

The Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford

Diocese of Broken Bay

Our Lady Help of Christians' Church
31 Oxford Street, Epping and

St Gerard Majella Church
543 North Rocks Road, Carlingford



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New COVID-19 restrictions in place from June 23rd require 4sqm per person in indoor settings, just as we had for several months last year. This reduces the capacity of OLHC Church to 80 people and St Gerard's to 145 people, plus essential ministers. The number of people in recent weeks at St Gerard's has been below this capacity, however, there are usually more than 80 people at Mass at OLHC, and significantly more at the vigil and 10.15am Masses. If you would normally attend the vigil or 10.15am Mass at OLHC, please consider attending Mass at St Gerard's instead, to better space out our congregations across our 7 Masses. We will need to close the doors of each church when our capacity is reached to ensure compliance with Govt requirements. Additional social distancing may need to be observed within the church.

YEAR B

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

04-07-21

Ezk. 2:2-5

2 Cor 12:7-10

Mk 6:1-6

Dear Parishioners,

We cannot gather in person this weekend due to lockdown. I acknowledge that many of us struggle during lockdown from a sense of isolation, including being unable to receive the Eucharist. The invitation each of us have is to make good use of this time; to walk, to exercise, to spend time with the people we live with, to call friends, to rest, to catch up on sleep, to read, to pray. We can give ourselves permission to be less productive, and to enjoy quietness, stillness and recreation as the opportunity arises.

Online prayer this weekend

As a parish we can gather in prayer in other ways. Fr Jim will be leading an interactive Liturgy of the Word on Sunday night at 6pm. This will use the scripture readings of this weekend's Mass and we can respond in prayer and discussion. This is suitable for families, and you can take part in your pyjamas or with your pets on your lap if you like!

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235360479?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235360479?pwd=eFJlWlhCcE5sc3h5TmtLTnFVdUV1UT09)
[pwd=eFJlWlhCcE5sc3h5TmtLTnFVdUV1UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235360479?pwd=eFJlWlhCcE5sc3h5TmtLTnFVdUV1UT09)

My homily for this weekend is on my YouTube channel
<https://youtu.be/TkDoVct3Q6c>

Lynn Siau runs prayer and scripture based activities for children in a safe private Facebook group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/255948268913440/> at 9.30am on Sunday.

Prayer during the week

Our parish is gathering for the Evening Prayer of the Church each weeknight at 6pm just for 15 minutes, which is a nice way to connect with one another and to give thanks to God for the day. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87526812991>
Mt Carmel Retreat Centre offer a beautiful range of prayerful reflections call *Praying simply at home – in the pandemic and beyond* <https://mtcarmel.com.au/the-prayer-project>

Or you might like to take the opportunity to spend some time in mission formation at <https://aliveinthespirit.com.au/> a virtual conference on "Becoming the Church Christ calls us to be" July 8-10

Phone calls: We are still answering phone calls to the parish. We are having intermittent problems with the parish phone number, so if you receive a "disconnected" message when you call the parish, try 0455 213 795 instead.

Funeral: Our long time parishioner Edna Gallen died in Estia Health (Poplars) this week, and her funeral will be at OLHC on Thursday July 8th at 10am. Edna's family welcome her friends to attend. We are, at the time of writing, allowed to have the funeral with 80 people at OLHC. Sadly, Edna's sister Elaine died the following day. We don't yet know her funeral details. We extend our condolences to their sister Kathleen and her family at this difficult time.

Masses after lockdown: We don't yet know if lockdown will finish in time for Masses next weekend or not, however, I'd like to signal our plans in advance so that, if we hear news lockdown being lifted at short notice you will know what to expect.

- If Mass is permitted but with a low number of people allowed such as the 50 people permitted after lockdown last year, then it would be difficult for us to effectively manage this safely and fairly. We would follow the protocol adopted last year, which is to not have weekend Masses, but have the online gathering and streamed Mass as with this weekend, and to have weekday Masses on the usual schedule. You will recall that last year Bishop Anthony suspended the obligation for Catholics to attend Sunday Mass until such time as everyone can safely attend, and we would expect the same to apply again now.

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- If Mass is permitted at 1 person per 4sqm then we will have all weekend Masses at the usual times. 80 people would be allowed at OLHC and 145 at St Gerard's. 10.15am Mass usually has the largest congregation, so we will offer an additional Mass at 11.30am which you might consider attending instead.
- The church doors will need to be shut either when we start Mass or when we reach the safe limit, so please be early.

QR Codes offer a much faster way of contact tracing than pen and paper should it be necessary, and we can see with the transmissibility of the Delta variant of Covid that fast notification and tracing is essential, so it is very much preferred that you check in using the QR code, and only use pen and paper as a last resort for the very small number of people who do not have a phone. Please bring your phone with the Service NSW app when you come to Mass.

Your sincerely,
Fr Jim McKeon