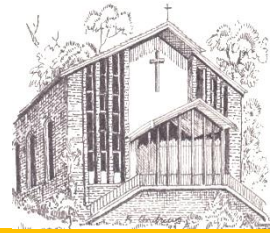




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



25 / 26 MAY 2019
6TH SUNDAY OF THE 50 DAYS OF EASTER ✦ YEAR C
Propagation of the Faith Appeal

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Closer Than Ever

In Sunday's liturgy, Jesus says, "If you loved me you would rejoice."

Imagine this: your best friend is leaving town, the one you had counted on for any trouble you just needed to share. There is no way to change his/her going, it is virtually certain.

What do you do with your sorrow?

In the reading, Jesus was leaving.

He told Mary Magdalene he must go to the Father. He had plunged into death and he swam to shore, but nevertheless could not stay on in this world.

We sorrow, big time.

Sunday, this is the story of the Gospel. The crucifixion had taken him away from us, and now his ascension will make his absence completely final. We, along with the apostles, do not want to lose him one more time! We are aghast that our friend is going away.

Think of the experience of a funeral. You may be truly glad that your beloved no longer has the pains and shortages of this life. But you do not get your own burden lifted, you get more added to it. He or she is gone.

Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, I am going away and I will come back to you." Going away but coming back? What kind of sense does this make?

Start with the pre-Jesus world. God the Father had been with the people for all ages. The First (Old) Testament tells this over and over. But God the Father stayed unknowable in very important ways. He told Moses that he, God, would pass by the mouth of a cave where Moses was, and ... when my glory passes I will set you in the cleft of the rock and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand, so that you may see my back; but my face may not be seen. (Exodus 33: 22) To see God directly would destroy a human being.

To close this gap, God decided to tell us everything about himself in a way we could understand. He speaks out his very self, using a Word that left nothing unsaid. Jesus was that Word, spoken in the large language called humanity. Now God can be known because we can know Jesus.

Jesus dies, resurrects and ascends to the Father from whom he came. Are we abandoned? No. Just as the Father had done, Jesus actually spoke out his very self in a further Word that left nothing of himself unsaid. That Word is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the full reality of a human being called Jesus, who is already the very interior reality of God. ✨ ✨



↪↪ We are to be closer to Jesus and to the Father even than the apostles were!



If you and I say yes to this Spirit, we will know that Jesus is with us, just as sheep know the voice of their shepherd. In knowing Jesus, we will know the presence of the Father. We will find him in the Mass, in the Great Sacrament of Baptism, in prayer, in the people around us. We will be side by side with the closest possible presence of the God of love.

So, we needn't sorrow. Nice as it might have seemed to experience Jesus in his physical company, we now have a much closer relation to him in the here and now.

The days in which the Risen Lord has shown himself to his disciples, leading them to full faith in him, are coming to an end – 'I am going away, and shall return'. The disciples have come to recognise, that faith in what God has done for the world in Christ brings a daunting task: 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you'; 'By this love you have for one another everyone will know that you are my disciples'.

That same task has been passed on to the Church of every age; but today's gospel reading brings encouragement. The first disciples became aware of the extraordinary resources that had been given to them, as they took up their task.

'Keeping the word' of the Saviour had a practical meaning for them: putting into practice what the teaching and example of Jesus asked of them. But, whatever age they live in, the disciples of the Risen Lord do not take up this task alone. The Father and the Son 'make their home' in them. Have we really taken to heart all that these words we have heard so often really mean? We are invited to share the humble stories of our lives with these almighty, constant and merciful companions. As they took up their mission, the first disciples experienced the power of the Word of God. If we become familiar with the great story of the Scriptures, we shall find them a constant source of inspiration and strength – nourishment for our faith in every circumstance. But the greatest gift of all is the Holy Spirit, the full expression of the love and joy that unites the Father and Son dwelling in us. The Spirit of Christ living in us will 'teach' us the ways of God, 'reminding' us of all that the Saviour has given to the world. No matter how unworthy we may feel, we are invited to enter into the love of the Father, Son and Spirit 'poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us' (Romans 5), inviting us to journey confidently towards the final Kingdom, where they will be our eternal joy.

Last week, our reading from the Book of Revelation spoke of the first Christians' vision of the Church brought into existence by the Saviour's Paschal Mystery, 'the new Jerusalem, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband'. Today's reading, a continuation of the same chapter, reminds us that the Church is the fulfilment of all the hopes of Israel – something we have tended to neglect in our Catholic awareness: twelve tribes, twelve gates, twelve apostles; filled with 'the radiant glory of God and the Lamb'.

