



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
28 / 29 MAY 2022
ASCENSION OF THE LORD ✦ YEAR C
FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Ascension of Christ

At the start of the story about the Ascension, Christ and the apostles are in Jerusalem. After his final talk with them there, Christ is ready to ascend to the Father. In his ascension, he goes directly upwards towards heaven. One might suppose that there is something childish about the miracle that has him levitating into the sky. He has just vanished on other occasions during his resurrected life. Why does he now not simply vanish, in a dignified way, one might say, and this time not return?

The question contains the answer within it. How would those who loved him know that this time he would not return? Why would those who loved him not still somehow suspect that around any corner he might still after all return again? And even if he said he would not return, it might still be possible for a loving and hopeful heart to expect him around any corner. Watching him ascend slowly into the sky does have a kind of finality about it. And so perhaps Christ protects those who love him from endlessly watching for him through this mode of leaving his resurrected earthly life. But there is also something important to notice in a little remarked bit of the story: Christ, who is in Jerusalem, walks with his apostles to the Mount of Olives, where Bethany is, and ascends from there. [After Christ's ascension the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, on the slope of which is Bethany.]

Christ's mode of ascension is straight upwards, and no place on earth is closer than another to the destination when the destination is straight upwards. So, there is something odd in Christ's walking some distance from Jerusalem in order to ascend from some place outside Jerusalem. Why does Christ not simply ascend from where they all are already in Jerusalem?

The answer is Bethany. Christ walks from Jerusalem to ascend from Bethany or someplace very near it. It is worth remembering, then, that Bethany is the home of Mary of Bethany.



Is it reasonable to suppose that the resurrected Christ could walk into Bethany or its environs with at least eleven other men and not be noticed there? And is it plausible that, if he were noticed there, someone would not have alerted Mary of Bethany? Finally, it is worth adding that when the apostles walk back to Jerusalem after the ascension and settle down together there, the text says that there were women there with them. Would there be such a group of women that did not include the Mary who loved Christ so intensely? So, it is reasonable to conclude that one part of Christ's last act on earth was to make sure that he consoled and took his leave of a woman in Bethany whose heart cleaved to him.

In today's liturgy we have two readings from Luke, the conclusion of his gospel, and the opening passage of the Acts of the Apostles. Comparing them can give us an insight into how Luke tells the story of the origins of our faith. In the concluding passage of the gospel, Jesus, on the evening of his resurrection day, 'withdraws' from the eleven and their fellow disciples, and 'is carried up to heaven'. John's gospel paints a similar picture – the Risen Lord, we recall, tells Mary Magdalene on the morning of his resurrection, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to my Father'. In fact, we do not find in any of the gospels – Luke's included – the sequence in Acts with which we are so familiar: Resurrection; Ascension (after 40 days); Pentecost (after 50 days).

Skilful teacher that he is, Luke wants, in these two accounts, to spell out for his readers different aspects of the Saviour's Paschal Mystery. The gospel account is, before all else, an affirmation of the faith and worship given by the apostles to the Risen Lord: brother of us all in his wounded humanity, whose sufferings are to be recognised as according to the preordained plan of God, sending the disciples to give witness to the whole world, promising his Spirit, blessing them and receiving their worship, now gone to the Father and no longer with them as before.

The gospel is the story of the Saviour. Luke's second volume, Acts of the Apostles is the story of the Church's beginnings. So, Luke tells this second story in a way that emphasises the sure foundations of the Church's faith – what the disciples learned from the Risen Lord, who 'for forty days, continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God'. As we have seen in the past weeks, all the gospels imply this learning process, making reference to the initial doubts and hesitations of the disciples in their encounters with Christ after his resurrection. Of course, Luke may have his own factual basis for his account – there was certainly a large influx of pilgrims to Jerusalem on the feast of Pentecost, 50 days after the Passover; on the other hand, as we know, 40 is used by biblical writers, as a round number. Through the gift of the Christ's own Spirit at Pentecost this foundation laid by the Saviour will shape the Church's mission: 'not many days from now you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit'. Luke, in Acts, tells the story of the early Church as the work of the Holy Spirit.

Luke's presentation of the Ascension brings out something else of great moment in the life of the pilgrim Church. 'I am going away', Jesus had said to the disciples more than once. Gone to the right hand of the Father he will be present in a new and more intimate way: 'I am with you always; yes, to the end of time' (Matthew 28). In one of his homilies Pope Leo the Great wrote: 'The visible presence of our Redeemer passed over into the sacraments. For, in a mysterious way, once he had returned to the glory of his Father's majesty, the Son of Man began to be more present'.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 1:1-11

- ✚ What does “witness to the ends of the earth” mean to you. What “witnesses” (saints, declared or undeclared) do you like to think about?
- ✚ Do you “witness” in any way? Care for Excluded? Help feed starving children in Kenya due to drought caused by climate change?

Second Reading Ephesians 1:17-23

- ✚ We do not yet experience completely Christ's coming, even though he is there in sacrament and word. Think of some times or instances in your life where an appropriate plea to God would be “come, Lord Jesus”.

Gospel Luke 24:46-53

- ✚ What was the promise of the Father that Jesus spoke of? Who brings Jesus' message and mission to completion in us and in the world? Do you listen for the Spirit's message to you personally?

God, the Son of God, descends and becomes man, takes our humanity and redeems it—he now ascends into heaven, taking our flesh with him. He is the first man who enters heaven, because Jesus is human, true man; he is God, true God; our flesh is in heaven and this gives us joy.

Now a human body sits at the right hand of the Father for the first time, the body of Jesus, and in this mystery we each contemplate our own future destination. This is not at all an abandonment; Jesus remains forever with the disciples—with us. He remains in prayer, because as man, he prays to the Father, and as God, man and God, he shows him his wounds, the wounds by which he has redeemed us. Jesus' prayer is there, with our flesh: he is one of us, God-human, and he prays for us.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 16 May 2021

ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass

FLOOD AND UKRAINE APPEALS – THANK YOU!

Thank you for your generosity over the last month. Totals *so far* ... as donations keep coming in:

VINNIES FLOOD APPEAL – TOTAL TO BE DONATED IS: **\$13,550**. THANK YOU!

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL – TOTAL TO BE DONATED IS: **\$10,520**. THANK YOU!

} TOTAL \$24,070

If you still wish to make a donation: please direct credit our Parish account, St Michael, BSB 066 711, Account Number 001788, and in the “Reference” indicate **FLOODS** or **UKRAINE**. ALL DONATIONS WELCOME!

MORNING TEA AFTER SUNDAY MORNING MASSES

As most Covid health restrictions have now been lifted, Morning Teas of a Sunday morning can be resumed. If you would be available to go on the roster – say once every three months – to prepare and serve morning tea of a Sunday morning after Mass, please contact Judy Bull, Roster Coordinator ☎ 4267 2417, or the Parish Office ☎ 4268 1910. The aim is to resume morning teas from Sunday, 7 August – just about the time when Krista Spiers would have turned fifty. Morning Tea on that day will be in memory of Krista. Please help – so far, there are only SIX groups (usually of two people) who have volunteered. Please consider helping out. Contact the Parish Office ASAP. Thank you for your generosity.



KINDERGARTEN 2023 ENROLMENTS FOR OUR PARISH SCHOOL NOW OPEN

Enrolments are accepted all year round, but the best time to enrol your child at St Michael's is at the beginning of the year – the year before your child is due to commence school. Contact the school office by phone [4267 2560] or in person to put your child's name on the enrolment list and you will be given/sent an enrolment package. Kindergarten enrolments are distributed and completed during Term 1, then enrolment interviews are usually held in May. Contact the school office as soon as possible so you and your child can come in and meet with the principal, Mrs Belinda Hughes. Written offers of placement will follow at the end of Term 2 (usually in June).

<https://www.smtow.catholic.edu.au/parents/enrolment-information/>

Parent Information for Confirmation: 7:30pm, Tuesday, 31 May.



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN – by Fr Michael Fallon MSC

During the Fifty Days of Easter each year, the Gospel of Saint John is read on the Sundays and weekdays.

Like the other Gospels, the Gospel of John was written within a Christian community which had its own rich traditions and life. Many people, therefore, would have contributed to it. Members of the community who knew Jesus personally would have shared their memories with others, and not only their memories but also their understanding of the significance of Jesus for themselves and for their world. They, and those who joined the community through their ministry, would have continued to reflect on the significance of Jesus and of his actions and words. They would have done this in the light of their own personal experiences and the experiences of the community as well as insights gained from reflections upon the inspired words of their sacred Writings. Their growing insights would have found expression in the teaching that took place in the community and in the preaching and the sharing that was part of the community's liturgical life.

There is no convincing argument against the ancient tradition that names Ephesus as the place of origin of the Gospel. Our earliest extant manuscript of the complete text is from the fourth century. However, we have a papyrus manuscript from about 200AD of the complete text up to John 15:8, minus a few verses and also a scrap of papyrus which shows that the gospel was in circulation in central Egypt by the middle of the second century. The fact that the author calls those who oppose Jesus simply 'the Jews', and that he is appealing to Jewish members of the Christian community who seem to be vacillating in their faith because of having to choose between Christianity and the Jewish synagogue, points to a time when the communion between Christian Jews and the Synagogue was broken. This would suggest 90AD as a likely date for the composition of the bulk of the Gospel and 100AD for the final editing. The First Letter of John was probably composed sometime between these two dates.

Among those responsible for the traditions which find written expression in the Gospel, one person stands out. In the Gospel itself we are not told his name. He is identified simply and significantly as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. John chapter twenty-one was added after his death. The author of the chapter mentions 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' as being among those who were fishing on the lake of Galilee. It was he who recognised the risen Jesus (21:7). Later in the chapter he identifies him as 'the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper' (21:20). He identifies him as the author of the Gospel: 'This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true' (21:24). We cannot be sure that the Beloved Disciple wrote everything in the first twenty chapters, but he is identified as being the key witness whose testimony guarantees the authenticity of what we find written there. Early tradition is unanimous in giving John as the name of the Beloved Disciple. Irenaeus, writing towards the end of the second century, identifies the author of the Fourth Gospel as 'John, the disciple of the Lord, who had leant back on his breast'.

The other writings which issue from the same community (the Letters of John) show that its members were quite capable of expressing their insights into Jesus in forms other than a gospel. By composing a gospel the author is not just giving us insights into the real Jesus, he is presenting Jesus himself as speaking and acting. When Jesus speaks the author is giving us words not as from himself but as from Jesus. We must note, however, that we are listening to Jesus' words not only as they were remembered by those who heard him speak in the period of his public ministry, but also as he continued to speak to his disciples through his Spirit after his glorification. We are listening to Jesus as he was heard when he walked the earth, but also as he was being heard in the experiences of the community of the Beloved Disciple. The author presents Jesus' words in a poetic rather than a prose form to highlight the fact that Jesus is 'from above'. A heightened form of language expresses more appropriately the mystery of Jesus and his revelation of God. Though the words spoken by Jesus in this Gospel are shaped by the author, by placing them on Jesus' lips he is presenting them as true expressions of him who is the incarnation of God's Word.

THIRROUL SEASIDE FESTIVAL 2022 – 3, 4 AND SUNDAY, 5 JUNE



The annual festival is a celebration of the arts and seaside activities that reflect our community interests and way of life.

Friday, 3 June – Official Opening, Thirroul District Community Centre

6:30pm Sponsors' Preview

7:00pm Doors open

7:30pm Official Opening and presentation of prizes

The exhibition is open all weekend (gold coin entry). All art works are for sale so enjoy a visual feast of art, sculpture and photography. Persons under 18 years of age are not admitted on the opening night.

Saturday, 4 June – Checkout the Art Exhibition prize winners and visit the artist stalls at the Thirroul District Community Centre.

Sunday, 5 June

Enjoy our magnificent seaside park where there is a full day of entertainment, commencing with the **Sunday Lions Club BBQ breakfast 8am**, at the south car park at Thirroul Beach.

Remember to check out the Art Exhibition Prize winners at the Thirroul District Community Centre, from 10am.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Monday	30 May	Monday of the 7 th Week of Easter	Acts 19:1-8	John 16:29-33
Tuesday	31 May	THE VISITATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY 7:30pm Parent Information Evening for the Sacrament of Confirmation	Romans 12:09-16	Luke 1:39-56
Wednesday	1 Jun	Saint Justin, martyr 1:00pm Funeral of Pam Atkins	Acts 20:28-38	John 17:11-19
Thursday	2 Jun	Thursday of the 7 th Week of Easter 2:00pm Funeral of Wal Freeburn at Hansen & Cole, Bulli	Acts 22:30, 23:6-11	John 17:20-26
Friday	3 Jun	St Charles Lwanga & companions, martyrs 9:30am Anointing of the Sick during Mass 11:00am Funeral of Mary McGrath	Acts 25:13-21	John 21:15-19
Saturday	4 Jun	Saturday of the 7 th Week of Easter Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival at Thirroul District Community Centre	Acts 28:16-20	John 21:20-25
Sunday	5 Jun	PENTECOST SUNDAY ... <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i> Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival – south car park at Thirroul Beach from 8am		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE ... Coconut and Sultana Slice

90g butter; 1 tablespoon golden syrup; ½ cup (110g) caster sugar; 1 cup (150g) self-raising flour; 1 cup (90g) desiccated coconut; 1 cup (150g) sultanas; 1 teaspoon vanilla extract; pinch salt; ¼ cup (60ml) lemon juice; ¼ cup (35g) icing sugar mixture.

Preheat oven to moderate, 180°C or 160°C for fan forced. Grease and line 20cm square pan. Melt butter and golden syrup in medium saucepan. Add flour, coconut, sultanas, sugar, extract and salt; stir with a wooden spoon until well combined. Press mixture firmly into prepared pan. Bake in moderate oven 15 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Meanwhile, combine juice and icing sugar in small bowl. Pour over warm slice; cool. Cut slice into squares when cold. **If you have a favourite recipe to share, please email it to the Parish Office.**

A PRAYER FOR THE EARTH – by Pope Francis – LAUDATO SI' WEEK

All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions. Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right. All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

Ascension of the Lord · Year C	
1 st Reading	Acts 1:1-11
2 nd Reading	Ephesians 1:17-23
Gospel	Luke 24:46-53

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

PENTECOST SUNDAY · Year C	
1 st Reading	Acts 2:1-11
2 nd Reading	Romans 8:8-17
Gospel	John 14:15-16,23-26

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday	5:30pm
Sunday	8:00am
☞ Saturday Mass recorded	

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

*One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes
Moving forward as a Parish Family*

Patrick Vaughan · *Parish Priest*

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm · *Assisting*

Lauren Faulks · *Parish Secretary*

Tues, Wed 9am-3:30pm; Fri 9:30am-2:30pm

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WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	☞ 5:30pm
Wednesday	9:00am
Thursday	9:00am
Friday	9:30am
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	