OUR LADY OF LOURDES PARISH NEWSLETTER

Fifth Sunday of Lent **22 March 2026**

Jesus: The Source of Eternal Life

Everyone needs friends, even Jesus. In the village of Bethany, he had three very special friends - Martha, Mary and their brother, Lazarus. Their house remained open to him when many other houses were being closed against him.

When Lazarus got sick, it was only natural that the sisters should turn to Jesus for help. They sent an urgent message to him: 'Lord, the man you love is ill.'

Who could resist a request like that? Surprisingly, Jesus didn't drop everything and rush to the bedside of his dying friend. Instead, he stayed on where he was for two more days. His delay in coming must have been heart-breaking for the sisters. Right in front of their eyes their brother's life was ebbing away. And the one they believed could save him wasn't there. We can identify with their disappointment. When something bad happens to us or to a loved one, we may feel abandoned by God. We can't help thinking if God really loved us, he wouldn't have allowed this to happen. Lazarus died.

The Gospel shows the desolation his death caused to Martha and Mary. It's a desolation many of us have experienced around the death of a loved one. While they had sympathetic people around them, it was not the same as having the presence of Jesus among them. His absence was felt deeply by the sisters.

When he finally came, Martha said to him, 'If you had been there, our brother would not have died,' thereby suggesting that he could have prevented his death. But Jesus challenged her to believe that he could still save Lazarus: '*I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will never die' (eternally)*.

In defiance of the evidence, she declared, 'I believe that you are Christ, the son of God, the one who was to come into the world.'

There was a happy ending for Martha and Mary - Lazarus was restored to them. However, there is no suggestion that he wouldn't have died again. Clearly, he did die again. But that is not the main point of John's story. The point of the story is contained in Jesus' declaration to Martha.

Jesus' purpose in coming into this world was to give us the life that cannot be touched by death, the kind of life that only God possesses. Those who believe in Jesus and who follow him, enter into a relationship with God which death cannot end. That is what the story is about. Even though there are no happy endings in our stories, we are called to be inspired by Martha's faith.

Flor McCarthy SDB

PARISH NEWS

The Annunciation of the Lord

Wed 25 Mar
6.30pm mass

Mary is shown as a model of faith. She demonstrated trust in God's plan despite uncertainty. Her obedience served as the instrument for Jesus to enter human history.

Lenten Reconciliation

Parish Lenten Reconciliation **Tues 24 Mar 7pm**

Blessing of the palms at all masses weekend **28/29 Mar**. Please bring your own palm to be blessed.
There will be a procession (**Sun 9am mass only**) around the church with palms preceding the mass.

Daylight Saving

Please note that *daylight saving* ends **Easter Sunday 05 Apr**. A reminder to put your clock **back 1 hour** before bed Sat 04 Apr.

RCIA Catechumens & Candidates

Holy Father, bless these catechumens and candidates who will receive the sacraments this season of Easter. We pray that they feel God's love, joy and peace as they enter full communion with the Church. Amen.
Vanessa, ***Matthew***, ***Blake***, ***Nathan***, ***Phillip***, ***Joel***, ***Christina***, ***Jessica***, ***Kristian***.

DIOCESE NEWS

Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary Acies ceremony will be held **Sun 22 Mar 2pm** at Christ the King Parish, Owairaka, led by Bishop Steve.

Palm Sunday Candlelight Vigil

To conclude their *Lenten 40 Days For Life* campaign, the Family Life NZ is holding a Candlelight Vigil for the unborn **Sun 29 Mar 7.30pm** at Potter's Park, Balmoral.
Come and join us!

Mass Times

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

Joshua Men's Catholic Fellowship

Come and journey together as men of faith as we prepare our hearts during this Lenten season **Wed 25 Mar 7pm** at St Thomas More Church, Glenfield.
Topic: *Lenten Reflection - The Two Standards.*
This is about choosing between two paths: ***the way of the world*** (pride, self-centeredness) or ***the way of Jesus*** (humility, service).

Bible Diaries 2026 ($20)

Beautifully designed to deepen your faith journey with God every day.
A display is available (church foyer).
For a copy, email Christian Malaitai:
cmalaitai@gmail.com

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, Pratima Hollomon

Last Week's Collection:

House - $1,573.00
Parish - $2,585.10

Thank you for your generosity.

Readings For The Upcoming Week

Mon 23 Mar:	Dan 13:1-9,15-17,19-30
Jn 8:1-11	Ps 22
Tue 24 Mar:	Num 21:4-9
Jn 8:21-30	Ps 101:2-3, 16-21
Wed 25 Mar:	Is 7:10-14, 8:10
Heb 10:4-10	Ps 39:7-11
Thu 26 Mar:	Gen 17:3-9
Jn 8:51-59	Ps 104:4-9
Fri 27 Mar:	Jer 20:10-13
Jn 10:31-42	Ps 17:2-7
Sat 28 Mar:	Ezek 37:21-28
Jn 11:45-56	Jer 31:10-13
Sun 29 Mar:	PALM SUNDAY

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 26:14 - 27:66

Holy Week & Easter Mass Times

Holy Thursday

7pm: Mass of the Lord's Supper
Adoration at Altar of Repose until 11pm (classroom)

Good Friday

9am: Stations of the Cross
10.30am: Stations of the Cross
3pm: The Passion of the Lord

Holy Saturday

7pm: Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday

9am & **10.30am**

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