



Our Lady of the Valleys Catholic Parish

Parish Priest: Fr Simeon Uchendu

Email: ppvalleysregion@rok.catholic.net.au

Parish Secretaries: Colleen Nevell, Melissa Sturt

Parish Office Hours: 9.00am - 12 noon
Monday to Friday

Telephone: 4992 1252

Email: valleysregion@rok.catholic.net.au

Parish communities:

St Joseph's, Biloela

Mass Times

Wednesday	8.00am
Thursday	5.30pm
Friday	8.00am
Sunday	8.00am

St Therese's, Monto

Mass Times

Sunday	6.00pm
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Parish Contacts:

Mary Ann List
- 0417 628 140

Sr Anne & Sr Marie, SMSM
Phone: 4166 3986
PO Box 129
Monto Q 4630

Sacred Heart Church, Theodore

Saturday	6.00pm
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Mass: 1st and 3rd
Saturdays

Lay Led: 2nd and 4th
Saturdays

St Michael's, Moura

Mass Times

Saturday (2nd and 4th)	6.00pm
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St Patrick's, Baralaba

Mass Times

Second Friday of the month	6.00pm
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SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: Biloela

St. Joseph's Catholic
School
Phone. 4994 8310
Principal: Tina Knight

Monto

St Therese's Catholic
School
Phone: 4166 1654
Principal: Doiya Knapman

First Sunday of Advent 3rd December 2023

**"When we pray, God opens our eyes, renews and changes our hearts,
heals our wounds and grants us the grace we need."**

Pope Francis

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY by Mary Coloe PBVM Wake Up!

The vestments change, the Gospel changes as the Church moves into a new cycle recalling and celebrating God's coming to our world in Jesus. This year we will hear the earliest written Gospel, that of Mark, written around the year 70 CE. These were years of conflict for the early Christians. The Emperor Nero had begun to persecute Christians in the year 64 and they were considered to be practising a new and superstitious cult. In Palestine things were no better for there had been a Jewish uprising against Rome in 66 that led to the destruction of Jerusalem. Mark's community was under threat and beside all these external factors, Jesus had not returned to them as they were expecting. For forty years they had kept faith but as time passed the waiting became harder.

The Gospel speaks into this situation. Be alert. Stay awake. The Master will return. Mark uses popular images associated with the end of time according to first century Jewish imagination. There was an expectation that the Messiah would return before the end; that the Messiah would lead a war against the Kingdom of evil; this moral struggle would be felt by the whole cosmos with earthquakes and famine. Mark also points to the reality that Christians were experiencing; no longer welcome within Judaism because they were saying the Messiah had come in Jesus; being brought to trial before Roman courts for not worshipping Caesar. This was the life and death struggle for Mark's community.

Living now, so many centuries distant from the Gospel events, Mark's words take on a special urgency. Complacency and routine can replace alertness and watchfulness. After such a long time perhaps we run the risk of failing to recognise the Master. Last week's Gospel revealed this difficulty. 'When did we see you hungry and thirsty, sick or naked?' We might say in response, 'Of course we would have welcomed you – but we didn't know it was you.' This is the alertness that we are called to; to recognise God's coming in the most unlikely ways. As the carols ring out around the shopping centres, watch out, be alert. You never know the time when God will come to you.

The reading from Paul to the Corinthians shifts from warning to thanksgiving but continues the same theme of 'while we wait for the revealing of Christ'. The Corinthians were a fascinating community in the early Church. They had been brought to Christianity by Paul in the 50's, about twenty years after the Easter event. A number were Jews ready to accept that Jesus is their long-awaited Messiah; a number were non-Jews, gentiles more familiar with worship in the Greek and Roman tradition. It seems they were a community with much enthusiasm for the Christian message, but in their enthusiasm, they made many errors. This is what prompts Paul to write to them, to answer some of the questions they had brought to him, and to let them know about some of the things that were happening in their community that Paul was not happy about. So this letter is part of an ongoing dialogue between Paul and his community.

The part we read today is the standard way to begin a letter in those times. Following his initial greeting Paul praises the community for the multiple ways that God's grace is obvious in their lives. He also mentions how gifted the community is, and how these many gifts will sustain the community while they wait. This theme will recur later in the letter as it seems that the multiple gifts are in fact causing multiple problems. Some fail to recognise that the gifts come from God and are for the building up of the community, not for the self-advancement of the individual.

As we draw near to Christmas, and are beginning to think about the gifts we want to give, and perhaps the ones we want to receive, it might be a good time to consider the deeper gifts we have, the gifts within our lives and how we are allowing these to flourish and to put them to use for others, our family, our communities, our co-workers. I had a poster once that said something like: who we are is God's gift to us; what we make of ourselves is our gift to God.

