

# Diocese of Broken Bay

Parish Priest: Fr Jim McKeon  
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Assistant Priest: Fr Aldrin Valdehueva  
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## Our Lady Help of Christians'

31 Oxford Street, Epping

## St Gerard Majella's

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## The Catholic Parish of Epping & Carlingford

*loving when it is not easy*

YEAR A

19 FEBRUARY 2023 SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

26 FEBRUARY 2023 FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



**Ash Wednesday is February 22nd.** Come and mark the beginning of this season if you can, with Masses at the following:

- 7am and 5pm at OLHC, and
- 9.30am and 6pm at St Gerard's.
- The schools will also have their own liturgies.



**Doing Lent:** The season of Lent offers us an invitation. In response to our society's over-indulgence there are various movements which now encourage some form of abstinence such as Dry July, Meat Free Monday and International Buy Nothing Day. These are all good for our health and for the environment, but Lent asks us to do something more: *To fast with a spiritual intention, that restraining our desire for external enjoyment might focus us inwardly towards our own soul, and to meet Jesus, who fasted in the desert, there.* Or some voluntary self-denial might help us to stand in solidarity with those who suffer involuntarily throughout the world. *Choose a form of fasting that is right for you.*

**Fasting** is only one part of Lenten practice. The other two disciplines of Lent are **prayer** and **almsgiving**, and we'd like to offer you some ways to do these:

- Spend time in quiet adoration of the Blessed Sacrament **at OLHC on Wednesdays 5.30-pm – 6.30pm (following 5pm Mass)**
- Join with our local Christian Churches **each Tuesday night of March at 7.45pm** for our ecumenical liturgies (details below) or for the World Day of Prayer on **March 1st**
- Join a small group to listen to, discuss and pray with the scriptures (details below)

**Almsgiving:** As always, we will be supporting Caritas Australia's Project Compassion, with this year's theme being For All Future Generations. You can pick up a money box or a set of donation envelopes from the church on Sunday Feb 19th or Ash Wednesday. You can also go direct to [lent.caritas.org.au](http://lent.caritas.org.au)



tempted, tried, triumphant

## Readings

**19 FEBRUARY 2023**  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18  
1 Corinthians 3:16-23  
Matthew 5:38-48

**26 FEBRUARY 2023**  
Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7  
Romans 5:12, 17-19  
Matthew 4:1-11



## Doing Lent cont'd...

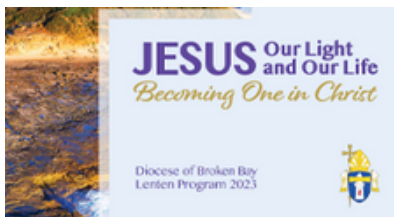
**Lenten Ecumenical Liturgies:** For many years our parish has joined together in prayer with our neighbouring Christian churches to pray at key times during the year. We'll be gathering each Tuesday of March at 7.45pm for prayer and supper at the following churches and we'd love you to join us, especially if you haven't been before.

- |              |                       |                                 |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| • March 7th  | OLHC Catholic         | Preacher: Rev Greg Woolnough    |
| • March 14th | West Epping Uniting   | Preacher: Bishop Ross Nicholson |
| • March 21st | Epping Uniting Church | Preacher: Rev Phil Lui          |
| • March 28th | St Alban's Anglican   | Preacher: Fr Jim McKeon         |

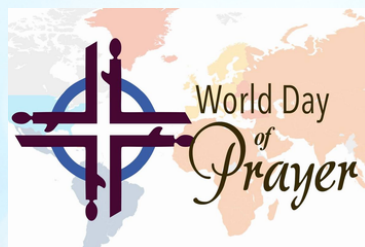
**Lenten Reflection Groups** have been a part of our parish life for decades. Small groups of parishioners gather either at home or in the church to read the scriptures of the coming Sunday of Lent, to reflect, share and pray in response to the Word of God. Groups will meet:

- Mondays at 10am in St Gerard's Church
- Tuesdays at 7.30pm in West Pennant Hills
- Thursdays at 7.30pm in North Epping
- Fridays at 10.15am in St Gerard's Meeting Room
- Fridays at 7pm in OLHC Church

To join, just put your name on the list in the back of either church.



