



09 MARCH 2025 - 1st SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR C

Holy Masses

Saturday Vigil5pm Hanmer Springs
(Every Saturday)7pm Culverden
(Every Saturdays)Sunday Mass8.30am Amberley
(Every Sunday)11am Cheviot
(1st & 3rd Sundays Only)10.30am Hawarden
(2nd & 4th Sunday Only)12pm The Beatitudes,
Leithfield
(Every Sunday)Weekday MassesMonday - Friday
8:30am AmberleyTuesday - Saturday
12pm The Beatitudes,
Leithfield

Adoration & Reconciliation

1st Friday of the month
from 7:30amConfession by Appointment
or before Mass

Rosary

Wednesday 1:30pm
Amberley Church Hall

Kalavale

Parish's cup of tea & raffles
1st Sunday of the Month.**St Joseph Men's Group**
2nd & 4th Monday 7pm-9pm
Amberley Hall

Playing God

There's an amusing story about a young man who was constantly bedevilled by sensual thoughts. Feeling guilty, he consulted a priest-friend. "Don't worry," the priest assured him, "these thoughts popped out in our minds. They're not sinful but only enticements. But the moment you start entertaining them, they become sinful. Did you entertain them?" The young man paused, then sheepishly replied: "Well, I didn't entertain them, Father, but I think, they entertained me!"

In today's Gospel (Lk. 4, 1-13), the devil tries to play God over Jesus by tempting Him in the desert while He is hungry, promising Him all the riches and power in this world and trying to make Him lose His trust in God the Father. Come to think of it, aren't all the temptations we go through in life all about focusing on the sensual, the worldly and the temporary to the detriment of the spiritual, the eternal? Reflect on all the temptations (and the falls) you and I have encountered in this life. Weren't they all temptations for us to play God?

And so it is that we have and still do follow our own desires and ambitions, our selfish personal agenda, without much thought about God's plan and agenda. Too engrossed in ourselves, we have often left out God, and thus played God, wanting to be in control and to be in charge.

I don't mind—in fact, I welcome—worldly success, but through what means, and for what? It pains me to see how many people, yes, good ones who started out with genuine and pure hearts but who, in the course of time, could not resist the temptations and ended up on the road of convenience and compromise. What happened? For survival perhaps? Or for greater heights? The point is that your soul is not for sale, nor is your God. Put simply: Don't sell out!

I am 44 years old now, and I have been through a lot, good and bad. You know what is my biggest concern now? That I make a meaningful exit from this life, and that I eventually, somehow, through God's mercy, make it to eternal life. How? By living a life that is pleasing to God in the here and now.

A text message put it so well: "Do not hold on to life that you cannot prolong, and forget eternity that is sure, certain and waiting." So, when will you stop playing God? I ask this question especially to those who are so drunk with earthly power and success that they have forgotten that life is all about stewardship, and that life does not end in the grave. Please, especially in this season of Lent, let us be reminded once again that we are dust, and to dust we will return.

What a lonely feeling it must be when, at the end of our lives, we realise that we have been living just for the money, and for the show. Praying, hoping, wishing that we all live meaningful lives beyond worldly temptations and, I repeat, that we make a meaningful exit from this life, and make an eventual entrance to eternal life. Do you have an exit plan? Do you have an eternal life plan?

Lord, you alone are God. Remind us that we are not gods, and to stop playing God. Amen.

From the workshop- words on St Joseph- Fr Calloway's book Page 74 & 219

To defeat the devil, you need Jesus, Mary, St Joseph, and the teachings and Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Every Christian needs truth and the strong spiritual fatherhood of St Joseph. St Joseph Terror of Demons pray for us.

SUNDAY'S READINGS:

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 26:4-10

The creed of the Chosen People

Psalm 90(91):1-2,10-15

Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.

SECOND READING: Romans 10:8-13

The creed of the Christian

GOSPEL: Luke 4:1-13

The temptation in the wilderness

HYMNS for SUNDAY MASSES

(May vary on the day)

842 Come back to me

607 Let all mortal Flesh

846 Amazing grace

840 God of Mercy

Lenten Retreat 2025: 7pm – Mass 7:30pm – Talk

Amberley: March 12th, 13th, 20th

Culverden: March 11th, 18th, 21st

LIGHT of FAITH

LENT – is the penitential season of 40 days set aside by the church in order for the faithful to prepare for the commemoration of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

It is good for us to reflect together what Lent invites us to do. Lent stands on three legs: prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

More than any period of the year, we are asked to pray, give alms and fast during this holy season.

Lent is a season of prayer. We do not mean that Lent is a season for more prayer, it is actually a season for better prayer. Lent is not an invitation to multiply Hail Marys or novenas. We can multiply your novenas but that will not be in the spirit of Lent. The spirit of Lent means better prayer, not simply more prayers. The question is the quality of our prayer that is to be offered to God during this season of Lent. Prayer that does not take root in our hearts will lead us nowhere. It will just message our ego and convince us that we are good. If there is no love in your heart it amounts to nothing.

The second leg is almsgiving. Almsgiving is not simply giving something to some poor person. It is not simply taking a coin from your pocket and dropping it into the collection box.

Almsgiving means thinking of other people. Almsgiving means sharing with other people. Almsgiving means giving a listening ear to somebody who needs advice. Almsgiving means accepting the apology of somebody who always hurts you. That is still almsgiving.

Alms is a general term. It is not simply something that is given out of charity. Alms is doing something concretely for a neighbour.

Fasting is not simply missing food. It is not simply dieting the season of Lent is for fasting, it is for us to impose on ourselves that discipline. It is craving for something but exercising restraint in giving in to it. It is conquering inner desires for something that we want to do or to have.

Since Lent stands on three legs, it also brings to us three fruits. Prayer encourages us to deepen our relationship with God. Almsgiving improves our relationship with each other. Fasting and sacrifice enhances our self-discipline.

Lent gives us three fruits – an improved relationship with God, an improved relationship with other people and a better awareness and control of our self.

A good manager knows where he is going. A good manager plans and does not simply float. We should know where we are going not only in terms of our career but most of all in terms of our spiritual life.

Praying, fasting and almsgiving, these acts must improve our relationship with God, our fellowmen and even with ourselves. **Let us ask the Lord to keep that spirit always alive in our hearts.**

NOTICES

SAFEGUARDING WORKSHOP at the Amberley Church Hall at 5:30 Tuesday April 8th.

For all volunteers in the parish are warmly invited to attend this workshop, please mark it on your calendar, and take advantage of the opportunity.

THE LENTEN CARITAS APPEAL 2025: "Restoring hope, your compassion in action."

Donation envelopes with Coupon Slips will be distributed during Sunday Masses.

As we focus on the three pillars of Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving during Lent, we connect with God and look to serve others. We warmly invite you to donate online through our Website: <https://www.caritas.org.nz/lent>

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Parish Treasurer - Secretary : Thomas Peacock - catholichurunuitreasurer@gmail.com - Office Hours Friday 8:00am - 3:00pm