



# ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD

**Parish Priest:** Father John Hayes

**Assistant Priest:** Father Liem Duong

**Administration Coordinator:** Nicolle Mazzaferro [admin@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:admin@stmarthas.org.au)

**Sacramental Coordinator:** Linda Praum [sc@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:sc@stmarthas.org.au)

**Safeguarding Officer:** Dianne Dawson [safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au)

**Parish Ministries Coordinator:** Helen Williamson

**Music Ministry:** Marcella Ayoub & Marion Li

**Children's Liturgy Coordinator:** Alannah Hickry



**'He went to Capernaum, that the prophecy of Isaiah be fulfilled' - Matthew 4**

70 Homebush Rd Strathfield NSW 2135

**Phone:** 9746 6131 **Fax:** 9764 3040

**Email:** [office@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:office@stmarthas.org.au)

**Website:** [www.stmarthas.org.au](http://www.stmarthas.org.au)

**Parish Office Hours:**

Mon, Tues & Thurs 9.00am-5.00pm



**St Martha's School:** 9764 1184

**Email:** [info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au](mailto:info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au)

**Principal:** Carolyn Parsell

**Assist Principal:** Steven Belcastro

**REC:** Cindy Ronzini

THE PARISH OF ST MARTHA'S ACKNOWLEDGES THE WANGUL PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT

## **Vision:**

**Welcoming**

**Eucharistic**

**Transformed by the Word**

**Full of Grace**

**Proclaiming Good News**

## **Mission:**

**Alive with the Spirit**

**Inspired by St Martha**

**We Celebrate & Witness**

**God's love**

**Using our Gifts & Talents**

## **MASS TIMES**

**Tuesday:** 7.30am

**Wednesday:** 9.10am

**Thursday:** 9.10am

**Friday:** 9.10am

**Saturday:** 9.10am, 5pm Vigil Mass

**Sunday:** 8.00am; 10.00am & 6.00pm

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of every month:**

8.30am Adoration followed by Mass at 9.10am.

**Divine Mercy Prayers** recited every Thursday after 9.10am mass. We welcome and encourage you to come along.

## **RECONCILIATION:**

Saturday after 9.10am Mass or by appointment.

## **BAPTISM:**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month at 11.00am

Please introduce yourself to Father after Mass to request a Baptism Information pack. Contact the Parish office for more information.

**MARRIAGES:** By appointment only.  
(6 months' notice is required).

## **ROSARY:**

Tuesday & Saturday after morning Mass

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8.30am

6.00pm on Fridays in conjunction with Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle and Divine Mercy Chaplet.

**ST MARTHA'S PRAYER GROUP:**

Resumes 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## **PLAYGROUP:**

St Martha's Primary School Playgroup is a great opportunity for children aged 0 to 5 years to enjoy some books and craft activities and get to know each other. From 8.50am to 10.00am in the upstairs school hall.

Playgroup runs every **2<sup>nd</sup> Monday** during the **school term only**.

Contact: [elena.razzoli@syd.catholic.edu.au](mailto:elena.razzoli@syd.catholic.edu.au)

**Please support our Catholic Press**  
**Copies of the Catholic Weekly are in the**  
**Church Foyer \$2.**

## **SAFE GUARDING**

A reminder to parents that the Notice-Board located at the side entrance contains various resources for children regarding Safeguarding.

### **A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY.**

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or [safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org)

You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

### **Commitment Statement**

The Archdiocese of Sydney is wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all Children and Adults at Risk, and it acknowledges its important legal, moral and spiritual responsibility to create a safe and nurturing environment for Children and Adults.



