us.

May Mary help us to wish good for one another.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Two days ago, International Women's Day was celebrated. I would like to address a thought and to express my closeness to all women, especially those whose dignity is not respected. There is still a lot of work that each one of us must do in order for the equal dignity of women to be genuinely recognized. Institutions, social and political, have the fundamental duty to protect and promote the dignity of every human being, offering to women, the bearers of life, the necessary conditions to be able to welcome the gift of life and assure their children of a worthy existence.

I follow with concern and sorrow the grave crisis afflicting Haiti, and the violent episodes which occurred in recent days.

I am close to the Church and to the dear Haitian population, which has been plagued by many sufferings for years.

I invite you to pray, by the intercession of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, that every sort of violence may cease, and that everyone may offer their contribution to the growth of peace and reconciliation in the country, with the renewed support of the international community.

This evening, our Muslim brothers and sisters will commence Ramadan: I express my closeness to them all.

I greet all of you who have come from Rome, from Italy and from many parts of the world. In particular, I greet the students of the Irabia-Izaga College of Pamplona, and the pilgrims from Madrid, Murcia, Malaga and Saint Mary's Plainfield, New Jersey.

I greet the young people preparing for their First Communion and Confirmation from the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Saint Philip the Martyr in Rome, the faithful of Reggio Calabria, Quartu Sant'Elena, and Castellamonte.

I affectionately welcome the Catholic community of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Rome. Let us pray for peace in this country, as well as in tormented Ukraine and in the Holy Land. May the hostilities that cause immense suffering among the civilian population cease as soon as possible.

I wish you all a good Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me.

Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci!*



POPE FRANCIS AT AUDIENCE Cycle of Catechesis. Vices and Virtues. 11. *Virtuous action*

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning! After having concluded our overview of the vices, it is now time to take a look at the mirror image, which is in opposition to the experience of evil. The human heart can indulge evil passions, it can pay heed to harmful temptations disguised in persuasive garb, but it can also oppose all of this. However arduous this may be, the human being is made for goodness, which truly fulfils him, and is also able to practise this art, causing certain dispositions to become permanent in him or her. Reflection on this wondrous possibility of ours forms a classic chapter in moral philosophy: the chapter of *virtue*. The Roman philosophers called it *virtus*, the Greeks *aretè*. The Latin term highlights above all that the virtuous person is strong, courageous, capable of discipline and asceticism: therefore, the exercise of the virtues is the fruit of long germination, requiring effort and even suffering. The Greek word, *aretè*, instead indicates something that excels, something that emerges, that elicits admiration. The virtuous person therefore does not become warped by distortion, but remains faithful to his own vocation, fully realizing himself. We would be off-course if we thought that the saints were the exceptions of humanity: a sort of restricted circle of champions who live beyond the limits of our species. The saints, from this perspective we have just introduced regarding the virtues, are instead those who become themselves fully, who fulfil the vocation proper to every man or woman. What a happy world it would be if justice, respect, mutual benevolence, broadmindedness, and hope were the shared normality, and not instead a rare anomaly! This is why the chapter on virtuous action, in these dramatic times of ours in which we often have to come to terms with the worst of humanity, should be rediscovered and practised by all. In a distorted world, we must remember the form in which we were shaped, the image of God that is forever imprinted upon us. But how can we *define* the concept of virtue? The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers us a precise and concise definition: "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good" (no. 1803). Therefore, it is not an improvised or somewhat random good that falls from heaven sporadically. History shows us that even criminals, in moments of lucidity, have performed good deeds; certainly, these deeds are inscribed in the "book of God", but virtue is something else. It is a goodness that stems from a slow maturation of the person, to the point of becoming an inner characteristic. Virtue is a *habitus* of freedom. If we are free in every act, and every time we are required to choose between good and evil, virtue is what enables us to have a tendency towards the right choice. If virtue is such a beautiful gift, a question immediately arises: *how is it possible to obtain it?* The answer to this question is not simple, it is complex. For the Christian, the first aid is God's *grace*. Indeed, the Holy Spirit acts in us who have been baptized, working in our soul to lead it to a virtuous life. How many Christians have reached holiness through tears, finding they could not overcome some of their weaknesses! But they experienced that God completed that work of good that for them was only a sketch. Grace always precedes our moral commitment. Moreover, we must never forget the very rich lesson from the wisdom of the ancients, which tells us that *virtue grows and can be cultivated*. And for this to happen, the first gift to ask of the Spirit is precisely *wisdom*. The human being is not a free territory for the conquest of pleasures, emotions, instincts, passions, without being able to do anything against these forces, at times chaotic, that dwell within. A priceless gift we possess is open-mindedness, it is the wisdom that can learn from mistakes in order to direct life well. Then, it takes good will: the capacity to choose the good, to form ourselves with ascetic exercise, shunning excesses. Dear brothers and sisters, this is how we begin our journey through the virtues, in this serene universe that is challenging, but decisive for our happiness.

