



St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception

Catholic Parish, 2134 Great North Road, Avondale, Auckland 0600

Vision/Tirohanga

Growing in Faith Together

Oranga i roto i te Whakapono

Goal/Whainga

To Grow in Awareness as One Parish Family

Kokiritia te Oranga Kotahitanga o te Whanau Whakapono

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT ~ 8th March 2026

Readings: Exodus 17: 3-7 | Ps. 95 | Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8 | John 4: 5-42

Gospel Reflection

Today, we are given the beautiful story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. The story begins with Jesus resting by the well, for He was "tired from His journey." A Samaritan woman approaches the well at noon, during the heat of the day, most likely to avoid the scorn of the other women who looked down on her. Jesus then does something that greatly surprises her: He asks her for a drink of water.

Jews used nothing in common with Samaritans, yet Jesus was willing to drink from her utensil. When she questioned Him about this, Jesus responded, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water."

The "living water" Jesus desired to give her was the spiritual gift of grace to renew and refresh her soul. His divine eyes enabled Him to see her spiritual hunger, and His compassion filled Him with a desire to free her from her many burdens.

The passage above might sound harsh at first: "For you have had five husbands..." Why would Jesus bring up this woman's humiliating situation? Because she had clearly been searching for fulfilment throughout her life, engaging in one failed marriage after another. Now, she was living with a man who was not her husband, a reality that left her dry and thirsty.

By speaking this way to the woman, Jesus lets her know that He knows all about her, loves her, and longs to fill her with the satiation she has been searching for throughout her life. He does not judge or condemn her; He invites her to experience the freedom He longed to bestow upon her. After the encounter, the woman left the well overjoyed and even left her water jar behind, symbolising that she was no longer thirsty – spiritually speaking. She then confidently went to the people of the town and said, "Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?"

Each of us needs to see ourselves in this woman. Our sins fill us with shame. The guilt of our hidden sins weighs us down, leaving us thirsty. If we can identify with this sinful woman, then we can also expect the same depth of compassion from Jesus. Too often, we hide our sins, even from ourselves, justifying our actions, downplaying them, or ignoring them. That is not the path to freedom. Freedom only comes by allowing our Lord to reveal our sins to us, facing them, and encountering God's abundant mercy.

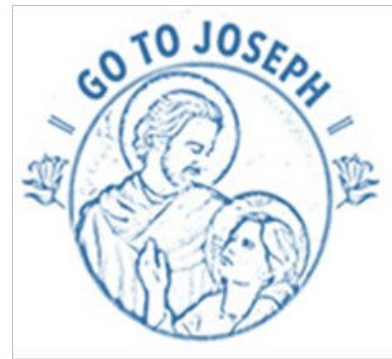
Reflect today on the importance of opening your eyes to see the reality of your sins. Don't run from your past – confront it, understand it, confess it, and receive the living water of mercy. The holier you become, the more clearly you will see even the smallest sins you have committed. That is good. It is necessary if we want to be healed and refreshed by God. Imitate this sinful woman today. God is never ashamed of us. Let the shame and guilt dissipate within God's abundant mercy so that like this woman, you will know that God knows you through and through and loves you despite your sin.

~ News and Updates from the Parish ~

Parish Outdoor Mass: Mark your diaries – Our next Parish Outdoor Mass is scheduled for **Sunday 22nd March 2026, 10.00am, in the School courtyard area (weather permitting)**. All parishioners are welcome to attend.

Lenten Rite II Reconciliation – Combined Liturgy for the parishes of St. Mary's Avondale and Christ the King Owairaka: A wonderful opportunity to prepare ourselves for Easter, to encounter Jesus Christ, experience His mercy and receive forgiveness of sins. Rite II Reconciliation will take place on Thursday 26th March 2026, 7.00pm, at Christ the King Church, Owairaka.

Bishops Lenten Appeal: “The beginning of Lent marks the start of the Bishops’ Lenten Appeal. Donations can be made to Caritas directly via direct debit or credit card through the Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand website <https://www.caritas.org.nz/ways-to-give>. The bank account for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand is 03-0518-0211216-000. Please use “Lent” as the Code and your first and last name as Particulars. Freepost envelopes are available in the Chapel throughout Lent. Please take an envelope, if you prefer to give in that way. Donations received by Caritas by 31st March will be sent a receipt for the 2025/26 tax year. Any donations received in the Caritas office after 1st April will be sent a receipt for the 2026/27 tax year. Your generous support enables Caritas to help poor and marginalised communities around the world. Thank you. For more information, email: caritas@caritas.org.nz or call 0800 22 10 22.