© Mary Coloe

VALLEYS REGION PARISH NOTICES

PLANNED GIVING

Thank you for the generosity of parishioners who contribute to our parish finances through planned giving or collections. Please make cheques payable to the **Catholic Parish of the Valleys Region**. If you would like to be part of our planned giving program please contact the Parish Office.

Last week's total contributions amounted to:

Biloela: \$433.10

Monto: \$172.85

Dawson Valley: \$65.00

Payment options for Planned Giving: Credit Card, Direct Debit or Envelopes. Please contact the Parish Office for more information.

VALLEYS' MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

- 3rd Sunday: Biloela Baptism - 9.15am
- 6th Wednesday: Biloela Mass - 8.00am
- 7th Thursday: Biloela Mass - 5.30pm
- 8th Friday: Biloela Mass - 8.00am
- 9th Saturday: Moura Confession - 5.30pm
- 10th Sunday: Parish Finance Council meeting - 9.15am

The next fortnightly meetings for the St Vincent de Paul Conferences will be:

Biloela: 8.30am on Thursday 7th December, 2023

Monto: 11.00am on Thursday 7th December, 2023

Prayers for the sick and struggling:

Frank Vogels, Henny Hay, Coleman family, Shane Corfield, Shirley Matheson, Michael Stoddart, Gail Harrison, Robert Harrison, Graham Phelan, Lorraine Stockley, Ryan Flenady, Pat Dingle, Margery Snell, Des Maher, Myrna Demasu-ay, Lindsay Sharpe

ARE YOU GOING TO BE HERE OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD?

A roster is available near the front of the Church. Please be involved and be part of our celebrations over the Christmas period.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 2023

MASSES

- Friday 22nd December 6.00pm - Baralaba (Christmas)
- Saturday 23rd December 5.00pm - Bauhinia (Christmas)
- Sunday 24th December 8.00am - Biloela (Sunday Mass)
6.00pm - Monto (Christmas)
- Monday 25th December 8.00am - Biloela (Christmas)
5.00pm - Moura (Christmas)
6.30pm - Theodore (Christmas)

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS: Monday - 8.00am - Biloela

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSIONS)

- Baralaba** - Friday 15th December - 5.30pm
- Moura** - Saturday 9th December - 5.30pm
- Theodore** - Saturday 16th December - 5.30pm
- Monto** - Sunday 17th December - 5.00pm
- Biloela** - Tuesday 19th December - 5.30pm

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Sunday 3rd December - 6.00pm

Redeemer Lutheran College, Collard Street, Biloela
Free entry - gold coin donations appreciated
Bring along a chair or blanket and enjoy the evening

BAPTISMS

Today we welcome into our St Joseph's Church community

LEITA SIMONE GRUMMITT

And

LULU LAURA GRUMMITT

Daughters of Alex and Amy



Reconciliation:

St Joseph's, Biloela - Sunday 7.00am to 7.30am

St. Therese's, Monto - Before Mass each Sunday

Baptisms:

Bookings are made through the Parish Office in Biloela.

Advance notice and preparation are required.

Weddings:

By appointment and after preparation.

DIOCESAN NOTICES:

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton abides by the principles of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (2022), and is committed to safeguarding, with a specific focus on protecting children and adults at risk. For further information or support please contact the Diocesan Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office: Response Line: 1800 830 113 (free call) or email: pssoadin@rok.catholic.net.au
Diocesan Website for more information: <https://rok.catholic.net.au/our-diocese/safeguarding/>
Our parish Safeguarding representatives are: Maureen Shultz (Biloela) and Naomi Arkinstall (Monto)

The Melchizedek Project

Do you desire to better serve God and His Church?

Are you unsure where your life is heading?

The Melchizedek Project is an online group for single men to journey together in learning about the Catholic faith, exploring the idea of priesthood, and discerning the vocation that God is calling you to. We meet through fortnightly online video calls, so no matter where you are based you're welcome to join with other men from around the diocese in tackling big questions about faith and life. A new group is starting in January 2024 and if you're interested in being involved or want to find out more, get in touch with Mick Otto at vocations@rok.catholic.net.au or 0433 897 973.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Lord, make us turn to you,
let us see your face
and we shall be saved.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

The Lord will bestow his bounty,
and our earth shall yield its increase.

English translation of the roman Missal © 2010,
International Committee on English in the Liturgy Inc. (ICEL)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord, show us your mercy and love,
and grant us your salvation.
Alleluia!

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

2 Peter 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

For daily Mass readings
please scan:

