

Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara Diocese of Broken Bay

Holy Family Parish Church, Lindfield
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Church, Killara

	LINDFIELD:	KILLARA:
MASS TIMES:		
Saturday	6:00pm	Saturday Vigil: 5:30pm
Sunday:	8:15am 10:15am 12:00 (Chinese Community Mass) 6:00pm (for both our communities) (5:30pm on 2 nd Sun. of month)	Sunday: 9:15am
Weekdays:		
Monday	9:15am	No Mass
Tuesday	No Mass	7:00pm
Wednesday	9:15am	~
Thursday	9:15am	~
Friday	~	10:00am* (Healing Mass)
Saturday	9:15am	~

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Saturdays 5:00 – 5:30pm (Lindfield)

For 15 minutes after the 5:30pm Mass (Killara)

* NO 9:15 Mass at Lindfield nor 7:30am Mass at Killara on the 2nd Friday of each month

* Healing Mass on the 2nd Friday of each month at 10am at Killara

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 9 – 9 – 18

This week: Is 35:4-7; James 2:1-5; Mk 7:31-37

Next week: Is 50:5-9; James 2:14-18; Mk 8:27-35

‘Ephphatha’. ‘Be opened’ :

the words of Jesus as he restores the hearing of the man in today’s Gospel.

Those same words were spoken to each one of us at our own baptism ~ and so they remind us of an essential part of our calling as disciples:

to be opened, to be open.

In fact however Christians are often known for their lack of openness, for rigidity, for being unwilling to be surprised by God and challenged by God.




The ministry of Jesus was a litany of such surprises: sinners embraced and welcomed; religious authorities challenged and criticised; the poor and outcast declared as blessed.

Today’s Gospel asks us whether as disciples we are faithful to that baptismal calling: are we ‘opened’, are we open – **open-hearted and open-minded?** Do we have the breadth of vision and depth of love revealed in the Jesus, the Word of God made flesh amongst us?

Fr Colin

Youth News ...

YOUTH@LINDFIELD KILLARA PARISH

 Fusion Youth at Lindfield Killara
  youth.fusion
  youth@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Youth & Family Mass

LINDFIELD KILLARA CATHOLIC PARISH

Our Youth & Family Mass is for anyone looking for a joyous, faith-filled celebration with youthful music and a warm, community feel. Feed the family after Mass at our supper

Next Youth & Family Mass...
 SUN 9 September
 5.30 pm
 Supper served after Mass
 All invited!

Fusion youth For teens in years 7-12

FUSION is a warm and welcoming space for teenagers - helping them navigate their teenage years and grow, through social justice activities, leadership-building, games (and dinner!)

SUN 9 September
 Meet after Youth Mass
 supper (approx. 7.30pm)
 in the Parish Meeting
 room until 9pm

FRI 28 September
 Yr.7,8,9 5.30-7.30pm
 Yr. 10,11,12 7.00-9.00pm
 Meet in Shirley Wallace.
 Dinner served at 7pm



For kids in years 3-6

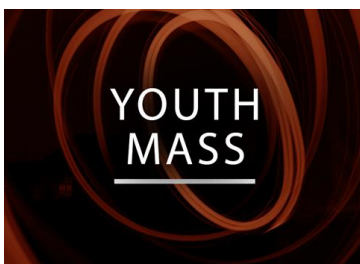
BLAST is a chance for kids to have fun whilst learning what it means to be part of a faith community. We have a different "theme" every month. Leaders for BLAST are teenage members of our parish.

We meet monthly on Sundays, from 4.00pm to 5.30pm, just before the Youth & Family Mass.

NO BLAST meeting in September

NEXT BLAST will be 14 October with a focus on "Social Justice"

FOR MORE INFORMATION... PLEASE CONTACT US VIA EMAIL OR SOCIAL MEDIA (SEE ABOVE)
 OR RING THE PARISH OFFICE.



OUR NEXT COMBINED CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MASS will be celebrated again on the second Sunday of the month, **today Sunday 9th September, at 5:30pm (not 6pm)** in Holy Family church and will be followed by a 'pot luck dinner' for all in St Brigid's Hall above the church.



PARISH DIARY : SEPT

Sun. 9th Sep.: Parent meeting & sessions 1 & 2 for 1st Communion preparation.

Sunday 9th Sep.: Monthly Youth and Children's Mass at 5:30pm at Lindfield followed by food in St Brigid's Hall.

