

DAMASCUS PARISH BULLETIN

15th March 2026
4th Sunday of Lent

A vibrant community, journeying with Jesus

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Damascus Parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Damascus Parish acknowledges the Wadawurrung people as the traditional custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

WEEKLY MASS TIMES

St Christopher's Church

Saturday 6pm Vigil Mass

Tuesday 9.30am Mass

St Therese Church

Sunday 9am Mass

Sunday 5pm Mass

Wednesday 9am Rosary

Wednesday 9.30am Mass

Friday 9am Rosary

9.30am Mass

followed by prayers of adoration

Nazareth Church

Sunday 11am Mass

Thursday 9.30am

CONFESSION

St Christophers Church

Saturday 5.30pm–6pm

Nazareth Church

Sunday 10.30am–11am

St Therese Church

Sunday 4.30 pm–5pm

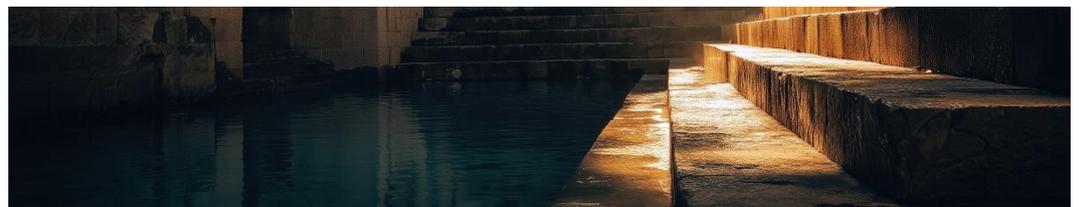
HOME VISITS

If there are any parishioners who are sick or housebound and would like to receive communion or a home visit please make contact with the parish office: 9412 8444



Where does the word "Synod" come from?

The word Synod comes from the Greek syn-hodos, meaning "walking together on the road." This reminds us that the Christian life is never meant to be lived alone. Faith is a shared journey, where we support one another, listen to one another, and discern together how best to follow Christ.



Dear Parishioners,

The war in Iran has now entered its second week with no clear end in sight. It's a disaster on every level. Thousands dead, including seven US service members, and hundreds of thousands of people displaced. Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic charity tending to the crisis in southern Lebanon, say that the situation is dire. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced from their homes, having to flee from airstrikes that have been unrelenting since fighting resumed earlier this month.

The pretence for this 'Operation Epic Fury', conducted by US and Israeli forces, is that Iran and its Islamist leaders pose an existential threat to the West due to their pursuit of nuclear weapons and their funding of terrorist organisations around the world. Or something like that.

Call me a cynic, but this sounds a lot like the 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' that Saddam Hussein apparently had in 2005, that led to the US being dragged into a middle eastern mess that cost the lives of thousands of US soldiers and a trillion US dollars. And only served to make the situation in Iraq worse.

You may well believe that Iran's supreme leader, Ayotollah Khamanei, was an evil mastermind that needed to go for the good of the Iranian people and the world. But after he was killed, his son Mojtaba Khamanei took power. He is said to be far more hostile to the West and more receptive to nuclearization than his father. It seems the US is finding out the hard way that Iran is not Venezuela and the head cleric of a huge Shiite Islamic country is not Nicolas Maduro.

It got personal on Monday of this week when Father Pierre al-Rai, a Catholic Maronite priest, was killed by Israeli tank fire in southern Lebanon. In a recent video he spoke to his people saying he would never abandon his homeland and his people but vowed to stay peacefully. That he only carried "kindness, goodness, love and prayer" in his heart. He died, when after rushing to the aid of civilians wounded in the shelling of a house, a second strike hit and killed him. My God grant him an eternal reward.

Pope Leo XIV expressed concern that the conflict could expand further - and with it the suffering of communities that are already at the limit of their strength. His concerns have been proven valid. Let us join the Holy Father in praying that "the roar of bombs might cease, that weapons might fall silent, and that a space for dialogue might open."

In Christ,

Fr Joel.

Volunteers Needed for Holy Week Ceremonies

With Easter approaching (5 April), volunteers are needed for the Holy Week ceremonies - Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil (2-4 April), which will be celebrated at St Therese Church. Sign-up sheets are available in each of our three churches for parishioners willing to assist. Each church community has been allocated roles, and resources will be provided as needed. Please check your diary and add your name if you are available. *With thanks, Marg O'Byrne - Parish Liturgy Team*

Bulletin Email missing

Some parishioners using @hotmail, @outlook or @live email addresses may not be receiving the Parish Bulletin due to Microsoft blocking bulk emails. If you have suddenly stopped receiving it and would like to receive the bulletin again, please resubscribe by scanning the QR code. We are working with IT on a longer-term solution. Thank you for your understanding.



