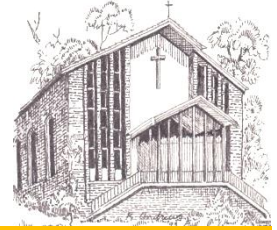




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



18 / 19 APRIL 2020
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER ❖ YEAR A
Day 8 of the 50 Days of Easter

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Hope and Exultation

The second reading for this Sunday, 1 Peter, says that by the resurrection of Christ we are reborn into a living hope. But what is hope? By faith a person believes in Christ, and by charity a person loves Christ. What is left for hope to do, once faith and charity have done their work?

Through the resurrection, we acquire a fundamental right that can never be taken away from us: the right to hope. It is a new and living hope that comes from God. It is not mere optimism; it is not a pat on the back or an empty word of encouragement, with a passing smile. No. It is a gift from heaven, which we could not have earned on our own. [Pope Francis, Easter Vigil 2020]



The reading from Acts says that after the resurrection the disciples ate their meals with exultation. That is not how we normally eat our meals, is it? When we eat, we are often anxious or sad. We worry about our weight, the healthiness of our food, the eating habits of our children, the cost of the meal, the unfriendliness of those around the table, or any of the many other things that are part of the stress of our days. What could possibly bring a person to eat his dinner with exultation? But consider this. How would dinner go for a person who learned that he had won the lottery? Before the lottery cheque has come, of course, he has no more money than he did before he won the lottery. At the time of his dinner, while he is still waiting for the cheque, he is as poor as he always was. But he has won the lottery! And the cheque is in the mail. In the expectation of that cheque, he will certainly eat his dinner in exultation.

In the midst of our poverty, our lack of holiness, our lack of loveliness, we are promised that when the Lord comes to meet us, we will be like him (1 John 3:2). Then we will have our heart's desires, and we will be so lovely in the Lord that we will think we are dreaming (Psalm 126:1). That day is one we still have to wait for. But we wait for it believing that the triumph won for us through Christ's passion and death, brought home to us in Christ's resurrection, that triumph is in the mail to us. We will think we must be dreaming then because the loveliness brought to us through Christ's suffering and rising is so much greater than we could ever have imagined.

In the expectation of that triumphant loveliness, we can wait for that day with joy. And that waiting with joy is what hope is. Who would not exult in it?





Our faith is grounded in the witness of the apostles. This witness had its origins in an overwhelming experience: a meeting, against all their expectations, with the final achievement in God's work of creation, the greatness of the Risen Lord. The gospel accounts echo this experience. Meditating on them gives us a greater appreciation of this foundation of our faith – the 'teaching of the apostles' that has gathered the Church in faith, since its beginnings in Jerusalem.



John's gospel, as we know, is the product of profound reflection on this gospel tradition. The more we come to know it, the more we recognise how much is implied in its apparently simple narrative (even, it seems, reference to the fact that the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection on 'the first day of the week' had its origin in the generation of the apostles).

It has often been pointed out that our understanding of the Easter Mystery has been shaped by Luke's schema of three distinct events: Resurrection; Ascension (40 days later); Pentecost (10 days later). In John's gospel, the Easter Mystery, is already experienced in all its aspects on Easter Day itself. Meeting Mary of Magdala, Jesus speaks of his imminent 'ascent' to the Father; and when he comes to the apostles place of refuge, on the evening of that same day, the Saviour who had 'emptied himself' becoming as we all are, shows himself already one with the Father in divine greatness and authority, as he bestows 'the Holy Spirit' and commissions the apostles to undertake their great mission – 'As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you'. John's narrative tells of the apostles' experience as a passing from apprehension and uncertainty – 'the doors were closed for fear of the Jews' – to the reassurance and joy brought by faith in the Risen Lord. Three times in this narrative he repeats his greeting, 'Peace be with you'. Given the fact that this is their first encounter with the one they had abandoned to his fate, even denied, these words three times repeated are far more than a conventional greeting. They echo down through the ages as words of divine forgiveness and reconciliation for a world whose burdens he has taken upon himself in the terrible drama of the cross. The gospels all speak of the hesitations experienced by the group as they came to terms with their experience, and passed from fear and uncertainty to the joy of believing. In John's narrative, this is all dramatized in the story of Thomas, the outspoken enthusiast, who tells Jesus, 'We do not know where you are going, how we can know the way?' and urges the group, 'Let us go up and die with him!' As in other gospel accounts, Jesus makes it clear that what they have encountered is not a ghostly apparition, but his Incarnate Self: 'Put your finger here, your hand in my side. Doubt no longer but believe'. And so, as John's narrative comes to its climax in Thomas' confession – 'My Lord and my God' – we hear echoes of the gospel's opening, 'The Word became flesh' (1:18), and an echo of its meditation on the Eucharist, 'The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world' (6:51).

Even for the apostolic group, 'seeing' was not 'believing'. The 'seeing' of their extraordinary and mysterious encounter was an invitation to accept the Saviour's gift of faith. Each Easter brings the same invitation to us all: 'Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe'. Peter has this same message: 'Although you have not seen him, you love him, and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy'.