POPE FRANCIS' 11th PAPAL ANNIVERSARY By Andrea Tornielli

In the deafening silence of diplomacy, in a landscape marked by the increasingly evident absence of political initiative and leadership capable of betting on peace, while the world has begun a mad race to rearm, allocating sums that would suffice to ensure basic healthcare twice over for all the inhabitants of the earth and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the lone voice of Pope Francis continues to plead for weapons to be silenced and call for the courage to foster paths of peace. The Pope continues to call for a ceasefire in the Holy Land, where the ruthless massacre of October 7 carried out by Hamas terrorists was followed by the tragic carnage that continues to be perpetrated in Gaza. He continues to call for weapons to fall silent in the tragic war that erupted in the heart of Christian Europe, in Ukraine destroyed and martyred by the bombings of the aggressor Russian army. He continues to invoke peace in other parts of the world where conflicts are fought with unspeakable violence, the forgotten conflicts that make up increasingly large pieces of a global conflict. The Bishop of Rome enters the twelfth year of his pontificate in a dark hour, with the fate of humanity at the mercy of rulers incapable of assessing the consequences of their decisions, who seem to surrender to the inevitability of war. With clarity and realism, he says that "he is stronger who sees the situation, who thinks of the people," that is, "who has the courage to negotiate," because "negotiating is a courageous word," of which one should not be ashamed. Pope Francis, challenging the misunderstandings of those both near and far, continues to place the sanctity of life at the centre of attention, expressing closeness to innocent victims and denouncing the dirty economic interests that move the strings of wars cloaked in hypocrisy. A quick look at these last eleven years of history makes clear the prophetic value of Peter's voice. The alarm, first raised two decades ago, about the third world war fought piecemeal. The social encyclical *Laudato si'* (2015) showed how climate change, migrations, wars, and an economy that kills are interconnected phenomena that can only be addressed through a global perspective. The great encyclical on human fraternity (*Fratelli tutti*, 2020) pointed the way to building a new world based on fraternity, once again removing any excuse for abusing the name of God to justify terrorism, hatred, and violence. There is also the constant reference in his magisterium to mercy, which weaves the entire fabric of a missionary pontificate. In secularized, "liquid" societies that lack certain foundations, nothing can be taken for granted, and evangelization – teaches Pope Francis – begins anew from the essentials, as read in *Evangelii gaudium* (2013): "We have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the centre of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal... The centrality of the kerygma calls for stressing those elements which are most needed today: it has to express God's saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical. All this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental." The testimony of mercy, therefore, represents a fundamental element of this "saving love of God" which is "prior to moral and religious obligation." In other words, those who have not yet come into contact with the Christian reality, as Pope Benedict XVI had already lucidly observed in May 2010, will hardly be struck and fascinated by the affirmation of norms and moral obligations, by the insistence on prohibitions, by the meticulous lists of sins, by condemnations, or by nostalgic appeals to the values of the past. At the origin of welcome, closeness, tenderness, and accompaniment, at the origin of a Christian community capable of embracing and listening, there is the echo of mercy that has been experienced and that one seeks despite a thousand limitations and failures to return. If we read with these eyes the Pope's gestures, even those that have provoked in some the same scandalized reactions that Jesus' gestures provoked two thousand years ago, one discovers their profound evangelizing and missionary force.

