



Catholic Communities of:
St Matthew's, Bridgewater.
Our Lady of the Rosary, Stirling East
St Joseph the Worker, Lobethal.
St Matthew's, Birdwood.
St Catherine's Catholic School, Stirling.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A

14/15TH MARCH 2026

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SUNDAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION

In the Gospel story of the man born blind, Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world," and then gives sight to a man who has never seen. The story begins simply: "As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth." The physical healing, however, is only the beginning. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes clear that this is not just a story about restored eyesight.

The man's spiritual vision develops in stages. First, he calls Jesus "the man." Later, "a prophet." Finally, he confesses, "I do believe, Lord," and worships him. Meanwhile, the irony deepens: those who claim to see – the religious authorities – grow increasingly blind. They cling stubbornly to their certainty and refuse the very light standing before them.

In the midst of Lent, Scripture invites us to examine our own sight. Is it possible to be religious and still miss what God is doing in our lives and in our parish? We may know the language and doctrines of faith yet resist the transforming light God offers us this Lent. Inspired by this Sunday's readings, we might ask: Where am I still blind? What truths about God, myself, or others do, but I avoid? Do I truly want to see?

The man born blind comes to faith in a simple way. He goes, washes, and gradually speaks the truth he is experiencing. He is a model for us. Change comes gradually. Insight unfolds step by step. We do not move from darkness to light instantly, but we do move toward it.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is traditionally called "Laetare Sunday" — from the Latin Laetare, meaning "Rejoice." Even in the midst of fasting and penance, there is joy. The light is already shining. Christ does not shame or accuse the blind man; he seeks him out, even after others cast him aside. Christ's light is not a harsh interrogation. It is healing illumination.

Our parish community is called not only to walk in the light ourselves, but also to be light for those who are excluded, judged, or left in the shadows. When members of the Christian community reflect the patience and mercy of Christ, people begin to see that Lent is about stepping into the light — trusting that the One who opened blind eyes is still at work among us.

The Scriptures are clear: we are called to be light not in the abstract, but for real people in real darkness: Those grieving or lonely, those burdened by shame or failure those struggling economically, those excluded or judged those who feel invisible

We may not have all the answers, but we can bring Christ's light into the darkness. Light may be a kind word, a steady friendship, a courageous stand for what is right, a parish that welcomes rather than filters.

WEEKEND MASS TIMES

St Matthew's Birdwood

8.30 am: 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month

St Joseph's Lobethal

8.30 am: 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month

St Matthew's Bridgewater

6pm Saturday Evenings

10.30 am Sunday

Our Lady of the Rosary East Stirling

5.30 pm Sunday

LORD I BELIEVE!



WE OFFER OUR PRAYERS ...

For those recovering from surgery, illness and the sick: Margaret Carroll, Betty White, Anne MacDonald, June Harvey, Jeff Oliver, Mirla Mills, , Krystina Rowland, Carolyn Whitfield, Margaret Surguy.

March Anniversaries: Eileen McGlasham, Sr Carmel Slattery Op, Zenon Sobeki, Zofie Gregorcyz, Wally Finch, Norm Davey, Kevin O'Brady, Claire Sobels. Tony Arthurson, Steve Sarlay, Stan Greg, Les Way, Karmenu Farrugia, Claire Klavins, Max O'Brien, Noel Fiebiger, Bastiaan Kradolfer, Ava Lynch.

Recently deceased: Gabrielle Morgan,

MASS TIMES DURING THE WEEK

Monday 16th	OLOR MASS	9.00a.m.
Tuesday 17th	St Catherine's—Liturgy	9.00a.m.
	Rosary at OLOR	4.00p.m.
Wednesday 18th	BIRDWOOD MASS	9.00a.m.
Thursday 19th	Feast of St Joseph OLOR	6.30p.m.
Friday 20th	BRIDGEWATER MASS	11.00a.m.
Saturday 21st	RECONCILIATION	12.00p.m.

