FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
15 MARCH 2026 YEAR A

I have never been able to reconcile the long faces some of us put on in Lent with the prayers of the Church that describe this as 'a joyful season'. The following story takes seriously that laughter is an essential element of our Lenten observance.

Once upon a time in a nice little forest, there lived an orphaned bunny and an orphaned snake. By surprising coincidence, both were blind from birth.

One day, the bunny was hopping through the forest while the snake was slithering along the same path. The bunny tripped over the snake and fell down. 'Oh, my,' said the bunny, 'I'm terribly sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you. I've been blind since birth, so, I can't see where I'm going. In fact, I'm also an orphan, so I don't even know what I am.'

'It's quite okay,' replied the snake, 'my story is much the same as yours. I've been blind since birth and never knew my mother. Tell you what, I could slither over you, and figure out what you are.'

'Oh, that would be wonderful.' replied the bunny. So the snake slithered all over the bunny, and said, 'Well, you're covered with soft fur; you have really long ears; your nose twitches; and you have a soft cottony tail. I'd say that you must be a bunny.'

'Oh, thank you! Thank you,' cried the bunny in obvious excitement. The bunny then suggested to the snake, 'Maybe I could feel you with my paw, and help you in the same way you've helped me.' So the bunny felt the snake all over, and remarked, 'Well, you're scaly and smooth, you have a forked tongue, you're impossible to pin down and you have no backbone at all. I'd say you must be either a contractor, a consultant or possibly someone in senior management.'

On reflection the Gospel of the man born blind is a joyful one too. Imagine this man's elation at having his sight restored. As the story develops the all-seeing Pharisees move to spiritual blindness by putting on the blinkers of the law. They cannot recognise Jesus or his works of mercy because of their tunnel vision. Jesus doesn't fit their worldview. Meanwhile the blind beggar, who has sight restored, goes on to gain insight about who Je sus is and the way that God works in the world; he begins to see how shallow and pathetic the Pharisees really are.

This Gospel also contains a critical theological lesson: disability and illness do not come from personal sinfulness. It's surprising that we need to keep saying this, but too readily we hear otherwise intelligent and good Christians, for example, telling us that some illnesses have been 'sent' by God as punishment for sins or they wonder what their families have 'done' to deserve disabled children. It's true that God permits us to live in an imperfect world where we are prone to illness and disability. But that same world gives us the freedom to be creative in the face of adversity, to be compassionate with those who are sick or disabled and free to believe that there is a purpose for each human life. God, the source of all love, does not actively send bad things to us, instead, he is our constant companion in dealing with them; giving us the courage and strength to cope with, and sometimes overcome, them.

The task of this joyful season is to bring our good humour and compassion to bear on the blind spots in our own lives and be on our guard for the times when we are too confident about who God is, how he works or what he can or cannot do. May it never be said of us that we were so consumed by our own religious vision that we missed God's woods for the trees.

Homily by Fr Richard Leonard SJ

DONATIONS TO PHILERMOS HOUSE, DAVENPORT STREET SOUTHPORT through the Order of Malta can be made several ways:

- Online through our secure payment facility

Direct Deposit to BSB: 083 453 Acct: 44888 1897

Please use 'Southport' as the description and email info@orderofmalta.org.au details to obtain a tax-deductible receipt

- **Phone** by calling 02 9331 8477 - please note the office is closed weekends.
- **Post** with cheques payable to '*Order of Malta*' and sent to Philermos House, Order of Malta, PO Box 79, Caringbah NSW 1495

Readings - Fifth Sunday Of Lent - 22 March 2026

Ezekiel 37:12-14; Psalm 129; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45

Celebration of First Reconciliation

We look forward to celebrating The Sacrament of Reconciliation on **Wednesday, 18 March 2026, 5pm** at **Mary Immaculate Church, Ashmore**.

Kindly return all signed forms to the Parish Office by **Monday, 16 March**, between **9.00am–12noon**, or email via: **sacramental.southport@bne.catholic.net.au**.

The Social Bus Trip planned for 17 March has been cancelled due to low numbers. A special "Thank you" to Christine and John for all their effort in trying to make it happen.

A warm welcome to our new Catholic members:
(L-R) Hera Dooney, David Jeon, Fr Gerard, and Madeline Hunter - received on 22 February 2026.

17 March Feast of St Patrick
An Old Irish Blessing for St. Patrick's Day

May your days be many and your troubles be few.
May all God's blessings descend upon you.
May peace be within you, may your heart be strong.

19 March Solemnity of St Joseph
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil.
Amen.

EASTER TRIDUUM 2026 – Volunteers Needed

Guardian Angels & Mary Immaculate Church

Please add your name and phone number to the sign-up sheets if you can help at our Easter Triduum Masses. (Sign-up sheets are at St Joseph the Worker this weekend, then at Guardian Angels and Mary Immaculate from 22 March.) Note: All volunteers are asked to attend a brief 30-minute practice session at the listed time.

