

Saints and Masses this Week Tuesday 17 Feb – Ord time yr2 wk6, Wednesday 18 Feb – ASH WEDNESDAY, Thursday 19 Feb – Thursday after Ash Wednesday, Friday 20 Feb – Friday after Ash Wednesday, Saturday 21 Feb – Saturday after Ash Wednesday, Sunday 22 Feb – First Sunday of Lent

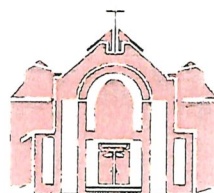
LENT IS WEDNESDAY -- LENTEN NOTICES

Stations of the Cross	Every Friday 6:00pm
Project Compassion Collection Boxes	18 February to 5 April
Ash Wednesday	18 February
Ash Wednesday Masses	9:00am & 7:00pm
Good Friday and Holy Land Collection	3 April
Easter Sunday	5 April

Compssio Lenten Reflections This Lent, enter into the heart of *compassio*—to “suffer with”—a grace-filled invitation to stand with Christ and with one another. Let this beautifully designed, 76-page, full-colour companion guide you through daily reflections, Sunday Gospel readings and reflections, spiritual direction, prayers, and group discussion questions, all crafted to deepen your encounter with God’s mercy.

In Australia and New Zealand, the obligations for Lent are: Catholics aged 18–59 should fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Catholics aged 14 and older are required to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Catholics aged 14 and over should abstain from meat on every Friday of the year, including Lent, or substitute this with another form of penance, either in prayer, fasting or almsgiving. Taking up some form of voluntary penance throughout the season of Lent is also expected. On a day of fasting, Catholics are supposed to have one normal-sized meal and two ‘snacks’ (or ‘smaller meals’), which cannot, put together, equal a full meal. On a day of abstinence, Christians are expected to abstain from meat

Join Palms International Volunteering online in this special session where you’ll learn about our diverse assignments suited to your qualifications. Hear from past Palms volunteers how skill-exchange makes a lasting impact in communities and changes lives. **Venue:** Online- Scan the QR or register at palms.org.au/events **Date:** Thursday 19 February 2026 **Time:** 7 pm – 8:30 pm AEDT **02 9560 5333** palms@palms.org.au ***Want to visit a community first?*** Join our 13-day Encounter Tour to Timor Leste! Book by **28 February** for the May tour! See palms.org.au/encounters



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Parish Priest: Rev Fr Eugene Ashkar

Parish Secretary: Lorraine Nagle (Thurs)

MASS TIMES		ROSTERS THIS WEEK	
TUES – SAT SAT VIGIL SUNDAY	9am at St Mary’s	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	
	6pm at St Mary’s	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	8:30am Tallarook	M Winnell	J Devanney
	10am at St Mary’s		
MASS PREPARATION		COMMENTATORS/LECTORS	
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
M Winnell	M Flynn	M Winnell	R Basco H Basco
COUNTERS		COLLECTION SUPERVISORS	
C Mansbridge	C Spykers	SATURDAY C. Spykers W. Spykers	SUNDAY C. Spykers

Thanksgiving Env - \$637

RECENTLY DECEASED We pray for the repose of the souls of all those who have died recently.

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH 15/2 - 21/2 : Gwen Royals, Marjorie Gall, Gavan Ring, Bernard McCarthy, Angela Pace, Brian Rice, Aaron Moloney, Clifford Stomann

ILLNESSES: We pray for: Sonia Willett, Rimón & Ellen Ashkar, John McMahon, Peter Matthews, Peter Gough, Colin Cooper, Milly Brock, Jeremy Stokes, Pete Dillon, and all who are suffering from the Corona Virus and all those unwell at the present time, who receive support from our prayers.

14/15 FEB 2026

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	Sat: M Winnell	Sun: M Flynn
LECTORS	Sat: C Smith	Sun: S Hamilton O Hamilton
MASS PREPARATION	Sat: C Smith	Sun: E Devanney
COUNTERS: A & V Hall	M Muscovich	

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 118)

ANTIPHON: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

RESPONSE: Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord!

LECTOR: They are happy whose life is blameless, who follow God's law! They are happy those who do his will, seeking him with all their hearts. **R.**

LECTOR: You have laid down your precepts to be obeyed with care. May my footsteps be firm to obey your statutes. **R.**

LECTOR: Bless your servant and I shall live and obey your word. Open my eyes that I may consider the wonders of your law. **R.**

LECTOR: Teach me the demands of your statutes and I will keep them to the end. Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Or

God so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, so that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

TODAY'S READINGS Sir 15:15-20; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37

NEXT WEEK (1st Sunday Lent Year A) Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

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The truth of divine wisdom



15 February 2026 6th Sunday Year A

Australians have long grumbled about the "nanny state." We roll our eyes at tobacco excises, plain packaging laws, bicycle helmet requirements, and bans on advertising to kids. Yet, if we're honest, no one lying in a hospital bed with lung cancer, managing type 2 diabetes, or recovering from a head fracture, ever mutters, "This wouldn't have happened if the government had just stayed out of my business."

Deep down, we know that some laws exist not to stifle us but to save us. They're less about control and more about keeping us alive and well. This weekend's readings invite us to see God's law in that same light; not as divine overreach but as wisdom designed for human flourishing.

Sirach reminds us just how much God respects human freedom: "If you choose, you can keep the commandments" (Sir 15:15). God does not impose the divine will upon us. Like public health policies, the commandments are set before us as a path of life, not as a compliance regime. Sirach's image of choosing between "life and death" (Sir 15:17) is less about punishment and more about recognising that our decisions shape who we become.

The psalmist sees the "wonders" of God's law (Ps 119:18). This isn't the awe of a bureaucrat admiring a perfectly filled-out form; it is the delight of someone who recognises that God's ways lead to peace, integrity, and deep contentment. The psalmist isn't one who revels in rules; but one who wonders at the simple and self-evident wisdom inherent in God's law.

Paul speaks of a hidden wisdom that the world

doesn't easily recognise—wisdom rooted in love rather than self-interest, in the Cross rather than cleverness. God's wisdom does not operate like the shifting advice of "this age," which prioritises individual success over communal wellbeing. Divine wisdom seeks communion, justice, and healing: all the things that help humanity to flourish. It is revealed, Paul says, by the Spirit who searches "the depths of God" (1 Cor 2:10) and leads us into those depths ourselves.

Matthew's Jesus insists he has not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it (Matt 5:17). But fulfilment doesn't mean tightening the rules; it means deepening them. Jesus directs our attention away from external actions to the dispositions of the heart. He's not adding more red tape. He's revealing that true obedience is not about external regulation but internal transformation – a radical change of heart and mind. The law's purpose is to form a people capable of love.

Which brings us back to our Australian examples. Just as no one on a hospital ward complains about the nanny state, so no one who has contemplated the "depths of God" complains that divine law is restrictive. God's law, like the best human laws, is given so we might flourish; not in fear, but in freedom shaped by sure wisdom and self-sacrificing love.

And that, ultimately, is the kind of "plain-packaged" law worth a moment or two of wonder.