





### **Catholic Theological College—Information Session Online**

The Catholic Theological College offers an Graduate Certificate in Teaching Meditation, a three unit course that can be complete online.

The course is designed for those seeking to learn the methods and skills of teaching meditation and meditative prayer in a variety of situations including primary and secondary schools, parishes, hospitals and other settings.

The course includes the history and practice of meditation and *lectio divina* and provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own spiritual gifts.

An online information session will take place on **Monday 4 September** at 7.30pm. Registration for the session is essential and can be made by going to [bit.ly/3qzMTfh](http://bit.ly/3qzMTfh). More information about the Graduate Certificate can be found by going to [bit.ly/3OVhahR](http://bit.ly/3OVhahR).

### **'Come Rest A While' Reflection Day**

In appreciation and interested Christian Initiation ministers, 'Come rest a while' is an opportunity to listen, reflect, and get to know other ministers. This year's reflection day will take place on **Saturday 9 September** at Charlestown, commencing at 10am and finishing 3.30pm. Morning tea and lunch is provided.

More details and registration is available at [bit.ly/44BV6hM](http://bit.ly/44BV6hM).

For enquiries or registration assistance, contact Sharon Murphy: phone 4979 1134, or email [sharon.murphy@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:sharon.murphy@mn.catholic.org.au)

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford recognize we stand upon the traditional country of Gringai clan of the Worimi people, who have walked upon and cared for this country for thousands of years.

We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and deep spiritual attachment and relationship to this country. We pay our respects to their Elders—past, present, and emerging—and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

### **140th Anniversary, Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar**

On Monday 4 September the Sisters of St Joseph, Lochinvar are celebrating 140 years of ministry within the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Four Sisters arrived from Perthville on 2 September, 1883 and enrolled the first children in Primary school the next day.

We rejoice that this ministry of education continues today in many schools throughout the Diocese in the hands of faith-filled, deeply committed lay teachers.

And so it is with great joy, that we give God thanks for the graces and blessings given to us, our students, their parents, our school staff and friends over these many years.

We invite you to remember us in prayer at this very significant point in our history.

### **Gospel of Mark**

The Gospel of Mark is a treasure trove for the nurturing and nourishing of our faith. Mark brings us face-to-face with the One who came to serve and not to be served, to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Explore the Gospel of Mark with Dr Debra Snoddy, As we look forward to the year when the Gospel of Mark takes pride of place in our liturgy, explore this Gospel with Dr Debra Snoddy, who promises to inform you, nourish you and challenge you to hear Mark's words in ways old and new.

The day will include an overview of the Gospel and a detailed treatment of some of the most illuminating texts from the Gospel of Mark.

Date: 15 November, Murray Room, 9.30am – 3.00pm. To register visit [bit.ly/3sro6dO](http://bit.ly/3sro6dO).

### **Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement**

The 2023-2024 Social Justice Statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has been released.

Entitled *Listen, Learn Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, the Statement calls "all the People of God to embrace a new engagement...which involves a commitment to listen to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers and to learn from them".

The Statement can be downloaded from our website by visiting [bit.ly/3OMAKFn](http://bit.ly/3OMAKFn).

For those without internet access who may wish to obtain a copy, please contact the Parish Office who will happily print a copy for you.

## **Homily by Richard Leonard**

At the morning parade in Dachau on 22nd July 1943, six prisoners were found to have escaped. Retribution was swift and brutal. Randomly selected, 12 people were hanged. As the other prisoners watched their 12 fellow inmates gasp for breath, someone in the crowd cried out, 'Where is God?' Silence descended on the yard. The 12 bodies were now in spasm, jerking and struggling for breath. As everyone watched, the voice came again, this time more urgently, 'Where is God now?' 'My God', another voice yelled back, 'My God is hanging there'.

This sort of faith is what today's Gospel is all about. Christianity is the only world religion that holds that God took our flesh, suffered, died and was raised to life.

It is certainly true that we have domesticated the scandal of the cross, even to the point that, these days, it dangles from various parts of people's anatomies. I often wonder, had Jesus been electrocuted to death, whether we would have little golden chairs around our necks? But while we have tried to tame the reality of Jesus' tortured hours in Jerusalem, the reality of the cross in each of our lives cannot be so commercially soothed.

Christians are not meant to be smiling masochists. We are not meant to be lovers of pain – just bearers of it.

We are invited, by Jesus, to see the burden of suffering in our lives as an opportunity to be faithful to his example. It also gives us an opportunity to be in solidarity with all those who suffer in our world. This is easier said than done. When we suffer in our daily lives, thoughts of others rarely come to mind easily, but it can be consoling to keep our suffering in context and know that we are not facing it alone.

