



Welcopme to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN

11 / 12 MAY 2024

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD ✦ YEAR B

50 DAYS OF EASTER! ALLELUIA!

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Stay With Us

A presider at one post-quarantine Mass admitted, with a beautiful poignancy, how much he missed the people. The parishioners and their networks of life had gone, restricted during the pandemic to cope with living apart from each other, and sometimes from their families, and certainly their friends.

This must have been the kind of hollowness felt by the disciples in the sudden absence of Jesus from their world. Especially was this true of the women—who had loved him so much. The passion had been the worst part. What could ever fill such cavernous emptiness? Having tunnelled through the narrow passageway of death—as we will one day—we had seen Jesus giving everything he was to the Father out of sheer love. What sort of lives could any Christian have after the very centre of their lives had been taken away?

Alright, you say, but there was the resurrection.

Correct, but we have seen how confusing this new resurrected presence was to the disciples. “I will not believe this unless I put my hands on him,” said doubting Thomas. And Christ’s new presence did not last so very long, did it?

There was an event called the Ascension that again “emptied the pews,” so to speak, all over again. It was joyous, yes, but why did he have to go so far away, and forever?

But of course, instead of there being nothing left, there was now humanity transformed. Jesus had graduated from life into LIFE. He was marked with the totality of love and was on his way back to the dynamic swirling, Trinitarian circle of love from which his humanity had issued in the first place. He lingered after the Resurrection mainly in order to tell us about it, to comfort us, to ease the loss.

“Stay in Jerusalem until my Spirit comes to fill your heart,” Jesus said to his followers.

Ok, but quite difficult to understand.

They were to be filled with all humility and gentleness, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit. (Ephesians 4:2-5)

And that was their answer and ours. The immense act of modest love that was the resurrection was now to be poured into believers. Jesus would continue to be alive within the world after all, but in a different form, that of the Holy Spirit. God the Spirit would be alive within their bodies and those of their neighbours. Loss and absence would be turned into real presence. These would linger in time by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion, we take his Body and Blood into our body and blood. The Spirit helps us accept his whole life, death, and resurrection as these settle into us and into others around us. This real presence now abides forever in our midst, urging us, gently nudging us to say yes.

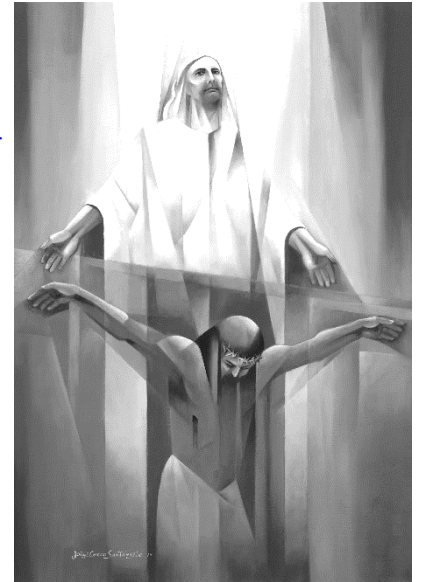
To put it another way, the church is not closed – there is no lock down.

From the moment of his resurrection triumph, the Saviour was living in the bosom of the Father. The faith of the Church had its beginnings in meetings with the Risen Lord – in which he ‘showed himself alive’ and ‘told them about the kingdom of God’ – preparing them for the great mission that would be theirs. Today’s celebration reminds us that these meetings finally came to an end – after ‘forty days’, as Luke puts it in our reading from Acts. Luke is preparing us for what will occur after ‘not many days’: at the Pentecostal celebration, fifty days after the Passover.

Jesus is not abandoning his friends. On the contrary, he tells them to look forward to ‘what the Father has promised’. When they are ‘baptised with the Holy Spirit’ – the Spirit who is the very expression of the life he shares with the Father – he will be with them in all that they are called to be and do. The Lord’s new presence will fill with new life the Church which is about to be launched forth on its mission – to bring the power and blessings of the Lord’s Paschal Mystery ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Luke), ‘to all creation’ (Mark).