***Our apologies for the incorrect printing for the Easter Triduum Services on last week's newsletter. It seems even our newsletter needed a little Lenten discipline to stay on track. Great news Easter is back on!*

Easter Triduum Services

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER

Friday	**3 April**	**10.00am**	Stations of the Cross
Sunday	**5 April**	**8.00am**	Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

MARY IMMACULATE

Thursday	**2 April**	**6.30pm**	Mass of the Lord's Supper
Friday	**3 April**	**10.00am**	Stations of the Cross **3.00pm** Good Friday
Saturday	**4 April**	**6.30pm**	The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night
Sunday	**5 April**	**9.30am**	Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
			NO 5.30pm Sunday Mass - 5 April

GUARDIAN ANGELS

Thursday	**2 April**	**6.30pm**	Mass of the Lord's Supper
Friday	**3 April**	**10.00am**	Stations of the Cross **3.00pm** Good Friday
Saturday	**4 April**	**6.30pm**	The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night
Sunday	**5 April**	**7.00am**	Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
		9.00am	Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Guardian Angels Church, Southport

Each Thursday noon to Friday

ending with mass at 12.30pm

24 hour adoration

Mary Immaculate Church, Ashmore

Thursday 7.45am- 8.30am

Please help us by committing to a time either on Thursday or Friday. SMS our Timetable master on 0402812832 or email adorationgc@gmail.com

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST STEPHEN

Archbishop Shane Mackinlay invites you to the annual

CHRISM MASS

THURSDAY 26 March 2026
7.00pm
Cathedral of St Stephen
249 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane
A celebration for
the entire Archdiocese
All Welcome
The undercover carpark will be
available from 6.00pm

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM
SOUTHPORT CATHOLIC PARISH
New Program starts on the 1 April 2026
New Envelopes available for collection at all churches next week 21 & 22 March

If you would like to be part of the Planned Giving Program
please contact the Parish Office 5510 2222
Wednesday-Friday 9.00am to midday.
Email: accounts.southport@bne.catholic.net.au
In making a commitment to be part of our planned giving program you are directly supporting and enabling the maintenance and growth of our parish's mission.

Thank you Fr Gerard

FAITHFUL DEPARTED

ANNIVERSARIES

BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE BOOK OF THE SICK

Each Church has both these books on display.
If you would like to include a name in either of the books, please seek approval from the parish office on 5510 2222.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Join us for the Stations of the Cross on Thursday at 6.00pm during Lent at Mary Immaculate Church, Ashmore. All are welcome to take part in this meaningful Lenten devotion.

PIETY STALLS

Southport Catholic Parish has three Piety Stalls**.**
Your support would be greatly appreciated.
Guardian Angels Church - open after the 9.00am mass each Sunday.
Mary Immaculate Church - open after all masses. Also open first and third Saturday of each month at 10.30am pending baptisms.
St Joseph's the Worker Church - open after 8.00am mass each Sunday.

GREAT NEWS Eftpos now available at St Joseph's the Worker

Each piety stall offers baptism candles, rosary beads, statues, prayer cards and other items for sale.

PARISH WALKING GROUP

meets every Saturday at 6.00am at St Joseph the Worker Church.
Contact Janeece on 0408 763 772

FLOCKNOTE
NEW PARISH REGISTRATION
Stay connected

SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

STOPLINE receives reports of suspected abuse, misconduct, or serious policy breaches involving Archdiocesan clergy, employees, or volunteers (reports may be anonymous). We uphold zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and adults-at-risk. Our parish follows the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Framework, with strong recruitment, screening, and ongoing practices to ensure a safe ministry environment . Our Local Safeguarding Representative (LSR) is **Catherine -** lsr.southport@bne.catholic.net.au

07 5510 2222 / 1300 304 550
aob@stopline.com.au
www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com

St Joseph the Worker Church
44 Imperial Parade, Labrador

Sunday Mass
8.00am

Weekday Masses
Monday & Wednesday 7.00am
1st Wednesday 7.00pm
1st Saturday 9.00am

Rosary
Monday & Wednesday 6.00am
1st Wednesday 6.00pm
1st Saturday 8.30am

Novena
Wednesday 6.00pm

Guardian Angels Church
99 Scarborough Street, Southport

Saturday & Sunday Masses
Reconciliation Saturday 4.30pm
Saturday (Vigil) 5.30pm
Sunday 7.00am & 9.00am

Filipino Mass
1st Sunday 12.00pm

Prayer & Adoration
Thursday 12.00 noon (24 hours)

Rosary & Mass
Friday 12.00pm

Mary Immaculate Church
31 Edmund Rice Drive, Ashmore

Saturday & Sunday Masses
Saturday (Vigil) 4.30pm
Sunday 9.30am & 5.30pm

Korean Mass
Sunday 3.00pm
한인미사 일요일 오후 3시

Weekday Masses
Tuesday & Thursday 9.00am

Adoration & Rosary
Tuesday & Thursday 7.45am

Gold Coast University Hospital

Rosary & Mass
Friday 10.00am

PARISH CONTACTS

Ph 07 5510 2222
Webpage: https://scp.org.au

Safeguarding Representative
lsr.southport@bne.catholic.net.au

Parish Office Ashmore
Monday to Friday 9.00am-12.00pm
31 Edmund Rice Drive, Ashmore, 4214

Parish Reception/Secretary
parish.southport@bne.catholic.net.au

Sacramental Programme
sacramental.southport@bne.catholic.net.au

Finance Officer
accounts.southport@bne.catholic.net.au

Associate Pastor
Fr John Hong Xuan Nguyen (Hospital Chaplaincy)

Parish Priest
Fr Gerard McMorrow PP