**Personal Lenten Reflection:** There are also free copies of a beautiful Lenten reflection resource from our own diocese available from the back of the church for personal use.



## It only happens in our Parish once every 6 to 7 years!

The last time our parish held World Day of Prayer was in 2016 (for Cuba) and because the service rotates around our local churches, it will be roughly another 6-7 years before it will be our turn again. So in many ways this year is a great opportunity to come.

**MARCH 3rd** is an EXTRA-ordinary day in the Christian calendar because Christians from ALL traditions pray the same service for Taiwan. It follows the sun over 170 countries in the world. In Taiwan, only 7% of population are Christian, so the theme "I have heard about your faith" is a poignant one indeed!

## World Day of Prayer is at St Gerard's Church on Friday March 3 commencing at 11 am.

The service runs for approximately 50 minutes and you are invited to stay after for cuppa and light refreshments in the meeting room. Why not bring a sandwich BYO and stay for lunch? We will break bread together. Even better, bring a friend or family member and celebrate together.

Please feel free to contact Lorraine Lobsey 98724005, or text 0438605773, or email at [robaine2@bigpond.com](mailto:robaine2@bigpond.com)



On the weekend of February 10th-12th, **Fr Aldrin, Leon D'Sylva and Belinda Shi** gathered alongside Catholics from across Australia and New Zealand to attend an empowering conference run by Divine Renovation. The focus of the organization is to provide a support network for Priests and more importantly lay leaders within a parish, giving them skills to help renew and reignite the life of our church: **The Great Commission, go and make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19).**

As our theme for the weekend was **"called to more"** by our loving God, this meeting with keynote international speakers such as the likes of Fr James Mallon and Fr Simon Lobo, has inspired us in so many ways to foster a more hospitable and lively parish community. As Fr Simon defined a parish as **"A parish is a praying people with a purpose"**, we come away from the talk pondering what is our responsibility in action and what is our purpose?

We hope that all that we've learnt can be transpired in our actions to serve our parish community of Epping and Carlingford. A few photos below to share.

~ Fr Aldrin, Leon and Belinda



Fr Aldrin, Leon, Pina Bernard from our diocese & Belinda



Bishop Michael Gielen, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Auckland, commissioning us to action.

## Parish Team

### Parish Secretary

**Dennis Porteous** Ph: 9876 2853

Email: [Dennis.Porteous@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Dennis.Porteous@bbcatholic.org.au)

### Parish Facilities & Operations Coordinator

**Richard Houwing** Ph: 9876 2853

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### Admin. Assistant

**Michael Davies** Ph: 9876 2853

Email: [Michael.Davies@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Michael.Davies@bbcatholic.org.au)

### Coordinator of Sacramental Programmes, Children's Ministries & Communications

**Lynn Siau** Ph: 9876 2853

Email: [Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au)

### Youth Ministry Coordinator

**Joanna Mak** Ph: 0404 710 588

Email: [Joanna.Mak@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Joanna.Mak@bbcatholic.org.au)

### New Parishioner Engagement Coordinator - OLHC

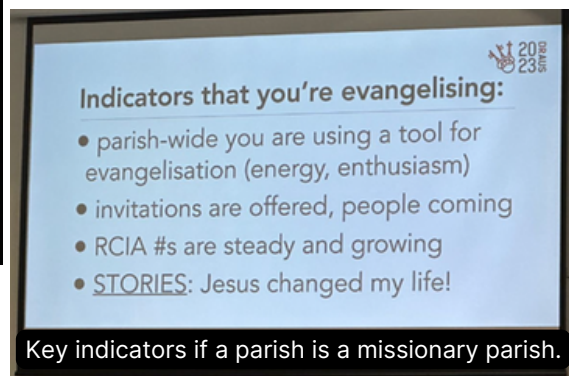
**Serena Kozanic** Ph: 0414 753 799

Email: [Serena.Kozanic@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Serena.Kozanic@bbcatholic.org.au)

