



Sacred Heart Parish Mildura

257—261 Eleventh Street Mildura

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Sacred Heart Parish | Mildura

Fr. Michael McKinnon PP

Fr Damian Styles

Parish Secretary: Carmel Russo

Office Hours: Tues—Fri 9am—4pm

**Our Lady of Lourdes
Werrimull**

**St. Francis Xavier
Elms Street, Irymple**

**2nd Sunday of Advent / Year A -
3rd & 4th December 2016**

Weekend Mass Times

Sat: 6:00 pm

Sun: 9:00 am, 5:00 pm

Irymple: 8:30 am

Werrimull 11:00 am (last Sunday of each month)

Weekday Masses

*If there is a Funeral Mass on Wed, Thurs, the advertised
Mass will be cancelled.*

Tues: 7:00 pm Wed: 9:10 am

Thurs: 9:30 am Fri: 5:40 pm

Sat: 9.30 am



Weekly Prayer Opportunities

Rosary: Monday 5:00pm

Prayer of the Church: Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri. 8:40 am

Christian Meditation: Sat 11:30 am Parish Prayer Room

Charismatic Prayer Group: Tues 7:30pm in Church

Devotion Prayer and Exposition: Fri 3:00pm

Reconciliation: Saturday 10:00am

RECENT DEATH:

ANNIVERSARIES:

Sunday 9am: Luigi, Maria-Michela, Incoronata Resta, Donato & Elisabette DeAngelis, Tony Modica, Angelo Resta (birthday remembrance)

Tuesday 6pm: KSC deceased members Mass

(Only members of the deceased's immediate family are permitted to arrange anniversary Masses.)



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:

If you want a sick person prayed for, ask for their permission. Names will be included for the duration of one month after which family or friends can request more time.

Don Lewis, Moataane Vatuvei, Brian Ramsay, Graeme Lewis, Joan Appleby, Ron Morello, Monica Crimmins, Daniel Ralli, Dan Rodan, John Devilee, Ethan Neyland, Georgie Manning, Dorothy Norris, Eileen Flanner, Fr Denis Dennehy, Eli Madden-Andrews, Kel Townsend, Vince Ali-castro, Judy Hunt, Hailey Crossan, Teresa Panuccio, Geraldine Brunner, Siliako Lolesio

GOSPEL REFLECTION

The wilderness or desert features powerfully in today's gospel reading. The desert is the biblical place of encounter with God, the place of beginnings and of testing. The voice of John the Baptizer is heard in the Judean desert. His food and clothing are desert-derived. John is identified as the one of whom Isaiah spoke, the voice crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way...." Ecologically, the Isaian image is quite confronting: preparing the way involves major earthworks



that reconfigure the landscape, levelling the mountains and filling the valleys to create straight paths. Yet the way is never straight and the metaphor must not be literalised. John knows this. The preparation he calls for is ongoing *metanoia*: keep on turning your lives around, keep on expanding your horizons, for the kin-dom of the heavens is "close at hand". The kin-dom is both present and yet still approaching: the verb used, *ēngiken*, allows for this ambiguity.

The first reading provides content to the notion of kin-dom or *basileia*: John is announcing the advent of God's long awaited empire of justice and right relationship. He offers a baptism of repentance (*metanoia*). In other words, John's baptism presupposes a commitment to a renewed way of life. His ministry is hugely effective. It attracts "people of Jerusalem, all Judea and all the region along the Jordan River." The arrival of two groups of religious authorities prompts a fierce response: "you brood of vipers". John has no patience with those who use their privileged positions to seek their own advantage. He challenges them with the striking image of the "more powerful one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire" and will sort out those who refuse to turn their lives around (the chaff) from those who listen to the call for *metanoia* (the wheat). The latter are "gathered in" while the former are burned "in a fire that never goes out".

