

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

37:12-14

The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord, have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R./ With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

8:8-11

People who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God. Your interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life,
says the Lord; whoever believes in me
will not die for ever.*

*Glory and praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ!*

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John *Shorter form:* 11:3-7,17,20-27, 33-45

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.'

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said:

'I am the resurrection and the life.

If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.' Jesus replied, 'Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said:

'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, let him go free.'

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord.



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - 21/22 MARCH 2026 - YEAR A



FOCUS ON THE WORD: *Roll away the stone, unbind him and let him go.* There can be many dark areas, some of them unacknowledged, in our private lives. We often bind ourselves with chains of addiction to alcohol, drugs, sexual deviations, slander, gossip, envy, prejudices, hatred, and uncontrollable anger, and we bury ourselves in the tombs of despair. Sometimes we are buried in the tomb of selfishness, filled with negative feelings such as worry, fear, resentment, hatred, and guilt. **Jesus asks us today to seek his help and that of the community around us to loosen those chains and come out of tombs of our own creation. Is there an area of life where Hope is gone? Why not invite Jesus to visit this area?** If we want Jesus to visit our dark dungeons of sin, despair, and unhappiness, **let us ask him during this Holy Mass** to bring the light and the power of the Holy Spirit into our private lives and liberate us from our tombs. Are there times when we refuse to let God enter into our wallets, fearing that faithful tithing will endanger our savings? When we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus will call our name and command, *"Come out!"* Jesus calls each of us by name to come out of our graves and to help others to do the same. *"Lazarus, come out! Mary, come out! Jim and Joe, Kathy and Lisa, come out!"* This is particularly Good News to someone who is addicted, whether to a chemical substance or to unsavory habits. *"Lazarus, come out!"* This is Good News for the person who has lived an empty, meaningless life. *"Lazarus, come out!"* This is Good News for the tired, the hurting, the person at his or her wit's end. *"Lazarus, come out!"* This is good news for all of us: *"Lazarus, come out!"* This can be the beginning of a new life. © <https://fitonyshomilies.com/>

PARISH SYNOD

2. Where does the word "Synod" come from?

The word *Synod* comes from the Greek *syn-hodos*, meaning "walking together on the road." This reminds us that the Christian life is never meant to be lived alone. Faith is a shared journey, where we support one another, listen to one another, and discern together how best to follow Christ.

The synod assembly will be held across the weekend of 4-6 December 2026, more information is available at melbournecatholic.org/synod2026



PRAYER FOR PEACE

Heavenly Father,

We lift up all those affected by the ongoing war.

Please protect the innocent, comfort the grieving, and give strength to those living in fear. Soften the hearts of leaders and guide them towards peace, wisdom and understanding.

May violence cease, may healing begin, and may hope rise even in the darkest places. Grant safety, unity and lasting peace to all. Amen.



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: The Parish of St John the Baptist, and the Archdiocese of Melbourne are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and vulnerable people in our community. May our message be that child protection and the dignity of every person is the responsibility of every adult. You can find out more about the church's work in this area at: www.catholic.org.au/responseandprevention SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY. **Please send a copy of any renewed cards to the Parish Office for updating.**

MEMORIAL DAYs Wed 25th Mar The Annunciation of the Lord

Week 5: **PROJECT COMPASSION** Unite Against Poverty - Donation boxes available in the Church

I have come that you may have life and have it to the full

(John 10:10)

PARISH PRIEST:
Fr Thomas Kuruvila 9758 1029
Email: thomas@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

ASSISTANT PRIEST:
Fr Peter Nguyen 9758 1029
Email: Peter.Nguyen@cam.org.au

DEACON:
Rev. Peter Stringfellow 9758 1029
Email: Peter.Stringfellow@cam.org.au

FAITH DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATOR
Mary Makarucha 9758 1029
Tuesdays and Wednesdays. 10.00am -2.00pm
Email: marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

PARISH OFFICE: 9758 1029
Monday Tuesday 10am-4pm
Wednesday to Friday 9.00am -3.00pm
Secretaries: Charmaine Premaratne & Maree Wilson
Accountant: Bernard Negline
Email: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au
PPG CHAIR Carolyn Sombekke
Email: csembekkesjb@gmail.com