### New Parishioner Engagement Coordinator - St Gerard's

**Belinda Shi** Ph: 0414 753 362

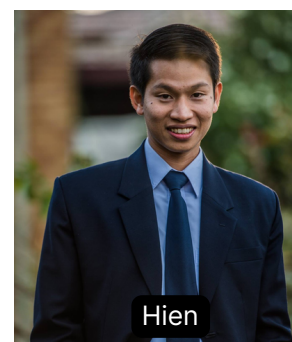
Email: [Belinda.Shi@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Belinda.Shi@bbcatholic.org.au)



**Congratulations to Richard Houwing** who will be admitted to Candidacy for future ordination to the diaconate. Bishop Anthony Randazzo will admit Richard, and also Hien Vu at the **5pm vigil Mass on Feb 25th at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, Waitara**. Come and join in praying for Richard and Hien.



Richard



Hien

**THANK YOU**

**Leadership:** Two parishioners have recently stepped into areas of significant volunteer leadership in the parish. **Trish O'Donnell** is now coordinator of catechists in our three secondary schools, and **James Boswell** is now coordinator of altar servers at OLHC. Fr Jim **thanks them for their generosity to serve** in leadership in the parish.



## FIRST RECONCILIATION 2023

Preparation sessions for First Reconciliation will begin this weekend. Candidates are required to attend a session once a week with their parent over 4 weeks for preparation of this sacrament. The four sessions are on:

1. God's Love
2. Choices
3. Forgiveness
4. My First Reconciliation

This week, the groups discuss what God's love is. Where do we experience God's love? How do we return that love? This session teaches the children that God is always there, ever loving, ever gentle and unchanging, even when we have turned away. Even so, the children also learn that effort is required on their part; God forgives a contrite heart that leans on Him for strength to do better next time.

In the Gospel of Luke, we read The Loving Father (also known as The Prodigal Son) where the father in the story represents God's unconditional love: what a beautiful gift and source of strength this is in our lives!

We also touch on the Ten Commandments with an exciting account from the bible on how it came about, why we still need them today and that the Commandments represent something very great: how to love God and others.

Lynn Siau

Coordinator of Children's Ministries, Sacramental Programme & Communications

[Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au)

## Kidz Word Science Experiment!

Kidz Word kickstarted the year with an engaging session led by **Sabitha and Nilu**. Matthew 5:13 was discussed:

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."*

Sabitha explained this through a video and how important we were to the world. Like the salt. She showed this by 2 scientific experiments:

- 2 glasses of water. When an egg was put in to the 1st glass the egg sank. Then we added salt to the next glass and dropped the egg in again. It was floating. So water with salt had the "super power" to carry the egg.
- Next, the kids were asked, "Can you balance one egg on top of the other?" A couple of kids tried and failed. But when you add salt to the top of one egg, you can magically balance the other egg on it!

Through these experiments the kids saw how salt was powerful and the leaders related that to us having the same powers as salt, *to make a difference in the world*.



## COMMUNICATIONS

**Article submission deadline:** If you would like to submit an article from your ministry for inclusion in the next edition of our parish bulletin, please send it to [Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Lynn.Siau@bbcatholic.org.au) before **10am on Wednesday 1st March 2023**. Kindly understand I am unable to accommodate late submissions. Please send in a Word document. Photos or graphics are acceptable in PNG or JPEG format. Please note that PDFs will have to be reformatted and the clarity of your notice will be compromised. Do remember to provide an email address, a contact name and number in your article. Thank you.

Other ways to connect:



FACEBOOK



INSTAGRAM



GRACE RADIO

**eBulletin:** If you know someone who would like to receive the electronic version of the bulletin, please forward this link for them to fill in the form on our website: [bbcatholic.org.au/epping-carlingford/news-events/parish-newsletter](http://bbcatholic.org.au/epping-carlingford/news-events/parish-newsletter)

## YOUTH MINISTRIES



**Emmaus young adults (23-30 year olds)** - Our young adults group will next meet on the **21st Feb, 7-8:30pm**. We will have dinner and a social night.

### *Thank you for the success of our Antioch retreat!!*

Thank you for the amazing Antioch weekend that passed on the 11-12th Feb as we celebrated 40 years of Antioch at Epping and Carlingford!

