# OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH NEWSLETTER

**First Sunday of Lent** **22 February 2026**

## ***The Purpose of Penance***

We have just begun Lent.
When we think of Lent we think of penance. Most Christians undertake some penance for Lent. This is a good and worthwhile practice.
There was a very earnest young man who wanted to become a rabbi. He went to see an elderly rabbi for advice. It was wintertime. The rabbi stood at the window looking out into the yard while the rabbinical candidate gave him a glowing accounting of his piety and austere lifestyle.
The young man said, 'I always dress in spotless white like the sages of old.
I never drink any alcoholic beverages, only water ever passes my lips. I perform numerous penances. For instances, I always carry sharped-edged nails inside my shoes to mortify myself. Even in the coldest weather, I lie naked in the snow to punish my flesh. And to complete my penance, I take a dozen lashes everyday on my bare back.'
As the young man spoke, a stable boy led a white horse into the yard and took him to the water trough. The horse drank his fill of water and having done so, rolled in the snow as horses sometimes do.
'Just look….that animal too is dressed in white. It also drinks nothing but water, has nails in his shoes and rolls naked in the snow. Also rest assured, it gets its daily ration of lashes from his master. Now I ask you, is it a saint or is it a horse?'
We may come to ask ourselves, what is the purpose of penance?
Penance is not meant to undo the past - the past is done. Nor is it meant to persuade God to erase our sins and forgo the punishment we deserve for them.
The first thing we do when we undertake penance is to acknowledge that we are sinners. The second thing is to express the desire to change our lives. The whole object of penance is to reform a sinful way of life.
Penance is an exercise in saying 'no' to ourselves. Its purpose is to acquaint us with our better side and to convince ourselves that we can do better. It means taking a step in the right direction. When people are pruning a fruit tree, they are not doing it to punish the tree but to enable it to produce more and better fruit. Same applies to our penances as the goal is to lead us to a new and better life. Lent provides us with a window of opportunity to look at ourselves to see how we can become better followers of Christ.

***(continued on the back page)***

## PARISH NEWS

### Columban Calendars

*It is not too late to grab your 2026 calendar!* Calendars are still on sale at the bookshop or the parish office, $13 a copy.

### Minimarket

There will be *no minimarkets* in February and March. Minimarket will resume **Sun 26 Apr.**

## DIOCESE NEWS

### Lenten Talks

St Michael's church is hosting a *series of 4-weekly talks (*Tuesdays) by Bishop Peter Brown leading up to Lent to guide us reuniting ourselves to Christ through his gift of Reconciliation.
It starts **Tues 03 Mar 7pm-8.30pm** at Mary MacKillop Hall, 6 Beatrice Rd, Remuera.

### Joshua Catholic Men's Fellowship

Come and journey together as men of faith as we prepare our hearts for the *Lenten Season* **Wed 25 Feb 7pm** at St Thomas More Church, Glenfield.
Fr Glen Lowe (Chaplain Joshua) will talk about Lent.
All men are warmly invited.

### Pilgrimage 2026

**25 September to 17 October 2026**

Fatima - Salamanca - Burgos - Lourdes - Paris - Venice - Padua - Assisi - Rome

Chaplain: Monsignor David Tonks

For more info, please contact Laura Yap laura.yap@travelmanagers.co.nz or call 021 390 055

### Lent 2026

Visit www.foodforfaith.org.nz and sign up to receive daily email encouragements from Fr John O'Connor.

### Safeguarding Workshop

Safeguarding training is a policy requirement of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland and the National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS) for volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults.
Join us **Sun 01 March 10.45am** at *St Dominics Parish*, Blockhouse Bay.
For more info, please contact Lisa-May Gray: lisam@cda.org.nz

## Mass Times

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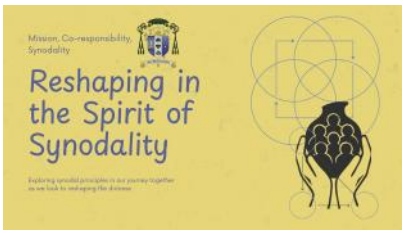
|---|---|
| Monday: | 9am |
| Tues/Wed/Thurs | 6.30pm |
| Wed: Novena | 6pm |
| Friday: | 9am |
| First Friday: | 6.30pm |
| Saturday: | 5pm Vigil |
| Sunday: | 9am,10.30am,5pm |