Fire is a multi-faceted image in the biblical record. Here it is used metaphorically for the judgment on the wicked. Fire, as we well know in this dry land, is a challenging symbol: it is both friend and foe. In the first-century *Manual of Discipline* from the Qumran community by the Dead Sea, water, refining by fire, and "a holy Spirit" are listed together as the instruments of God's saving and purifying action. John, who may have been a member of the Qumran community, presents his own role as preparatory to that of Jesus, the Spirit-filled, powerful and enduring agent of God's refining and purifying work in the world. We recognise our own ongoing need for a "baptism" with the Holy Spirit and fire. We prepare the way by constantly expanding our vision and turning our lives around in the direction of God's reign.

Veronica Lawson rsm

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF MASS TIME ON TUESDAY FROM 7PM TO 6PM. KSC DECEASED MEMBERS MASS.

SACRAMENTAL LIFE & LITURGY

WEDDINGS

We congratulate Jacob Vallelonga & Gabriella Garreffa who were married this weekend.



RCIA—Jesus

Will be held on Thursday 8th December, 7pm in the Hillman Room.

FIRST EUCHARIST 2017

All information pertaining to preparation for the reception of First Eucharist in 2017 is now available at the Parish Office.



Parents of our children in Catholic Schools will receive information from School during the coming weeks also.

RECONCILIATION Friday 17th March
FIRST EUCHARIST Weekend 17th & 18th June

Please make a note of these dates now.



COMMUNAL CELEBRATION OF RECONCILIATION MONDAY 12TH DECEMBER at 6:30pm

Let us prepare to celebrate the gift of Christ's Peace at Christmas by acknowledging our need for healing and forgiveness.

NATIVITY PLAY CHRISTMAS EVE 2016

All children are invited to attend and be part of our traditional Nativity Play on Christmas Eve at 6:00pm. The first practice session will commence on Friday 16th December at 4pm in the Sacred Heart Church and the dress rehearsal on Wednesday 21st December at 4pm in the Sacred Heart Church. "All participating children to meet inside the front of Church at 5.45pm Christmas Eve." Contact Lisa Cirillo 0408337297

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE
CHRISTMAS MASSES.
ROSTER SHEETS AT THE BACK OF CHURCH.**

MILDURA CHRISTMAS MASSES 2016

<u>CHRISTMAS EVE</u>	<u>CHRISTMAS DAY</u>
6:00pm Mildura	9:00am Mildura
8:00pm Mildura	
12 Midnight Mildura	

PARISH FINANCE

Last week's collections

1st Collection (support of Priests & Presbytery)	\$1164.80
2nd Collection (includes DD, CC & EFT)	\$3066.50
Loose Plate	\$ 508.25

Next Finance Meeting will be held on Friday 7.30am

COMMUNITY LIFE & OUTREACH

PASSIONIST FAMILY GROUP

Passionist Family Groups final get together for the year will be on Sunday lunch at Irymple Hotel on the 4th December. Please bring a Kris Kringle to exchange. Intensions to Jean 50237561 or Denise 50211918.

REGIS TENTH AGED CARE MASS

Will be held on Tuesday 6th December at 2pm. All welcome.

SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP MEETING

Will be held on Tuesday December 6 at 4.30 pm in the Hillman Room Topic for discussion The Bishop's recent statement about aging. All interested parishioners are welcome to attend

KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Tuesday 6th Dec 2016 -- 6pm, Knights of the Southern Cross Mildura, deceased Members Mass in Sacred Heart Church, followed by BBQ tea and social evening in the Club rooms.

A farewell cuppa for Fr Damian will be held after the 9am Mass on Sunday 18th December. A plate to share would be greatly appreciated. Any donations towards a farewell gift can be left with Carmel at the Parish Office.

Fr Damian will be leaving Mildura in early January where he will be posted to Kapooka in Wagga Wagga.

THE GIVING TREE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St Vincent de Paul Society will appreciate toys being left at the Giving Tree at the back of the Church for children up to 12 years to the value of \$10.00. Sunday 11th December will be the final date for this appeal. Many thanks.



Church Life Survey during Masses next weekend **10th & 11th of December**. During these weekend masses, participants will be asked to fill out the survey. To facilitate this process, there will be no homily during these masses!

