



ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD

Parish Priest: Father John Hayes

Assistant Priest: Father Liem Duong

Administration Coordinator: Nicolle Mazzaferro admin@stmarthas.org.au

Sacramental Coordinator: Linda Praum sc@stmarthas.org.au

Safeguarding Officer: Dianne Dawson safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au

Parish Ministries Coordinator: Helen Williamson

Music Ministry: Marcella Ayoub & Marion Li

Children's Liturgy Coordinator: Alannah Hickry



'The water that I shall give will turn into a spring of eternal life' - John 4

70 Homebush Rd Strathfield NSW 2135

Phone: 9746 6131 Fax: 9764 3040

Email: office@stmarthas.org.au

Website: 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

Acting Principal: Steven Belcastro

Acting Assistant Principal: Chelsea McKeown

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
MASS TIMES**

Mission:

**Alive with the Spirit
Inspired by St Martha
We Celebrate & Witness
God's love
Using our Gifts & Talents**



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

1st 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:

2nd & 4th 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 9th 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 **2nd Monday** during the **school term only**.
Contact: Info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au

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

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.

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

Fr John is away from the Parish until 12th March.

Background on the Gospel Reading (Loyola Press): On this Sunday and the next two Sundays, we break from reading the Gospel of Matthew to read from John's Gospel. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel not assigned to a particular liturgical year. Instead, readings from John's Gospel are interspersed throughout our three-year liturgical cycle. In today's Gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and a woman from Samaria is among the most lengthy and most theological found in Scripture. The most startling aspect of the conversation is that it happens at all. Jesus, an observant Jew of that time, was expected to avoid conversation with women in public. The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans should have prevented the conversation as well. The woman herself alludes to the break from tradition: "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" Yet Jesus not only converses with the woman, he also asks to share her drinking vessel, an action that makes him unclean according to Jewish law. The initial conversation between Jesus and the woman is better understood if we consider the importance of water, especially in the climate of Israel. At first, the woman understands Jesus' promise of "living water" in a literal sense: "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." With no running water, the daily trip to the well by the women of the community was of paramount importance. The women of the town would have traveled to the well in the early morning, but this woman came to the well at noon, the hottest time of the day. The timing of her visit is a clear sign that she is an outcast within the Samaritan community. We learn in her conversation with Jesus that she is an outcast because of her "many husbands." Behind the conversation lies the animosity and rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans. Samaritans shared Jewish ancestry, but Samaritans had intermarried with foreigners when they lived under the rule of the Assyrians. Samaritan religion included worship of Yahweh, but was also influenced by the worship of other gods. When the Jews refused Samaritan help in the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans eventually built a temple for themselves at Mt. Gerizim (the same mountain mentioned by the woman at the well). Like the Jews, the Samaritans believed that a Messiah would come. The high point of the conversation is when Jesus reveals himself to her as the Messiah. His answer to the Samaritan woman's questions about worship is meant to predict a time when worshiping in truth and spirit will become the way to worship. After the conversation, the Samaritan woman becomes a disciple. Even though she is an outcast and not a Jew, she returns to her town to lead others to Jesus and to wonder whether she has found the Messiah. The Samaritan townspeople return with her to meet Jesus for themselves, and many are said to come to believe in him. The significance of the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman has many levels. The first is personal: The woman is herself converted to belief in Jesus as Messiah because he knows her sin but speaks with her just the same. The second is social: Having come to know Jesus as the Messiah, the Samaritan woman becomes an evangelist to her own people. The third level of the story is educational: Jesus uses his encounter with the Samaritan woman to teach his disciples that God's mercy is without limit. The disciples return from their shopping quite confused to find Jesus talking with a Samaritan, and a woman at that! But the conversion of the Samaritan townspeople is a foretaste of the kind of open community that will be created among those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

Family Connection: Lent is a season for repentance. It is a season during which we are called to reflect upon and to live deeply the promises of Baptism. The well and the conversation about water immediately recall for us the Sacrament of Baptism. As the Samaritan woman was converted and sent on a mission because of the conversation about water, we too are converted and sent by our Baptism to preach the good news of Jesus to others. Take this opportunity to reflect upon the importance of Baptism with your family. If you have photos or other mementos of your family's Baptisms, bring them out and take some time to recall the day of Baptism and its importance to you and your family. Create a prayer table that includes these mementos and a bowl of holy water. After you have spent some time talking about Baptism, invite everyone to listen carefully and prayerfully to today's Gospel. Read John 4:5-42 together. Ask how Jesus' meeting with the woman at the well is like Baptism. (Jesus knows the woman's sin and forgives her. The woman comes to know Jesus as the Messiah. The woman invites others to meet Jesus.) Pray a prayer of blessing for each member of the family that God will help each one live the promises of his or her Baptism. Pray together the Lord's Prayer.

