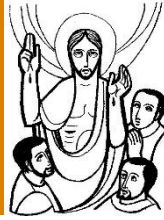


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
6 / 7 APRIL 2024
2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER + YEAR B
50 DAYS OF EASTER! ALLELUIA!

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Doubting

So, what is the trouble for this famous man, Thomas, in the Gospel? His doubts echo through history. We often assume that he was just a tough guy who had trouble trusting. But it would help you and me in our own doubts if we could understand more about this person who couldn't believe in the resurrection.

We call him Doubting Thomas.

First, who was he? His real name in Aramaic, Te'oma (Thomas), meant twin, and he was also called Didymus, which meant the same thing in Greek. So, he likely was a twin, perhaps of Matthew.

He might have been a bit glum. For instance, he gave a practical but gloomy response when Jesus wanted to go back to Judea after Lazarus died. None of the disciples wanted to go there, because they knew the leaders had tried to stone Jesus (John 10:24-30). At that point Jesus gave some high-minded talk about how much they would learn by going, but Thomas ignored these reasoning. His sarcastic reply is a perfect picture of him: "Alright, let us also go die with him" (John 11:16).



Here Thomas reminds me a bit of Joe Btfsplk, the famous Al Capp cartoon character from yesteryear who walked around with a perpetual rain cloud over his head!



Much later, just before the passion, Jesus will say, "Where I am going you know the way." This was really a spiritual statement about going to the Father, but Thomas took it literally (John 14:3-6). He gives a very matter-of-fact response, but rooted in emotion. In summary he says, "You're talking in secrets! We can't follow you if don't say where you are going! Help us."

Thomas loved Jesus doggedly, that is for sure. But he feared the dangerous situations that Jesus always walked right into. Thomas' practical nature looked frankly at them and drew the pragmatic, pessimistic conclusion. Thomas the twin had twin emotions, love and fear.

Is it any wonder, then, that in this Sunday's Gospel Thomas laid down unflinching requirements for believing in the resurrection? Take a look. His worst fears already had come true: Jesus had been killed. To deal with this sorrow Thomas resolved to accept the death stolidly. He would never slip and talk about his departed friend in the present tense, as if he were still here. Thomas the pragmatist knew that Jesus was dead and gone. He had predicted it.

Then came the new news.

"Didymus, Jesus is alive! You were away, but suddenly he stood there among us even though all the doors were locked! He talked to us!"

No. NO! Thomas' heart could not accept it. He wanted it too much. He could not bear to believe it. "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25)

This is exactly in character for Thomas/Didymus. These tough words are really a protection for a heart that would break in pieces if it were fooled by another false hope. "The only way I would believe such nonsense is if you give me absolute proof."

Jesus gave it. Fingers in nail marks, hand in side.

Thomas had always belonged to Jesus. Yes, he was cynical, but when he got the practical proof he needed, he sank to the ground in heart-rending surrender.

"My Lord and my God."

What a great story for us at Eastertide.

St John's gospel, written long after the other three gospels, is a meditation upon the events of the Saviour's life filled with Resurrection light. It is not surprising, therefore, that the gospel readings for the Sundays of the Easter season are from the fourth gospel. Today's readings are a celebration of the Resurrection faith that makes it possible to know and enter into the Paschal Mystery. They come to a climax with the story of how the original 'doubting Thomas' found faith.



This gospel invites us to share the experience of the disciples, finding faith through the coming of the Lord into their midst on the evening of his Resurrection Day. What a dramatic situation – they are to meet the one whom they have deserted and abandoned to his fate. There is no word of reproach, no reference to what has taken place, only 'Peace be with you' and again 'Peace be with you' – you are forgiven come once more into my friendship. Their



✠✠ finding faith is a meeting with God's generous and reconciling love. And he sends them forth with the good news of the forgiveness of sins.

For many, faith does not come easy and they are helped by the testimony that echoes down through the centuries of hard headed Thomas – as he owns that it is indeed the crucified one – the one who shared the deepest darkness of the world we have made – to whom we can entrust ourselves, as our 'Lord' and our 'God'.

