



Sunday 18th February 2024

Parish Priest: Fr. Steven Rigo **Assistant Priest:** Fr Ananda Maddineni MSFS

Parish Pastoral Associates: Sandy Starbuck & Sr. Margaret Sapsford

The Partnered Parishes of:

St. Mary's

204 Grimshaw St.,
Greensborough, 3088

Parish: 9435 1543 **Presbytery:** 7036 9329

Email: Greensborough@cam.org.au

Website: www.cam1.org.au/greensborough

Secretaries: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday to Friday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.30pm

Sunday: Mass 8.00am, 10.00am & 5.00pm

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 5.45pm-6.15pm before evening
Mass

Parish School Principal

Mrs. Marisa Matthys **Ph:** 9433 4000 **or Email**
principal@smgreensborough.catholic.edu.au

Sacred Heart & St Peter's

25 Gipson Street,
Diamond Creek 3089

Parish: 9401 6361

Email: DiamondCreek@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/diamondcreek

Secretary: Pat Guatta

Mass Times

Wednesday & Friday: Mass 9.15am

St Peter's: 1st Saturday 7.15pm

Sunday: Mass 9.00am

Reconciliation Times

Friday: 9.45am to 10.15am

Acting Parish School Principal

Mrs Gina Murphy **Ph:** 9438 1590 **or Email**
principal@shdiamondcreek.catholic.edu.au

St. Thomas the Apostle

251 Diamond Creek Road,
Greensborough Nth 3088

Parish: 9434 7373

Email: greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au

Website: www.pol.org.au/greensboroughnorth

Secretary: Lisa Leahy

Mass Times

Tuesday & Thursday: Mass 9.15am

Saturday: Vigil Mass 6.00pm

Sunday: Mass 10.30am

Reconciliation Times

Saturday: 9.30am to 10.00am

Acting Parish School Principal

Mrs Jo Nolen **Ph:** 9434 4565 **or Email**
principal@stgreensboroughnth.catholic.edu.au

Please send any bulletin contributions to greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au by 12noon Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend bulletin. Thank you



SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: THE GOOD NEWS OF THE COVENANT

Grant, almighty God, through the yearly observances of holy Lent, that we may grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects. First Sunday of Lent Year B, 18 February 2024.

<https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/reflection-1-lent-year-b>

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

www.cam.org.au

St Mary's Facebook page

facebook.com/stmarysgreensborough/



Our Partnered Parishes respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the traditional custodians of this land and we pay respect to the Elders past and present.

PARTNERED PARISHES NEWS

LENTEN THEME 2024 – CREATE A NEW HEART

Lent is the liturgical season for prayer, reflection and contrition for any wrongdoing we have made in our lives as we prepare for the joyous season of Easter.

The theme for this year, *Create a New Heart*, offers all of us the opportunity to open our minds and hearts to embrace and live by the Word of God. When we look around our communities, our country, our world, we often see war and turmoil, hate and revenge, and many people who have turned from a spiritual relationship with God. To follow the teachings of Jesus we need a new heart, one that is open to and knows the will of God. And with a new and transformed heart we can fulfil our mission: "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Create a new heart, holy Lord, beckon our lives through your word,

Open our eyes to your call, united as one for your world.

Heighten our minds to your thoughts, heal us of pride and of hurt,

May we go forth in your name, we pray our hearts change.

(A New Heart for a New World, T. Watts and M. O'Brien)

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Week 1

Today is the first weekend of Lent and we pause to reflect.

In the Gospel today we see Jesus going into the desert, to pray and prepare for his mission. He is tempted away from his mission but he turns to the Father and chooses the road to ministry, to sharing the Good News, and eventually to his death and resurrection – the will of God.

God's love is offered to all. We are born in God's image. With the demands of life and threats to our world, we may close our hearts to the whispers of faith. Let us make time to hear God speak.

"I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart." (Jeremiah 24:7)

COMBINED CHURCHES OF DIAMOND CREEK: St John's Anglican Church 61 Main Street Diamond Creek will host World Day of Prayer 2024 on Friday 1st March 1.30pm with Afternoon Tea to follow. All welcome.

TOGETHER COMMUNITY ART EXHIBITION: at St John's Anglican Church Diamond Creek 19th – 28th April at 12 noon until 4pm. TOGETHER 2024 is inviting local artists to display their work in the welcoming space of St John's. All mediums welcome. Art has the power to transcend words, fostering connections that go beyond the ordinary. TOGETHER aims to be a space where community members connect, resonate, and find common ground through the language of art. Free Entry. www.stjohnsdc.org.au/together



CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES NATIONAL CONFERENCE: Will be held from the 21st-23rd February in Melbourne. Keynotes: Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Professor Maek Considine AM, Dr Julie Edwards OAM. For more information and bookings; www.css.org.au

'ASHES TO EASTER':LENTEN CONCERT-REFLECTION with Peter Kearney. Friday 1st March, 7.00pm. St. Luke's Church, 1A David Street, LALOR. Donations welcome.