Lenten Devotion: Stations of the Cross *Every Friday of Lent at 7pm.*

**Easter Cards \$10 (box of 10) available from the
piety stall**

Easter is the largest liturgical celebration throughout the year and many volunteers are needed across all ministries. If you are on the regular roster and attending any of the Easter Liturgies, could you please consider volunteering. We are in need of Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Lectors, Altar Servers, Acolytes & Wardens. Please write your name on the sheets on the rear table of the church or contact **Helen Williamson on 0408 970 120.**

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALSO NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 'WASHING OF THE FEET' AT THE HOLY THURSDAY MASS. PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE SIGN-UP SHEET AT THE REAR OF THE CHURCH IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER.

Understanding Scripture (Liturgia)

LIVING WATER

Jesus and the Samaritan woman engage in a wide-ranging discussion - water, marriage, worship, belief. In the course of this discussion the woman comes to a progressively deeper understanding of who Jesus is: 'a Jew' (4:9), possibly 'greater than our father Jacob' (4:12), 'a prophet' (4:19), possibly 'the Christ' (= Messiah'; 4:25, 29), 'truly the Saviour of the world' (4:42). This journey of faith begins with the innocuous request for a drink of water. Jesus, who is in the awkward position of asking the woman for water, is in the privileged position of being able to offer the woman 'living water.' The Greek expression is deliberately ambiguous. 'Living water' can refer either to 'flowing water' as from a stream (as opposed to standing water in a pond or cistern) or to 'life-giving water.' The woman understands the first meaning while Jesus intends the second. This misunderstanding allows Jesus to elaborate (4:13-24). The immediate context doesn't explicitly explain what Jesus means by 'living water.' It is somehow linked to 'the gift of God' (4:10) but that, too, isn't entirely clear. Later in the gospel Jesus explains: 'Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him.'" John explains: 'He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive' (John 7:38-39). Thus, 'living water' is the Spirit which is how Jesus himself remains in his disciples after his resurrection-ascension. 'Living water' as a metaphor for the divine presence is attested in Jeremiah. The prophet compares idolatry to trying to draw water from a cracked cistern: just as there is no water in an empty cistern (Jer 2:13), there is no power in idols because they are not gods. The Lord, however, is as refreshing and reliable as fresh flowing 'living water.' In 17:3 Jeremiah is more explicit when he says that 'living water' is 'the Lord.' To have living water as an internal spring means that believers will never thirst for God, for the Spirit is in them (14:17, 20) leading them to 'eternal life' (4:14).

14th & 15th March

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

Special Ministers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Joanne Touma	Gian Surjadinata	Rachel Suriano	Kynetha Torcato
	Lisa Dennis	Artha Surjadinata	Maria Soares	Volunteer Needed
Readers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Julie Erskine	Robert Smith	Mark Soares	Andrew Chasle
	Camille Kafka	Volunteer Needed	Marlyn D'Souza	Volunteer Needed
Altar Servers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Grace T.	Ryan W.	Marcus V.	Volunteer Needed
	Peter T.	Dylan W.	Elijah M.	Volunteer Needed
	Volunteer Needed	Matthew C.	Harrison S.	Volunteer Needed
	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Wardens	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Linda Praum	Paul Abela	Trudie Rogers	Anthony Thurn

Mass Intentions

Recently Deceased:	Nancy Au, Grace Maria Rumore, Andre Miguel Marquez, Swady Anne Hanna, Fr Glynn, Brother Julian (Maurice) Quinlan, Frank Burriss, Trudie O'Neil, Pierantonio Deidda, Laurice Touma Sassine, Carmel Nelson, Milagros Manipis, Olga Chidiac.
Rest of The Soul:	Fr Adrian Horgan, Fr Paul Ryan, Kevin Bouffler, Br Ray Dowding, Francesco & Sarina Campanale, Daniel Lucich, Stefano, Francesco & Maria Colagiuri, 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, Filomena & Giuseppe Pagano, Joseph Tannous, Nejia Tannous, Faado, Alice & Slainman 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, Pauline Gibson & Robert Rumore.
Anniversaries:	Mary Sorbello, Judith Mueller, Elias Aslan, Mark Kelly, John Tandiono, Sagaya Sargunam, James Henness, Grace Hunt, Maureen Sarks, Margaret McGannon, Richard Sullivan, John Tandiono, Dorothy Harris, Elizabeth Keating, Sandor Toth, Maureen & Edmund Duggan, Eliana Barnes, Minter Antoun, Frances Bot, Harry Russo, Jim Bradbury, Julian & Mabel Doyle, Harry Thorpe, Daniel Dillon, Antonio Iannella.
Sick Intentions:	Amy Scott, Dareth Flavell, 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, 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.
Special Intentions:	Deceased friends, relatives & Benefactors of the Dominican Order & St Vincent de Paul Society. Harry Amalan & David Russell.

