



THE SAVING WORD

MATTHEW

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT / A

8 MARCH 2026

FIRST READING

Ex 17:3-7

A reading from the book of Exodus

Give us water to drink.

Tormented by thirst, the people complained against Moses. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt?' they said. 'Was it so that I should die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?' Moses appealed to the Lord. 'How am I to deal with this people?' he said. 'A little more and they will stone me!' The Lord said to Moses, 'Take with you some of the elders of Israel and move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river, and go. I shall be standing before you there on the rock, at Horeb. You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink.' This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel. The place was named Massah and Meribah because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, 'Is the Lord with us, or not?'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 94:1-2, 6-9. R. v. 8

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; / hail the rock who saves us. / Let us come before him, giving thanks, / with songs let us hail the Lord. **R.**

2. Come in; let us bow and bend low; / let us kneel before the God who made us / for he is our God and we / the people who belong to his pasture, / the flock that is led by his hand. **R.**

3. O that today you would listen to his voice! / 'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, / as on that day at Massah in the desert / when your fathers put me to the test; / when they tried me, though they saw my work.' **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 5:1-2, 5-8

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. This

hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Jn 4:42, 15

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! / Lord, you are truly the Saviour of the world; / give me living water, that I may never thirst again. / Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Jn 4:4-5, 19-26, 39-42

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

The water that I shall give will turn into a spring of eternal life.

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:

'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you:

Give me a drink,
you would have been the one to ask,
and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied:

'Whoever drinks this water
will get thirsty again;
but anyone who drinks the water that I shall
give
will never be thirsty again:



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PARISH PRIEST: Rev Fr Leenus Neetany SAC

Permanent Deacon: Rev John Lam

Parish Coordinator: Joanna Lam

ST JOSEPH'S, ELSTERNWICK

71 Orrong Road, Elsternwick 3185

Mass

Friday 10:00am, Saturday 6:30pm and Sunday 10:30am

Reconciliation

Friday after Mass, Saturday 6:00pm

HOLY CROSS, CAULFIELD SOUTH

707 Glen Huntly Road, Caulfield South 3162

Mass

Thursday 10:00am and Sunday 9:00am

Reconciliation

Thursday after Mass

ST ANTHONY'S, GLEN HUNTLY

74, Grange Road, Glen Huntly 3163

In Residence: Fr Pat Jackson SAC, Br Lindsay Rust SAC

Mass

Monday - Saturday 9:15am

Saturday 6:00pm

Sunday 9:00am, 11:00am, 5:00pm

Reconciliation

30-mins before all Masses & Saturday 9:45-10:10am

Thanksgiving & Special Collections

Church: TBA Presbytery: TBA

Special Collection: -

Next Week's Roster

Lectors:

Saturday 6:30pm S Bettoni

Sunday 9:00am D Duffy 10:30am M Dinh

Counters: M Beaumont & B Leong

Upcoming Week's Liturgical Calendar

Sun 15 Mar: 4th Sunday of Lent

Thanksgiving



Stations of the Cross in Lent after Mass

Holy Cross on Thursdays after 10:00am Mass.

St Joseph's on Fridays after 10:00am Mass.

St Anthony's on Fridays after 9:15am & 7:00pm



Lenten Scripture Reflection

Starting on Monday 23 February, and every Monday thereafter, during Lent from 7-8pm at St Anthony's Church. All welcome!

RCIA : Scrutiny of the Elect

This year through the RCIA Program our Parishes have 2 Catechumens for Baptism: Josephine Gorman and Blair Jones and 2 Candidates for Confirmation: Ashley Campbell and David Nicolas.

Their Scrutiny takes place at:

St Anthony's on Sunday 8th March at 11am Mass

Holy Cross on Sunday 15th March at 9am Mass

St Joseph's on Sunday 22nd March at 10:30am Mass

Sacraments will be at the Easter Vigil Mass at Holy Cross Church. God bless them!

Trivia Lunch - 11th March 2026

Join us at the Holy Cross Parish Hall every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 12-noon. Bring your own lunch and enjoy the Trivia session and a catchup. All are welcome.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (cf. Ps 24:15-16)

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (Jn 4:13-14)

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Those who are ill*: -

**Names are published for a month, unless further requested.*

Recently Deceased: -

Death Anniversary: Leonardo Facchino

Lenten Eucharistic Adoration Challenge

Start on any day according to your convenience and carry on for 31 consecutive days of Eucharistic Adoration by visiting the Blessed Sacrament e.g. at the Perpetual Adoration Chapel at St Joseph's Church, Elsternwick.

For more info, email angelica.barrios.au@gmail.com or the Parish Office. Pamphlets available in the Church foyer.