GENERAL NOTICES...

NEW TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES? HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU?

Welcome. Wherever you are in your faith journey, it is great to have you. Please visit our website or call the parish office. We're here to serve you. www.olol7hills.org.au

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/OLOL7Hills/>

SICK AND/OR HOMEBOUND?

Would you like to receive Communion? Or seriously ill or in danger of death? We have dedicated ministers who can visit and bring you communion. Feel free to approach or call Fr Henry for the Holy Anointing of the Sick. Please call the parish office 96222920

FUNERALS

When a Funeral is to be celebrated, please contact the parish office to organise a meeting with Fr Henry. Funerals are not permitted on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

BAPTISM

Parents desiring Baptism for their children are encouraged to contact the parish office to arrange for the required preparation class for parents.

MASS INTENTIONS

All Mass intentions must be submitted to the Parish Office on or before Thursday. Names will be published for 4 weeks at a time.



LOURDES OVER 50s GROUP

Over 50s meeting Thursday 11th April 2024, 10.30am– 1pm in the Parish Hall. Please bring a plate to share. Look forward to seeing you there.

Lourdes: Luminate Young Adults Group

The next group night will be the 21st of March. If you would like more information please kindly contact Ian Epondulan: youtholol7h@gmail.com or search 'Lourdes 7Hills Young Adults' on Facebook.

LOURDES PLAYGROUP

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish playgroup is a fun playtime for children aged 0 to 5 years old and their carers. It is held every Friday morning during school terms 9.30am-11.00am in the Parish Meeting Room. For further information please contact Maria Hosni 0432 174 056 or the Parish Office.

FREE ZUMBA CLASSES

Every Tuesday and Thursday 6.00pm-7.00pm in the Hall. Everyone Welcome!

LEGION OF MARY

Thursdays at 1.30pm in the Parish Meeting Room. All Welcome.

Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group

Thursdays at 9.30am in the Parish Meeting Room. All Welcome

VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRES ARE STILL AVAILABLE TO THOSE IN NEED

St Vincent de Paul Support Centres across Greater Sydney are still available and taking calls to arrange for food vouchers or other items to be provided to those in need. If you need assistance, call the Support Centres in Blacktown on (02)8861 9777, Harris Park on (02)8861 9757 and Penrith on (02)8861 9770. To find out more about what support is available, visit <http://vinnies.org.au/covidsupportnsw>

OFFERTORY PROCESSION FOR OUR WEEKEND MASSES

With the intention to help our community to get more involved at Mass and better appreciate our share in the priesthood of the faithful, meaning our call to be priests, prophets and kings or queens of Jesus through baptism that Fr David Orr reminded us in our recent Parish retreat, I would like to invite all our parishioners to take part in the offertory procession, especially families that have some special celebrations in the families, such as wedding anniversaries, baptisms, birthdays, or death anniversaries. Please see Fr Henry or Ernie before Mass to arrange it.

OLOL PARISH CALENDAR

March

21	Lourdes: Luminate Young Adults Group Meeting	6.30pm
24	Palm Sunday	Vigil, 8am, 9.30am
26	Parish Reconciliation 2nd Rite	7.30pm
28	Holy Thursday Mass	7.30pm

OLOL MINISTRY ROSTER

Acolytes, Ministers, Readers and Altar Servers, please remember to arrive 15 minutes before the beginning of Mass.