SCHOOLS:
St John the Baptist 9758 1013
Principal: Kelli Johnston
Email: kjohnston@sjfemtreegully.catholic.edu.au
St. Joseph's College 9758 2000
Principal: Catherine Livingston
Mater Christi College 9754 6611
Principal: Maria Haggett

MASS TIMES: Please note changes in body of Bulletin
Saturday Vigil Emerald and FTG 6:00 pm
Sunday Belgrave 8.30am FTG 10.30 am
Gembrook 9am Monbulk 11.00am
Tuesday Belgrave 9am FTG 7:00pm
Wednesday Belgrave 9am FTG 9.15am
& Thurs Belgrave 9am FTG 9.15am
Friday Belgrave 9am FTG 11.00 am
RECONCILIATION: Saturdays 5.15 pm

GLENGOLLAN VILLAGE MASS 1st Friday 2pm
WILLOWBROOK MASS 2nd Thursday 11am

BAPTISMS: Either during a weekend Mass or at 12.30pm on the 2nd Sunday of the month. 6 weeks' notice required. Please refer to our Guidelines for Infant Baptism on our Parish Website.
Contact the Parish Office on: 9758 1029 or via email at: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

WEDDINGS: By appointment, 6 months' notice required. Saturdays or weekdays (not Sundays). Contact the Parish Office: on 9758 1029.

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND.
24-26 April, 2026 – Live-in Weekend, St Paul's Retreat Centre, Wantima South Mercy & James Bvirakare Ph: 0409 183 676 Email: vicbookings@wme.org.au

SLAVERY-FREE EASTER CHOCOLATE – Look for any of these three certification symbols on the wrappers: More Info: <https://acrath.org.au/slaveryfree-easter>

5th Sunday of Lent - Yr A
21 /22 March 2026 - Year of St Francis

PRAYING FOR...

All who have died recently:

Vito Lorusso

Those who we remember at this time

Sue Woodward, Guiseppina Russo, Tom Schepisi Mary Whelan, Ronald Gallenti, Domenico Lizza, Brian Mitchell

The sick: Rosa Lisle, Bonnie Hoefler, Ann Jayawardena, Barbara Kenny.

ROSARY the Rosary will be recited 30 minutes prior to all weekday Masses in the Church. All welcome to join in the recitation.

GROUP ROSARY SESSION FOR PEACE

When: **First Saturday of the Month** Please contact Joan Ryan on 0408 411 096 for details.

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS: are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of His last day, beginning with His condemnation. At each station, the individual recalls and meditates on a specific event from Christ's last day. Specific prayers are recited, then the individual moves to the next station until all 14 are complete. **We will be having the Stations of the Cross on Friday at 10.30am at St John's, and 7pm at St Thomas More Belgrave during lent** followed by mass at 11.00 am. All are invited t

CHILDREN'S LITURGY Our children's liturgy sessions are back on, Meet in the room at the back of the church.

ST. JOHN'S CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP meet every Tuesday Morning at 10.20am in the Parish Community Centre. We are currently running the ALPHA course All welcome, and share lunch after the talk.

FRIENDSHIP GATHERING Come and join us each **Thurs Morning at 10am in the Parish Community Centre** for a chat, a game of cards, may just a cuppa and to sit and knit.

PARENTS AND KIDS GROUP will meet after the 10.30am Mass **Sunday 15th March 2026** in the Parish Community Centre. Email jacquiandcarlos@gmail.com.

YOUTH GROUP Please dm us on Instagram @sjtb.youth or email us at sjtb.youth@gmail.com if you would like to know more or if you have any questions!

LENT PRAYER GROUP –Please join us on **Mon 23 March at 7:00 pm in the meeting room in the Parish Office** for a time of Lenten prayer and reflection.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION – A PLACE to explore for a connection & union with the divine.

'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10. If you would like to speak to a Spiritual Director, please call the Parish Office on 9758 1029 or phone Beth Duffy on 0423 759 850



CHANGES TO WEEK-DAY MASS TIMES during Fr Thomas trip to India to be with his family
Normal Weekday Mass times at St John the Baptist from: Tues 24th -Thurs 26th March with Fr Peter, NO WEEKDAY MASS at Belgrave. Thank you for your understanding. Regular Mass times resume Fri 27th Mar.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA PROJECT COMPASSION
Since October 2023, Caritas Jerusalem staff in Gaza have endured displacement, personal loss, and danger alongside the communities they serve. Despite unimaginable challenges, they remain committed to providing lifesaving support, standing in solidarity with families enduring this conflict. Please Donate Today. Scan the QR code, or by calling: 1800 024 413 **Thank you for standing with us, as we Unite Against Poverty this Lent.**



HOLY WEEK SIGN UP SHEETS – on glass wall. Please let us know if you can help out, by adding your name and contact information to the sheet. With Grateful thanks...