But today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles also reminds us that, with all its blessings and resources, the Church will still face practical problems in the carrying out of its mission – problems that must be patiently resolved, in a fraternal spirit open to the guidance that is promised from on high.

PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH APPEAL

Sister Stan Mumuni is at the forefront of the Church's work in reaching out to children in need in Ghana. As the director of the Nazareth Home for God's Children, Sister Stan works endlessly to provide education, healthcare and a safe home for children rescued from life-threatening situations.

In line with traditional beliefs, in parts of Ghana, children born with a disability, or whose mother passes during childbirth, are considered to be 'spirit children' and thus at risk of being harmed or killed. The Church in Ghana is dedicated to protecting these children and educating families to ensure every child has a chance to live a full life. The Nazareth Home for God's Children is among the pioneers in this crucial mission.

Today you have the opportunity to personally partner with the Church in Ghana and offer monthly support to this essential work. All gifts will be directed to life-saving projects for children in need. Your one-off gift today is also very much appreciated and will make a great difference to those in need. ☎️ **1800 257 296** catholicmission.org.au/Ghana



SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB

All are invited to a discussion on *Why Do We Have Scapegoats? Some Insights From René Girard*. The speaker is **Sr Susan Connelly**, a Sister of St Joseph who has been involved in education as a primary school teacher and principal. She also has taught Scripture in State schools full-time for ten years. Her involvement with the Timorese people has been extensive, mainly in cultural pursuits and justice advocacy. The people of West Papua are also of concern, as are asylum seekers. Susan has gained a PhD applying René Girard's insights on violence to Australia's relationship with East Timor. Venue: **Woonona Bulli RSL Club**, 455-459 Princes Highway, Woonona, **7:30pm–9:00pm on Tuesday, 28 May. All welcome!**

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Book of Revelation had its origin in a time of crisis, but it remains valid and meaningful for Christians of all time. In the face of apparently insuperable evil, either from within or from without, all Christians are called to trust in Jesus' promise, "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Those who remain steadfast in their faith and confidence in the risen Lord need have no fear. Suffering, persecution, even death by martyrdom, though remaining impenetrable mysteries of evil, do not comprise an absurd dead end. No matter what adversity or sacrifice Christians may endure, they will in the end triumph over Satan and his forces because of their fidelity to Christ the victor. This is the enduring message of the book; it is a message of hope and consolation and challenge for all who dare to believe.

The author of the book calls himself John, who because of his Christian faith has been exiled to the rocky island of Patmos, a Roman penal colony. Although he never claims to be John the apostle, whose name is attached to the fourth gospel, he was so identified by several of the early Church Fathers. However, the vocabulary, grammar and style make it doubtful that the book could have been put into its present form by the same person(s) responsible for the fourth gospel. Nevertheless, there are definite linguistic and theological affinities between the two books. The tone of the letters to the seven churches is indicative of the great authority the author enjoyed over the Christian communities in Asia. It is possible, therefore, that he was a disciple of John the apostle, who is traditionally associated with that part of the world. The date of the book in its present form is probably near the end of the reign of Roman Emperor Domitian (81–96), a fierce persecutor of the Christians.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Tuesday 28 May 7:30pm Spirituality in the Pub
Thursday 30 May Baptism Preparation Meeting
Friday 31 May The Visitation of Mary
Saturday 1 Jun St Justin, martyr



5,772 rescues since 1 July 18; last week **5,728**

SOCIAL JUSTICE

“Yes, I have many human faults and failures... But God bends down and uses us, you and me, to be his love and his compassion in the world; God bears our sins, our troubles and our faults. God depends on us to love the world and to show how much God loves it. If we are too concerned with ourselves, we will have no time left for others”.

– Mother Teresa of Calcutta as cited in *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

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

AN EASTER THOUGHT

In the lead up to his death Jesus is well aware of what is to occur. In the 24 hours prior to his crucifixion, just before the Passover feast, Jesus does something odd. He washes his disciples feet. The teaching moment for Jesus comes after he performs this washing. He explains to his disciples that the reason he does this is to be an example of service. They are to understand this for themselves, serving and loving one-another in similar ways. Through his life, his ministry and his death on the cross Jesus has not just given us a symbol of humility and service but has acted in humility and service toward us. *May we come to a new appreciation of this great act of humility and service, for us, for our neighbour, and for our world.*

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Sixth Sunday of Easter • Year C

1st Reading Acts 15:1-2,22-29

2nd Reading Revelation 21:10-14,16-17,20

Gospel John 17:20-26

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Ascension of the Lord • Year C

1st Reading Acts 1:1-11

2nd Reading Ephesians 1:17-23

Gospel Luke 24:46-53

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

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📧 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

Parish School of St Michael 📞 4267 2560