MAKING A SCENE AT CHRISTMAS

Commencing on Thursday December 8th until Sunday December 11th, a display of Christmas Nativity scenes will be held in the Monaghan Centre, Sacred Heart Church, Mildura.



On display, there will be in excess of 300 nativities from over 40 countries. Opening hours are Thursday 12noon—4.00pm; Friday 12.30pm—4.00pm; Saturday 10.00am—8.00pm and Sunday 9.00am - 7.00pm.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

If John appeared in our Churches today what would we make of him? Smile at his delusion? Be embarrassed by his challenge? Be angered by the upset to our normal religious routines? If these questions cause discomfort, John caused discomfort in his time, so much so that he was thrown into prison and executed. John preaches the coming of God. Nothing about him is attractive – the environment is the harsh Judean wilderness, his clothes and food are bizarre and his message ‘Repent’ is hardly an advertising slogan. And yet people come to him. Jerusalem, all Judea and the whole Jordan district go to him for baptism. People can recognise truth. It may not be attractive, some may prefer to avoid it, but we cannot fully hide from the truth. John speaks to the truth of God. God is near. God is coming. Is your life open to receive God or not? When we hear the word ‘baptism’ we may immediately think of the Christian ritual of baptism. The word in Greek meant to plunge into the water and this was a very common ritual within Judaism. Archaeologists have found many bathing pools in some of the houses in Jerusalem and at the entrance to the Temple – these are called *mikvot* (singular: *mikvah*). Before going to the Temple pilgrims would first totally undress, then submerge themselves under the waters of a *mikvah* – there were some for women, and some for men. Priests who lived in Jerusalem would have their own *mikvot* and would carry out this ritual every day before serving in the Temple. This ritual of outer cleansing symbolised an inner cleansing of one’s heart in preparation for encountering God. John used the cleansing waters of a river rather than a constructed *mikvah*, but the meaning was the same – a ritual of inner cleansing in preparation for God. The early followers of Jesus, who were Jews and so familiar with this ritual, used this plunging beneath water as their ritual of commitment to Jesus and initiation into the community.

The word translated as ‘repent’ means something like ‘change your way of being, change your heart’ – *metanoia*. John doesn’t go into details of how to do this. Exactly what ‘*metanoia*’ means is left to each individual. All John demands is a true change of heart. This is why he is critical of the Jewish leaders who are presented here as just going through the motions. They want the waters of baptism without doing the hard work of seeking the truth in their lives. Rituals are easy. Truth seeking costs. As we prepare yet again for the celebration of God’s coming may we approach it at the level of our hearts, even if that calls for some changes.



ADVANCE NOTICE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

SACRED HEART PARISH—LAWN MOWER

We have for sale a second hand Yardman Ride on Mower. 12.5HP motor 38” cut, with a new battery, tyres are OK and in reasonable condition. \$650.00 or price can be negotiated. Please contact Frank Moloney 0417 031 175 for a look over and further information.



THANK YOU

I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their sentiments and kind wishes during the past week. Turning 60 was actually a very pleasant experience. Thanks also to all who helped with the organisation of our social gathering after last Sunday’s 5:00pm Mass. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

Fr. Michael



IS THERE A HEAVEN OR HELL?

It has been brought to my attention on more than one occasion over the past couple of weeks that some people think that in a recent homily I dismissed the idea of the existence of heaven or hell. It was certainly never my intention to lead people to believe that heaven does not exist. As for hell, according to my homily notes, I never even mentioned it.

What I did say was that *heaven* is first and foremost about our relationship with God - at least that is what Jesus seems to be saying. Rather than give us a detailed description of heaven as a place, Jesus speaks of it more in terms of the absolute fulfilment of our relationship with God, our origin and our destiny. I believe that this also includes our relationships with one another. As far as the physical or supernatural dimensions of heaven go, I am happy to leave that up to God. One way or another, I am expecting it will be a glorious surprise!

There is a very sound theological argument for the existence of hell. According to the Gospel of John, God is *Love*. The gift of our free will furnishes us with the ability to respond to that love or to reject it. It is a risk that God has taken. But without it, there can be no possibility of our being able to love in return. Despite the absolute love God has for humanity and all creation, the gift of free will opens up the possibility for us to choose evil and death over goodness and life.