NEW LITURGY ROSTER for April to July 2026 It is time to start looking at updating the liturgy roster, for Lectors and Ministers of the Eucharist, for the months of April to July 2026. Please contact the parish office, by Tuesday, 10th March if you know of any time that you are unavailable during that period. Phone: 9758 1029 or Email marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au Thank you for your continued service in this ministry.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST OPEN DAYS FOR 2027 PREP CHILDREN Let your neighbours, friends and relatives know St John's School Open Days are set for March. **School Open Days will be held on: Thursday 26th March 9am, 10am, 4pm & 5pm; Thursday 7th May Saturday 9th May – morning and Tuesday 2nd June** Every day is Open Day at St John the Baptist School!! Please come and see us in action. **Contact : Kelli on 9758 1013**

St John the Baptist Sacramental classes for the sacrament of Confirmation will take place in second term 2026. If your child is due to take part in the celebration for Confirmation please contact the parish office on: 9758 1029 or office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au The sacrament of confirmation is for children who have celebrated their First Reconciliation and First Eucharist and are in Grade 6 or upwards.

2026 PALM SUNDAY WALK FOR JUSTICE you are warmly invited to join the walk for Justice, Respect and Kindness. Sunday 29 March 2026, at 1.00 pm – Gather on Princes Bridge (near Flinders Street Station) with banners and placards, 1.30 pm – Walk to Lower Terrace, Birrarung Marr 2.00 – 3.30 pm – Speakers and music Lwr Terrace Birrarung Marr.

FUNERAL LIVESTREAM LINK Fr Thomas has sent through the link to watch his father: Kuruvila Kumbuckal's Funeral; for those who would like to watch it -click here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/BJF4MLS6Tb4?si=K84BbzUbcKWwU8>

MASS OF THE HOLY OILS The Mass of the Holy Oils will be held at St Patrick's Cathedral on Tuesday 31st March at 10am.



RCIA - Newly Elect This weekend our catechumens will take part in reciting the Our Father. Please make them feel welcome and keep **Justin, Macaulay, Shannon and Brodie** in your prayers.

FUNERAL DETAILS OF Vito Lorusso, not yet confirmed at time of printing. Please contact: Le Pine Funeral Directors Ferntree Gully next week.

EXPRESSIONS of INTEREST: THE PARISH PASTORAL GROUP INVITES EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST, from parishioners, in a planning meeting for a one-off social event in 2026. **DATE OF MEETING: Wednesday 25th March 2026** **TIME: 7.00pm** **PLACE: Parish Community Centre** Please reply to the **PARISH OFFICE: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au**



PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY (Next Sun 29th Mar) The 10.30am Mass on Palm Sunday will begin outside the doors to the School Hall (weather permitting) and will then process with Palm branches into the church. Some young people are needed to assist with the distribution of palms. Please come 15 minutes early, or see Sue this weekend, if you're able to help.

SIGN UP SHEETS FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER are on the glass wall. If you can assist with any of the tasks/ministries available, please write your name in the spaces provided.

GOOD FRIDAY ECUMENICAL WALK Friday, 3rd April **The Walk begins at 9.15am** from the car park of Maxi Foods, Upper FTG, with our ecumenical neighbours, **finishing at St John's church 10.00am** **Stations of the Cross service.** Following the service, tea, coffee & hot cross buns will be served

EASTER VIGIL we will be specially celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation for Justin, Macaulay, Shannon & Brodie.

ROSTERS: Mon 23 to Sun 29 March 2026

Flowers	NO Flowers Lent
Linen	Carole D'Souza
Welcomers	6pm Myra Noth 10.30am Terry S, Joanna C, Thelma B
Lectors	6pm Gab C 10.30am Joan R
Counters	Bryon, Ruby, Guil
Gardening	Carlos E