Hosted by St. Luke's Parish, Lalor. Enquiries: 03 9465 2180.

Peter Kearney is an Australian Catholic songwriter, singer and guitarist whose hymns and songs include 'Fill My House', 'The Beatitudes' and 'Where Is Your Song, my Lord?'

His 'Ashes to Easter' concert weaves songs and stories and reflections on Lenten themes and looks ahead to Holy Week and Easter.

Mainly for adults though upper-primary and older students could also enjoy.

"A beautiful Lenten reflection ... prayerful and spiritual ... a worthwhile part of our Lenten journey".

Invite your friends; walk-ins welcome or book to save to your calendar. Book your free tickets online at

www.trybooking.com/COXOR



1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

WEEKEND OF 17-18 FEBRUARY 2024



"I am determined to finish my senior high school so I can provide a better future for my children."

Ronita, Philippines



"We are very thankful and grateful for the water tank. It has helped us so much and made our daily life easier."

Leaia, Samoa



"In my community, most people think that only men can be carpenters, so I want to prove to my community that women can do it as well."

Memory, Malawi

REFLECTION

Mark's Gospel is bold and challenging. It doesn't beat around the bush. Throughout this year, there will be many Sundays when we really need to tune in because Mark's Gospel doesn't wait for the reader to be ready. It is right in your face, to use a modern expression. Sometimes Mark reminds us of the wise old person who doesn't use many words, but every one of those words counts. There can't be many books of so few pages that have had such a mighty impact on the world.

Today, a few lines tell us that Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and 'was tempted by Satan.' He was 'with the wild beasts', meaning he was vulnerable as he was immersed in the natural world. This was surely an experience of struggle and growth. Then suddenly Jesus discovers that John the Baptist has been arrested. In a few lines, Mark creates the impression of a challenging time.

How did Jesus respond? He seems to have been enlivened, to have decided to create change. He is full of energy and purpose. 'The time has come,' he says. In his vulnerability, he has discovered that 'the kingdom of God is close at hand.'

This year, through Project Compassion, Caritas Australia will

ask us to consider several stories of vulnerability and hope in action. Over the coming weeks, we will meet a number of extraordinary women: Leaia from Samoa, Ronita from the Philippines and Memory from Malawi. They remind us that in many situations around the world, women are the heart of the community and the drivers of change. In each case, a partnership involving Caritas Australia and local agencies has led to new opportunities not just for an individual but for families and communities. The kingdom of God is, indeed, closer than we think. Our decisions help to bring it to reality around the globe.

Perhaps we might spend time with the words of today's Psalm: 'God guides me in the right path; God teaches the Lord's way to the poor.'



DON'T FORGET
TO CREATE YOUR PARISH
FUNDRAISING PAGE AT:
[CARITAS.ORG.AU/
PROJECT-COMPASSION](http://CARITAS.ORG.AU/PROJECT-COMPASSION)

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION



We pray for all those around the world who are vulnerable to the impact of poverty, violence, and climate change. May our generosity towards Project Compassion be a measure of our commitment to global change. Lord, hear us.

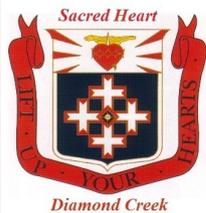
FUNDRAISING IDEA

Ask your Youth Group to organise a fundraising activity outside of the parish. Resources can be found at fundraise.projectcompassion.org.au

BULLETIN NOTICE

You can help better the lives of people in some of the most vulnerable communities on earth by making a donation through Project Compassion boxes and envelopes, visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SACRED HEART & ST PETER'S



PARISH OFFICE HOURS: *Tuesday & Thursday 10.00am-1.00pm, Wednesday & Friday 8.30am-2.30pm.*

Please send bulletin contributions by 12.00pm on Wednesday. Thank you

BAPTISMS: we pray for Mason, Havana & Piper who will be welcomed into our Sacred Heart community in February.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD: 'Let the little children come to me' **Mathew19:14**

Children's liturgy of the word is commencing in 2024 during 9am mass on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of school terms for children from preschool to grade 3. Volunteer leaders are welcome. Working with children card and safeguarding training is mandatory. Training provided. For information call Jasna Bruce 0403827350.