We are encouraged to see that suffering can be an opportunity to grow in love. If we understand our crosses as our particular schools of love, then we learn more about ourselves and God and are able to help others carry their crosses as well.

Carrying our cross, however, is not just about bearing physical, personal, sexual, spiritual or emotional pain; it can also be in the sharing of our gifts and talents, our love and compassion. In every gift there is a burden. Following Christ's example, we are called to share our gifts heroically with anyone in need, even to the end.

Some people complain these days that God is often presented as a big marshmallow, all sweet and soft. Today's Gospel shows the 'edge' involved in being a follower of Christ. I don't know of a more demanding vocation in our world than

that of taking up the cross of being faithful, loving and selfless.

And while we are invited to take up our cross and follow Jesus, we never do it alone. If we have the eyes to see it and the humility to accept it, Christ, literally, hangs in there with us every step of the way.

So let's recall the first cross from which we take comfort as we bear our own crosses. 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.'

© Richard Leonard SJ

Richard Leonard SJ is the Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting, is a member of the Australian Catholic Media Council and a film critic for all the major Australian Catholic newspapers. He completed a PhD in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne. He lectures in cinema and theology at the Jesuit College of Spirituality and has been a visiting lecturer in Australian cinema at the University of Melbourne, a visiting scholar within the School of Theatre, Film and Television at UCLA and is visiting professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University, has lectured widely and is the author of numerous books.



## **Become an SRE Volunteer**

Did you know that some 50% of Catholic children are in state schools? Have you ever thought of spreading the Good News of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ with children? Have you ever thought about becoming a Special Religious Educator?

This could be an opportunity for you to meet new people, discover new friendships and build quality relationships whilst mastering skills and confidence in Catechetics. You can make a difference in the schools within our parish! For people of faith, knowing you are participating in Christ's call to share the Good News to all is a great source of joy and meaning.

If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please contact the Pastoral Ministries Team: Rose McAllister, Manager Formation & Education (0414 962 922) or Nicki Graham, Officer Formation & Education (0417 773 444)

### **The Parish Diary** (for the week ahead)

22nd Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 4 September

Tuesday 5 September

Wednesday 6 September

Thursday 7 September

Friday 8 September

*Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

Saturday 9 September

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 10 September

*Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday*

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

### **Today's Liturgy:**

**1st Reading** Jeremiah 20:7-9

**Psalm** Psalm 62

My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

**2nd Reading** Romans 12:1-2

**Acclamation** cf Ephesians 1:17-18

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our hearts that we might see how great is the hope to which we are called.

Alleluia!

**Gospel** Matthew 16:21-27

**Memorial Acclamation**

Save us, Saviour of the world,  
for by your Cross and Resurrection  
you have set us free.

### **Morning Tea at Clarence Town**

The next morning tea at Clarence Town will be held after the 8am Mass today (1 September). Please stay and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

### **Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for September:**

*"We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhuman life conditions; may they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance."*

### **Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...**

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding: by phoning 4979 1390 or emailing [childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au).

Visit the Office of Safeguarding website for further information [www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au)

## **Living the gospel**

### **Have you got what it takes?**

*For some people, to be a Christian is a 'soft option' – they see being Christian as being a bit 'fluffy'. This week's gospel is a reminder of the real challenge of being a Christian. Jesus reminds us that to be one of his followers we must be prepared to pick up our cross – whatever our particular cross might be – and still follow his example. To be a Christian means that we don't fall in a heap when difficulty comes our way; we take up the burden – our cross – and continue to look forward with hope. To live like Jesus is no easy option.*

### **In Your Charity, Please Pray for:**

#### **Those Who Have Died:**

**Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In September:** Annie & Brian Maurer, Peggy Brennan, Godfrey Barry, Tony O'Hearn, Fr Brian Quillinan, Pat Byron, Marjory Neilson, Ivy Hinton, Arthur Sonter, Ron Neilson, Fr Peter Quirk, Tony & Mary Maurer, Kath Morrow, Frances Amy Young, Rowland Young and Dennis Melmouth, Dot Shurrey, Mary Moylan, Norm Barham, Eileen Godwin, Warren Trappel, Lachlan Tindall, Brian Byron, Margaret Moule, John Melmeth, Beryl Cooper, Paul Evans.

**Those Who Are Sick:** Maryann Smith, Daphne Bond, Maree McCulloch, Leonie Young, Lisa Reid, Bev Herbert, Denise Wenden, Warren Wade, Irene Robinson, Ray Tonkin (Qld), Luke Barry, Kathie Maynard, Kevin Ward, Brian Holstein, David Loudon, Michaela Brown, Phillip Hartup, Bella Duggan, Ella Rusak, Peter Byron, Peter Rooke, Graham McCarthy, Matthew Kerr.