Please be aware that if you "TAG" St Martha's in photos on your Facebook page, the images also appear on an "unofficial" St Martha's Facebook page. This "unofficial" page was created automatically by Facebook and is not controlled by St Martha's. We kindly remind you to take care when uploading photos of any children without parent consent.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES YOU ARE REQUIRED TO **SIGN IN** - ACOLYTES; READERS; EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS; CHOIR; CHILDREN'S LITURGY (LEADERS & CHILDREN) & SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM (LEADERS & CHILDREN). SIGN IN FOLDERS ARE KEPT IN THE SACRISTY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

ALTAR SERVERS ARE **NOT** PERMITTED IN THE SACRISTY WITHOUT A PARENT/TEACHER. THE SIGN IN FOLDER IS LOCATED IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE SACRISTY.

GLUTEN FREE HOSTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANY CELIAC PARISHIONERS. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION PLEASE TELL THE CHURCH WARDEN OR SEE AN ACOLYTE IN THE SACRISTY PRIOR TO MASS.

# HAPPY AUSTRALIA DAY

## MASS WILL BE CELEBRATED

### AT 9.10AM ON MONDAY 26<sup>th</sup> JANUARY.

Loving God,  
we give thanks for this ancient and beautiful land,  
for its contrasts of landscape and climate, for its abundance of wealth  
and opportunity for our history with all its struggles in adversity, its courage and hope.  
A land of despair and hope, a land of abundant harvests, a land of fire, drought and flood.  
Give us in our diversity, tolerance and respect for each other and a passionate commitment to justice for all.  
We pray that your Spirit may continue to move in this land and bring forgiveness, reconciliation,  
and an end to all injustice;  
Bless us so that we might be a blessing to others.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## *Reflection*

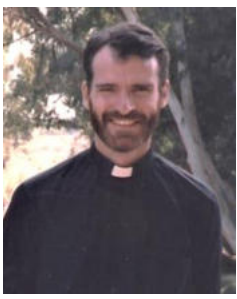
As we approach Australia Day, we can't pretend to understand all the issues. But we do understand that people approach this day with different emotions. Some with sadness and grief, some with anger, some with joy and thankfulness and others indifference and I'm sure a range of other emotions. We don't have the answers yet but seeking to understand each other and the life-history we bring to this day will help us. It's when we take the time to listen and seek to understand each other that we show love to our fellow Australians. So why not ask someone about their history this week? Seek to understand them and how their history shapes them.

Take some time to read more about our indigenous history to understand where others are coming from.

Show love to people by seeking to understand who they are and where they've come from, not just where they've lived but the history they've come from. Turn to Jesus, God's son, who understands us and knows us better than we know ourselves. Jesus came to live on earth amongst us so he knows and understand what it means to be human. Jesus grieved with hurting people, he grieved over death, he suffered himself at the hands of people and he did all of this because he loves us. Jesus understands our pain, anger and sadness as well as our joys. Whatever emotions you approach Australia Day with, why not take the time to love those around you by asking them about their history and how they feel about Australia Day? And if you'd like to know more about Jesus who understands all our history better than we do and loves us more than we can imagine then why not check out the life of Jesus for yourself.

**Background on the Gospel Reading (Loyola Press):** Today's Gospel describes the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke (called the Synoptic Gospels), Jesus' public ministry begins after his baptism by John the Baptist and after his retreat to the desert where he was tempted by the devil. When Jesus returns from the desert, he hears that John has been arrested. The first part of today's Gospel places Jesus' ministry in the context of the writings of the prophet, Isaiah. Matthew wants to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecies given to the people of Israel, and he refers to Isaiah to do so. Isaiah says that the Messiah will begin his ministry in Galilee, the land of the Gentiles. When Jesus begins to preach in Galilee, Matthew points to his ministry as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, proof that Jesus is the Messiah. When Jesus called his first disciples, the Gospel tells us that the fishermen (Peter and Andrew, James and John) dropped everything to follow Jesus immediately. Yet this Gospel tells us little about the prior experience that the fishermen had of Jesus. Did they know him? Had they heard him preach? What kind of person must Jesus have been to invoke such a response? We can imagine that Jesus was a powerful presence to elicit a response as immediate and complete as these first disciples gave. The Gospel concludes with a description of the ministry that Jesus begins in Galilee. Jesus inaugurates the Kingdom of God with his work. He teaches in the synagogue and preaches the kingdom. His ability to cure people's diseases and illness is a sign of the kingdom. In Jesus' ministry, we already begin to see the Kingdom of God among us.