LENTEN DISCUSSION GROUP: Booklets are now available in Sacred Heart Church.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2024: St John's Anglican Church Diamond Creek will host on Friday 1st March 1.30pm with Afternoon Tea to follow.

THANK YOU TO FAMILY GROUPS: Sacred Heart Family Groups raised \$2500.00 for the parish by volunteering at DC Rotary Club Tram Café in 2023. They have generously agreed to more dates in 2024.

SENIOR MOMENTS: Wednesday 21st February 12pm Lunch & Scrabble in the Parish Centre.

Wednesday 6th March 12pm lunch at Diamond Creek Hotel.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING Thursday 8th February. Some items discussed:

- Thank you to Alison for hosting PPC Christmas social and also for her outstanding effort organising 9am Mass with a memorable sendoff for Fr Martin.
 - Parish Connections Night with School Foundation Parents hosted by PPC. Volunteer babysitters needed.
 - Hurstbridge & District Adult Riding Club and Pony Club have requested use of St Peter's Church grounds for car parking when hosting gymkhana events.
 - Partnered Parishes Pastoral Council to start planning for Archbishop Comensoli's visit to our Partnered Parishes in November.
 - Combined Churches of Diamond Creek Annual World Day of Prayer hosted by St John's this year.
 - Andrew from School Advisory Committee presented a report.
 - Lenten Program booklets now available.
 - Brian gave a maintenance report for St Peter's and Sacred Heart churches.
 - Family Groups fundraising volunteers have raised \$2500.00 at DC Tram Café.
 - Liturgy of the Word on Fridays while Fr Steve is away on leave.
 - Monthly raffles to continue. Asking for donation of prizes.
 - Further discussion to hold Women's Dinner in May.
- Next meeting 14th March. Suggestion box in church or email: ppcdiamondcreek@gmail.com

HALL HIRE: Sacred Heart Hall is for hire. For all enquiries regarding cost and terms and conditions contact Alison Pieper on 0417571535 or alisonpieper52@gmail.com

ROSTERS:

Cleaning: Week 20th February F. Geoghegan, P. Leonard

Sunday 25th February Sacred Heart 9am

Reader: A. Pieper **Commentator:** R. McEvoy **Eucharistic Ministers:** C. Garzia, C. Ledda

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Antonietta Nesci, Grace Wein, Chris Padget, Pam Collins, Katie Pittle, Catherine Leonard, Peter Mejak, Joan Moran, Bridie Burke, Thomas Keenan, Mervyn Bourke, Jacob Draper, Kath Rickard, Fr Terry Kean

We pray for those who have died and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of February that they may enter joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Nese Roberts, Leanne Lynch, Judy Vincent, Mary Crothers

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S

Vision Statement "To be a vibrant Christian community engaging with the world"

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 10am-4pm, Wednesdays 8am-12noon, Thursdays 10am-4pm.

Please send any bulletin contributions directly to greensboroughnorth@cam.org.au or greensborough@cam.org.au by 12noon Wednesday to ensure inclusion in the weekend combined bulletin. Thank you



MUSICIANS AND SINGERS: Because of a copyright issue affecting all parishes we can no longer embed music into our slides on the data projector (until further notice). So you will notice that at some of our Masses there will be no music at all. Consequently, we are looking for volunteers who can play an instrument together with anyone who could lead the congregation in song at the 8am Mass or two Sundays at the 10am Mass. Please contact Megan via email mamitchem@gmail.com for further information.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP: Our Bereavement group will have their first Memorial Mass on Friday 23rd February at 9.15am.

OUR LENTEN ENVIRONMENT During Lent, our worship space is simplified with no flowers or greenery in the church or gathering space representing the barren desert where Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. This is symbolic of the Lenten Season when we are encouraged to pare our lives back to the basics and look into the depths of our hearts with honesty - only then can we truly see our need for repentance and change.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS DURING LENT Three Stations of the Cross services are available on our parish website during Lent – one based on the *Gospel of St Mark*, another *Mary's Stations*, and a video *Way of the Cross* with images of the Stations at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Deepdene carved by Austrian immigrant Leopoldine Mimovich.

CHOIR PRACTICE FOR HOLY WEEK: Choir Practice for Holy Week Ceremonies will take place on **Fridays 1, 8, 15 & 22 March** in the Church from 1:30 - 3:00 pm. Dom LaFerlita our Saturday night pianist will accompany us. The Liturgy is the centre of the Church's life and music adds another prayer dimension. We sing at the Palm Sunday Vigil (Sat 23/3), Holy Thursday (28/3), Good Friday (29/3) and the Easter Vigil (Sat 30/3). All are very welcome to join and no experience is necessary.