16/17 March 2024

Acolytes	Vigil: Frank Paiva 8am: Terry Jordan 9.30am Eugene Miu
Ministers	Vigil: A. Do Rosario, N. Shami 8am: A. McNally, J. Irudayaraj 9.30am: B. Chandler, M. Michael
Readers	Vigil: N. Do Rosario, J. Samiento 8am: Pepito Ferriols, M. Santos 9.30am: R. Epondulan, A. Han
Altar Servers	Vigil: A. Bagatella, A. Laus, S. Thoms 8am: Volunteers 9.30am: C. Attard, Leo Culili, L. Sadipoor
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Parish Pastoral Council
Musicians	Vigil: K. Thoms & C. Woodward 8am: Fr. Henry 9.30am: Maximilian Chorale
Flowers	Fennie & Angela
Church Cleaning	27 March Jessie Borg Anne McNally
Welcomers	Vigil: Ram Ugre 8am: Volunteer 9.30am: Volunteer

23/24 March 2024

Acolytes	Vigil: Derick Soares 8am: Sub Req 9.30am Eugene Miu
Ministers	Vigil: H. Gonzales, R. Soares 8am: F. Paiva, S. Nemorin 9.30am: M. Aquino, P. Gow
Readers	Vigil: B. Motha, C. Rodrigues 8am: K. Walker, F. Kennedy 9.30am: I. Epondulan, C. Diaz
Altar Servers	Vigil: M. Gluvic, E. Reardon, B. Spadaro 8am: Volunteers 9.30am: S. Gulili, A. Melki, Sub Req
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Couples for Christ
Musicians	Vigil: Nina's Group 8am: Fr. Henry, C. Clarke & C. Woodward 9.30am: Nina's Group
Flowers	Annette & Mary
Church Cleaning	4 April Lourdes Spiteri
Welcomers	Vigil: Chrisha Gonzales 8am: Suzy Nemorin 9.30am: Volunteer

The Kids' Bulletin

Fifth Sunday of Lent
March 17th, 2024



In today's Gospel reading Jesus says, "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Can you find your way from this grain of wheat to the new seeds at the top?

The Power of His Love

"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." John 12:32 (NIV)

Choose the word that best matches the definition. Answers can be found in John 12:28-33 (NIV)



- ___ 1. Everyone and everything
A. lifted B. angel C. voice D. all
- ___ 2. To be raised up
A. earth B. all C. voice D. lifted
- ___ 3. A heavenly servant of God, often pictured as a human with wings
A. earth B. Jesus C. lifted D. angel
- ___ 4. The end of life
A. all B. death C. voice D. crowd
- ___ 5. To bring praise and honor to God
A. glorify B. death C. earth D. draw
- ___ 6. The land surface of the world
A. earth B. lifted C. draw D. death
- ___ 7. The Son of God
A. Jesus B. Andrew C. Philip D. John
- ___ 8. What we humans use to speak or sing
A. all B. voice C. draw D. lifted
- ___ 9. To attract someone or something
A. voice B. lifted C. draw D. crowd
- ___ 10. A large group of people
A. death B. earth C. crowd D. draw



Answers: DRAW
FATHER SHOW
LIFTED WORLD

"But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."
John 12:32 (NIV)

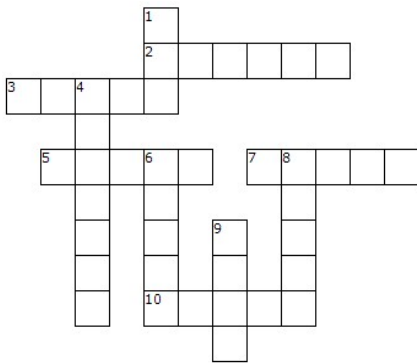
LTIFED 1

WLORD 2

FETAHR 3

SOHW 4

Answer: 1 2 3 4



ACROSS

2. To be raised up
3. A heavenly servant of God, often pictured as a human with wings
5. What we humans use to speak or sing
7. The Son of God
10. The end of life

DOWN

1. Everyone and everything
4. To bring praise and honor to God
6. A large group of people
8. The land surface of the world
9. To attract someone or something



DEATH	ANGEL	VOICE	EARTH	JESUS
ALL	DRAW	GLORIFY	LIFTED	CROWD