The Resurrection faith today's liturgy celebrates is a faith which must find expression in action. The reading from Acts describes the first community of Christian faith, no longer a group of discouraged and disillusioned followers, but galvanised into action: sustained by the power of the apostles' witness, united in heart and soul, sharing what they had with those in need. The apostolic witness and preaching are echoed for us in the reading from John's first letter. The faith that unites believers in the Resurrection is a 'victory' – not a victory achieved by violence and power, but the triumph that belongs to those who have truly learned the ways of the Risen Lord – whose greeting was 'Peace' and the forgiveness of sins.

Authentic Resurrection faith awakens a sense of responsibility and brings a call to mission: 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you'.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 4:32-35

- ✠ The early Church's response to Christ's life, death, and resurrection was their treatment of possessions. Compare your attitude toward possessions with theirs.
- ✠ Who are the disadvantaged people in your immediate life? Can you take care of at least some of their needs? What, if anything, can you do about the basic necessities of people in your extended world? If you joined forces with another person or group could you do anything to alleviate the suffering of these people?

Second Reading 1 John 5:1-6

- ✠ Does what you have done make you a Christian, or what Christ has done? Which is more important, belief in Jesus or performance of good deeds? If you believe deeply and personally in Jesus will good deeds spring from that belief and love?
- ✠ "... We know that we love the children of God when we love God and obey his commandments." Love of God presumes love for others. If the two love are so connected and if one form of love always results in the other, does it matter which comes first?

Gospel John 20:19-31

- ✠ Genesis 2:7 says "God blew the breath of life" into the nostrils. ... In John 20:22 Jesus breathes on the disciples. Could we pray for the breath of the Spirit to help with problems today? What about police kneeling on a person's neck like with George Floyd? And problems with breathing due to climate change?
- ✠ Thomas wants an extraordinary sign in order to believe. Jesus shows his wounds to him in an ordinary way, in the community. What does Pope Francis say to us about Jesus coming to us in our community? And in the name of Jesus' wounds, what would the community's action be?

Dear brothers and sisters, the invitation given to Thomas is valid for us as well. We, where do we seek the Risen One? In some special event, in some spectacular or amazing religious manifestation, only in our emotions and feelings? Or rather in the community, in the Church, accepting the challenge of staying there, even though she (the Church) is not perfect? Despite all of her limitations and failures, which are our limitations and failings, our Mother Church is the Body of Christ.

And it is there, in the Body of Christ, that, still now and forever, the greatest signs of his love can be found impressed. Let us ask ourselves, however, if in the name of this love, in the name of Jesus' wounds, we are willing to open our arms to those who are wounded by life, excluding no one from God's mercy but welcoming everyone, each person like a brother, like a sister. God welcomes everyone. God welcomes everyone.

– Pope Francis, 2nd Sunday of Easter, 16 April 2023

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS AT EASTER

Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!

Today throughout the world there resounds the message proclaimed two thousand years ago from Jerusalem: "Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, has been raised!" (Mark 16:6).

The Church relives the amazement of the women who went to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week. The tomb of Jesus had been sealed with a great stone. Today too, great stones, heavy stones, block the hopes of humanity: the stone of war, the stone of humanitarian crises, the stone of human rights violations, the stone of human trafficking, and other stones as well. Like the women disciples of Jesus, we ask one another: "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" (cf. Mark 16:3).

This is the amazing discovery of that Easter morning: the stone, the immense stone, was rolled away. The astonishment of the women is our astonishment as well: the tomb of Jesus is open and it is empty! From ✠✠



✠✠ this, everything begins anew! A new path leads through that empty tomb: the path that none of us, but God alone, could open: the path of life in the midst of death, the path of peace in the midst of war, the path of reconciliation in the midst of hatred, the path of fraternity in the midst of hostility.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is risen! He alone has the power to roll away the stones that block the path to life. He, the living One, is himself that path. He is the Way: the way that leads to life, the way of peace, reconciliation and fraternity. He opens that path, humanly impossible, because he alone takes away the sin of the world and forgives us our sins. For without God's forgiveness, that stone cannot be removed. Without the forgiveness of sins, there is no overcoming the barriers of prejudice, mutual recrimination, the presumption that we are always right and others wrong. Only the risen Christ, by granting us the forgiveness of our sins, opens the way for a renewed world.

Jesus alone opens up before us the doors of life, those doors that continually we shut with the wars spreading throughout the world. Today we want, first and foremost, to turn our eyes to the Holy City of Jerusalem, that witnessed the mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, and to all the Christian communities of the Holy Land.

My thoughts go especially to the victims of the many conflicts worldwide, beginning with those in Israel and Palestine, and in Ukraine. May the risen Christ open a path of peace for the war-torn peoples of those regions. In calling for respect for the principles of international law, I express my hope for a general exchange of all prisoners between Russia and Ukraine: all for the sake of all!

I appeal once again that access to humanitarian aid be ensured to Gaza, and call once more for the prompt release of the hostages seized on 7 October last and for an immediate cease-fire in the Strip.

Let us not allow the current hostilities to continue to have grave repercussions on the civil population, by now at the limit of its endurance, and above all on the children. How much suffering we see in the eyes of the children: the children in those lands at war have forgotten how to smile! With those eyes, they ask us: Why? Why all this death? Why all this destruction? War is always an absurdity, war is always a defeat! Let us not allow the strengthening winds of war to blow on Europe and the Mediterranean. Let us not yield to the logic of weapons and rearming. Peace is never made with arms, but with outstretched hands and open hearts.

Brothers and sisters, let us not forget Syria, which for thirteen years has suffered from the effects of a long and devastating war. So many deaths and disappearances, so much poverty and destruction, call for a response on the part of everyone, and of the international community.

My thoughts turn today in a special way to Lebanon, which has for some time experienced institutional impasse and a deepening economic and social crisis, now aggravated by the hostilities on its border with Israel. May the Risen Lord console the beloved Lebanese people and sustain the entire country in its vocation to be a land of encounter, coexistence and pluralism.

I also think in particular of the region of the Western Balkans, where significant steps are being taken towards integration in the European project. May ethnic, cultural and confessional differences not be a cause of division, but rather a source of enrichment for all of Europe and for the world as a whole.

I likewise encourage the discussions taking place between Armenia and Azerbaijan, so that, with the support of the international community, they can pursue dialogue, assist the displaced, respect the places of worship of the various religious confessions, and arrive as soon as possible at a definitive peace agreement.

May the risen Christ open a path of hope to all those who in other parts of the world are suffering from violence, conflict, food insecurity and the effects of climate change. May the Lord grant consolation to the victims of terrorism in all its forms. Let us pray for all those who have lost their lives and implore the repentance and conversion of the perpetrators of those crimes.

May the risen Lord assist the Haitian people, so that there can soon be an end to the acts of violence, devastation and bloodshed in that country, and that it can advance on the path to democracy and fraternity.

May Christ grant consolation and strength to the Rohingya, beset by a grave humanitarian crisis, and open a path to reconciliation in Myanmar, torn for years now by internal conflicts, so that every logic of violence may be definitively abandoned.

May the Lord open paths of peace on the African continent, especially for the suffering peoples in Sudan and in the entire region of the Sahel, in the Horn of Africa, in the region of Kivu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the province of Capo Delgado in Mozambique, and bring an end to the prolonged situation of drought which affects vast areas and provokes famine and hunger.

May the Risen One make the light of his face shine upon migrants and on all those who are passing through a period of economic difficulty, and offer them consolation and hope in their moment of need. May Christ guide all persons of good will to unite themselves in solidarity, in order to address together the many challenges which loom over the poorest families in their search for a better life and happiness.

On this day when we celebrate the life given us in the resurrection of the Son, let us remember the infinite love of God for each of us: a love that overcomes every limit and every weakness. And yet how much the precious gift of life is despised! How many children cannot even be born? How many die of hunger and are deprived of essential care or are victims of abuse and violence? How many lives are made objects of trafficking for the increasing commerce in human beings?

Brothers and sisters, on the day when Christ has set us free from the slavery of death, I appeal to all who have political responsibilities to spare no efforts in combatting the scourge of human trafficking, by working tirelessly to



✠✠ dismantle the networks of exploitation and to bring freedom to those who are their victims. May the Lord comfort their families, above all those who anxiously await news of their loved ones, and ensure them comfort and hope. May the light of the resurrection illumine our minds and convert our hearts, and make us aware of the value of every human life, which must be welcomed, protected and loved.

A happy Easter to all!

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	8 Apr	The Annunciation of the Lord	Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10	Hebrews 10:4-10	Luke 1:26-38
Tuesday	9 Apr	Tuesday of the 2 nd Week of Easter	Acts 4:32-37	John 3:7-15	
Wednesday	10 Apr	Wednesday of the 2 nd Week of Easter	Acts 5:17-26	John 3:16-21	
Thursday	11 Apr	St Stanislaus, bishop, martyr	Acts 5:27-33	John 3:31-36	
Friday	12 Apr	Friday of the 2 nd Week of Easter	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15	
Saturday	13 Apr	Saturday of the 2 nd Week of Easter	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21	
Sunday	14 Apr	3 RD SUNDAY OF THE 50 DAYS OF EASTER • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>			

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Sunday, 7 April	03:00	Daylight Saving ends – turn the clocks BACK one hour
✦ Wednesday, 10 April	11:00	Catholic Women's League Meeting
	17:30	Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

POSITION VACANT – EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

An exciting opportunity exists for a suitably experienced and qualified person to apply for the role of Executive Assistant. Please visit the website: <https://www.dow.org.au/JOBS/> For all enquiries, call Robin Williams on (02) 4222 2402. Applications can be emailed to recruitment@dow.org.au Closing date: Tuesday, 9 April 2024

RAY'S RAPTUROUS RECIPES RETURN – CHOCOLATE CRACKLES® TUTTI FRUTTI

4 cups Rice Bubbles; 1 cup icing sugar, sifted; 1 cup desiccated coconut; 250g copha, chopped; 3 tbsp cocoa; 24 patty cases; ¾ cup mixed dried fruit; 1 tsp cinnamon.

In a large bowl, mix the Rice Bubbles, icing sugar, cocoa and coconut. Slowly melt the copha in a saucepan over a low heat. Allow to cool slightly. Add to Rice Bubbles mixture, stirring until well combined. Add ¾ cup mixed dried fruit. Add 1 tsp cinnamon to bowl with Rice Bubbles mixture. Spoon mixture into paper patty cases and refrigerate until firm.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Collaboration among all Christians is crucial in addressing the pastoral challenges of our time. In secularized societies, this enables the voice of the Gospel to have greater force. In contexts of poverty, it impels people to join forces in the service of justice, peace and the dignity of the least. In all instances, it is a resource for healing the culture of hatred, division and war that pits groups, peoples and nations against each other.

– XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (Synod on Synodality) Synthesis Report.

AN EASTER THOUGHT

The Risen Christ is the all-embracing, loving incarnation of the Divine, extended without limit, totally inclusive, unconditionally welcoming. Christ is risen, the light has dawned, and hope is born anew has made.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website	NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY MASS TIMES
2 ND SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR B	3 RD SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR B	
1 st Reading Acts 4:32-35	1 st Reading Acts 4:8-12	Saturday 17:30
2 nd Reading 1 John 5:1-6	2 nd Reading 1 John 3:1-2	Sunday 08:00
Gospel John 20:19-31	Gospel John 10:11-18	☞ Saturday Mass is recorded.
Parish of St Michael – Thirroul <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i> Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i> Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00	🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au 📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive 📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515 ☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976 📧 thirroul@dow.org.au Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560	THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES Monday _____ Tuesday 17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>