'Doubting Thomas' didn't doubt, but rather he was a-believing because in John's Gospel, belief isn't about an intellectual assent to some list of facts, but instead, belief is about a relationship. When Jesus died on the cross, so too did his relationship with Thomas. Thomas believed Jesus, he gave him his heart and his hope, and that belief couldn't live beyond the grave. Unless, that is, Jesus lived beyond the grave, and that is so hard to fathom, that Thomas wanted proof before he handed his heart over to be burned again.

PROJECT COMPASSION 2020

Happy Easter from all at Caritas Australia!

Please keep your Project Compassion boxes or envelopes at home – until you can safely drop them into the Parish Office during Parish Office hours. Thank you!

ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK

Don't forget, you can bring in one non-perishable item per family each week and leave items on the front verandah of the presbytery. Thank you!

COLLECT FROM THE FRONT VERANDAH

Whenever you wish and it's safe to do so from Easter Sunday onwards, please collect these from the front verandah of the presbytery:

- ✓ palms blessed on Palm Sunday and rosemary blessed on Good Friday
- ✓ Easter Holy Water blessed at the Easter Vigil
- ✓ items left by the 'substitute' Easter Bunny – yum!

If you know of anyone who cannot make it to the front verandah of the presbytery, please collect the items for them and deliver it to them – in their mail box, on their front verandah ... *or get the items to them somehow.*

WAY OF THE CROSS ON GOOD FRIDAY IN ROME

Pope Francis presided over a profoundly moving, extraordinary Way of the Cross (*Via Crucis*) from the steps of St Peter's Basilica on Good Friday evening, overlooking an empty square due to the coronavirus pandemic. The miraculous crucifix from the church of St Marcello in Rome, which was attributed with helping end "the black plague" in Rome in 1552, stood facing the pope, as a call to prayer to God to end this modern-day plague. For more than half a century, since Pope Paul VI revived this ancient tradition in 1964, popes have travelled to Rome's Coliseum for the *Via Crucis*, which normally attracts a vast crowd of pilgrims and tourists. The Way of the Cross was led by two groups, each of five persons, representing prisoners and health workers. The first group came from the "Due Palazzi" House of Detention, in the northern Italian city of Padua, not far from Venice. The second group was from the Health and Hygiene Directorate of the Vatican City State, which has been heavily involved in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. Individuals from these groups carried the cross in turn, starting at the obelisk in the centre of St Peter's Square. They carried it around the obelisk for the first eight stations, and then moved up the steps on a path lit by torches to where the pope was for the next four, next to the miraculous crucifix. Pope Francis has long been concerned about the situation of prisoners in jails worldwide, and he invited the chaplaincy of the Padua house of detention, led by Father Marco Pozzo, to prepare the reflections for the ceremony. In this way, he brought to the world's attention not only the trials and desperation of prisoners but also the faith, hope and love that can take root even in the most difficult situations, sometimes with the help of prison guards, chaplains, catechists and others who work with prisoners. The reflections also demonstrated the dramatic situation of victims, including family members of the prisoners, and how each in their own way can find a new path forward marked by faith, hope and love. The Vatican revealed that those who wrote the meditations included five prisoners, a family that was the victim of a murder, the daughter of a man given a life sentence, a prison teacher, a civil magistrate, the mother of a prisoner, a catechist, a volunteer religious brother, a prison guard and a priest who was convicted and then finally acquitted of an unspecified crime after many years in the justice system. The anonymous texts were written and read in the first person. The text of these *Via Crucis* is available on the Vatican's website.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Weekend 18/19 Apr Second Sunday of Easter

➤ collect Easter Water+ from the presbytery verandah

Weekend 18/19 Apr Blessing of April Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays

Saturday 25 Apr ANZAC Day – light a candle or stand in front of your house
Mass will be celebrated at 6:15am and emailed by 8:00am

Weekend 25/26 Apr Third Sunday of Easter

ANZAC DAY 2020

As you would be aware, there are no formal, public ANZAC Day services. The Australian War Memorial will go ahead with a private, nationally televised ANZAC Day commemorative service. This revised ceremony will be held in the Commemorative Area and Hall of Memory of the Memorial at 5:30am on ANZAC Day. The event will not be open to the public but will be broadcast live across Australia by the ABC and streamed online. **You can do something to commemorate ANZAC Day: light a candle and put it in your front window at 5:30am/6:00am on ANZAC Day – OR – stand at the front of your house or in the driveway at 6am and observe a minute's silence. Mass will be celebrated just at 6:15am at Thirroul and emailed by 8am.** For ANZAC Day, Saturday, 25 April, rosemary (cut up into small strips) will be needed. Please put cut rosemary on the front verandah of the presbytery by Friday, 24 April.



DELIVERING THE BULLETIN to those without the Net

If you know of anyone who would like our Parish Bulletin, but who is not on the Internet, please call the Parish Office so that a Bulletin can be mailed to them. **Have you "checked in" on another parishioner this week to say "Hi"?**

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Easter • Year **A**

1st Reading Acts 2:42-47

2nd Reading 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel John 20:19-31

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Third Sunday of Easter • Year **A**

1st Reading Acts 2:14,22-33

2nd Reading 1 Peter 1:17-21

Gospel Luke 24:13-35

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
Thirroul Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

This week, all liturgies will be recorded and a link will be emailed.

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

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

📧 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