Perpetual Adoration Chapel

The Adoration Chapel was built in 2018 to commemorate the Centenary Celebration of St Joseph's Church. The Chapel can be accessed 24/7 with a security tag. Contact the Parish Office to apply. A refundable deposit of \$100 will be required upon application.

Walk With Mary 2026

Sunday, 15th March at St Patrick's Cathedral ~ 2pm Prayers, Holy Mass and city street procession.

Most Rev. Bishop Rene Ramirez will be the Main Celebrant.

A grace-filled afternoon of prayer awaits. Let us walk with Mary who always leads us to Her Son.

There are at last signs of great hope. At Fatima, Our Lady said, "In the End My Immaculate Heart Will Triumph!" The signs of rebirth are present throughout the world, from the Middle East to Africa, from Asia to America and throughout Europe, so many countries are reporting incredible rates of conversion.

Come and be blessed on this unique day!



Mary Magdalene – The Musical

An uplifting Lenten production retelling the journey of Mary Magdalene through music and story. Presented by COG Theatre Group and directed by Beth Mondragon Williams, this moving work reflects on redemption, grace, and hope.

Fri & Sat 13–14 March, 7pm & Sat & Sun 14–15 March, 1pm Renaissance Theatre, High Street, Kew

Special discounts end this Monday 9th of March! All profits go to our soup kitchen). Book at trybooking.com/DHZPD

Southern Stars Social Club

We welcome new Members (age 40 to 60+) and Young Stars (age 28 to 40). Email sssc.online@gmail.com, call Peter 9885 2167 or visit <http://sites.google.com/site/ssstarssc>



Melbourne Synod 2026

On this 3rd Sunday of Lent, Archbishop Peter Comensoli formally convoked a Synod for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The synod calls the Melbourne Church to journey together in communion, participation and mission, echoing Pope Francis' vision of a 'listening Church' (Evangelii Gaudium, §31). Informed by Vatican II's teaching, the Church is 'a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit' (Lumen Gentium, §4).

There are three themes about which the church of Melbourne is being invited to discern:

- young discipleship
- missionary leadership
- formation and participation.

The synod assembly will be held across the weekend of 4–6 December 2026. Over these next months, a range of opportunities will be available for Melbourne Catholics to be part of the consultation process toward the synod. In the meantime, further information can be accessed at melbournecatholic.org/synod2026.

In the synodal Church 'the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyse, dialogue, discern and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions (ITC 68) for mission' (Final Document, §87).

Lenten Walk

The annual parish Lenten Walk will take place on Sunday 15th March. Meet at St Anthony's Church foyer at 12:30pm with your lunch. Tea and coffee will be provided.

We will travel by cars to Dandenong South, to the Syro Malabar Church of St Thomas, to pray before the Migrant Jubilee Cross. The Cross, which is currently in Melbourne, will be taken to every corner of Australia between October 2025 and October 2026, giving us all an opportunity to pray together, giving thanks particularly for the great gift of migrants and refugees. Wear sensible shoes and bring a hat and some water. If you need transport please contact the Parish Office. All welcome.

St Anthony's Church open on Fridays during Lent

This initiative has a two-fold purpose:

To make the church available to more parishioners during Lent and to take a small step on the path of keeping the Church open for daily prayer. Do you recall the days when our church was open every day? There is a need and a hunger in the community. St Anthony's is taking this step to meet it, starting Friday 27th February.

If you are able to commit to a time of personal prayer and be present to keep an eye in the church on Friday afternoon, please contact the Parish Office.

Prayer for peace and healing in the Middle East

"Heavenly Father, we place before you the innocent suffering because of this conflict; the dead, the injured and traumatized, families separated or displaced and communities living in fear. Guide leaders at every level, that their decisions be grounded in respect for human dignity, the common good and solidarity with the suffering. Lead the world in the path of peace and the healing of a region that has suffered too much for too long. Amen.

Day of the Unborn Child - 28th March 2026

Holy Mass in Reparation for and Healing from Abortion on at 9:00am every 4th Saturday at St Patrick's Cathedral.

Confessions from 8:30am. Celebrant: Fr Nathan Rawlins. Rosary Procession after Mass.

Join us in prayer to the edge of the 150m Abortion Prayer Exclusion Zone, Wellington Parade, East Melbourne (Opposite Jolimont Station Ramp Exit). Parking available off Lansdowne Street. Please vacate carpark by 11:30am.

Helpers of God's Precious Infants: Contact 0407 090 367.



We proclaim a crucified Christ
1Cor 1:23

PASTORAL LETTER

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus,

My prayerful greetings to you in the Lord.

In recent years, the Church throughout the world has entered a time of attentive listening, discernment and renewal through what we have come to call a synodal way of being. Many of you have taken part in important moments of consultation and reflection: for the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia, for the Synod of Bishops on Synodality, and within our own Archdiocesan journey of renewal, Take the Way of the Gospel. Through these experiences you have generously embraced the call to walk more faithfully with Christ and with one another.