Reflection for the 3rd Sunday of Lent Year A

By Ron Rolheiser

The Cross as Revealing Christ's Descent into Hell

There's a curious line in our creed which says that, immediately following his death, Jesus "descended into hell". What, possibly, can that mean? Within the popular Christian mindset we have the conception that, as a consequence of original sin, the gates of heaven were closed so that, from the time of Adam and Eve until the moment of Jesus' death, nobody could enter paradise. Only a divine act of reparation could again give human beings access to heaven and that act of reparation was Jesus' death which "paid the debt of sin" and so opened the gates of heaven. In this view of things, all the just who had died from the time of Adam and Eve until Jesus' death were asleep somewhere, in a Hades of sorts. Immediately following his death, Jesus descends to that underworld and awakens these souls and then triumphantly leads them into paradise. That descent to the underworld to wake the souls of the dead and take them to heaven is what is understood as "the descent into hell". The image of this is wonderfully captured in an ancient homily that the church now uses as one of its readings for the hour of vigils on Holy Saturday. But that's an image, something that captures, as might an icon, a deeper reality. It's not a video-tape of an actual happening. How is it to be interpreted? How did Jesus descend into hell?

Let me try to explain this by combining three images:

The first is a story, a tragic one: Some years ago some family friends of mine lost a daughter to suicide. She was in her early twenties and away from home when she made her first attempt to kill herself. The family rushed to her, flew her home, surrounded her with loving solicitude, took her to doctors of every kind, and generally tried every possible way to love and coax her out of her deadly depression. In the end, they failed. She killed herself, despite their efforts. All the loving effort and professional resources they could muster could not break through and bring her out of the private hell into which she had descended. Strong as human love can be, sometimes it stands helpless, exhausted, before a door it can't open.

My second image is taken from John's Gospel: After Jesus rises from the dead, he appears to the disciples who, as John describes, are huddled together in a room, in fear, with the doors locked. Jesus comes right through the locked doors, stands inside the middle of their fear, and breathes out peace. A week later, he does it again.

A third image: When I was a young boy, my mother gave me a holy card, an adaptation of a famous painting by Holman Hunt ("The Christ Who Knocks") In the version my mother gave me, we see, behind a locked door, a man huddled and paralysed by a fear and darkness of some kind. Outside the door stands Jesus, with a lantern, knocking, ready to relieve the man of his burden. But there's a hitch, the door only has a knob on the inside. Jesus cannot enter, unless the man first unlocks the door. There's the implication that God cannot help unless we first let God in. Fair enough? Not exactly.

What the cross of Christ reveals is that when we are so paralysed by fear and overcome by darkness that we can no longer help ourselves, when we have reached the stage where we can no longer open the door to let light and life in, God can still come through our locked doors, stand inside our fear and paralysis, and breathe out peace. The love that is revealed in Jesus' suffering and death, a love that is so other-centred that it can fully forgive and embrace its executioners, can precisely pass through locked doors, melt frozen hearts, penetrate the walls of fear, and descend into our private hells and, there, breathe out peace. In the case of the young woman who committed suicide, she had reached a point where she was frozen inside of a private hell, behind doors that her family's love and professional doctors could no longer open. They stood outside of her locked doors, like Jesus in Holman Hunt's painting, knocking, begging for a response that she could no longer give. I have no doubt though that when she awoke on the other side she found Christ standing inside her fear and darkness, breathing out peace. The doctrine of the "descent into hell" is singularly the most consoling of all doctrines, in any religion. As that ancient homily on Holy Saturday so wonderfully puts it, the love that Christ reveals in the cross is so strong that it can descend into any hell we can create, thaw out our frozen souls, and lead us into the light and peace of paradise, despite our fears and weaknesses. The cross of Christ does not stand helpless before a locked door.



Third Sunday of Lent
7-8 March 2026

Monoranjon lives in a village in Bangladesh close to the sea, where floods and storms often damage his crops and his home. With support from Project Compassion, he learnt climate-resilient farming techniques and new ways to diversify his income, helping his family survive and build a safer, more sustainable future.



Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty this Lent.*