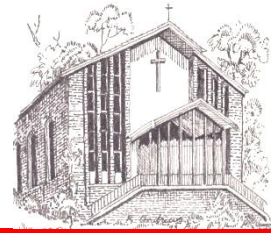




# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



**8 / 9 JUNE 2019**  
**PENTECOST SUNDAY + YEAR C**  
**THE 50<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF THE 50 DAYS OF EASTER**

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

## *Remaining in the Upper Room*

Peter Maurin, the man who helped Dorothy Day found the *Catholic Worker*, used say: “When you don’t know what else to do, keep going to meetings!” Sound advice.


Jesus, it seems, would agree. At the end of Luke’s gospel, just before he departs this earth, he gives his rather shaky group of followers this counsel: “Return to the city and don’t leave until you feel yourself clothed with power from on high?” We find out later, in the Acts of the Apostles, how his followers interpreted that. They met and waited together in an “upper room” until they felt the fire of Pentecost.

When one tries to name the present moment in the Church, few metaphors are as penetrating, as fertile a field for reflection, and as descriptive of what is actually happening as is this biblical image—a formerly-confident-but-now-somewhat-deflated group of disciples is huddled together in an upper room, confused and out of gas, needing to be recharged with power from above. That’s us; except our upper rooms are legion—church meetings of every kind, diocesan synods, ministerial associations, congresses on how to re-found religious life, ecumenical meetings, pastoral institutes, social-justice commissions, efforts in missiology, institutes on spirituality, and men and women all over the world (in kitchens and monasteries) feeling powerless and praying for God to come anew into our world. Our church meetings are “the upper room.”



Like the original upper room, our venues too are humble, church basements and church conference-centres, with their plastic chairs and disposable cups. The upper room is never glamorous, de Vinci painting. It’s more like the meeting-rooms in our local churches.

But that’s where we are today, by necessity, waiting for a new health and joy to return after a painful period within which we are being humbled and purified. This is not a time of pride for the Church. Secular forces are increasingly marginalizing us; humiliating Church-scandals, to the delight of the culture, frequently headline the front pages of our newspapers; and it’s fashionable to be anti-ecclesial and anti-clerical. This isn’t a time to hold one’s ecclesial-head very high.

Much of this, however, can be understood biblically, as a time of pruning, a time in the “upper room.” Much of what is happening in the Church today is deserved, the chickens coming home to roost. We lived too long in a time of ecclesial and clerical privilege, forgetting that what we falsely idealize we will soon enough demonize. How we love 

🔗🔗 to see the gods fall! A time of dis-privilege will always follow its opposite. There was a time when the Church couldn't do anything wrong. Now it can't do anything right. So, Jesus has sent us back into the upper room, to pray and to wait, to sort out our confusion, and to re-root ourselves in the basics, so as to prepare to receive a new fire.

But that's only half of it. We are in the upper room today for another reason too: like the first followers of Jesus, immediately after his departure, we also don't know any more what we should be doing. So much of what used to work no longer does. We are finding it ever-harder to pass on our faith to our own children, to fire the religious and romantic imagination of our culture, and to make a religious and moral dent of any kind in the ever-hardening secularity of ordinary consciousness. What should we be doing in the face of declining church attendance, the emptying and greying of our seminaries and convents, the growing agnosticism of our world, and the ecclesial indifference of so many of our own children?



Biblically, here is our answer: return to the city and remain in the upper room! What is meant by that? In Luke's writings, "the city" refers to Jerusalem which, itself, is an image for the Church, the faith, the dream that Jesus had instilled. To walk away from Jerusalem, as the disciples were doing in walking towards Emmaus, was to walk away from the Church, the faith, and the dream. So now, like then, Jesus tells us: "Return to the city, to the dream!" And what is the upper room? The fundamentals. Our faith has some basics, some elements, a rock-bottom foundation that we need always to fall back on. Too often, for every kind of noble reason, we forget (irrespective of the importance of the moral or religious struggle we are engaged in) that what God ultimately wants of us is charity, patience, understanding, hospitality, humility, prayer, community with each other, forgiveness, and a non-judgmental attitude. To enter the upper room is to re-root ourselves in these and then trust that God will save all those people that we can't.

And we support others and ourselves in all of this by going to meetings! When you don't know what else to do, return to the upper room—keep going to meetings!

The reading from Acts sets the tone for today's celebration. Luke tells how the Church's universal mission was inaugurated, in the power of the Holy Spirit, as faithful Jews gathered for their Pentecost festival, fifty days after the Passover celebration. Luke was conscious of his task of telling the world what had really happened – as he makes clear in introducing each of his two works. He faced a great challenge, however, as he set out to describe and interpret the vast complexity of the Church's early development. He met this difficulty by choosing several events that were turning points in the Church's history, and presenting them in a dramatic way that made clear their profound significance – a device used by other writers of the day.

Luke's story of the Church's first Pentecost is an example of this approach. The Church's first courageous witness, and its subsequent announcing of the Good New throughout the known world, was a remarkable fulfilment of the Saviour's promise that he would give his disciples courage and power through the gift of his own Spirit (Mark 13:9-11). The universality of the Church's mission is made clear. The Church's first witness is to 'devout people from every nation' – in the first place to 'Jews', but with the mention of 'proselytes' among the crowd addressed the conversion of the gentiles is also anticipated. In the continuation of our passage, Peter's sermon gives a summary of the Church's early witness.