From the earliest times of the Church, gatherings of the faithful — which became known as synods (from the Greek *synodos*, meaning "journeying together" or "walking the same path") — have met to discern important questions in the light of the Word of God and through attentive listening to the Holy Spirit. "Synodality" therefore, describes the way in which this journeying together takes place: the shared participation of the whole People of God in the life and mission of the Church.

Such a journey requires patience, humility and trust in the guidance of the Spirit. At its heart is a simple but profound discipline: to listen — to the Gospel, to the lived experience of our communities, and to the Spirit who speaks through God's faithful people.

Across our Archdiocese there is a rich diversity of gifts and a deep desire for renewal. Many have expressed hopes for stronger communion, renewed missionary purpose, deeper formation, and a Church in which every person knows they belong. These are signs of the Spirit at work among us.

As your Archbishop, I carry these hopes with you. I am deeply grateful for the generosity and faith you have shown in walking this path together.

In light of these reasons, today, Sunday 8 March, I formally convoke a Synod for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The purpose of this Synod is to help shape our evangelical and missionary priorities for the years ahead. It will be a time for our local Church to listen attentively to the Holy Spirit and to discern how we are called to proclaim the Gospel more faithfully in our time and place.

I invite every parish, community, ministry and Catholic organisation across the Archdiocese to take part in this journey.

In the months ahead, you will be asked to gather in prayer, to listen to one another, and to reflect together on how the Lord is calling our Church to a renewed faith and fruitfulness.

This synodal journey will focus particularly on three themes I shared with you at the end of last year: Young Discipleship; Missionary Leadership; and Formation and Participation. As you reflect on these themes, I encourage you to ask some simple but important questions: Where is the Holy Spirit leading our Archdiocese at this time? To whom are we being called to accompany in faith more intentionally? How might we reflect the face of Christ more clearly in our local Church?

As we begin this journey, I entrust our Archdiocese to Mary, Mother of the Church. She pondered the mysteries of God in her heart and remained steadfast among the first disciples. May she guide us to be a Church that listens with faith, loves with generosity, and follows Christ with renewed confidence and hope.

With every grace and blessing, I remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

Breaking Open the Word

the water that I shall give
will turn into a spring inside him, welling up
to eternal life.'

'Sir,' said the woman, 'give me some of that
water, so that I may never get thirsty and never
have to come here again to draw water. I see
you are a prophet, sir' said the woman. 'Our
fathers worshipped on this mountain, while
you say that Jerusalem is the place where one
ought to worship.' Jesus said:

'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming
when you will worship the Father
neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.
You worship what you do not know;
we worship what we know;
for salvation comes from the Jews.
But the hour will come – in fact it is here
already –
when true worshippers will worship the
Father in spirit and truth:
that is the kind of worshipper
the Father wants.
God is spirit,
and those who worship
must worship in spirit and truth.'

The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah
– that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes
he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking
to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.'

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in
him on the strength of the woman's testimony
when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done,'
so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they
begged him to stay with them. He stayed for two
days, and when he spoke to them many more
came to believe; and they said to the woman,
'Now we no longer believe because of what you
told us; we have heard him ourselves and we
know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Longer form 4:5-42

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FOR WHAT DO WE THIRST?

The first two Sundays of Lent are from
Matthew's Gospel, the Gospel of this liturgical
year. They recall Jesus' temptation (*Mt 4:
1-11*) and his experience of being transfigured
(*Mt 17: 1-9*). For the remaining Sundays
of Lent, we listen to John's Gospel. These
Sundays will explore the central religious
and theological questions especially relevant
for contemporary disciples in their Lenten
journey: For what do we truly thirst (today's
Gospel)? How might our eyes be opened to
Jesus (next Sunday)? What is the life for
which we deeply desire (the final Sunday of
Lent)?

In today's Gospel a Samaritan woman comes
to a well at noon—the brightest moment of
the day—and encounters the source of Light,
Jesus. She comes to draw water and only later
realises that she has met the one who can
quench her deepest spiritual thirst. The whole
scene is replete with theological symbolism,
a characteristic of John, as Jesus invites the
woman to explore the depths of her thirst that
only he can address. We learn that she has had
several 'husbands'. This is not an admission
of the woman's adventurous liaisons, as
many commentators have interpreted, but
an acknowledgement of her attraction to the
'husbands' (the 'Baals') of religions that are
'not her own'. She is looking for the true one
from God, not these other counterfeits.

Jesus reveals himself to her: He is the 'I AM',
the Old Testament name for God. Through
him the woman comes to encounter the
Sacred and sets her on a journey back to her
townspeople. Like the woman, we, too, thirst,
for God and for a deeper religious life as we
journey through Lent.



Fr Michael Trainor