

**22 FEBRUARY 2026
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

REFLECTION

Today's Gospel isn't strictly about wealth, or money, or riches or power. The heart of the issue is whether you serve and worship God, or not. If you are not serving God, you're ultimately serving the devil.

Who are you serving? Simply put, are you doing what God wants you to do? Are you constantly discerning what God wants you to do with your treasure and talents? Because it is supposed to be an ongoing discernment.

Because the devil is tricky, just as we see in today's Gospel, in the way he tempts Jesus.

And he is tricky to us in a different way, because he doesn't physically manifest himself as he did to Jesus. He often doesn't manifest himself as some shady figure, in a trench coat, on a literal crossroads, with a contract in fine print in his pocket. If he did we wouldn't sign on the dotted lines and serve him in exchange for riches.

No, what happens is much more subtle. He gives you riches for serving him, often with you being unaware of it. For example you get offered a job on the other side of the country that offers an extra 20-30k bump in your salary, and the devil gets you obsessing over how you can get a nicer car, a bigger house but he couches it in altruistic language, and gets you to ignore the reality.

Your car is old - it's a 2020 model. And too small - it's a minivan and you only have two kids. And you need a nicer, bigger car - and you failed to mention more luxurious. And all the while the devil is also tempting you not to think. "Is this really a good thing for my family?" Perhaps you probably could use a new car, but does that good outweigh you moving your family away from other family and friends and support groups and school? Is it really worth 20k more a year?

These are the questions the devil gets you to ignore or at least, put little thought into.

This is why we need to be constantly turning to God and inviting Him into all our decisions, especially the major decisions of life. Because if we don't, we give the devil a chance to work on us, to move away from God, to quietly serve ourselves and thus, ultimately, him. That is why we need to go to Mass every week. That's why we need to have a daily prayer life, to be rooted in scripture, to pray devotionals like the Rosary, to spend time with Christ in adoration, in order that we might be rooted in Christ, who succeeded where Adam failed, and who shows us the way. God is actually asking us to give our very lives to Him in service and worship. He wants all of you and all of me. It begins by giving all of ourselves to God at this Mass, and every moment after. Serve and worship God, and you will have life, and life in abundance. Serve and worship the devil, and you may have riches, but your ultimate reward is death.

Extracts from the writings of Fr Nathan Pacer

GIRL TIME!

We extend an invitation to all women for our "Girl Time" meeting, a group for friendship, laughter and inspiration. Join us for morning tea, as we explore topics that resonate with our lives and faith. A light lunch will be provided. 10.15am Monday 2nd March in the Foley Centre. Optional extended session till 2.00pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

**NEW AT ST MARY'S
NURTURE OUR FAITH**

Monthly sessions, faith formation opportunity to gather, reflect, nourish and strengthen our faith. Different topics and facilitators on every 4th Monday of the month. Commencing with a Lenten Reflection on "Eucharistic Adoration: A privileged space for a personal encounter with Jesus- What, Why, How" 23 February 7 to 8.30pm in the Foley Centre, facilitator Joyce Ng

BISHOPS' LENTEN APPEAL

The beginning of Lent marks the start of the Bishops' Lenten Appeal, donations can be made to Caritas directly via direct credit 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. Free Post envelopes are available from church if you prefer to give that way. All funds received by 29 March will be processed as part of the 2025/26 tax year. Your generous support enables Caritas to help poor & marginalized communities around the world. Thank You!

THURSDAY MORNING SCRIPTURE STUDY AND REFLECTION

continues this coming Thursday, 19 February 10:15am to 11:15 am in the Foley Centre. Current series: "The Bible and the Sacraments" Contact: Parish Office (09) 480 7357 or Text/Call Rose 0225807851 for further info.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE

This year at St Aidan's, 97 Onewa Road 10am on Friday 6 March, followed by a delicious morning tea. ALL WELCOME!

MASS INTENTIONS

Rey Modesto Calugcug RIP; 10.30am Kazik & Kazia Rajwer RIP & Leanne & Yoanne Allwyn Celebrating birthdays this week.

ACTORS WANTED!

We are in need of actors for our Good Friday dramatization of the Gospel. Both male and female actors required must be 14 years or older. Please contact the parish office if you would like to Audition and find out the rehearsal times office@stmarysnorthcote.org.nz

ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Are still in need of non perishable food items such as, pasta, tin fish and meat, sugar, tea, spreads for school lunches, biscuits, tin vegetables, long-life milk etc. You can also bring other necessities for homes i.e. Soap and Soap powder, washing-up liquid, toilet rolls, toothpaste, tooth brushes etc. The usual monthly cash collection will be taken up on the first weekend of the month after all Masses. We will have an epost machine available this year. The money is used to buy fresh meat, vegetables and fruit for food parcels. Please give as generously as you can!

