15 FEBRUARY 2026
6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

ALEXANDRA CATHOLIC PASTORAL AREA
[St John the Baptist (1924) Alexandra;
St Peter's (1928) Omakau;
St Dunstan's (1903) Clyde;
St Patrick's (1892) St Bathans;
Our Lady of Peace (1910) Roxburgh]

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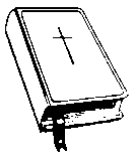
SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS SUNDAY

(1) **Ecclesiastes 15:16-21.** *This book of wisdom writings was penned by the sage Ben Sira, around 250 years before Christ. In today's passage Ben Sira sets out the contrasting choices which face us, to which we can freely reach out our hands. It is one of the chief passages in the Bible stressing our own free will. Of our own volition we may turn to good or to ill. God calls for our love and response, but does not force us, for love must be a free choice.*

(2) **1 Corinthians 2:6-10.** *The plan of God has been working itself out through history, but we still struggle to fully understand it. And yet we are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning to it all, and that this meaning is for our glory.*

(3) **Matthew 5:20-22,27-28,33-34,37.**



Jesus is the completion of the Law of God given to Israel through Moses. He has come not to sweep the Law away but to perfect it. Each correction begins with a statement of the old Law and boldly goes on, 'But I say this to you...' Each of the corrections has its own character, and each highlights the raised bar of Jesus' demanding standards. (Commentaries are from the Universalis website.)

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS

(1) **Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7** (2) **Romans 5:12,17-19**
(3) **Matthew 4:1-11**

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Died Recently: Laurence Van der Eb
Anniversaries about now: Mary Truesdale; Sr Elizabeth Mackie OP.
'May they rest in peace.'

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WANTED: K-line pods (about 5 sprinklers) to borrow to try out for irrigating between the Alexandra church/presbytery grounds and St Gerard's school. If anyone could help please contact Fr Brendan.

ASH WEDNESDAY and LENT: This coming Wednesday is ASH WEDNESDAY, which marks the start of the 40 day season of Lent running up to Holy Thursday. **Ash Wednesday** Mass times are as follows:

9:05am., Alexandra
5:15pm., Roxburgh.

For people unable to attend these Mass times there will be an opportunity to receive the ashes after the end of the Omakau 6pm vigil Mass on Saturday evening, or after the 9am and 11am Masses at Alexandra and Roxburgh respectively on Sunday.

***Questions:**

(1) ***Why is Lent 40 days long?*** Answer: It mirrors the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert in preparation for the commencement of his public ministry.

(2) ***How is it that the 40 day period of Lent excludes Sunday's and the feast days of St. Patrick (17 March) and St Joseph (19 March)?*** Answer: Because the day commemorating Resurrection (Sunday) has priority of place over and above all other events and emphases, as do the feast days of people who were extra-ordinary instruments of faith.

(3) ***Why during Lent are there no 'Alleluia's' and 'Glorias' sung, and no flowers placed around the church?*** Answer: So to provide ways to highlight the significance of Easter when it arrives, through adding back in music and colour omitted over Lent.

(4) What are the three principle activities focused on during Lent, and why? Answer: The so-called 'tools of trade' of the Christian life are Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving, which are given particular focus during Lent (although not only).

(A) Regarding Prayer: *'Prayer is to the soul what air is to the lungs!'* Extra opportunities for community prayer over Lent in the church in Alexandra will include:

(i) Praying decades of the **Rosary** from 8:30am to 8:50am before the start of 9am Sunday Masses;

(ii) Attending the praying of the **Stations of the Cross** from 5:15pm to 5:40pm during Fridays of Lent.

(B) Regarding Fasting: As people facing particular challenges fast from food to optimise their bodily capacities and focus their minds (e.g. Olympic athletes), so fasting should help Christians focus their attention on the reason for the season of Lent, on its causes and consequences, and how we might best respond. To help with that the Church specifies that everyone aged 14 and older, in reasonable health, are obliged to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and for those aged 18-59 to fast (reduce food intake) on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and on Fridays of the rest of the year, which may be fulfilled in one or more of the following ways:

a) by abstaining from meat or some other food;

b) by abstaining from alcoholic drink, gaming or some other form of amusement;

c) by making an extra effort to be involved in family prayer, taking part in a weekday Mass, visiting the Blessed Sacrament or praying the Stations of the Cross;

d) by fasting from all food for a longer period than usual and perhaps giving what is saved in this way to the needy at home and abroad;

e) by making a special effort to help or befriend somebody who is poor, sick, old or lonely.