**Family Connection:** Today's Gospel tells us little about the background of these fishermen, their work, and their families. In today's Gospel, we are simply told that James and John left their father, Zebedee, in the boat and followed Jesus. Some details about the families of these first followers of Jesus are found later in Matthew's Gospel, however. In Matthew 8:14-15 for example, Jesus goes to the home of Peter and heals his mother-in-law of a fever. Matthew 20:20-28 relates how the mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John) approaches Jesus with the request that her sons be given places of honor in Jesus' kingdom. These brief references suggest that the first disciples' separation from their families may not have been as complete as the verses in today's Gospel might lead us to believe. Matthew points out the separation because he wants to show that Christian discipleship can require a change in our lives and even our family relationships. Perhaps the message for us today is to balance the radical call to be a follower of Jesus with the challenge to be "fishers of men" even within our own families. Creating this balance may require that we change some of the priorities of our own family life. As a family, detail the activities of a typical day. Discuss together what priorities are reflected in this daily schedule. How does your family respond when your daily plans are interrupted or must be changed? Together read today's Gospel, Matthew 4:12-23. Reflect together on the example of the first disciples who dropped everything to follow Jesus. Ask: Does our family schedule give evidence that we put God first in our family life? What might we do to better reflect that God is our priority? Pray together that your family will always give evidence that God comes first in your family life. Pray today's Psalm or the Lord's Prayer.



# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY FATHER JOHN

January 28th marks the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fr John's arrival at St Martha's as our Parish Priest. We sincerely thank him for his pastoral ministry and spiritual guidance to our parish community.



*Heavenly Father,  
We come before You with hearts full of gratitude on this special anniversary  
of Your servant, Father John.*

*Thank You for calling him to serve Your people,  
and for the grace You have poured out upon him over the years.*

*May his ministry be a source of joy, hope, and inspiration, bringing healing, comfort, and the Good News to all he serves.  
Keep his heart steadfast in faith, ever faithful to Your call and committed to the Gospel and grant him the courage to lead with  
compassion and the humility to serve as an instrument of Your love.*

*bless him abundantly, Lord, and grant him many more years of fruitful ministry in Your vineyard.*

*May his life be a testament to Your love, bringing glory to Your Name.*

*Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.*

The new Ministries Roster is now available from the church side entrance or via the parish website.

## 31<sup>st</sup> January / 1<sup>st</sup> February

**IF YOU CANNOT FULFIL YOUR ROSTER DUTY PLEASE ORGANISE A REPLACEMENT.**

Special Ministers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Beatrice Bonett	Yvonne Martins	Jackie Romanous	Andrew Bova
	Vince Blefari	Lilly Ravi	Helen Williamson	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Readers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Helen Blefari	Daniel Martins	Anne Marrins	Andrew Chasle
	Maria Soo	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>	Steven Doumit	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Altar Servers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Marissa B.	Jacob M.	Jay L.	Zachary A.
	Olivia B.	Christian C.	Jarvis L.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>	Ryan W.	Courtney O.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>	Dylan W.	Charlize O.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Wardens	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Edith Pun	Peter Yamin	Trudie Rogers	Theresa Kuk

If you are an Acolyte; Reader; Eucharistic minister or in the Music Ministry you are required to sign in – (red folders are kept in the sacristy). The altar servers sign in folder is located in the side corridor.