Thank you to the dozens of people who donated food, snacks, drinks and the people who cooked and baked food and provided all the meals for the youth! Thankyou to the helpers on the day serving meals and the 15 on God squad (all ex Antiochers), thankyou to our clergy (Fr Jim, Fr Aldrin and Deacon Adrian) and visiting priests (Fr Joey, Fr Marek, Fr Vincent, Fr Geoff) for reconciliation, thankyou to our Antioch parent couple Louise and Kirk and past Antioch parent support Joanne, Karen who coordinated the delicious meals, and finally thanks to the amazing Antioch team and every Antioch person (40 of us with over 25 being new members) who came to the retreat and to our 2023 leaders, Alex and Will for leading our amazing retreat!

### *Thanks be to God!*



Antioch retreat 2023



**Cana (Year 6-9)** - Cana is on the **17th and 24th February, 7:30-9pm!** Come join us weekly on Fridays during the school term. 543 North Rocks Road, Carlingford - entrance via North Rocks Rd.

We are also launching a **brand NEW parent youth group**, on the **4th Friday each month**, the first one is on the **24th Feb**. We will meet at St Gerard's meeting room - dinner provided and we will watch 'The Search'. Cana kids will also have free dinner.



**Antioch (Year 10/16 year olds- 23 year olds)** - Antioch will meet on the **19th and 26th February** in the Antioch meeting room!

We welcome everyone to come on the 19th Feb to celebrate our retreat success and we'll have games, a badminton competition and sharing of what Antioch gets up to throughout the year.

Contact the parent support if you have any questions: Kirk Koelmeyer (0420 874 824) or Louise Koelmeyer (0404 496 554).

Some of our volunteers pictured below who helped cook/serve/prepare our meals



We also have Facebook groups for Antioch and Emmaus.

If you would like to join or would like more information on any of our 3 youth groups, please contact the Youth Minister, Joanna Mak on 0404 710 588 or email her at [Joanna.Mak@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:Joanna.Mak@bbcatholic.org.au)

## NEWS FROM VINNIES - EPPING CONFERENCE

### *A blessing for Tony McEearney - 5pm Vigil Mass Saturday 18th February*

Fr Jim will give Tony a blessing **at OLHC** at this Mass to mark the occasion of Tony's retirement from the Epping Conference of St Vincent de Paul.

Tony has been an active member of the society since 1948. After the Mass there will be light refreshments and tea and coffee and a chance to congratulate Tony.

## PARISH SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

**JRS Parramatta** tell us they are currently in desperate need of pantry staples. We ask for your donations of:

- BASMATI rice ( 1kg or 5 kg bags)
  - Cooking oil ( 1L or 5L)
  - Dry chickpeas
  - Dry red and green lentils
- A marked box will be in the back of each church on the **25th and 26th February** only. Your practical support and prayers are most appreciated.



## Australia Celebrates Pathways to Permanency for Refugees with Temporary Protection; Urges Action on Family Reunion

"JRS Australia welcomes the long-foreshadowed announcement, in line with the Government's 2022 election commitment, creating pathways to permanent residence for refugees who hold or are eligible to hold Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs).

Under the new arrangements around 19,000 people will be eligible to apply for Resolution of Status Visas, which will provide them with the same entitlements as other permanent residents, including social security payments, higher education loans, access to the NDIS, and the ability to apply for family reunification, and, in the future, for Australian citizenship. JRS Australia lauds these long-overdue measures towards ending a policy which has wrought terrible harm upon refugees for over a decade. We also note the strength and fortitude of these refugees, their ability to overcome daunting odds, and their tireless advocacy that has led to this moment."

For the full media release, contact: Shuja Jamal at [Shuja.Jamal@jrs.org.au](mailto:Shuja.Jamal@jrs.org.au) or 0459 479 669. We are considering ways that our Parish can continue its support for refugees and asylum seekers during 2023.

~ Parish Social Justice Team

## NEWS FROM THE CATECHISTS

The 2023 School Year has commenced and our catechists are getting ready to return to Schools. On February 8, a Pre-Meeting Mass was celebrated by Fr Aldrin who also spoke to our catechists at the Catechist Meeting that followed (see photos on the right).