According to the Gospel of Luke the angels tell the disciples not to seek the Lord ‘in the sky’, but to take up the mission they have received, to be his ‘witnesses’ throughout their world. The era of the pilgrim Church that is about to begin – the angels tell them – will end when Jesus returns, and the Church’s life in faith and sacraments gives way to the absolute fulfilment of the final Kingdom.

Our readings describe the task of the Church as it journeys through history towards the final Kingdom, bringing the ‘Good News to all creation’. Its life together – in the power of the Resurrection – should be a living sign, confirming the message it brings. ‘Charity, selflessness, gentleness and patience’ should be an expression of the ‘unity of the Spirit’ – the unity which only God can give, the unity of the ‘one Body’ of Christ, the unity of those who know that they are called together by the ‘one God who is Father of all’.



✠✠ United, through their ‘baptism’, in the blessings of the Paschal Mystery, Church members should share the many gifts they receive from ‘the one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things’. Doing so they will show their world the pattern of authentic human fulfilment, in ‘the fullness of Christ’.

On Ascension Day we celebrate our Christian hope – where Jesus, our brother and our Lord has gone we shall follow. The pilgrim Church must bring to our struggling world the Good News that, through his Paschal Mystery, the Saviour calls the whole of the human family to live forever with him in the bosom of the Father.

Today, the Church celebrates the climax of Jesus’ life. At his death he entered into the fullness of communion with God which we speak of as ‘heaven’ where he became ‘great king over all the earth’. Since Easter we have had a period of forty days in which we have been thinking about all the different ways in which we experience Jesus being present among us. We have been thinking of the various ways in which his love is radiating out from the Church which, as Paul tells us in the Second Reading, ‘is his Body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation’ (Ephesians 1:23). As we continue to preach the Gospel, Jesus is with us, in the words of today’s Gospel: ‘confirming the word by the signs which accompany it’ (Mark 16:20). The 40 days is itself symbolic of our life’s journey. We know that he will be with us at every stage of our journey through life.

Today, however, we begin by forgetting ourselves and just looking at him, and expressing our joy that at the end of his life’s journey, God raised him to life and took him to himself, into the eternal embrace of love that we call heaven. Like us, Jesus spent his life dreaming of this day, his whole being longing to see God face to face and to enjoy, without distraction, the communion of love for which we are all created and for which we all yearn. As we love him, so our hearts are happy for him. His time of waiting, his time of suffering is over. Nothing can ever come between the longing of his heart and the joy of experiencing his heart’s desire.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 1:1-11

- ✠ “Then they prayed.” Do you pray before you make important choices? Would you feel comfortable “casting lots,” throwing dice, or flipping a coin after you pray? How would you make a final choice like the one they had to make?
- ✠ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” This could be the definition of evangelization. Pope Francis says that Jesus himself is the model of evangelization. How important is listening to people’s needs in being a witness and evangelist for Christ?

Second Reading Ephesians 1:17-23

- ✠ “God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God and God in them.” Whenever you experience true love, is God present? Can we find God in all true love? So, does it work both ways: love of God leads to love of neighbour, and love of neighbour leads to love of God?
- ✠ “... live in a manner worthy of the call you have received ... “ If your call isn’t to be an evangelist or a pastor, what is it? Could it be to feed the hungry? To lead Eco-justice or social justice? Help people find jobs or housing?

Gospel Mark 16:15-20

- ✠ Why does Pope Francis say Jesus remains forever with the disciples (and with us) even though he ascended into heaven? What is the second reason for our great joy or confidence?

God, the Son of God, descends and becomes human, 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 man, 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-man, and he prays for us.

And this should give us confidence, or rather joy, great joy! And the second reason for joy is Jesus’ promise. He told us: “I will send you the Holy Spirit.”

– Pope Francis, *Regina Caeli* for 6th Sunday of Easter, 9 May 2021

- ✠ Jesus said signs would accompany those who believed. Most of us will not be picking up serpents with our hands or drinking deadly things without being harmed. What kinds of signs might you see today when you or someone else proclaims the Gospel in some way? Crises (racial, environmental, trafficking) brought into the light? Voice for the voiceless? Change for the good?

MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day is a special occasion that celebrates and honours motherhood and Mums nationwide. It's a time to honour the powerful maternal bond that connects Mother and child and celebrate the influence our Mums have on us as individuals.

In Australia, Mother's Day is celebrated in May – specifically, the second Sunday of May.

Mother's Day as we know it today all started with an initiative from Anna Jarvis in the early 20th Century. Jarvis started her Mother's Day campaign in 1905 in the USA – the same year her own mother, Ann, died.

Ann Jarvis was a peace activist who looked after wounded soldiers in the United States Civil War. Ann also started a work club she named the “Mother's Day Work Clubs” to speak out against public health issues. Anna Jarvis wanted to honour her mother, and continue the work she had spent her lifetime undertaking. She decided that it was only fair to set aside a day for celebrating mothers because she believed a mother is “the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world.” Originally, she called Mother's Day “Mothers Friendship Day”.

The first modern Mother's Day was celebrated in 1908 when Jarvis held a remembrance day for her own mother at St Andrew's Methodist Church (in Grafton, West Virginia). This church now holds the International Mother's Day Shrine.

Anna Jarvis also founded the Mother's Day International Association. All along, her intention with Mother's Day was to get people to celebrate the mother figure in their life (rather than celebrating motherhood as a whole).

In 1914, US President Woodrow Wilson was the person who made the Mother's Day holiday official (this year also marked the US's first official Mother's Day). The rest is history.

Celebrating Mother's Day is a fairly new pastime, but celebrations honouring mothers have been held for thousands of years. Some notable examples include: Christian Mothering Sunday (originally a commemoration of the Mother Church, not motherhood directly); the festivals held in ancient Greece to honour mother goddesses Cybele and Rhea; the Roman Festival of Hilaria.

There are a number of Christian blessings of mothers and a number of prayers for use on Mother's Day.

✠ **Tender, gentle God of love, bend down your ear: bless the mothers of our families. Bless them with the strength of your Spirit, as they taught their children to walk. Bless them with the melody of your love, as they shared how to talk and sing. Bless them with a place at your eternal dinner table, they who fed and nurtured life. Bless them today with good things, with good health, with pride in their children, with joy, love and laughter. Surround them with many good friends. May they who carried life in their wombs be carried one day to your divine embrace. May your blessings descend on all mothers. Amen!**

✠ **A Mother's Day Prayer for Those Hurting on Mother's Day**

Dear God, some days feel too hard. We're hurting. Struggling. Fighting fear and worry at every turn. Thank you in the midst of it all, you haven't left us to fend for ourselves. Forgive us for doubting you are there. Forgive us for thinking you've forgotten. Forgive us for believing we somehow know the better way. You are fully trustworthy. You are All Powerful. You are Able. You are Lord over every situation no matter how difficult it may seem. You are Healer and will never waste the grief we carry today. You will use all things for good in some way. Anything is possible with you. Nothing is too difficult for you. We pray for those who grieve today. We ask for your comfort to surround those who weep. We pray for the peace of your presence to cover our minds and thoughts, as you remind us, the enemy can never steal us out of your hands. He never has the final say over our lives. We are kept safe in your presence forever, whether in life or in death. We thank you that your ways are higher than our ways and your thoughts are bigger than our thoughts. We lay it all down at your feet, every burden, every care. Believing that is the safest place for it to be. We love you Lord, we need your fresh grace.