Prayer to St Joseph

O Saint Joseph, do assist us by
your powerful intercession
and obtain for us our parish
Church.

And thus, having experienced
your heavenly power here
below may we praise God our
Father in Heaven. Amen

Life Teen Aotearoa Leadership Convention | 13-15 March 2026 at Sacred Heart College, Auckland: THE BEST place to be trained, renewed and inspired for Catholic Youth Ministry. Whether you are new to ministry, or looking for the best practices to continue your ministry, this event is designed for you. Expect incredible keynotes from the Catholic speakers, practical breakout sessions, and in addition to practical, comprehensive training, you will experience community and personal spiritual renewal. Whether you are a priest, in parish leadership, youth minister, DRS, teacher, youth leader, college chaplain, or an interested parent, we are ready to serve and train you this year at Life Teen Aotearoa’s 2026 Leadership Convention. Register NOW! Earlybird prices available until 9th March: <https://www.eventbookings.com/b/event/life-teen-aotearoa-leadership-convention>

Parish Pledge Giving via Online Banking: Due to our current situation and many of our parishioners having to attend Mass elsewhere, some have asked about our Parish Pledge Giving. If you would like to continue with your regular contributions, we encourage you to change from using Pledge Envelopes to Online Banking instead. That way it doesn’t matter where you attend Sunday Mass, your regular contributions will continue for our parish of St. Mary’s Avondale, and we will still be able to issue a tax receipt to you at the end of the current financial year. If you would like to change to online banking, please contact the Parish Office.

The St Mary’s Education Grant has been providing financial assistance to poor students in our local St Mary’s School and Overseas, especially in our Pacific neighbourhood. The grant was started twenty-one years ago in November 2003. We urgently need new donors. Can you please help with a monthly contribution of just \$10? Yes, just \$10 a month can help to make a difference in some student’s life. You can set up an Automatic Payment to the Parish Bank Account 02-0108-0706996-000 through your bank. Please include the following details: **Reference:** Educ Grant | **Code:** your phone number | **Particulars:** your surname and initials. You can set this up yourself through internet banking or take an Automatic Payment form from the table in the foyer. All donations are added together with your other donations to St Mary’s Church and so they qualify for the usual tax deduction claim. For more information contact Tony Rea (email: tonirea@xtra.co.nz), Sumit Luis (sumit.luis@gmail.com) or Joe James (joejamesnz@yahoo.com).

~ News and Updates from around the Diocese ~

WYD 2027 Webinars: In preparation for World Youth Day 2027 in Seoul Korea, Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College invites young people and everyone to grow in their faith, hope and missionary discipleship, with this year's webinar series, "Take Courage! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). More info at www.tekupenga.ac.nz/webinars-2026

LENT 2026 with FOOD FOR FAITH: Visit <https://www.foodforfaith.org.nz> and sign up to receive daily email encouragements from Fr. John O'Connor. Prepared especially for those seeking greater maturity of faith.

"You are Chosen": Life In The Spirit Seminar – Saturday 14 March to Sunday 15 March, at St. Joseph's Church Parish Hall, Takapuna. Deepen your relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. All are welcome! There will be time for teaching, worship, prayer, fellowship and activities. Please register at: bit.ly/ur-chosen

2026 Theology of the Body Courses and Prayer Retreats - Registration OPEN for 2026: Course 2: NEW Beginners TOB course – Called to Holiness - LIVE – 4-talk series. Sat 28 March (ONE DAY only). All adults 20 years + are welcome. To register please visit: theologyofthebody.nz

Wings.Nga Parirau this Lent – an invitation to know your faith and grow your relationship with Jesus. Are you interested but cannot make face-to-face meetings? Try Zoom! First Year Programme of 'Wings', Modules One and Two, on Zoom, 7-7.40pm, all Thursdays in Lent'. We will be reflecting on the Catholic Faith and our personal Faith journey. Sunday Gospels of Lent provide a framework for our Scripture reflection, on Zoom, all Saturdays in Lent 7-7.40pm. Church Teaching through the writings of Pope Leo XIV, reflect together, all Wednesdays in Lent, on Zoom, 7-7.40pm. Come and pray silently with others, be present with Jesus each morning, on Zoom, 6.15 – 6.45am. Is Meditation new for you? 'Come and See!' Contact Dianna Fouhy: diannaf@cda.org.nz

New Zealand Catholic Medical Association (NZCMA) Retreat and Seminar: The New Zealand Catholic Medical Association provides community, support and chaplaincy for those involved in health care in Aotearoa. The association welcomes doctors, nurses, midwives, carers, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists, dentists, health administrators, counsellors, social workers, chaplains, lawyers, and anyone in allied roles. The next nationwide event is a retreat and seminar at the St Francis Friary & Retreat Centre, Auckland on **March 20 and 21**. For more information or to register, visit <https://bit.ly/NZCMA2026> or email newzealandcatholicmedical@gmail.com