At the meeting, we welcomed our new Catechists, Jeannette Brady, Eveline Issa, Teresa Otoy, Steffi Saldanha and James Wu. Key information was shared which included those from the Ministry of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) such as catechist training and formation, teaching resources etc; and also those activities to take place in our Parish such as Combined Public School Mass, Priests' visits to Schools and so on.

We seek your prayers for all our catechists as they religiously take the WORD of GOD to hundreds of our children every week and we thank them for their dedication of time and effort.



If you are interested to become a catechist or to obtain more information regarding this ministry, please contact [katherine@eppcarl.org.au](mailto:katherine@eppcarl.org.au) for primary school or [trish@eppcarl.org.au](mailto:trish@eppcarl.org.au) for secondary school or call the Parish Office during office hours at 9876 2853.



**Celebrations this Week**

**Ordinary Week 7**

21 Feb Tuesday: *St Peter Damian*

22 Feb Wednesday: **Ash Wednesday**

23 Feb Thursday: *St Polycarp (commemoration)*

**1st Week of Lent**

26 Feb Sunday: *Rite of Election*

27 Feb Monday: *St Gregory of Narek (commemoration)*

3 Mar Friday: *Ember Day*

4 Mar Saturday: *St Casimir (commemoration)*



**RCIA Rite of Election – 26 February 2023:** Catechumens of the Diocese, parish RCIA teams, and all parishioners are warmly invited to attend this year's Rite of Election with Bishop Anthony Randazzo, where Catechumens will be presented to the Bishop and officially enrolled into the list of the Elect for the Sacraments of Initiation at Easter. The Rite, for adults seeking baptism will be held at **Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, Waitara, on Sunday 26 February at 2.00pm.** Please join us in support of our Catechumens from Epping & Carlingford Parish!

**50++ OUTING TO BALMORAL:** A very pleasant and relaxing day was enjoyed by 17 of our parishioners. We soaked up the natural and unspoiled beauty of Balmoral. Great public transport. Fish & Chips/Burgers for lunch and well-deserved ice cream at Circular Quay before returning home. Thank you all for the good company. We shall meet again! Enquiries Carole Wilson 9869 1036.

**CATALYST FOR RENEWAL REFLECTION MORNINGS:**

Catalyst holds a reflection morning on the **1st Saturday from March to October.** We meet in the **parish hall of Hunters Hill. 9.30 - 12.30.** Different leaders, different topics/themes each month. Fr Michael Whelan SM will lead our reflection on **Saturday, March 4th.** His topic/theme is 'Vulnerability'. No need to book. All are most welcome. Tea & coffee provided. We do ask for a donation. Time for reflection. Time to be still. Time for you. Enquiries Carole Wilson 9869 1036.

**GOT YOUR WEDDING PLANS UNDER CONTROL?**

How prepared are you for marriage? Engaged Encounter provides you with deeper insights into each other and into married life. We give you a chance to spend time together to strengthen and enrich your relationship. For further information visit our web site: [www.engagedencounter.org.au](http://www.engagedencounter.org.au) Choose any of the coming weekends:

**Feb 25-26, May 6-7, Aug 5-6, Nov 11-12**



**Congratulations!**



Congratulations to **Lisa-Marie Voon and Jimmy Liang** who are marrying on Feb 18th.

Congratulations, love, and warm wishes to **Margaret & Gordon Floyd** on their wedding anniversary celebrating **68 years of marriage!**

Margaret is not at all well and needs our prayers. The first meeting to discuss a Catholic Church in Carlingford was held in the home of Margaret & Gordon Floyd. They truly are foundation members of St Gerard's. They are now in Aged Care in Oatlands. However, still very much with us in Spirit. We send love and blessings to you both.

Many of us have benefited from the tranquillity of the bushland, quality hospitality and spirituality at the retreats at the **Carmelite Centre, Varroville** (approx 50 mins away). Their 2023 Retreat program has just been released. Please see a brochure at the rear of the Church or their website at <https://mtcarmel.com.au/carmelite-retreat-program>



**Fr Roger Delmonte** will be celebrating the **9.15am and 6pm Masses on Sat Feb 25th.** This will allow both Fr Jim and Fr Aldrin to take part in the annual Pastoral Council and Finance Committee leadership morning, and for Fr Jim to attend Richard Houwing's admission to Candidacy in the evening.

Fr Roger was ordained with Fr Aldrin in 2021, and he is looking forward to visiting the parish again.

**HELP SYRIA.** Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) has launched an emergency appeal for the people in northern Syria desperate for help following the devastating earthquakes. ACN is begging for funds to support their long-time local project partners on the ground in Syria. To read more about what ACN is doing and to make an offering please visit [www.aidtochurch.org/syriaearthquake](http://www.aidtochurch.org/syriaearthquake) or scan the QR code from the hard copy of the bulletin.



**POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY**

**PARISHES**

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

**Responsorial Psalm Response**

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 19 Feb 2023

Ps 102:1-4, 8, 10, 12-13

**Gospel Acclamation**

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 19 Feb 2023

Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Whoever keeps the word of Christ,  
grows perfect in the love of God.**WEEKEND MASSES****Epping** 5:00pm Vigil, 8:30am (Family/Children), 10:15am and 6:00pm (Youth)**Carlingford** 6:00pm Vigil, 7:45am, 9:30am (Family/Children) and 5:00pm (Youth)**WEEKDAY MASSES**

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	
<b>EPPING</b>	No Mass	*	5:00pm	*	*	9:15am	
<b>CARLINGFORD</b>	9:30am	No Mass	9:30am	9:30am	9:30am	No Mass	

**EXPOSITION OF THE EUCHARIST: Epping** Wednesday 5:30-6:30pm and Saturday 9:45-10:15am,**Carlingford** Thursday 10-10:30am**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Epping** Wednesday 5:30-6:30pm and Saturday 9:45-10:15am,**Carlingford** Thursday 10-10:30am and Saturday 5:15-5:45pm, **OR BY APPOINTMENT at either church****BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS: BY APPOINTMENT****POSTAL ADDRESS FOR THE PARISH OFFICE:** PO Box 369, Epping NSW 1710**ST GERARD MAJELLA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL: PH:** 9871 1633 **Email:** sgc@dbb.catholic.edu.au**OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS' PRIMARY SCHOOL: PH:** 9868 3322 **Email:** olhc@dbb.catholic.edu.au**Healing Mass: 1st Tuesday of the month at St Gerard's Meeting Room, Carlingford****\*Tuesday, Thursday & Friday Mass at OLHC on hold till further notice.**

Please pray for.....

**For those who are sick and suffering:**

- Nancy Walker (family of Eileen Nicoll)
- Martin McGuire (family of Eileen Nicoll)
- Cohen Hadden (family of Pat & Margaret McArdle)
- Graham Yeates
- Dennis Porteous (our Parish Secretary)
- Eric Yeung (brother of Goretti Yeung)
- Eileen Brownlow
- Margaret Floyd
- Graham Kelly
- Veronica Kemp
- Ethan Seng Mestanza (Mario and Graciela Mestanza's grandson)
- Maureen Carlon (Marie Saul's sister)
- Kevin Saul (Marie Saul's nephew)



**Thank you** for your prayers for all our brothers and sisters who are on our prayer list for the sick and suffering. They have a difficult road ahead and will surely be strengthened by our united prayers for them. In case you did not know this, our parish also has a Prayer Ministry group on Facebook. This was established in 2020, when we went into our first lockdown. It still remains active today with occasional prayer requests that come through the office via email or directly posted on this private group. Please feel free to join if you would like to pray for someone or for your own intentions:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2660800900909668>

**Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of Everlasting life. Grant that life to:**

**Recently deceased** - HO Chung (father of Fanny), Patrick David, Bernie Cross, Sofia Lopez de Zubiaga (mother-in-law of Ana Terrazas), Elizabeth Keating, Sandro Oselli (family of Anne Campbell)

**Anniversaries** - Bridget Mahon, Louis Hermis

**Responsorial Psalm Response**

1st Sunday of Lent - 26 Feb 2023

Ps 50:3-6, 12-14, 17

Be merciful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

**Gospel Acclamation**

1st Sunday of Lent - 26 Feb 2023

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

No one lives on bread alone,  
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.