✠ **A Son's Prayer for His Mum on Mother's Day**

Lord, thank you for Mum. Thank you for the woman who gave birth to me and has loved me ever since. I'm grateful for her impact on my life, for her presence, for her love. Thank you for every moment she was there to pick me up from school, and every moment she helped me heal from heartbreak. Thank you for every phone call, hug, compliment, even complaint. Thank you that she cares. Thank you that despite us not always getting along, our love has endured. I'm grateful for Mum, and pray that you help me to better honour her every day. Show me how I can express appreciation for what she has done. Help me to see all that she has done. God, please help me practice patience when I feel like she's being too much, or too bossy, or too much like a mum. Honestly God, who would I be without Mum? I pray to you now, God, asking you to bless the remainder of her life. Please bring her comfort when sickness and body aches occur. Please give her continued direction for her life. Keep her mind renewed. God, I ask that the remainder of her life may be enriched, that she would still feel like she has purpose to fulfill, despite having accomplished so much already. And may she not just continue to be a blessing upon my life, but also my father's, my siblings, other relatives, friends, and anyone else who knows Mum. Thank you for her, God. Thank you God, very much.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	13 May	Monday of the 7 th Week of Easter	Acts 19:1-8	John 16:29-33
Tuesday	14 May	Saint Matthias, apostle	Acts 1:15-17,20-26	John 15:9-17
Wednesday	15 May	Wednesday of the 7 th Week of Easter	Acts 20:28-38	John 17:11-19
Wednesday	16 May	Thursday of the 7 th Week of Easter	Acts 22:30, 23:6-11	John 17:20-26
Wednesday	17 May	Friday of the 7 th Week of Easter	Acts 25:13-21	John 21:15-19
Saturday	18 May	Saturday of the 7 th Week of Easter	Acts 28:16-20	John 21:20-25
Sunday	19 May	PENTECOST SUNDAY • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 11/12 May Mothers' Day – Special Blessing of all Mothers
- ✦ Monday, 13 May Confirmation 2024 Enrolments close
- ✦ Weekend, 18/19 May Baptisms
- ✦ Thursday, 30 May 19:15 Baptism Preparation for June Baptisms

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2024: THURSDAY, 27 JUNE

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in our Parish on Thursday, 27 June 2024 for to Year 6 (or older) students. **Enrolments** for the Sacrament of Confirmation 2024 close on Monday, 13 May 2024. Enrolment Forms for 2024 are downloadable from the Parish website or may be collected from the Parish Office:

http://thirroulcatholic.org.au/images/stories/02_Enrolment_Form_Confirmation_2024.pdf

Enrolment Forms are to be returned to the Parish Office, not to the School Office.

AGEING WITH CONFIDENCE

Are you or a loved one looking to access aged care but are unsure where to begin? CatholicCare Wollongong has industry specialists who are here to help you make informed decisions. They will help you understand: accessing support services; CatholicCare services for older people; keeping your mind and body fit; advocating for and supporting older people and their families. CatholicCare Wollongong are conducting an Ageing With Confidence session – a FREE event with morning tea – at the **Fraternity Club**, 11 Bourke Street, Fairy Meadow, on **Wednesday, 5 June, 09:00 to 13:00.**

The half-day information session will provide seniors with practical information on the aged care system and healthy ageing. Expert presentations from staff at CatholicCare will be joined by presenters from the Seniors Rights Services NSW and the NSW Fire and Rescue Service to talk about home safety.

Places are limited, so you will need to register: 4227 1122 or www.catholiccare.dow.org.au/events

THIRROUL LADIES BOWLING CLUB – MANGO FRUIT CAKE + AMBROSIA SALAD

500 grams mixed fruit; 6 glazed cherries cut in half; 1 tin mangoes. Chop mangoes roughly, place in a saucepan and simmer for 5 minutes. Cool slightly. Preheat oven to 160°C. Add to saucepan 1½ teaspoons baking powder, 1½ cups self-raising flour, 2 lightly beaten eggs. Put in square or round tin. Bake at 160°C for 1 hour, or two loaf tins, bake for 50 mins.

1 can (420g) mandarin oranges, drained; 1 can (225g) pineapple tidbits, drained; 1 cup miniature marshmallows; 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut; 1 cup sour cream; In a large bowl, combine the oranges, pineapple, marshmallows and coconut. Add sour cream and toss to mix. Cover and refrigerate for several hours.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Acts 1:1-11
2 nd Reading	Ephesians 1:17-23
Gospel	Mark 16:15-20

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

PENTECOST SUNDAY • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Acts 2:1-11
2 nd Reading	Galatians 5:16-25
Gospel	John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday	17:30
Sunday	08:00
☞ Saturday Mass is 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

Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00

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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>	