**THANK YOU TO OUR OUTGOING
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

We extend our sincere thanks to our outgoing Finance Committee for their time, dedication and expertise during their term. Your service has been greatly appreciated. We are now seeking parishioners interested in joining the newly forming Finance Committee. If you have skills in finance or a desire to support the parish in this way, please email your expression of interest to parishpriest@stmarysnorthcote.org.nz

BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE

Next Course, and first for 2026 will be held on 10 & 11th March. It consists of Two 1 1/2 Hr. sessions, 7.30-9pm, and is held in the Foley Centre. This Course is mandatory for your first child prior to Baptism, can be completed prior to baby arriving. Reg. office@stmarysnorthcote.org.nz

A HUGE THANK YOU!

To all involved in our successful Parish/School Cultural Day last Sunday, those who helped set up, those who prepared the food, the stall holders, the entertainers, those who helped clean and clear up not forgetting those who came along and enjoyed the food! We will do it again next year!!

DATES TO NOTE

Anointing Masses
5.30pm Sat 14 March
10.30am Sun 15 March
Ministers of Holy Communion formation
Sat 2.30pm 07 March
Thurs. 6pm 12 March

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS
AND AN EVENING MASS EACH
WEDNESDAY DURING LENT
COMMENCING 25 FEBRUARY
STATIONS 6.30PM & MASS 7.00PM
COME AND JOIN US,
ALL WELCOME!!**

DE PAUL HOUSE

needs on going help to support families and seniors in need, basics like Bedding/towels, new or nearly new single/double duvet inners, Sheets, pillows, beds, tables, chairs anything that turns a house into a home!. Thank you St Mary's !

**WEEKEND PILGRIMAGE
RETREAT
TO NORTHLAND, NZ**



You are cordially invited to join a week-end Pilgrimage to the Hokianga in Northland Place: Tamatea Marae & St Mary's Catholic Church, Motuti, Hokianga Northland Date: 14-15 March; Leaving Auckland at 6:00 am Saturday 14 March Registration: \$90 per person (for Marae accommodation, meals and refreshments) Transport: Participants' arrangement (car-pooling suggested) Contact: Text Rose 0225807851 email: northwestcurianz@gmail.com

ST MARY'S KNIGHTS!

Calling all parents with children aged 8 to 12 years! We have an awesome programme continuing from last year taking place on the 4th Friday of every month called St Mary's Knights. Drop your child off at 6pm and collect them at 8pm, or you can stay and help/watch. Allowing your child(ren) to have fun in a safe environment as they build friendships and learn more about their faith. The group is led by senior students and graduates from Carmel, Rosmini & St Mary's Colleges. NEXT Friday 27th February, meet in the parish hall for messy games on the turf at St Mary's Primary School. Wear clothes that you won't mind getting messy and bring a towel and a plate of snacks to share if you are able i.e. fruit, or cookies. Further info contact Francesca 022 059 0852 SEE YOU THERE!

MISISON HUB - SHARING YOUR STORY: TESTIMONY THAT TRANSFORMS

Our lives are full of moments where God's presence quietly guides, comforts & inspires us. This February, Mission Hub, in collaboration with the Catholic Enquiry Centre, is gathering online for Sharing Your Story - Testimony that Transforms! Join us to reflect on how telling our stories with honesty & humility can encourage others. Mon.16 Feb. 7-8.30pm
Via ZOOM register here <https://bit.ly/february16webinar>

WEEK 1 THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Loving God, in our wilderness times, may we draw strength from Your Word. When our inner voices or temptations of the world distract us from our mission, may we attune ourselves to the faithful voice of God.

Amen

LENT!

PREPARE Wed. of Lent 7-7.40pm **PRAY** Daily 6.15am
PONDER Sat. Evenings 7-7.40pm **All ZOOM**
contact email: diannaf@cda.org.nz
Faith Formation Team, Catholic Diocese of Auckland

CALLING ALL AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS!

There is a large, vibrant, Catholic student community in the Auckland CBD. Join us in 2026! To find out more please contact Daniel Story at dans@cda.org.nz and/or check out our socials search [aucklandcatholic.org.nz](https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Prison Chaplaincy see details at www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz under Diocesan Services and Staff Vacancies.