Friday 14th Sep.: Monthly Healing Mass and morning tea at 10am at Killara.

Sunday 16th Sep.: Morning tea after 9:15am and 10:15am Masses.

THIS WEEK: CHANGING OF THE GUARD!

Fr Colin is back from holidays but this week Fr Thomas will be taking part in his annual retreat. Please see page 1 for this week's weekday Mass programme.

THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL meets *this* Tuesday 11th September at 7:30pm in the hall at Killara (Mass at 7pm in the church).

SOME ADVANCE DATES

Wednesday 10th October at 6:00pm Our annual Mass for HSC and International Baccalaureate students and their families followed by pizzas in the Shirley Wallace Parish Centre.

Tuesday 13th November Our annual **Thank You Night for all those involved as volunteers in our parish ministries and activities:** beginning with Mass at 7:30pm in Holy Family church and followed by a social evening with food and drink in St Brigid's Hall.

Sunday 18th November Our parish welcome to the Kindergarten families in our Parish School for 2019: a welcome by our Principal and a blessing at the 10:15am Mass followed by morning tea.

Friday 7th December: **A Festival of Christmas:** our annual combined parish and school celebration of Carols with lots of delicious food stalls.

All Year 12 HSC and IB students and their families invited to...



**AT HOLY FAMILY
CHURCH LINDFIELD**

**PIZZA SUPPER
AFTER MASS IN**

**SHIRLEY WALLACE
CENTRE**

**LOCATED ABOVE
THE CHURCH**



Our Parish SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUP

will meet as usual the second Wednesday of the month (this Wednesday 12th September) from 10am – 11am. The venue is the Library in the Shirley Wallace Parish Centre.

We are working through John's Gospel and so it would be helpful to have read John chp 18 for the coming meeting.
All welcome. *Fr Colin*



Parish Staff and Contact Information

Parish Priest: Fr Colin Blayney colin@lindfieldkillara.org.au 9416 7195
Assistant Priest: Fr Thomas Alackakunnel VC thomas@lindfieldkillara.org.au 0421 406162

PARISH OFFICE:

Address: Level 1, 2 Highfield Road (cnr Pacific Hwy) Lindfield NSW 2070
 (Postal: PO Box 22, Lindfield NSW 2070)

Ph: 9416 3702 **Fax:** 9416 3913 **Email:** parish@lindfieldkillara.org.au
Parish Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9:30am-1:00pm and 1:30pm-4:00pm

Parish Secretary: **Philita Marundan:** philita@lindfieldkillara.org.au
Parish Office Coordinator: **Alison Williams** alison@lindfieldkillara.org.au

Parish Website: www.lindfieldkillara.org.au

Please see the parish website for full staff contact details.

 <p>Comfort Inn North Shore</p> <p>Family owned and professionally operated motel with on-site restaurant</p> <p>Address: 1 Gatacre Avenue, Lane Cove Phone: 02 9427 0266 Email: res@cins.com.au Website: www.cins.com.au</p>	<p>RENOVATIONS & BUILDING MAINTENANCE</p> <p>CHRIS IACONO <i>Parishioner</i></p> <p>All work large and small <i>Lic 89879c Fully Insured</i> 50 years' experience</p> <p>Mobile : 0412 256 616 Phone : 9416 36 98 chris.iacono@bigpond.com</p>	 <p>Henry & Gloria Cheung Parishioners</p> <p>Serving the Australian Construction Industry for 32 years UNIVERSAL INSTRUMENTS 326 Pacific Hwy, Lindfield NSW 2070 Tel no. 94165335 Fax no. 94161538 E:sales@universalinstruments.com.au</p>
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The **Plenary Council 2020** Preparation for the Plenary Council 2020 begins with open Listening and Dialogue. It is the first step to preparing the agenda for the Plenary Council. Your experience of faith and the Church is important. Read about how you can #shareyourstory at plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au.



The Plenary Council agenda will be developed from the stories you share and the questions you raise. To join a small group for Plenary Council Listening and Dialogue, please contact the parish office. All people are welcome – come along, and bring a friend. Visit plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au for more information.

THE CHILDREN, YOUNG AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY MUST BE KEPT SAFE.

We the people of the catholic Diocese of broken bay are committed to the fostering communities of safety and care for all people, especially for children and others in the community who are vulnerable.