A workshop for Church Organists: A free practical workshop helping beginner organists develop stronger hymn-playing skills. Presenter: Michael Cox. Saturday, **14 March 2025**, 1pm – 4pm. St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 119-129 Seddon St, Pukekohe. : Registrations essential – Email: office@pukekohecatholic.org.nz



Divine Mercy Feast
Sunday 12th April 5:30pm
St Benedict's Church
1 St Benedict's Street, Newton

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction.

✦ Blessing of Images,
✦ Holy Mass,
Veneration of St Faustina's Relic.

Bring your Divine Mercy Images and Artefacts to be Blessed

Free parking is available at Wilson Carpark, including free street parking on Sundays

“My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity. It is My desire that it be solemnly celebrated on the first Sunday after Easter”
Diary of Saint Faustina

All Welcome

~ News and Updates from around the Diocese ~

LENT WEBINAR SERIES 2026

Whakarongo ki te reo, whakahokia te karanga
Hear the voice, answer the call

Journey through Lent with New Zealand's Catholic Bishops and others of the faith as they guide us in prayer and reflection on each Sunday's Gospel.

Wednesdays 7:30pm to 8:30pm
From Ashes to Hope

25 Feb	<i>The Temptation Led by the Spirit</i>
4 Mar	<i>The Transfiguration "Listen to Him"</i>
11 Mar	<i>The Woman at the Well "I am He"</i>
18 Mar	<i>The Man Born Blind "Now I see"</i>
25 Mar	<i>The Raising of Lazarus "Lazarus, come out!"</i>
1 Apr	<i>The Passion "I will strike the shepherd"</i>



Scan the QR code to register or use one of the contacts below

caritas.org.nz/lent-webinars
0800 22 10 22
caritas@caritas.org.nz
Replays available


AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Safeguarding is making a safe space for all our people



Who is Safeguarding for?

- ✓ Volunteers
- ✓ Tamariki
- ✓ Clergy
- ✓ Elderly
- ✓ EVERYONE!

SAFE PARISH – SAFE GUARDING

As Catholics we believe that every person is created in the likeness and image of God. Therefore, we continue to ensure that our parish is a place where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. We foster an environment which is welcoming, and in which all our parish whanau, including our tamariki, rangatahi, kuia and kaumatua, feel safe. If you have any complaints or concerns, our Safeguarding Co-ordinator is Tania Starr and you can contact her via email: safeguardingrep@avondalecatholic.org.nz. You may also contact the National Office for Professional Standards 0800 114 662. You may also contact the Police 111.



Wings. Nga Parirau

Catholic Faith Formation

On Zoom this Lent

Thursdays 7pm - 7.40pm

Begin now
Modules 1 and 2
over these 40 days
of Lent

1. Made by God
2. Faith Journey

Know your faith.
&
Deepen your
relationship
with Jesus



Visit QR code for
programme details



Contact: dianna@cdca.org.nz
Catholic Diocese Auckland

Engaged & Planning a Wedding?

Catholic Diocese of Auckland

Approved Marriage Preparation Course

Book your Marriage Preparation Course EARLY
(1 year for NZ and 18 months for overseas Weddings)

Register & Book here:
<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/discipleship/our-courses/>

For more information, contact Gerry:
Email: gerrys@cda.org.nz | **Mobile:** 021 02247442

<p>Parish Priest: Fr. Andrew Matthew Assistant Priest: Fr. Danko Bizjak</p> <p>Email: ppriest@avondalecatholic.org.nz</p> <p>Parish Secretary: Gwendoline Jessop Helg</p> <p>Email: office@avondalecatholic.org.nz</p> <p>Website: www.avondalecatholic.org.nz</p> <p>Facebook: www.facebook.com/stmarysavondale</p> <p>School Principal: Kathryn Hira</p> <p>Email: principal@stmarysavondale.school.nz</p>	<p>Parish Office:</p> <p>Phone: (09) 828 9309</p> <p>Tue – Fri: 9.30am – 3.30pm</p> <p>Monday: Closed</p> <p>School Office:</p> <p>Phone: (09) 828 5599</p>
<p>Pledge Giving Account Number: 02-0108-0706996-000</p> <p>Mass Offering Account Number: 02-0108-0706996-001</p> <p>SMACC Building Fund Account Number: 02-0108-0706996-004</p>	