Please contact Megan Mitchem via email: mamitchem@gmail.com if you would like to be part of the choir so that music can be organised for you.

SUMMARY OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETING, Tuesday 6th of February 2024

We opened our meeting with a prayer led by Sandy. We then moved into reviewing and discussion our Strategic Planning Document. We picked up where we left off in October of last year as we re-evaluated our goals for the future. After this, we discussed the plan for different groups from across the Parish to host a morning tea throughout the year. This is great to not only greet new members of the parish, but also facilitate greater connections and friendships whilst serving the community as Jesus asks of us. We then had a brief discussion about the Episcopal Visitation occurring in October of this year as well as the Prep Connections Night occurring on Wednesday the 6th of March.

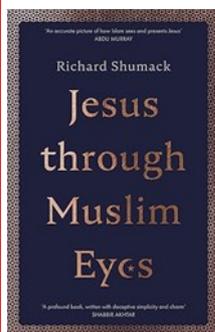
SUNDAY CATECHIST CLASSES: For primary school children attending Government Schools classes commenced in February at 9.00am in St Mary's School. Classes are for children from Grades 3 to 6, and include the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation, and are held during each school term. **All enquiries - Geraldine - 0438 148 896**

HOLY ROSARY is recited every Thursday morning after 9.15am Mass.

THE PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: The prayer shawl ministry meets in the Gathering Space 10am - 12pm on Mondays.

Enquiries: Maureen Leahy—0407 687 517; Anne Fleming— 0409 234 326 .

Be informed, inspired and entertained



Jesus through Muslim Eyes by Richard Shumack

Islam and Christianity agree on many aspects of Jesus' earthly and heavenly life. Beyond these agreements, however, the Jesus of Islam points down a different road to that of Christianity. The Muslim Jesus wants you to be a better person by walking a road of passionate devotion to God; the Christian Jesus wants you to be a whole new person by joining him on a road to crucifixion and resurrection.

This book calls for Muslims and Christians to embrace constructive disagreement about Jesus as the best way to both religious peace and eternal truth.

Online access to the catalogue is available at: cloud.collectorz.com/247780



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST MARY'S continued

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Baptisms: Marcus, Darcy, Eliza, Jackson, Riley

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners & friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Peter Mejak, Barbara Fernandez, Christos Pittas, Jocelyn Tibayan, Margaret Schreenan , Olivia MacDonald, Helen Quigley, Lorraine Alexander, Harley McAleer, Pat Milczakowsky, Rosie Bray, Lois Jones, Peter Miles, Leon Gray, Amparp Sarmiento, Mick O'Meara, Fr Terry Kean

Recently Deceased:

We Pray for those whose Anniversaries occur this week, may they enter joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Bill Smith, Cyril Cummins, Andrew Callinan, Livia Adrien, Keith Hitch, Arthur Cousins, May Milne, Carmen Taylor, Steven Rigo (Snr), Udo D'Lima, Frances Steger, Lynette Blume, Frank Woolcock, Sydney Pollard, Cyril Fernandes, Dulcie Anderson, Lourdes Garrovillas, Leigh Hewatt, Alex Friscic, Maryanne Lancefield, Lily Theresa, Norma Sinclair, Gisele Battour, Mary McNamara, William McAlister, Shane Walker, Shane Walker, Adeline Armstrong, William Hains, Jack Oakley, Bert Hatherly, Maisie Schofield, Francis Baretto, Edna Baretto, Kathleen Callinan, Gretta Haynes, Max Emmins Sr. Leanne Lynch, Thomas Monagle, Lawrence Bunt, Vincenzo D'Amico, Salvatore Mellino, Mervyn Reid, Joseph Racz, Yoseph Cahyadi Arthur Thomas, Thomas McIntyre, Jesus Malicse, Lawrence Roberts, Conrado Pena, Maria Antonia Lanciana, Barry McKenney, William Spence, Fred Dixon, Francis Farrugia, Giuseppina Merlino, Hollis Moyle, Eileen Walsh, Rose Healy, Thomas Ryan, Bernadette Barnett, Margaret Lundberg, Michael Thornton, Ada Hawkshaw, Alf Simpson, Ella Mallett, Virgil Fernando, Maryanne Lancefield, Giuseppe DiStefano

TIME OF PREPARATION Fr Andrew Hamilton SJ 31 January 2024

Lent is a time of preparation. It asks us through prayer, reflection and penance to deepen our understanding of the Gospel and its riches.