We will be kept safe by **ADULTS** who...

We will be kept safe by **ADULTS** who...

CARE

for us as we are a precious gift from God

RESPECT our rights, abilities, contributions, needs and wishes



COMMUNITIES OF SAFETY AND CARE



COMMUNITIES OF SAFETY AND CARE



catholic
MISSION
Reach out. Give life.

'You are Mission'

Next weekend our parish will be holding the annual Catholic Mission World Mission Appeal.

This year we are invited to consider

This year we are invited to consider how we can answer Pope Francis' call to be a part of mission, and how we can support mission globally.

Please come prepared next weekend to give generously

Freecall: 1800 257 296

THE PRAYERS AND RESPONSES OF MASS

GLORIA:

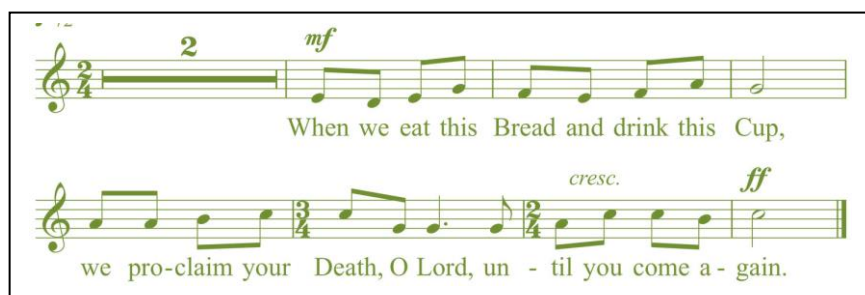
Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION:



When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we pro-claim your Death, O Lord, un - til you come a - gain.

THE PSALM Ps 145:7-10.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bound down,
the Lord who loves the just,
the Lord, who protects the stranger.

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan,
but thwarts the path of the wicked.

The Lord will reign for ever,
Zion's God, from age to age.

At Masses at which the Psalm is sung the response is: Praise the Lord, my soul!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus
preached the Good News of
the kingdom
and healed all who were sick.
Alleluia!

RESPONSES TO THE PSALM FOR WEEKDAY MASS THIS WEEK:

Monday: Lead me in your justice, Lord.

Tues: The Lord takes delight in his people.

Wed: Listen to me daughter;
see and bend your ear.

Thursday: Guide me, Lord, along the everlasting way.

Friday: Do not forget the works of the Lord!

Saturday: To you, Lord, I will offer a sacrifice of praise.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow at the following words in bold):

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of
the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

For our sake
he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the
Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father & the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy,
catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward
to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen

Catechists – Scripture teachers in the Public Schools

‘GOD DOESN’T CALL THE QUALIFIED, HE
QUALIFIES THE CALLED.’

“Jacob was a cheater, Peter had a temper,
Noah got drunk, Jonah ran from God,
Gideon was insecure, Miriam was a gossip,
Martha was a worrier, Thomas was a
doubter, Sara was impatient, Elijah was
moody, Moses stuttered and Abraham was
old. God doesn’t call the qualified, He
qualifies the CALLED!”

We’re not qualified but God doesn't care. No
matter where you are in your life with God,
HE is qualifying you for his service because
you are CALLED. He can help you overcome
your worries, and even use them to help
others. Just allow *Him* to use you.

Don’t miss an opportunity to serve the Lord
because of insecurity.

Come and talk to me, attend the training &
see if you can let God work through you.

The children need Teachers and Assistants
in classes & next year when the new school
in Lindfield opens we’ll need even more
Catechists – get qualified now and see if you
can serve in this way (Training: Frenchs
Forest - Thurs 18, 25 Oct 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Nov & 6 Dec 2018, 7:00pm-9:00pm;
Pennant Hills - Mon 5,12,19 & 26 Nov
2018, 9:30am-2:30pm. There are manuals
telling you exactly what to say and do!!!

Try focus on what God can do through you
and not about what you can or can’t do.
Team teaching is a wonderful way to start
and learn. Assist with an experienced
Catechist who can guide you and let you try
just 5 min of teaching a lesson and work
that up as you grow in confidence.

Moses was called by God to deliver the
Israelites out of Egypt, but said "Who am I
(to bring the Israelites out of Egypt)?" and
God told him "I will be with you."