(C) Regarding <u>Almsgiving:</u> In his apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo makes it clear that the preferential option for the poor is essential to *"the burning heart of the Church's mission. … Love for the poor – whatever the form their poverty may take – is the evangelical hallmark of a Church faithful to the heart of God."*

Caritas is the world's second largest humanitarian network, and is one of the principal charity agencies of the Church in New Zealand. To support the work of Caritas, its Lenten appeal envelopes may be collected from church foyer tables. (NB: Caritas is a Government-accredited support agency for providing relief to people suffering from material hardship, and so donations attract a 1/3 tax refund.) Donating online is also possible, either through the Caritas website or via direct deposit.

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<u>SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME:</u> Every two years the sacraments of Confirmation, Reconciliation, and Holy Communion are offered in Alexandra parish for children (already baptised) who are aged approximately eight years old at least. Baptism is also offered for any children yet to receive this initial and prerequisite sacrament. Preparatory programmes will be provided as follows:

Baptism: During school term I.
Confirmation: During school term II.
Reconciliation: During school term III.
Holy Communion: During school term IV.

To register interest, adult parents please email Fr Brendan Ward via <u>alexcatholic@xtra.co.nz</u>, or speak to him personally, before **<u>Sunday 22nd February</u>**. An initial meeting providing sacramental programme details will be held in the Alexandra parish church on **<u>Wednesday 25th February at 7pm.</u>** If that time is unsuitable for families please contact Fr Brendan.

For families from Omakau and Roxburgh church communities with members for reception of the sacraments, also please contact Fr Brendan at the details above.

<u>VATICAN NEWS (www.vaticannews.va):</u>

*** Pope's Lenten message: Abstain from harsh words and rash judgement**. Ahead of the start of Lent, Pope Leo XIV invites Catholics to open ourselves to listening, fasting, and community, urging us to abstain from words of hatred in order to make space for words of hope and peace.

*** Pope Leo: We must rediscover the essential core of the Christian message**, and he stresses the importance of an "upright conscience".

*** Cardinal Bo: Myanmar forgotten by world, but not by God.** The Asian country is afflicted by a civil war that shows no sign of ending, and is marked by an economic, social, healthcare and education crisis.

<u>CATHNEWS 13.02.26</u>

*** Child poverty is worsening, Salvation Army report finds: …** rising family violence and ongoing cost of living pressures are among the findings of the Salvation Army's latest State of the Nation report.

*** Vicar for Māori: Living the 'word' of Treaty would make NZ great:** He says. That a lived focus on the "word" that is Te Tiriti o Waitangi would help make Aotearoa New Zealand the greatest country on earth

*** Vatican sends generators to freezing, war-ravaged Ukraine:** … which has been enduring severe winter temperatures.

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<u>SUNDAY MASS</u>

Omakau St Peters (Saturday): 6pm vigil
Alexandra St John the Baptist: 9am
Roxburgh Our Lady of Peace: 11am

<u>WEEKDAY MASS</u>

	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Alexandra	5pm	9am	9am	Noon	9am
Roxburgh		5:15pm			

<u>RECONCILIATION</u> (Rite I)
<u>Alexandra</u>: Saturdays 9:30-10am; or upon request.

<u>ANOINTING OF THE SICK</u> (Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec)
<u>Alexandra</u>: First Friday Mass (noon)
<u>Roxburgh</u>: First Wednesday Mass (5:15pm)

<u>EXPOSITION and BENEDICTION</u>
<u>Alexandra:</u> Side chapel, Fridays 11:30-11:50am.

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<u>PARISH CONTACT DETAILS</u>

Parish Priest: Fr Brendan Ward.
Address: 3 Killarney St, Alexandra.
Phone: 03 448 8202, or 027 975 3272
Email: alexcatholic@xtra.co.nz
Parish Council: Mrs. Kathleen O'Kane.
Finance Chair: Mr. Pat Cooney.
St Gerard's Principal: Mrs. Julie Flannery.
Catholic Social Services: 03 4485385 (Mon-Thu).
0800 277 669 (toll-free)
Parish Website: www.alexcatholic.nz
Diocese Website: www.cdd.nz.