Read the full story at: <https://www.australiancatholics.com.au/article/time-of-preparation>



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST THOMAS

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday & Friday: 8.00am-4.00pm Wednesdays 12.30pm,-4.00pm
Thursdays 8.00am-11.30am (**Wednesday 8.00am-12.00pm & Thursday 12.00-3.00pm St Mary's**)
Please send bulletin contributions by 12.00pm on Wednesday. Thank you

Baptisms: Please keep in your prayers Willemina, Oliver, Conor and Gabriel who are being baptised later this month.

BUILDING BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP: Come up join us for a coffee and chat on **Thursday 22nd February** at 1.30pm at Phoenix, 285 Diamond Creek road Plenty.

So I can book a table please email stewmarg@bigpond.net.au or text 0408 370685.

Everyone welcome Marg.



LOYOLA MASS: MacKillop House Mass Sunday 3rd March, 10.30am.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS St Thomas PPC. StThomas.PPC@cam.org.au

Roster for Weekend 24th & 25th February

Saturday 6.00pm

Readers: P. Carty

Commentator: A. Fernando

Eucharistic Ministers: T. Holland, L. Carty

Set Up: K. Salm

Sunday 10.30am

Reader: B. Iacobucci

Commentator: T. Williamson

Eucharistic Ministers: C. O'Brien, A. Kerr

Set Up: C. O'Brien

St Thomas prayers are asked for the following Parishioners:

Our prayers have been asked for sick parishioners and friends that they may be healed & comforted during this time:

Miran Kasalo, Peter Kernjak, John Geretschlager, Dominic Cambareri, Fr Terry Kean

We pray for those who have died recently and all those whose Anniversaries occur in the month of February that they may enter Joyfully into God's Kingdom:

Fr Peter Fulton, Mary Crothers, Francesca Serrao, Reginald Chircop,, Sanico de Carlo, Brian Kenny, Nick Buttifant, Giuseppe Piccolo, Eddie Scully, Leslie Lowe, Kevin Phin, Rosemary Schneider, Alfonso Nguyen, Maria Nguyen, Vito Zuccula



Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close A retreat into a wild and lonely place can mean both death and renewal, crisis and opportunity. The same goes for Mark's 'wild beasts', i.e. demons, which 'the Spirit drove' Jesus to face. They were inner demons that confronted Jesus and they posed no mortal threat once he had lived with them and faced up to them. The vital ingredients in this situation are time, courage and a little help from God. Lent is a time for us to face our personal demons and, if we are courageous and rely on divine help, then death will lead to renewal and crisis to opportunity.

First Sunday of Lent, Year B

18 February 2024

First Reading Gn 9:8-15

I will recall the covenant between myself and you...the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.'

God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 24:4-9. R. see v.10

(R.) Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)
2. Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness,
O Lord. (R.)
3. The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Pt 3:18-22

The water of the flood is a type of the baptism which saves you now.

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 4:4

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Gospel Mk 1:12-15

He was tempted by Satan, and the angels looked after him.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'



Reflection by Greg Sunter

The First Reading, from Genesis, and the Gospel this week need to be looked at together. In the Genesis reading, God has just wiped clean the earth and is ready to re-establish the relationship with humanity through Noah and his family. In the short gospel passage, Jesus enters the wilderness as a time of preparation and renewal, ready to embark on his mission of re-establishing the relationship between God and humanity. In both readings there is a sense of a fresh start – a clean slate – for humankind. It is a clear indication of God's commitment to humanity, even when we have totally distanced ourselves from God and forgotten about keeping up our part of the relationship, God is willing to make a clean start of it all again. Both readings offer a reminder of God's constant desire for us to be in right relationship with God and with the world. The presence of Jesus in the world was as clear a signal as the rainbow in the sky that God was willing to give us another go – give us a chance to again see God with new eyes and new understanding.

In the gospel passage, we have a picture of Jesus preparing himself for his public ministry. He takes himself out into the wilderness, away from all that he has known until this time, to reflect on his life so far and this next vital stage that he is about to enter. In the wilderness, Jesus is tempted. He has to face his own doubts and demons before he sets off on the road of his public ministry. When he leaves the desert wilderness and enters back into Galilee he immediately begins to preach and, in the first words accredited to him in this gospel, Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is at hand and it's time to repent and believe. It's a call to open your eyes and get with the program!

The psalm responses are from the English Translation of the Lectionary for the Mass ©1981 International Committee on English in the Liturgy Inc. (ICEL). All rights reserved. The psalm texts, from *The Psalms, A New Translation*, ©1963 by The Grail, England and used by permission of the publishers. The scriptural quotations are taken from the *Jerusalem Bible*, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers.
© 2017 Creative Ministry Resources Pty Ltd
All use must be in accordance with your user licensing agreement.