Contact Sue-Anne Sherwood
sue-anne@lindfieldkillara.org.au

You are warmly invited to the annual community

Interfaith Prayer Service

to celebrate UN Int. Day of Peace
11AM - Friday 21st Sept



Many faiths represented - peace prayers -
school choirs sing - a peace bell is rung -
peace candles are lit - all welcome

A very special annual community event, hosted by Lindfield Uniting Church (formerly St David's), held in the main community hall, 454 Pacific Hwy (Cnr Provincial Rd) Lindfield Ph: 9416 2106

'Islam in the Modern World'

Friday 26 October 7.30pm



Speaker: Associate Professor Mehmet Ozalp is a theologian, author & academic, & founding director of the Centre for Islamic Studies & Civilisation (CISAC) at CSU; founder of ISRA Aust providing educational services on Islam & Muslims; & a co-founder of Affinity Intercultural Foundation in 2000, fostering interfaith harmony in Aust.

*'Question Time' * Supper provided afterwards*

*Entry by 2 x gold coins donation **

Everyone welcome RSVP appreciated for seating numbers & refreshments

Hosted by Lindfield Uniting Church, 454 Pacific Highway Lindfield

Contact: LUC Office (Jane) 9416 2106 or Malcolm & Noella 9498 8105

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Jason Roach
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Agent, Director
Parishioner

Jason 0448 455 556 or
jason.roach@century21.com.au

If I can ever be of assistance to you, a family member or a friend with any property advice for buying, selling or renovation tips, I would be delighted to help.

Kimberlee Gross
(parishioner)



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OUR MONTHLY HEALING MASS

Our monthly Healing Mass (including the celebration of the Sacrament of the Sick) will take place as usual on the second Friday of the month (**THIS Friday 14th September**) at **10am** in **our church at Killara** (no Mass at Lindfield or Killara at the normal Friday times on that day).

Mass will be followed by morning tea in the hall at Killara.

If you or someone you know would like to attend but is unable to get there or needs assistance in travelling please ring Fran Grant who will be happy to organise transport: **9880 7679**.

PARISH YOUNG ADULTS GROUP The next gathering for the year takes place **next Sunday 16th September** immediately following the 6pm Mass and will be held in the lounge in the Shirley Wallace Parish Centre on the first floor of Lindfield church. All young adults welcome – a relaxed and informal time (including dinner).



Our Memorial Walls

As you know we now have a Memorial Wall in each of our two churches. As promised there will be Mass each year in November for those whose names are recorded on the Memorial Walls. The dates for this year are:



* at Lindfield ~ at the 9:15am Mass on Saturday
3rd November

* at Killara ~ at the 7:30am Mass on Friday 16th
November

Ordering New Plaques:

If you would like to order one or more Memorial Plaques for either church please contact Philita in the Parish Office. You can also find out more about the plaques and donate the forms required for ordering the plaques by visiting our parish website and going to 'Our Parish' → 'Memorial Walls'.

For the plaques to be in place for this November you would need to have your order in to Philita by **Friday 14th September**.

Saturday		8 Sep	15 Sep
Lindfield	6:00pm	Fr Colin Blayney	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel
Killara	5:30pm	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel	Fr Colin Blayney
Sunday		9 Sep	16 Sep
Lindfield	8:15am	Fr Colin Blayney	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel
Killara	9:15am	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel	Fr Colin Blayney
Lindfield	10:15am	Fr Colin Blayney	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel
Lindfield	12:00noon	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel	Fr Thomas Alackakunnel
Lindfield	6:00pm	Fr Colin Blayney	Fr Colin Blayney

CHINESE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

常年期第二十三主日

9-9-2018

讀經一 (聾人，將要聽到；啞吧的舌頭，必要歡呼。)

恭讀依撒意亞先知書 35:4-7

你們要告訴心怯的人說：「鼓起勇氣來，不要畏懼！看，你們的天主！報復已到！天主的報酬已到！他要親自來拯救你們！」

那時，盲人將會看見，聾人將要聽到；那時，瘸子必要跳躍如鹿，啞吧的舌頭，必要歡呼。因為，曠野裡，將流出大水；沙漠中，將湧出江河；火熱的沙地，將變為池沼；乾旱的地帶，將變為水源。——上主的話。

(默想片刻)

答唱詠 詠146:7, 8-9, 9-10

【答】：我的靈魂，你要讚美上主。

(詠146:1)