**Reconciliation by appointment.**
**Please contact the parish office**

## Synodal Workshops




***Feb-Mar-Apr 2026***

As part of the Diocese's *Reshaping in the Spirit of Synodality* journey, you are encouraged to attend one of the upcoming synodal workshops. These sessions will help us better understand what it means to "walk together" as a Church and prepare us for the important conversations and discernment ahead in our parish communities. **To register please go to**: [www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/reshaping-in-the-spirit-of-synodality/](www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/reshaping-in-the-spirit-of-synodality/) and pick the venue you would like to attend.

**If you wish to place a notice in our parish newsletter, please email the parish office by Wednesday**

## Please pray for our sick parishioners:

Violet Furtado, Mary Holmes, Ethan Peter Lelo, Rosalen Ahearn, Saulius David Balsys, Kalameli Tauta, Pauline Caffell, Louisa Baptist, Robert Shearman, Siufaga Maileoi Lilii, Lee Dunn, Alex Soniega, Aaron Ablan, Priscilla Fernandes, Nellie Lemusu-Kea, Joy Rapcsak, Gerard Hoover

## Last Week's Collection:

**House** - $1,928.30
**Parish** - $3,365.70

**Thank you for your generosity.**

## Readings For The Upcoming Week

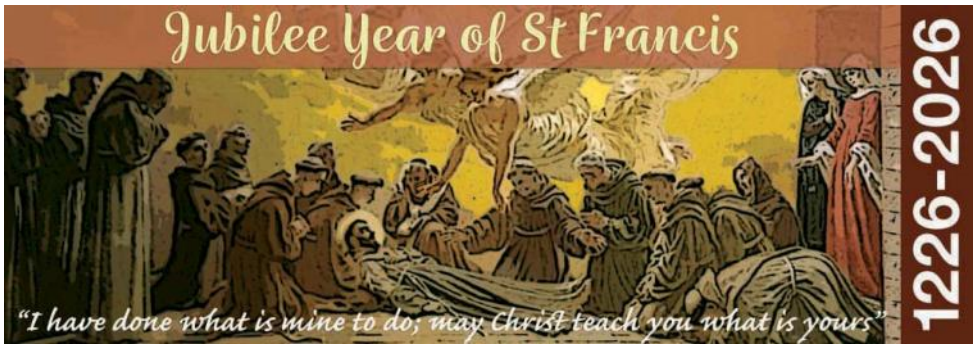
**Mon 23 Feb:** Lev 19:1-2, 11-18
Mt 25:31-46 Ps 18:8-10, 15
**Tue 24 Feb:** Is 55:10-11
Mt 6:7-15 Ps 33:4-7, 16-19
**Wed 25 Feb:** Jonah 3:1-10
Lk 11:29-32 Ps 50:3-4, 12-13, 18-19
**Thu 26 Feb:** Esther 4:17
Mt 7:7-12 Ps 137:1-3, 7-8
**Fri 27 Feb:** Ezek 18:21-28
Mt 5:20-26 Ps 129
**Sat 28 Feb:** Deut 26:16-19
Mt 5:43-48 Ps 118:1-2, 4-5, 7-8
**Sun 01 Mar:** Gen 12:1-4
Mt 17:1-9 2 Tim 1:8-10
Ps 32:4-5, 18-20, 22

***(continued)***

In the desert Jesus triumphed over the devil through prayer, fasting and obedience to the word of God.
He will help us to be victorious too in our struggles.

**Flor McCarthy SDB**

## St Francis Retreat Centre (1226-2026)




As we mark the *Franciscan Jubilee Year,* may the enduring spirit of St Francis inspire us to walk together a community of peace, gratitude and joyful simplicity.

*Time Out Days* - For those who seek a day retreat (9.30am to 2.30pm) $35 incl lunch ~ **Tues 03 Mar** | **Wed 01 Apr**

*24-Hour Quietude* - Begins Friday 7pm with prayer and rest, and continues until Saturday 7pm with a full day dedicated to reflection, contemplation and prayer ~ **Apr 17-18** | **Jul 03-04**

Bookings essential. Please visit **www.stfrancisretreatcentre.org.nz** or email **admin@sfrc.org.nz**

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