UPCOMING PARISH ACTIVITIES March 2026

Wednesday 18th	Parish Pastoral Council	6.00p.m.
Thursday 19th	Feast of St Joseph	
Friday 20th	Sacrament of Reconciliation	6.00p.m.
Sunday 22nd	Fifth Sunday of Lent	
Mon/Thur 23/26th	Mission Lenten week	6.30p.m.
Wednesday 25th	Feast of the Annunciation	6.30p.m.
Friday 27th	Way of the Cross at OLOR	6.00p.m.
Saturday 28th	Blessing—Way of the Cross at Birdwood	1.00p.m.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Jesus, won't you cleanse our blind eyes?

Wash away the mud?

and move us from unseeing souls to believers—

from bystanders to disciples, walkers in darkness to lamps for your light.

O let our souls see!

GABRIELLE MORGAN RIP

Early Thursday morning our beloved parishioner Gabrielle passed away. She had been battling cancer for the past two years. After the sudden death of her husband she left Tasmania and came to Bridgewater. As a devout Catholic she came to our parish and from that day she became part of our parish community. Her smile and her simplicity towards life made Gabrielle such a wonderful person and being accepted by all. During her illness she

always said that she is not afraid to die and that she is prepared to go to heaven. We will miss her but we will never forget her good example of what it means to be a truly disciple of Jesus. Details of funeral still to be announced.



ROSTERS FOR WEEKEND MASSES

NORTHERN End	LOBETHAL Sunday 22nd Mar 8.30a.m	LOBETHAL Sunday 29th Mar 8.30a.m
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Welcoming	Gayle Raven	Gayle Raven
1st Reader	Jo Brickhill	Margaret S
2nd Reader	Eric Toome	Simon Murphy
Euch. Minister	Anne Moore	Eric Toome
Cleaning	Gayle Raven	Gayle Raven

BRIDGEWATER	Saturday 21st Mar 6.00pm	Sunday 22nd Mar 10.30am
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Sacristan	Kathy Lloyd	Di Golding
Welcoming	Lyn Norris	Gina Kelly
Reader 1	Henry Duszynski	Ric Sachse
Reader 2	Alan Miller	Nolan Parodi
Euch.Ministers	Kathy Lloyd	Pam Broadbridge
	Mary Homann	Deb Stapleton
		Gina Kelly
Musicians	Power Point	Nathan Sachse
Counters	Maria Thompson &	Di Golding
Our Lady	Di Golding	Di Golding
Cleaning	Jan McDonnell &	Dan De Fazio
Flowers	Gina Kelly	Gina Kelly

OLOR	Sunday 22nd Mar 5.30pm	Sunday 29th Mar 5.30pm
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Welcoming	Jenny Johnston	Annette Lamont
Cleaning	Kathy Decosta	Kathy Decosta

PASTORAL LETTER FOR LENT By ARCHBISHOP Lenten Practices of Encountering Christ

This Lent offers us a privileged time to deepen our encounter with the Risen Jesus who speaks peace to us: Prayer becomes a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus who invites us into his presence. Can we sit in silence before him, bringing our locked rooms and paralyzing fears, and allowing him to breathe his Spirit upon us? Fasting becomes a way of making room for the Lord Jesus in our overfilled lives. What might we release in order to be more available to his surprising grace? Almsgiving becomes a participation in Lord's own mission of mercy. How can our acts of charity be expressions of the peace we have received from him?

Practical Steps for Meeting Christ this Lent 2026

I invite you to concrete practices for encountering the Risen Lord: First, spend time in prayer each day with the Gospel accounts of Jesus appearing to his disciples after the resurrection. Place yourself in that locked room. Hear Jesus speak your name. Receive his peace. Second, bring your locked rooms to Christ in the Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation). Let him breathe his Spirit of forgiveness upon you. Experience the peace that flows from his mercy. Third, ask the Lord Jesus each day: "Where are you sending me?" Be open to surprises. Listen for his voice in Scripture, in the needs around you, in the promptings of the Spirit. Fourth, practice encountering Christ in others, especially those whose experience differs from yours. Jesus promised that what we do for the least of his brothers and sisters, we do for him. Fifth, participate in communal prayer and discernment within your parish as we prepare for our upcoming Archdiocesan Synod. When we gather in Jesus' name, he is present among us.