領：上主為被欺壓的人辯護；上主賜食物給飢餓的人；上主使被囚的人，獲得自由。【答】

領：上主開啟瞎子的眼睛；上主使偃僕的人挺身；上主喜愛正義的人；上主保護旅客。【答】

領：上主扶助孤兒寡婦；上主迷惑惡人的道路。願上主永遠為王！熙雍，你的天主萬壽無疆！【答】

讀經二 (天主不是選了世俗視為貧窮的人，使他們繼承所預許的國嗎？)

恭讀聖雅各伯書 2:1-5

我的弟兄姊妹們：

你們既信仰我們已受光榮的主耶穌基督，就不該以貌取人。如果有一個人，戴著金戒指，穿著華麗的衣服，進入你們的會堂，同時，一個衣服骯髒的窮人，也進來，你們就專注那穿華麗衣服的人，且對他說：「請坐在這邊最好的位置！」而對那窮人說：「你站在那邊！」或說：「你坐在我的腳凳下邊！」這樣，你們豈不是以偏私的標準，來歧視人嗎？我親愛的弟兄姊妹們，請聽！天主不是選了世俗視為貧窮的人，使他們富於信德，並繼承天主向愛他的人，所預許的國嗎？——上主的話。(默想片刻)

福音前歡呼

領/眾：亞肋路亞。

領：耶穌宣講天國的福音，治好民間各種疾病。(參閱瑪 4:23)

眾：亞肋路亞

福音 (他使聾人聽見，叫啞吧說話。)

恭讀聖馬爾谷福音 7:31-37

那時候，耶穌從提洛地區出來，經過漆冬，走向加里肋亞海，到了十城區的中心地帶。有人帶來一個又聾又啞的人，求耶穌給他覆手。

一耶穌便帶這人離開群眾，來到邊，把手指放進他的耳朵，並用唾沫，抹他的舌頭，然後望天歎息，向他說：「厄法達」就是說：「開了吧！」這人的耳朵就立刻開了，舌結也解了，說話也清楚了。耶穌於是囑咐群眾，不要告訴任何人；但他越囑咐他們，他們便越發宣傳。

眾人都不勝驚奇，說：「他所做的一切都好：使聾人聽見，叫啞吧說話。」——上主的話。(講道後默想片刻)

華人天主教會 北區中心,主日彌撒 12 時, 彌撒後, 午餐聚會.

餐費成人\$6 小童\$4

牧職修女 司徒金美修女

聯絡 ☎ 0419- 426899

中心聯絡 Gloria Cheung

聯絡 ☎ 0416-118089

Sunday School 主日學

12noon Parish Meeting Room

23/9北區中心慶祝中秋節午餐聚會,請帶一份甜品分享

華人天主教會暨高齡之家高齡之家, 依士活中心 慶祝中秋節聯歡會, 日期 :23/9 1:00 -5:00 pm

慶祝梁加恩神父九十大壽感恩彌撒將於十月六號星期六 Strathfield Santa Sabina College舉行, 隨後晚宴喺大三元海鮮酒家,每位 \$50



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(continued from p.12...) spices with which to embalm his dead body. Jesus meets her, alive and in no need of embalming, but she doesn't recognize him. Bewildered, but sincere, she asks Jesus where she might find Jesus (something, I suspect, we do often enough in prayer). Jesus, for his part, repeats for her the question he opened the gospel with: "What are you looking for?" Then he answers it. With deep affection, he pronounces her name: "Mary."

In doing that, he tells her what she and everyone else are forever looking for, God's voice, one-to-one, speaking unconditional love, gently saying your name. In the end, that's what we are all looking for and most need. It's what gives us substance, identity, and justification beyond our own efforts to make ourselves lovable, worthwhile, and immortal. We are forever in fear of our own seeming insubstantiality. How to give ourselves significance? We need to hear God, affectionately, one-to-one, pronounce our names: "Carolyn!" "Julia!" "Kern!" "Gisele!" "Steve!" "Sophia!" Nothing will heal us more of restlessness, bitterness, and insecurity than to hear God say: "I love you!"

Moreover since prayer is meant to be a mutual thing, it's important too that we respond in kind: Part of affective prayer is also that we, one-to-one, with affection, occasionally at least, say the same thing to God: "I love you!" In all long-term, affectionate relationships the partners have to occasionally prompt each other to hear expressions of affection and reassurance. It's not good enough to tell a marriage partner or a friend just once "I love you!" It needs to be said regularly. The relationship of prayer is no different.

