



# St Michael's Parish, Nowra

Incorporating the Catholic Communities of St Michael's, Nowra – St. Patrick's, Berry – Sacred Heart, Bomaderry - Help of Christians, Culburra – St Joseph's, Kangaroo Valley – Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

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*Second Sunday in LENT Year B*

*28th February 2021*



## Pope Francis to Visit Iraq: a place steeped in biblical significance.

BAGHDAD — On a recent Sunday in Baghdad, a congregation of Chaldean Catholics gather — masked and distanced — to attend Mass at the Church of the Holy Family. Some are from the capital, others fled the north of the country when ISIS seized swaths of territory nearly seven years ago.

"They announced it in the churches — leave, quickly, ISIS is coming," says Nadera Butrus Tobbya, 62, at church with her little grandson. She had been at a gathering before her daughter's wedding near the Iraqi city of Mosul. The family piled into cars and fled the extremists and she has been in Baghdad ever since.

"Christians are persecuted," she says. But her face brightens when she speaks of Pope Francis, who plans to visit Iraq next month.

"When we heard that we would see the pope," she says, "it was as if the world was reborn. Praise God." Even if she only sees him on television, she will be happy. "He is a brave man to come under such circumstances."

If the visit goes ahead — despite a large increase in daily new coronavirus cases and security concerns, including a recent rocket attack on U.S. forces — it will be the first ever papal trip to Iraq.

Pope Francis is due to arrive in Baghdad on March 5, where he will be welcomed at the Presidential Palace, and later meet Christian leaders. He will visit Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the influential leader of Iraq's Shiite Muslims, in Najaf and attend an interreligious meeting in Ur. He will also visit the north of the country, celebrating Mass in Irbil and saying prayers in Mosul, (***known in the O.T. as Nineveh***) before departing March 8.

Iraqi Christians trace their roots back almost to the very beginning of the faith, but in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion and the rise in extremist violence, the community has dwindled.

"It is very normal now for a Christian family to come to me and tell me they want to leave," says the Rev. Ghassan al-Botany. He says ruefully he has no authority to tell them to stay, "but I tell them, think about it. Why? Because the Arab region lost many Christians."

He hopes hearing something similar from the pope during his visit will strengthen people's resolve to stay. "When these words come from a supreme authority, it has a flavour and a difference," he says. "The Iraqi Christian loses part of his faith, part of his legacy and part of his roots when he travels outside."

Father Ghassan says a turning point came in 2010, when militants burst into Our Lady of Salvation cathedral in Baghdad, killed two priests, and took about 150 hostages. Iraqi and American special forces burst in to free the hostages hours later, but the attack left dozens dead and the church scarred and bloodied.

More than a decade later, the pope is due to visit the same church and has called for support for an enduring Christian presence in the country and the region.

"We must work to ensure that the Christian presence in these lands continue to be what it has always been: a sign of peace, progress, development and reconciliation between peoples," Francis told a group of Catholic charities shortly after the Vatican announced plans for the trip in December.

His trip will also take him to places where very few Christians live, and most everyone is Muslim.

The schedule includes an interreligious meeting on the **Plain of Ur**, the site of an ancient city that scripture records as **the birthplace of the patriarch Abraham**. These days, Ur is an archaeological site, where visitors can tour the ziggurat — a Mesopotamian pyramid largely reconstructed in the pre-2003 era of Saddam Hussein — and sun-baked ruins known as the House of Abraham.

At the site, gardeners and construction workers are sprucing things up, while tourists play pop music and take selfies on the ziggurat.

"I'm so excited," says Bdoor al-Asady, 19, a medical student visiting the site with her parents. She's Muslim and says Abraham is an important figure in Islamic scriptures, so the pope's visit to the site matters to Muslims, too.

The site's director, Ali Kadhim, says he has been waiting for this moment since 1999, when Pope John Paul II canceled a planned trip after negotiations with Saddam Hussein failed. He has worked at the site for more than 20 years.

"This place is my life," he says. "I was isolated from the world because I spent my life here."

Kadhim notes that Abraham is central to Islam, Christianity and Judaism and, a Muslim himself, he says the papal visit is a symbol of the tolerant side of the country.



Lenten Season – **Stations of the Cross** will be held on Fridays 10:00am, St Patrick's Berry. Weather permitting, outside in the church grounds. Stations of the Cross will be held Friday after Mass at Vincentia.

**Rosary:**

Nowra - Tuesday morning after 8:00am Mass

Berry - Tuesday evening after 5:30pm Mass

Culburra – Thursday evening before 5:30pm Mass

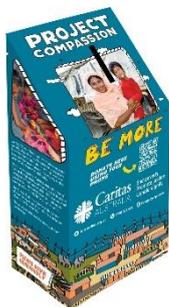
Bomaderry - Friday before after 5:30pm Mass

Vincentia – Monday to Friday morning after 8:00am Mass (not during Lent)



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2021 focusing on the country of Vanuatu to be held at the **Presbyterian Church Nowra** at 10am on Friday March 5th followed by morning tea. All are most welcome.