LENT 2026

The fourth Sunday of Lent is sometimes called *Laetare* Sunday. *Laetare* is a Latin word that means "rejoice." Traditionally, Sundays are named after the first word of the liturgy's opening antiphon. On this Sunday, the antiphon is taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 66:10-11). Even as we observe our Lenten sacrifices, we rejoice in anticipation of the joy that will be ours at Easter. In the Gospel, Jesus is the light that has come into the world, but people preferred the darkness. We wish to keep our sins hidden, even from God. Jesus has come into the world to reveal our sins so that they may be forgiven. This is the Good News; it is the reason for our rejoicing in this season of Lent and throughout our lives.

PRAYER SERVICE

At the Northern End during Lent, Sunday gospel reflection of the coming Sunday in Lent is mediated on Wednesday after 9.00 a.m. Mass

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

During Lent, every Friday at 11.00 a.m. followed by Mass.

FEAST OF ST JOSEPH

We have two major feasts in honour of St Joseph. On March 19 our veneration is directed to him personally and to his part in the work of redemption, while on May 1 we honour him as the patron of workmen. This year the 19th March falls on Thursday so we will celebrate also his feast by celebrating Mass at 6.30p.m. at the OLOR church.

PALM SUNDAY 29 MARCH

As part of our Palm Sunday tradition, parishioners, with the children dressed as the Jewish people, gather in Fr. Fred's backyard under the oak tree, for the blessing of the palms. The children then process with Father into the church for Mass. All children, especially those in the Sacramental Programme, are invited to participate in the procession on Palm Sunday at the 10.30 am Mass. Children are asked to meet Cathie in the Parish House at 10 am to be dressed in their costumes. For more information contact: catherine@adelaidehillsparish.com.au

EASTER MINISTRIES:

If you are available for ministry over the Holy Week/Easter period, please write your name in the relevant spot on the sheets at the back of the church.

EASTER SUNDAY 5 APRIL

Please join with other parishioners and Father Fred to celebrate his birthday after 10.30 am Mass on Easter Sunday. There will be a birthday cake, and parishioners are asked to bring a plate of either savoury or sweet food to share. Father's family is in Malta, we his parishioners, are his family in Australia. Please come along to the party.

CHANGE OF DATE

The blessing of the new Way of the Cross at Birdwood is going to be held on Saturday 28th March at 1.00p.m. We bless and do the Way of the Cross, bless the renovated parish house. This will be followed by lunch. It's an invitation to everyone to this special event.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Next meeting next Wednesday 18th March at 6.00p.m. at the OLAH parish hall at Bridgewater. Discussion about Dialogue evening.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

This year we are combining the Lenten Penitential Service with the children doing for the first time their Sacrament of Reconciliation on Friday 20th March at 6.00p.m. at St Matthew's Bridgewater.



Life was hard for **Manaini** and her children living in rural Fiji. With the support from Caritas Australia's partner, FRIEND, she learnt food processing and gardening skills, improving nutrition and creating new income opportunities to support her children's education.



Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

BIRTHING KITS

To celebrate Women's International day, like previous years, we help in promoting the Birthing Kits. Women in Developing Countries have little chance of a midwife present. A clean birth kit will provide everything a mother needs to have reasonably safe and clean birthing environment. A kit may be the difference between a woman and a baby living or dying during the birthing process. All donations ensure Adelaide High School to continue to pack kits for many women world-wide. Last year our contribution helped packing of 400 kits. A collection for this appeal will be held this week-end of 14/15th March.

STATE ELECTIONS

One of our parishioners Tomislav Kovac and a member of the PPC is contesting the State elections as a candidate for One Nations. We are not campaigning, everyone is free to vote for his favourite party/candidate. However, we wish Tomislav every success in the upcoming election. May his vision and dedication inspire positive change.

**Weekly Income 7/8th March 2026
THANK YOU**

**First Collection: \$621.35
Planned Giving Received: \$1975.00
Loose Plate: \$237.00**

**If you would like to donate by Direct Debit use the parish bank account details below:
BSB: 066-782 Account: 10000277
Account Name CCES ADEL HILLS
Refer payment as "donation"**

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

A reading from the first book of Samuel

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

R.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

R.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

R.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said: Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man." "How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said. They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet." They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that any-one who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?" Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from." The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said,^[a] "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus

READINGS FOR THE
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A

1st Reading	Ezekiel 37:12-14
2nd Reading	Romans 8:8-11
Gospel	John 11:1-45