## Mass Intentions

<b>Recently Deceased:</b>	Trudie O'Neil, Pierantonio Deidda, Laurice Touma Sassine, Carmel Nelson, Milagros Manipis, Olga Chidiac, Charbel Mannah, Martha Lynch, Emged Rizkalla.
<b>Repose of The Soul:</b>	Fr Adrian Horgan, Fr Paul Ryan, Fr Mark Beard, Elias & Julia Georges, Luke Manassa, Alfredo Pjanic, Kevin Bouffler, Br Ray Dowding, Francesco & Sarina Campanale, Daniel Lucich, Stefano, Francesco & Maria Colagiuri, Filomena & Giuseppe Pagano, Matteo & Caterina Genova, Caterina Guarnia, Frances & Harry Doumit, Frederick McDowell, Dorothy Harris, James Brady, Elizabeth Keating, Anne Cecilia Glass, Reginald & Agnes Glass, Giuseppe Mazzaferro & Salvatore Corelli, Gerald & Frances Gleeson, Joseph Tannous, Nejia Tannous, Faado, Alice & Slaiman Herro, Aldo & Fiorella Amarino, Salvatore Puglisi, Monica & Patrick Ryan, Elie Sahyoun, Christopher John Stewart, Stephen Maxwell Stewart, Margaret Raeburn, Francesco & Mary Sorbello, Bruce & Estelle Thurn, Gerald Wilson, Lisa Cooke, Michael & Mary Cassar, Giuseppe & Romilda Reginato, Gladstone & Noel Jebanasam, Jenny Indriani.
<b>Anniversaries:</b>	Dan Dillon, Eliana Barnes, Anne Russo, Milagros Manipis, Michael D'Cunha, Alice Herro, Des McNamara, Dorothea Starr, Harry Thorpe.
<b>Sick Intentions:</b>	Amy Scott, Dareth Flavell, Micah Kim, Baby Mia Valente, Geoff Sims, Cameron Stacy, Helen McAlister, Sr Marilyn Farley, Elliot Leahy, Toni N, Norma Habib, Joe Everitt, Alf Buda, Ann Cincotta-Tangey, Mark Samaha, John Weitering, John Hay, Ajith Antony, Rudy Raeburn, Robert Rumore, Carminella Tiberio, Theo McLean, Joseph Akkary, Sylvia Watson, Virgilio Lim, George Jabbour, Dr Maher Ishak Morian, Stephanie Harrington, Phil Harriss, Sophie O'Donnell, Ken South, Siena Fabrie, Joanna Jo, Simon Alam, Rosanne Sukkar, Henry D'Souza, Danielle Fabien, Maroun Moussa, Stephen Chase (snr), Ajay Babu Avirneni.
<b>Special Intentions:</b>	Deceased friends, relatives & Benefactors of the Dominican Order & St Vincent de Paul Society. David Russell.

Remembering someone with a Mass Intention honours them in a unique way – surrounding them with the warmth of God's love. A Mass may be offered for the living or deceased, for a Birthday, Anniversary, for somebody who is ill, or for a special intention. Mass Intention envelopes are available at the Church Entrance. If you would like a Mass offered on a particular date, please contact the parish office to arrange this.



# Praying for Israel and Jerusalem

By Ron Rolheiser

I once lived in community for several years with an Oblate brother who was wonderfully generous and pious to a fault. But he struggled to pick up symbol and metaphor. He took things literally. For him, what the words said is what they meant! This caused him considerable confusion and consternation when each day praying the psalms we would pray for Jerusalem and Israel and would occasionally pray for the demise of some other nation. Coming out of prayer, he would ask: "Why are we praying for Jerusalem? For Israel? What makes those places more special in God's eyes than other cities and other countries? Why does God hate some countries and cities?" We would try our best to have him understand that these names were not to be taken literally, as places on a map, but rather as symbols. Wisely or unwisely, I would sometimes say, "Brother, whenever you read the word 'Jerusalem' or 'Israel', just take that to mean the 'church', and whenever a nation or a city is named that God seems to hate, take that to mean that God hates sin." We might smile at his piety and literalism, but I'm not sure we don't all still struggle with our own literalism in understanding what in fact the scriptures mean by words like Jerusalem, Israel, Chosen people, and God's elect. Indeed, as Christians, what do we mean with the words Christian, Church, and Body of Christ?