### PROJECT COMPASSION – 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Lent



Margret is a teacher at a vocational school for deaf students in the Solomon Islands that suffered long-term water shortages and damage from Tropical Cyclone Harold. With Caritas Australia's support, Margret's school installed water tanks, repaired cyclone damage and implemented COVID-19 prevention measures and is now planning to boost food security.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 and help people living with disabilities in the Solomon Islands gain access to education and clean water, empowering them with skills to protect our common home.**

You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or phoning 1800 024 413.

### Australian bishops release new sexual abuse protocol

A new national protocol for responding to historical child sexual abuse and any new allegations in the Catholic Church was introduced on February 1, 2021. It is intended as a national benchmark forming a consistent approach for Catholic authorities and entities in investigating, compensating and providing ongoing care for people alleging child sexual abuse and survivors. The 67-page National Response Protocol can be accessed via the Bishops Conference website at: <https://www.catholic.org.au/nationalresponseprotocol>

**PLEASE NOTE**

## **Change in Weekday Mass times for Fridays.**

Mass times for Fridays for the next few weeks will be as follows

**Nowra – 11:30 am & Bomaderry – 5:30pm**

***The 8:00 Mass will be cancelled till after Easter.***

Current health regulations stipulate school Masses cannot be open to the public (Parish). Therefore children of St Michael's will now celebrate Mass at 9:30am.

## **We are using SERVICE NSW QR CODE for check in.**

Nowra, Culburra, Berry and Bomaderry – **are now using the Service NSW QR check in (the Service NSW QR remembers your details) or signing in at the door.**

For Mass at Kangaroo Valley, please email [ronankangaroo1@gmail.com](mailto:ronankangaroo1@gmail.com)

For Mass at Vincentia - call **0435 862 156** or email [holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com](mailto:holyspiritvincentia@gmail.com)

### **Weekend Masses**

<b>Nowra</b>	Saturday	5:00pm
	Sunday	8:00am
		9:30am
		5:00pm

<b>Culburra</b>	Saturday	5:00pm
<b>Bomaderry</b>	Sunday	9:30am
<b>K'Valley</b>	Sunday	11:00am
<b>Berry</b>	Sunday	8:00am

<b>Vincentia</b>	Saturday	6:00pm
	Sunday	9:30am
Croatian Mass	Saturday	7:00pm
	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month	

### **Weekday Masses**

<b>Nowra</b>	Monday to Friday	8:00am
	Wednesday	5:30pm
	Friday	11:30am

<b>Berry</b>	Tuesday –	5:30pm
<b>Culburra</b>	Thursday –	5:30pm
<b>Bomaderry</b>	Friday –	5:30pm

<b>K' Valley</b>	Tuesday to Thursday	9:00am
<b>Vincentia</b>	Mon, Thurs & Friday	8:00am
	Tue & Wed	5:30pm

### **Reconciliation/Confessions**

<b>Nowra</b>	Saturday: 9:30 – 10:30	<b>Berry</b>	Tuesday following 5:30 Mass
<b>Culburra</b>	Saturday before 5:00pm Vigil Mass	<b>Bomaderry</b>	Friday following 5:30 Mass
<b>Vincentia</b>	Saturday: 5:00pm		

### **Ministers of Holy Communion**

In order to reintroduce Eucharistic Ministers to help with the distribution of Holy Communion at all Churches, could those who wish to help for the ministry please give your name to the office.

Please ensure that you are not in the at-risk category.



**Fr Joseph Pothenparimpil**

Fr Joseph join us from 13<sup>th</sup> April and we will look forward to giving Fr Joseph a hearty welcome and learn about him.



**We prayerfully remember** the recently deceased and those whose anniversaries occur at this time: **Janine Demeck**. We pray also for all who have died from Covid-19 in Australia and worldwide.

## Second Sunday in LENT Year B

### Entrance Antiphon

Cf. Ps 26:8-9

Of you my heart has spoken, Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

### A reading from the book of Genesis

Gen 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, Abraham,' he called.' Here I am' he replied. 'Take your son,' God said 'your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.'

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. 'Abraham, Abraham' he said. 'I am here' he replied. 'Do not raise your hand against the boy' the angel said. 'Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son.' Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

The angel of the Lord called Abraham a second time from heaven. 'I swear by my own self – it is the Lord who speaks – because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of your enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience.'

### Responsorial Psalm

(R.) I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

1. I trusted, even when I said:  
'I am sorely afflicted.'  
O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful. (R.)
2. Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;  
you have loosened my bonds. A  
thanksgiving sacrifice I make:  
I will call on the Lord's name. (R.)
3. My vows to the Lord I will fulfil  
before all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the Lord,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. (R.)

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Rom 8:31-34

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

### Gospel Acclamation

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! From the shining cloud, the Father's voice is heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

### A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Mk 9:2-10

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.

### Communion Antiphon

Mt 17:5

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.