Please pray : For the elderly and frail and the sick in our parish, especially, Philip, Yohann, Linda F, John McC, Megan S, Peter D, Peter C, John W, Mary L. Shannon, Owen B, Susan C, Brian, Katya, S Perry, Kathy M, Matthew S, Ronald B, Syrel C, Billy G, M. Angus C, Keira, Max W, David P, Yvonne S, Andrew C, Lauren S, Fe T, Jamie S-W, Adam S, James F, Lu P, Caroline C, Connie B, John H, Emily D, Sebastian C, Lucia, Anselmo S, Victoria R, Huda AW, Hilda P, David K, Maria O, Alice C, Najla, Petros A, Jocell D-V, Luca M, Maselino L, Ann C, Letalie V, Yvonne P, Helen McBride, Aesop N, Patricia W, Elizabeth S, M O'S, Jason P, Maria & Andre T, Chike E, Emily G, June B, John R, John S, Patricia Maunsell, Mary G, Cath S, Anne J.

DAILY READINGS

Monday	Reading	Lev.	19: 1- 2,11-18	Ps.	19B
	Gospel	Matthew	25:31-46		
Tuesday	Reading	Isaiah	55:10-11	Ps.	34
	Gospel	Matthew	6: 7-15		
Wednesday	Reading	Jonah	3: 1-10	Ps.	51
	Gospel	Luke	11:29-32		
Thursday	Reading	Esther	4:17	Ps.	138
	Gospel	Matthew	7: 7-12		
Friday	Reading	Ezekiel	18:21-28	Ps.	130
	Gospel	Matthew	5:20-26		
Saturday	Reading	Deut.	26:16-19	Ps.	119A
	Gospel	Matthew	5:43-48		
Sunday 2nd Week of Lent					
	1st Reading	Genesis	12: 1- 4	Ps.	33
	2nd Reading	II Timothy	1: 8-10		
	Gospel	Matthew	17: 1- 9		

NOTICES FROM THE DIOCESE

Life Teen Aotearoa Leadership Convention 13/15 March @ Sacred Heart College whether you are new to the ministry or looking for the best practices to continue in your ministry. Expect incredible keynote speakers Register now earlybird price available till 9 March.

<https://www.eventbookings.com/b/event/life-teen-aotearoa-leadership-convention>

New Zealand Catholic Medical Association (NZCMA) Retreat and Seminar The NZCMA provides community, support and chaplaincy for those involved in health care in Aotearoa. The Association welcomes doctors, nurses, midwives, carers, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologist, dentists, health administrators any anyone in allied roles. The next nationwide event is a retreat and seminar at St Francis Friary & Retreat Centre 20 & 21st March. More info. or to register visit <https://bit.ly/NZCMA2026> or email newzealandcatholicmedical@gmail.com

Lent 2026 with Food for Faith visit www.foofforfaith.org.nz and sign up to receive daily email encouragements from Fr. John O'Connor. Prepared especially for those seeking greater maturity of faith.

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 www.tekupenga.ac.nz/webinars-2026

Lent Webinar Series - Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand Journey Registrations have ow opened for the next Webinar Series involving our Catholic Bishops, for all dates: <https://link.caritas.org.nz/lentweb1regionong>
Teams Oceania Conference 20-22 March Team members from around Oceania, including the Philippines & Timor Leste. For enquiries and registrations contact Jan & Tony on teamsnaotearoa@gmail.com

WHY NOT BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN YOUR PARISH IN 2026? URGENTLY NEEDED NOW

Car Parking attendants (ALL Sunday & Special Masses)

Mass Coordinator for 10.30am Mass

Hospitality people

Contact the office on office@stmarysnorthcote.org.nz and more Details/training will be given!

CHURCH CLEANING 21 Feb. Upton Family - 28 Feb. Kimberley G
ALTAR LINEN 22nd Feb Eresha D - 01 March Anne H

'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Matthew 4:1-11

How often do I turn to God's Word for guidance, comfort, or strength?



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YOUNG ADULTS GROUP 2026!

We relaunch on 01st March after the 5.00pm Mass. Anyone between the ages of 18-35 is most welcome. Come along and meet other young adults in the parish for fellowship and to journey alongside one another in our Catholic faith. Enquires Email: gnastrun88@gmail.com

PROLIFE FACTS

From the 1970s onward, New Zealand's pro-life movement has shared the pro-life message with the wider public. Many early events were led by the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). When SPUC became Voice for Life (VFL) in the 1990s, it continued its public witness with regional marches, Life Chains, youth activism, and various educational campaigns. Other pro-life groups such as Family Life International, Right to Life, and 40 Days for Life campaigns expanded pro-life witness within the community. In 2017, the wider pro-life network laid the foundation for a united national event, March for Life NZ. A family-friendly march, it became an annual event, drawing thousands. March for Life 2026 will be held in Auckland. Participants will gather from 1 p.m. in Te Komititanga Square, bottom of Queen St and march at 2 p.m. to Aotea Square. more info., see: marchforlife.nz. For pro-life info, visit www.voiceforlife.org.nz.