Damascus Parish Combined Choir - Rehearsal dates for the Easter Triduum 2026. All at St. Therese Church Torquay.

Friday March 20th 2026 - 5PM (for Holy Thursday)

Sunday March 22nd - 3PM (for Good Friday)

Friday March 27th - 5PM (For the Vigil)

All volunteers welcome. Contact Sherry Watson Ph: 0417 259 735.

Email: shezzawatto@gmail.com

Saint Joseph's Men's Dinner

Please find here an invite for men in your parish to the St Joseph's Men's Dinner on Thursday 19 March 2026 beginning with Holy Mass at 6.30pm at St Catherine of Sienna Parish, Caroline Springs, followed by dinner at West Waters, 10/20 Lake Street Caroline Springs. More information can be found [here](#). Please RSVP by Thursday 12 March 2026.

Palm Sunday, 28th/29th March, please consider collecting some olive branches in short manageable lengths to bring along for the weekend Masses.



There will be *no bulletin next week*. The office will still be open Tuesday to Thursday as usual and closed on Friday.



On Friday, 20th March, there will be no Prayers of Adoration following the morning Mass, as we will welcome students from St Therese Primary so their Year 3 students can receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Over the next two weeks, Fr Joel will visit all four of our primary schools, either at school or at the Church to celebrate this sacrament with the students.

Mary Glowrey Catholic Primary School Information Evening.



Mary Glowrey
Catholic Primary
School

25th March 7pm - 7.45pm at Bial-a Armstrong Creek Library. For further details, including enrolment enquiries, visit www.maryglowrey.catholic.edu.au

A finance report will be presented to each community this weekend. A supplementary handout is available in the foyer for anyone who would like to take a copy.

First Reading:

1 Samuel 16:1. 6-7.
10-13

Responsorial

Psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading:

Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel: John 9:1-41



Daily Readings

PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY

Recent deaths:

Anniversaries who are at this

time: Salvatrice Andaloro

PRAYING FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK IN OUR COMMUNITY

Our thoughts are with those who are unwell at this time.

Please submit a consent form to have a loved one prayed for.



Parish Presbytery

For any urgent pastoral need outside of office hours please call the presbytery on 03 9412 8443

Office Hours

Our hours are: **Tuesday - Friday, 9am - 3pm. Closed Public Holidays**

Outside of these hours, please leave a message and one of the staff will contact you when they are next in the office.

Bulletin Notices

Please submit them by Thursday mornings.

Sign up to receive the weekly bulletin via email by visiting our website tagparish.com.au

St Therese Votive Offerings

You might have noticed a candle stand placed beside the statue of St Therese in Lisieux Place. It was gifted to the parish by a young father and handyman, Martin Brennan, parishioner of St Bernard's Bacchus Marsh. He built one for my mate Fr John Paul Mount who is the parish priest there, and sheepishly asked if he had another one in him. He gladly obliged. Lighting a candle is a beautiful way to turn our prayers and intercessions into a small sacramental. In that it is a visible sign of an invisible reality. A reminder that our prayers truly are a light amidst the darkness of our world. Lighting and leaving a candle is also great, as it remains present long after we have made our offering, a more enduring reminder to God of our petition to Him through the intercession of the Little Flower. There is a money box attached. If you do have some spare change, do pop some in. And if you don't, feel free to light a candle anyway! God bless, Fr Joel.

LISZT'S VIA CRUCIS - Musical setting of Stations of the Cross

Experience the drama of Franz Liszt's emotive 'Via Crucis' at St Mary Star of the Sea Church, West Melbourne, 7.30pm Sunday 15 March 2026. This will be presented in the context of the Stations of the Cross led by a priest. The choir and soloists will be directed by Jonathan Baker, with Fr Nicholas Dillon playing the grand Fincham pipe organ. This late sacred masterpiece of Liszt draws listeners into an extraordinary soundscape that accompanies us along the Via Dolorosa, depicting in music various aspects of that painful path to Calvary. A leaving collection will be taken up to assist with expenses.



A letter from the [Archbishop convokes a synod for the Archdiocese of Melbourne](#). This is also available as another handout should you like a hardcopy to read.

POPE LEO

For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.



Fourth Sunday of Lent 14-15 March 2026



Life was hard for **Manaini** and her children living in rural Fiji. With the support from Caritas Australia's

partner, FRIEND, she learnt food processing and gardening skills, improving nutrition and creating new income opportunities to support her children's education.

Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at:

www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty this Lent*.



**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent

Damascus Parish Holy Week Mass Times 2026

Holy Thursday

2nd April - 7.30pm
The Lord's Supper

St Therese Church, 43a Surfcoast Highway, Torquay

Good Friday

3rd April - 3pm
Passion of the Lord

Good Friday 10am Stations of the Cross, Nazareth Church

Easter Saturday

4th April - 8pm
Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday - April 5th

9am - St Therese Church, Torquay
10.30am - St Christopher's Church, Anglesea
11am - Nazareth Church, Grovedale

MUSIC AT THE BASILICA
Sunday 29 March, 4.00pm Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels 136 Yarra Street, Geelong

EASTER CONCERT

A concert for women's voices

Vox Angelica Chamber Choir and Windfire Choir
Tom Healey - conductor
Zinaida Campion, soprano Salvador Blasco, oboe
Olivier Bonnici, violin Frank De Rosso, organ

Tickets from www.trybooking.com/DIJNV or at the door.
Children and school students - free

Gospel Focus - None so blind

There's a very old saying that has its roots in the Bible but is not a direct quote from the Bible: 'There are none so blind as those who will not see.' It would be a fitting summary of today's passage for there are two movements between darkness and light that are evident in the story. Firstly, there is the blind man who can see. He can see physically but can also see the truth of who Jesus is. Secondly, there are the Jewish authorities who have physical sight but are completely blind to the truth of Jesus.

Finance Report for 2025 to Damascus Parishioners

In summary, the Parish had an operating surplus of \$18,547 in 2025. In the attached page the actual figures have been detailed. A copy of this report is available in the foyer.

In regards to Income, there was a considerable increase in the amount collected for the first collection both in loose cash and in the Tap N Go. More people started to use the Tap N Go consistently and the introduction of the Sunday 5pm Mass also contributed to the increase in income. We decided not to have the raffle during the year, but it should be noted that the introduction of a Special Collection during January 2026 was very successful.

The main source of income is still the Thanksgiving Campaign. The Finance Committee is very appreciative of our parishioners who keep our Parish viable by contributing to the Campaign. However, it should be noted that there has been a slight decrease in the amount contributed, mainly due to people passing on or leaving the Parish. It will be important to conduct a new Campaign this year to endeavour to enlist new members.

The interest income increased by \$11,000 because of the term deposits. Rent income decreased as the Anglesea Cottage was vacant since mid July 2025.

In regards to Expenditure, Staffing Expenses were lower than expected due to our inability to find a staff member in the liturgy/sacramental support area. This has been changed in 2026. While it did increase compared to 2024, it was budgeted to increase by more. The interest expenditure was reduced because the Archdiocese loan was paid off in October 2025. The Archdiocese Levy is set based on income 2 years prior. Overall the amount of expenditure was very similar to 2024.

During the year, the Parish sold land adjacent to the Nazareth Church to Nazareth Primary School. The details of the sale are listed below in this report. With this income, we were able to pay off our loan to the Catholic Development Fund and we have money in the bank earning interest to support our income.

Once again, I would like to thank parishioners for your support in keeping the Parish financially viable.

Gross price of sale of land at Grovedale	\$1,350,000
Archdiocese Levy	-\$202,500
Book value of the old land at Grovedale	-\$467,000
Subdivision costs	-\$74,999
Profit	\$605,501

Damascus Parish Finance Committee

NAZARETH PARISH						
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT						
				ACTUAL		ACTUALS
				2024		2025
INCOME						
Loose Collections						
- Plate				43,403		50,831
- Tap and Go				21,940		36,713
Donations				6,770		3,823
Interest				1,736		12,736
Sacramental Programs				31,531		35,513
Rent				17,310		9,168
Service Fees				18,111		18,490
Thanksgiving				120,494		118,836
Raffle				4,259		0
Other Income				7,500		3,927
				<u>273,055</u>		<u>290,037</u>
EXPENDITURE						
Staffing				84,982		99,889
Property				90,440		87,327
Motor Vehicle				6,600		7,232
Administration				26,741		23,650
Interest				27,858		19,348
Archdiocesan Levy				16,344		22,696
Sacramental / Liturgy				7,030		4,703
Other				11,733		6,645
				<u>271,729</u>		<u>271,490</u>
Net Operating Surplus / - Deficit				<u>1,326</u>		<u>18,547</u>
Profit on Sale of Assets						605,501
				<u>1,326</u>		<u>624,048</u>