Prayer, it is said, is not meant to change God but us. True. And nothing changes us as much for the good as to hear someone say that he or she loves us—especially if that someone is God.

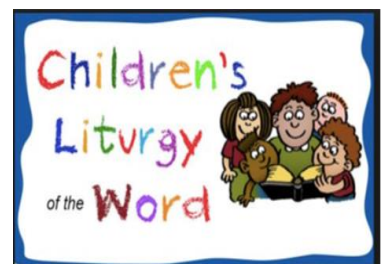
Fr Ron Rolheiser omi, Centre for Liturgy, University of St Louis

Dear Parents,

We are in desperate need for more volunteers to help run Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) at the 8:15am and 10:15am Mass each Sunday at Holy Family Church Lindfield.

We have volunteers up to mid-September, but need more help from there onwards. Getting involved is very rewarding and without your help, we may not be able to have the CLOW for the children.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact our CLOW coordinators, Helen and Richard Martin at: richardianmartin@yahoo.co.uk



**Lord, in Jesus your Son, you restored to us the gift of everlasting life.
Grant that life to:**

Recently deceased: Bill O'Connell, Janice Breslin, Pattie Upton. Faye Bartlett.

Anniversary: Marion Blayney, Beni Conti, Veronica Buchanan, Philomena Beazley, James and Daphne D'Cruz.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK : Daniella Schulze, Joe Agius, Maureen Hobbs, Ian Coffey, Yvette Marie and Jeff Oras, John and George Agius, Fr Franciscus Choi, Ken Kan, Gizelle Tan, Cyril Ferriere, Br Braden, Brian Couper, Kieran Norton, Sean Maguire, Pakie Maguire, Naneth Bernado, Michael Swan.

REFLECTING ON THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURES

“Be opened!”—And immediately the man’s ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly

AFFECTIVE PRAYER

A while ago I attended a six-day retreat given by Robert Michel, an Oblate colleague and a highly sought-after spiritual mentor. His approach was disarming. Most of us are forever looking for something novel, at the cutting-edge, outside the box, something complex, but what he offered was stunningly simple and down-to-earth. He spent the whole time trying to teach us how to pray in an affective way.

What exactly does that mean, to pray affectively? In essence, what he told us might be summarized this way: “You must try to pray so that, in your prayer, you open yourself in such a way that sometime—perhaps not today, but sometime—you are able to hear God say to you: ‘I love you!’ These words, addressed to you by God, are the most important words you will ever hear because, before you hear them, nothing is ever completely right with you, but, after you hear them, something will be right in your life at a very deep level.”

These are simple words, but they capture what we ultimately try to do when we “lift mind and heart to God” in prayer.

In the end, prayer’s essence, its mission-statement, its deep *raison d’être*, is simply this: we need to open ourselves to God in such a way that we are capable of hearing God say to us, individually, “I love you!”

We need to open ourselves to God in such a way that we are capable of hearing God say to us, individually, “I love you!” This might sound pious and sentimental. It’s anything but that. Don’t be put off by simplicity. The deeper something is the simpler it will be. That’s why we have trouble understanding the deep things, be they of science or the heart. What separates the great minds (Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Whitehead, Einstein, Lonergan) from the rest of us is their capacity to grasp the simple. Anyone can understand what’s complex, but we have trouble grasping the principle of relativity, the concept of being, the concept of love, and things about the nature of the God, for exactly the opposite reason. They’re too simple. The simpler something is, the harder it is to wrap our minds around it and the more we need to make it complex in order to understand it. That’s true too of prayer. It’s so simple that we rarely lay bare its essence. It has ever been thus, it would seem.

John’s gospel already makes that point. The Gospel of John, as we know, structures itself very differently from the other gospels. John has no infancy narratives or early life of Jesus. In his gospel, we meet Jesus as an adult right on the first page and the first words out of Jesus’ mouth are a question: “What are you looking for?” That question remains throughout the rest of the gospel as an interpretive coloring suggesting that beneath everything else a certain search is going on. A lot of things are happening on the surface, but underneath, there remains always the nagging, restless question: “What are you looking for?”

Jesus answers that question explicitly only at the end of the gospel, on the morning of the resurrection. Mary Magdalene goes looking for him, carrying *(continued on p. 11):*