Whatever of the biblical and medieval images of fire, sulphur and physical torment, according to our theological tradition hell is *existence without God*. Accordingly, there are two questions we need to ponder. The first is: considering the fact that our human capacity for completely knowing God is limited, to what extent is any human being able to utterly and totally reject God? The second is: to what extent can the eternal, absolute and unconditional mercy of God be exhausted?

Is anyone in hell? We might certainly acknowledge the notion of the experience of *hell on earth*. But as for the next life, I suppose only God can answer that.

Fr. Michael



Our Parish Vision
*“Our Parish is a Eucharistic Community
 united by our faith in Jesus Christ.
 We work together in the power of the Holy
 Spirit to spread the good news of God’s
 Kingdom.”*



Our Parish Schools

Sacred Heart Primary School
 Principal: *Des Lowry* 5023 1204

St Paul’s Primary School
 Principal: *Vince Muscatello* 5023 4567

St Joseph’s Secondary College
 Principal: *Marg Blythman* 5018 8000

3rd & 4th December, 2016

THIS WEEK’S READINGS

First Reading: 1sa 11:1-10
Resp Psalm: Ps 71:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17. R. cf. v. 7
Response: Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.
Second Reading: Rom 15:4-9
Gospel: Mt 3:1-12

EUCHARIST MINISTERS

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
6PM	9AM	5PM
6 Ministers required	7 Ministers required	6 Ministers required
Taiana Fatai	Elena Garreffa	Tony Finn
Margaret McDonald	Maryanne Modica	Melanie Ransome
Trish McNamara	Maria Page	Bill Dolence
Morris Henderson	Lyn Welsh	Jacqui Willis
Anita Naray	Loretta Thompson	Barbara Bunting
Maria Cirillo	Giuseppe Scopacasa	Katrina Groves
	Maria Scopacasa	

MUSIC

Singing Group	Italian Group	Youth Group
M Sullivan	N Armsden	K Mafi

ALTAR SERVERS

Please volunteer	Please volunteer	Please volunteer

OFFERTORY PROCESSION

2 Volunteers required	2 Volunteers required	2 Volunteers required
	Colin & Lyn Welsh	

READERS

Rosemary Barnes	Nicholas Mataele	Sue Hermans

COUNTING TEAM 8

TREVOR AUST 5023 6597

IRYMPLE - SUNDAY - 8.30AM

READER	EUCHARIST MINISTER
G Schmidt	R Barbary

10th & 11th December, 2016

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS

First Reading: Isa 35:1-6, 10
Resp Psalm: Ps 145:6-10. R. cf. Isa 35:4
Response: Lord, come and save us.
Second Reading: James 5:7-10
Gospel: Mt 11:2-11

EUCHARIST MINISTERS

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	
6PM	9AM	5PM
6 Ministers required	7 Ministers required	6 Ministers required
Christine Carmichael	Susan Lewis	Juday Hall
Ellen Frauenfelder	Minda Wright	Myrna Rodi
Jacinda Deacon	Rose Op’t Hoog	Maree Irvin
Katy Quinlan	Rini Op’t Hoog	Sue Hermans
Margaret Sheahan	Cora Howell	Danielle Mazzini
Irene Morello	Narie Lewis	Volunteer Please
	Renata Byra	

MUSIC

Filipino Group	Sacred Heart Group	M Guthrie
A Armsden	Leader	All welcome
	M Fainga’anuku	

ALTAR SERVERS

Please volunteer	Please volunteer	Please volunteer

OFFERTORY PROCESSION

2 Volunteers required	2 Volunteers required	2 Volunteers required
	Baptism	Baptism

READERS

Trish McNamara	Rose Op’t Hoog	Barb Kelly

COUNTING TEAM 9

GEORGE DOLENCE 5023 7993

IRYMPLE - SUNDAY - 8.30AM

READER	EUCHARIST MINISTER
G McCracken	D Knight