It is in the power of the Spirit that the Church takes up its mission. Today, before all days, the Church invites us to deepen our faith in the Saviour's gift of his own Spirit. 🔗🔗

✚✚ Already in the Old Testament, ‘the Spirit of God’ was active as a life-giving force at work in creation. Anointed by the Spirit as God’s ‘Servant’, in fulfilment of the prophecies of the Book of Isaiah, Jesus has led us to know the Spirit as a Person sharing the one divine life with the Father and the Son. Today’s gospel reading is a meditation upon this shared life, and the way in which those who find faith in Christ have the Father and the Son ‘make their home’ in them. Those who have received the gift of Christ’s own Spirit will be led to know how the Saviour is the source of hope for the whole world – as the Spirit ‘reminds’ them of all that Jesus said and did.

The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit is the very life principle of the Church; the Spirit dwells in each believer as our ‘paraclete’ – the companion who stands by us in all our trials, providing whatever is needed to survive every trial. We live ‘in Christ’ because he has given us his own Spirit. Writing to the Romans St Paul reminds these new converts that, together with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit will come to ‘live in them’ – renewing their lives, as they set aside their old fears, and find joy and encouragement, as the Father’s beloved ‘children’ who are ‘coheirs with Christ’, sharing the blessings of his resurrection. The energy and power of Pentecost Sunday is captured in this line from Gerard Manley Hopkins poem, ‘*God’s Grandeur*’: “**the world is charged with the splendour of God**”.

## ARE YOU AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT ROSTER?

**Thank you** to all who volunteer for the many parish ministries: AV Operators; Leaders of Children’s Liturgy; Cleaning; Communion to Coledale Hospital; Communion Ministers; Counters; Flowers; Laundry; Morning Tea; Mowing; Readers and Safety Officers!

If you would like to join any of the rosters to help out, **please call or email the Parish Office this week**. We especially need more **AV Operators** (who operate the computer) and **Safety Officers** (who greet people when they arrive and organize the collections).

## CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES



This year there are **50** Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This weekend, some Candidates will be at Masses to be presented to the Parish as they and their parents make their commitment towards preparing for the reception of Confirmation on 26/27 June.

## CATHOLIC WOMEN’S LEAGUE

Next Tuesday, **11 June**, commencing **11:00am** in the McCarthy Centre, Jade from Wollongong Council will be speaking about “**Plastic-Free Wollongong**”. She will also do a Beeswax Wrap demonstration and a No-sew Bag made from a recycled t-shirt. Light luncheon to follow. **All welcome!** Monthly meeting 1:30pm.

## KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS CHARITIES DINNER

The Knights of the Southern Cross Annual Charities Dinner will be held on Saturday, 22 June at 7:00pm at the Thirroul Railway Institute Hall. Guest speaker, Fr Patrick Vaughan, “*The Spiritual Benefits of Pilgrimage*”. Tickets \$35. Paul Tuckerman 4267 2535. BYO.

**VIVID SYDNEY** is where art, technology and commerce intersect. Three weeks of game changing ideas and seminars, amazing music and light sculptures that transform the city, **24 May to 15 June every night 6pm to 11pm**. [www.vividsydney.com](http://www.vividsydney.com)

## MARY DOWLER – THANK YOU!

Long-time parishioner, **Mary Dowler**, is moving from Austinmer into Wollongong. Mary has worked for 15 years in our Parish School, and for the past several years has given most generously of her time as “sacristan”, helping set up for Masses and looking after the sacristy. Thank you, Mary, for your untiring work, and all the best in your new residence.

# WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

**Monday 10 Jun** Mary, Mother of the Church  
**Tuesday 11 Jun** St Barnabas, *apostle*  
 Catholic Women's League, 11am  
 Confirmation Class #1, 3:45pm  
**Thursday 13 Jun** St Anthony of Padua, *friar priest, doctor*



## PLENARY COUNCIL 2020

After 10 months of Listening and Dialogue and a period of analysis and prayerful discernment, the National Themes for Discernment for the Plenary Council 2020 are being announced at Pentecost – this weekend. More information on each of the National Themes for Discernment will be available in the coming weeks. Meantime, a summary report from our Parish is attached to this Bulletin, and the full report may be viewed on our Parish website (*a few printed copies are available*). Check out: [www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au](http://www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au)

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

“Fighting against the terrible scourge of hunger means also fighting waste. Waste reveals an indifference towards things and towards those who go without. Wastefulness is the crudest form of discarding. I think of the moment when Jesus, after the distribution of the loaves to the crowd, asks for the scraps to be gathered up, so that nothing would go to waste (cf. John 6:12). Gathering in order to redistribute; not production that leads to waste. To throw food away means to throw people away. It is scandalous today not to notice how precious food is as a good, and how so much good ends up so badly.”

– Pope Francis, 18 May 2019

## ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA

**THIS Sunday's Readings** *on our website*

**Pentecost Sunday - Year C**

**1st Reading** Acts 2:1-11  
**2nd Reading** Romans 8:8-17  
**Gospel** John 14:15-16,23-26

**NEXT Sunday's Readings** *on our website*

**Trinity Sunday - Year C**

**1st Reading** Proverbs 8:22-31  
**2nd Reading** Romans 5:1-5  
**Gospel** John 16:12-15

### SUNDAY MASS TIMES

**Church of St Michael • Thirroul**  
 Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am  
**Bulli • Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm**  
**Corrimal • Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am**

### LITURGIES THIS WEEK

**Wombarra [Liturgy]** Monday 4:30pm  
**Thirroul** Tuesday 5:30pm  
 Wednesday 9:00am  
 Thursday 9:00am  
 Friday 9:30am

## Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

*Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes*

Patrick Vaughan • *Parish Priest* ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

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 ☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

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📧 [thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

**Parish Office  
Hours**

**Tuesday, Wednesday  
Friday**

**9:00am to 3:30pm** Magda Pires  
**10:00am to 3:00pm** Maureen Franciskovic

🌐 [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560