## *For whom are we praying when we pray for Jerusalem and Israel?*

What we see in scripture is a progressive de-literalizing of names and places. Initially, Israel meant an historical nation, Jerusalem meant an historical city, the Chosen People meant a genetic race, and God's elect was literally that nation, that city, and that genetic race. But as revelation unfolds, these names and concepts become ever more symbolic. At least this is true for most parts of Judaism. Most parts of Judaism understand these words symbolically, though some still understand these words literally. For them, Jerusalem means the actual city of Jerusalem, and Israel means an actual strip of land in Palestine. Christians mirror that. Mainstream Christian theology has from its very origins refused to identify those names and places in a way where (simplistically) Jerusalem means the Christian Church and Christians are the Chosen Race. However, as is the case with parts of Judaism, many Christians, while de-literalizing these words from their Jewish roots, now take them literally to refer to the historical Christian churches and to its explicitly confessing members. Indeed, my answer to my Oblate brother ("Jerusalem means the church, Israel means Christianity") seems to suggest exactly that. However, the words Church and Christianity themselves need to be de-literalized. The church is a reality which is much wider and more inclusive than its explicit, visible, baptized membership. Its visible, historical aspect is real, is important, and is never to be denigrated; but (from Jesus through the history of Christian dogma and theology) Christianity has always believed and taught clearly that the mystery of Christ is both visible and invisible. Partly, we can see it and partly we can't. Partly it is visibly incarnated in history, and partly it is invisible. The mystery of Christ is incarnate in history, but not all of it can be seen. Some people are baptized visibly, and some people are baptized only in unseen ways. Moreover, this is not new, liberal theology. Jesus himself taught that it is not necessarily those who say 'Lord, Lord' who are his true believers, but rather it's those who actually live out his teaching (however unconsciously) who are his true followers. Christian theology has always taught that the full mystery of Christ is much larger than its historical manifestation in the Christian churches. Kenneth Cragg, a Christian missionary, after living and ministering for years in the Muslim world, offered this comment: I believe it will take all the Christian churches to give full expression to the full Christ. To this, I would add, that it will not only take all the Christian churches to give full expression to the mystery of Christ, it will also take all people of sincere will, beyond all religious boundaries, and beyond all ethnicity, to give expression to the mystery of Christ. When my pious Oblate brother who struggled to understand metaphor and symbol asked me why we were always praying for Jerusalem and Israel, and I replied that he might simply substitute the word Church and Christianity for those terms, my answer to him (taken literally) was itself over pious, simplistic, and a too-narrow understanding of the mystery of Christ. Those terms Church and Christianity, as we see in the progressive unfolding of revelation in scripture, must themselves be de-literalized. For whom are we praying when we pray for Jerusalem or for Israel? We are praying for all sincere people, of all faiths, of all denominations, of all races, of all ages. They are the new Jerusalem and the new Israel.



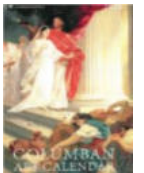
## St Martha's Piety Stall

located in the Church foyer has a wide variety of sacramental and religious goods such as devotional candles, statues, rosaries, cards, and other devotional items. Please see the warden after Mass if you would like to purchase an item.

**The new 2026 Columban Art Calendar is still available for \$10.**



***Please continue to support the St Vincent De Paul Society through the Church Poor Boxes***



 **Beyond Blue**  
Beyond Blue  
P: 1300 22 4636  
W: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

 **CatholicCare**  
CatholicCare – Archdiocese of Sydney  
P: 13 18 19  
W: [www.catholiccare.org](http://www.catholiccare.org)

 **kidshelpline**  
Anytime Any Reason  
**Call 1800 55 1800**

 **Lifeline**  
Saving Lives  
Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.  
Lifeline  
P: 13 11 14  
W: [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**1800RESPECT**  
NATIONAL DOMESTIC FAMILY AND  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE  
1800RESPECT  
P: 1800 737 732  
W: [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)