



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/Whaingā

To Grow in Awareness as One Parish Family

Kokiritia te Oranga Kotahitanga o te Whanau Whakapono

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT ~ 15th March 2026

Readings: Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13 | Ps. 23 | Ephesians 5: 8-14 | John 9: 1-41

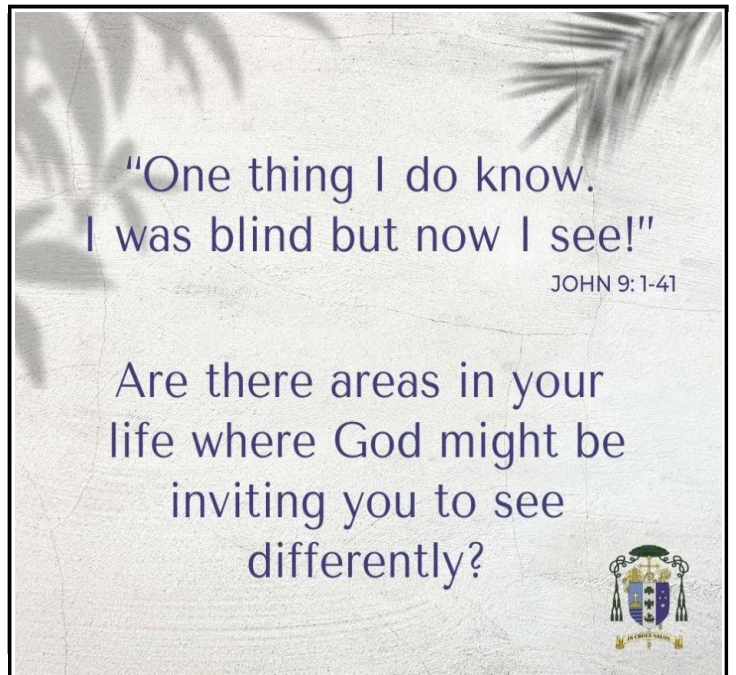
Gospel Reflection

As we did last week, we are reading today from the Gospel of John. In today's Gospel, the healing of the man born blind invites us to focus on the physical and spiritual aspects of sight and light. In the first part of today's Gospel, we hear Jesus' response to a prevalent belief of His time: that misfortune and disability were the result of sin. That belief is why Jesus is asked the question of whose sin caused the man's blindness – his own or his parents'. Jesus does not answer directly, but instead gives the question an entirely different dimension – through this man's disability, God's power will be made manifest. Jesus then heals the man.

The healing is controversial because Jesus heals on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, the religious authorities of Jesus' time, understood that the law of Moses forbade work (including healing) on the Sabbath. They also have trouble believing that Jesus performed a miracle. To determine whether the man was really born blind, the Pharisees question him and his parents. The man challenges the leaders of the synagogue about their assessment of the good that Jesus has done. In turn, they expel the man for questioning their judgment.

The final revelation and moment of enlightenment comes when the man born blind encounters Jesus again. Having heard the news of his expulsion, Jesus seeks out the man born blind and reveals Himself to him as the Son of Man. In this moment, the man born blind shows himself to be a man of faith and worships Jesus. Jesus replies by identifying the irony of the experience of many who encounter Jesus: Those who are blind will now see, and those who think they now see will be found to be blind.

As in last week's Gospel about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, today's reading has many allusions to Baptism. The washing of the man in the pool of Siloam is a prototype for Christian Baptism. Through the man's encounter with Jesus, the man born blind is healed, his sight is restored, and his conversion to discipleship begins. The man born blind gradually comes to a greater understanding about who Jesus is and what it means to be his disciple, while the Pharisees (those who should see) are the ones who remain blind.

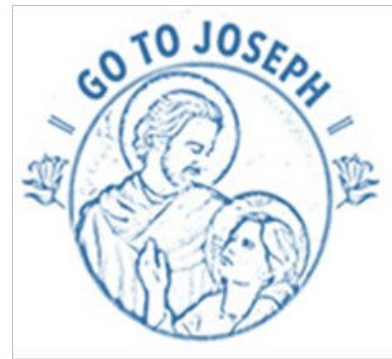


~ News and Updates from the Parish ~

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. 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

Prayer Retreat for Women: Prayer and the Interior Life' Friday 17th April 6pm to Sunday 19th April 3pm 2026 - with time for Holy Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Reconciliation, Personal Prayer and Spiritual Direction. Location: Hillsborough, Auckland. Early bird registration and details here: www.stfrancisretreatcentre.org.nz

Rise up and Shine Festival: Taste the World, Celebrate the Culture! 30th of May, 2026. Starts at 10am with Thanks giving Mass. Followed by Social Entertainment until 3pm. Music, Zumba, Food stalls and Cultural Show. Join us at the Migrant Chaplaincy Rise Up & Shine Festival, where every bite tells a story and every dance spark joy.

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.

The Upper Room | Wed 18 March 2026 at Good George, Mission Bay: The Upper Room is a night of formation and fellowship for young adults. Guest speaker James Bergin will be presenting on the topic of 'Digital Integrity', where we will delve into how one can be authentically Catholic in an artificial digital world. \$10 per ticket. Register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/the-upper-room-march-2026>

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

The Gift of Dreams: On Saturday **28th March**, 10am to 2pm at Orewa Catholic church, the Auckland Christian Meditation Community is hosting a presentation by Tay-Marie Yorston. Dreams tell our stories; they anchor and deepen our faith in seasons of transition, anxiety, stress, grief and loss. For more details, visit christianmeditationnz.org.nz/community-days-retreats



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



Visit QR code for programme details

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



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

Parish Priest:	Fr. Andrew Matthew Assistant Priest: Fr. Danko Bizjak	
Email:	ppriest@avondalecatholic.org.nz	
Parish Secretary:	Gwendoline Jessop Helg	
Email:	office@avondalecatholic.org.nz	
Website:	www.avondalecatholic.org.nz	
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/stmarysavondale	
School Principal:	Kathryn Hira	
Email:	principal@stmarysavondale.school.nz	

Pledge Giving Account Number: 02-0108-0706996-000

Mass Offering Account Number: 02-0108-0706996-001

SMACC Building Fund Account Number: 02-0108-0706996-004

Parish Office:

Phone: (09) 828 9309

Tue – Fri: 9.30am – 3.30pm

Monday: Closed

School Office:

Phone: (09) 828 5599