

Adoration chapel a blessing for Blue Mountains

By Mary Brazell, 8 October 2019



The Blessed Sacrament as seen in the new Adoration Chapel at St Canice's Church, Katoomba.
Image: St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Parish Upper Blue Mountains.

The Three Sisters and Jesus Christ.

There is a powerful devotion to the Blessed Sacrament in the Blue Mountains amongst locals and tourists alike, according to Fr Carlos Walker.

“There is a strong Eucharistic devotion here in the Upper Blue Mountains,” Fr Carlos told *Catholic Outlook*.

“During a recent visit, Bishop Vincent [Long, Bishop of Parramatta] said that we are an emblematic parish and church. Lots of people come and visit the Blue Mountains and we should be a part of that – we should be welcoming them in.

“This church is a heritage-listed building, and a lot of visiting Catholics step in and take a look, so we wanted to create where people can jump in and pray,” he said.

Fr Carlos is the parish priest of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Parish in the Upper Blue Mountains, which includes St Francis Xavier’s in Wentworth Falls, St Bonaventure’s in Leura and St Canice’s in Katoomba.

St Canice's, located on the main street of the tourist hot-spot Katoomba, has begun Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, with a former flower room inside the heritage-listed church to act as an Adoration Chapel.

Perpetual Adoration begun on Tuesday 24 September, and will run 24 hours a day from Tuesdays to Thursdays.



The new Adoration Chapel at St Canice's Church, Katoomba. Image: St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Parish Upper Blue Mountains.

The idea to start an Adoration Chapel had been a project of the parish for a while.

It was through a Eucharistic Mission, run by visiting Irish priest Fr Gary Holmes, a member of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist, that the idea gained momentum.

The charism of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist is "the promotion of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration in parishes and dioceses," according to their website.

"Fr Gary came to here [to St Canice] and explained what Adoration is, what it entails, and explained that the blessing of Adoration isn't just for the parish, but for the diocese and the world," Fr Carlos explained.

A number of volunteers from the parish and neighbouring parishes have indicated they will participate in the Holy Hour as part of a roster system, with Fr Carlos explaining that the early morning sessions were the first to go.

"We have around 250 parishioners attend Masses across all our churches [in the parish], and despite the snowy conditions we had up here, 75 people came to hear Fr Gary's talks in August.

“When we reached out to the parish, looking for leaders and organisers to help set up Adoration, we expected four to five people to sign up, but 13 people came.

“A lot of parishioners have told me that they were looking for places for Adoration, and some have come up to me to tell me ‘Father, this is what we are looking forward to,’” Fr Carlos said.

Fr Carlos also explained that local tradespeople and artisans have offered to help during the construction phase, and locals are happy to support the project financially.

Jacque Harsh, a parishioner of St Canice’s, and part of the organising team, believes that only good things will come from the setting up of the Adoration Chapel.

“[The reception] has been amazing. The people who have signed on for the early shifts, I think, are some of the keenest, [they’re] very committed.

“The sessions [with Fr Gary] were wonderful. I think it was a brand new concept for a lot of people up here, [they were] very informative and inspiring.

“Being a mum, Adoration is the quiet time that I don’t get a home, but it’s also the strength and guidance, and thankfulness and praying intentions. It’s a time outside of Mass where I can connect with Christ.

“It’s something that’s never been there before. It’s a tight-knit community, and [I hope it brings] many blessings. Only God knows what’s going to come from it, but only good things. It will be incredible.

“I believe it will [go to seven days]. I think when Fr Gary was talking, he said it just grows bigger and people never walk away with nothing,” Jacque said.

“We are aiming to cover the full seven days,” Fr Carlos added.

For Fr Carlos, he hopes the Adoration Chapel will provide parishioners, visitors and members of the community with a quiet place to pray.

“Adoration, to me, is a chance to be with Jesus personally – it provides a personal encounter with Christ.

“People may not come to church, but they might come to the chapel for quiet prayer.

“There are many reasons to pray, the world needs prayers, and we’re creating the conditions for a prayerful environment.

“I hope the chapel will further enhance Eucharistic devotion in the Blue Mountains and act as a way to evangelise,” he said.

If you want further information about the chapel, or if you would like to sign up for a weekly hour of Adoration, please contact the parish office on 02 4782 2804.

<https://catholicoutlook.org/adoration-chapel-a-blessing-for-blue-mountains/>