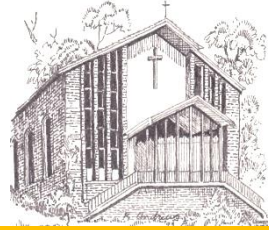




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirrour and Wombarra



2 / 3 MAY 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ❖ YEAR A
Day 22 of the 50 Days of Easter

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Good Shepherd

The most comforting of the Psalms begins with the line, “The Lord is my shepherd.” It ends with this line: “Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

Goodness and mercy, in the person of the Good Shepherd, have to follow the sheep, because it is lost and the shepherd is heading out to seek it. That sheep is leading the way, and that is why it is lost. A shepherd is the one who knows the way and ought to be leading, but this shepherd has to follow because that one sheep got out ahead of the shepherd and so got astray.


In the Gospel Reading, Jesus says that his sheep follow him. Those who belong to him know his voice and so they are willing to follow him and let him lead the way.

Of course, the sheep don't know the voice of the shepherd unless they know the shepherd. The difference, then, between being one of the lost sheep who have to be followed by the shepherd and being one of the faithful sheep who are led by the shepherd is a matter of knowing the shepherd.

Now the shepherd is a person. And knowing a person is a matter of personal relationship, with all the risks and vulnerabilities that personal relationship entails.

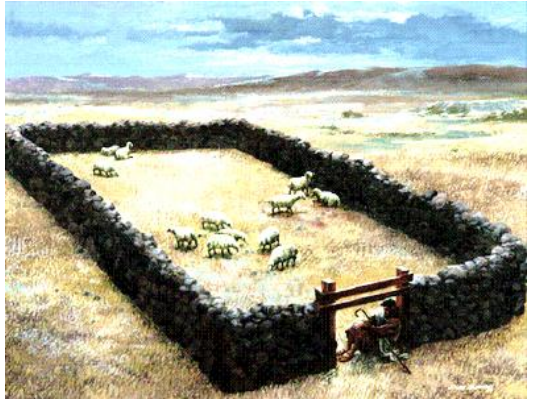
So the faithful sheep are in a personal relationship with their shepherd and love him. That is why these sheep know the voice of the shepherd and follow him.

Here is the good news, then. Whether a person is faithful or lost, he will be surrounded by the love of the Good Shepherd. Either the shepherd will lead him, or the shepherd will follow after him to find him when he is astray. And so St Patrick's prayer is right: Christ before me, Christ behind me. And, either way, Christ with me.

The image of Jesus, as a shepherd, established itself early in the outlook of the first Christians. The letter of Peter, identifying Jesus with the Suffering Servant of 



✠✠ the Isaian writings, calls him their 'shepherd and guardian'. It is a pity that this great theme is associated for many people with a sentimental image of the Saviour. Today's gospel reading invites us to reflect that for Jesus himself the comparison would have suggested the rough and tumble of a world in which widespread poverty led to theft of livestock, and the disputes and violence arising from such a practice.



The image of the shepherd was long established in the biblical tradition. It was used by the prophets to challenge Israel's corrupt rulers; Israel's Lord, the familiar psalm tells us, will care for them 'like a shepherd'.

When, in the passage following today's reading, Jesus declares, 'I AM the Good Shepherd', he is making a messianic claim. In the sequence of John's gospel, today's reading follows immediately after the healing of the blind man. The implication is that the conflict between Jesus and the opponents whose bad faith had been demonstrated on that occasion could be compared to the conflicts that arose between honest shepherds and the thieves who preyed on them.

The shepherd theme gives rise in this passage to a whole complex of comparisons. They can be confusing if they are not considered separately. As our passage begins, Jesus compares himself with his opponents. He comes to God's people with the 'messianic signs' that confirm his mission from the Father. His enemies, on the other hand, are robbing God's people of the blessings he brings – using their authority to undermine the trust and enthusiasm with which he was initially received.

As the passage continues, Jesus – having identified himself with the shepherd who enters the sheepfold with proper authorisation – speaks of the relationship that exists between such a shepherd and his sheep. They recognise his voice when he calls them – as the common people did when he began his ministry. He knows them and leads them to pasture. The obtuseness of those he is challenging leads Jesus to take up a new comparison – one that makes more clear the claim that he is making for his mission from the Father: 'I AM the gate of the sheepfold'. This comparison may have been suggested by words of Psalm 118, a psalm used as a processional hymn for the Feast of Tabernacles (cited several times in a messianic sense in the New Testament): 'This is the gate of the Lord, where the upright go in'. 'I AM the gate' Jesus says, 'Enter through me; you will be safe, and be sure of finding pastures'.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord – these words were to become one of the most meaningful phrases of the Church's common life. In a sense, they sum up the whole of Christian faith: Jesus is for us, 'the Resurrection and the Life'; he is the 'mediator' of the new and everlasting covenant; he is our 'way to the Father'.

Jesus offers a clear contrast among shepherds. This would apply to priests, parents and all of us in our own unique way. The contrast Jesus offers is between the ones who care deeply for those entrusted to their care, and those who are just going through the motions and are more motivated by selfishness than sacrificial love. This love is seen in Jesus, and also in the unwavering love of a parent, sibling, or dear friend. When the love one offers us is unwavering, especially in difficult times, this is a great support. And love offered to another like this forges a deep spiritual bond that is stronger than any hardship we may face. Just as a flock is guided and fed by a shepherd so the faithful are fed by Christ.

WELCOME TO THE FIFTH MONTH!

May was originally termed *Mains* and was the third month of the Roman calendar before the Gregorian calendar came into being [in October 1582] making it the fifth month. The term *Mains* in turn was a reference to the Greek goddess *Maia*. If you're born in May, here are five qualities that will make you believe you're one of the lucky people:

Luck: After a short experiment at the Edinburgh International Science Festival involving 40,000 people, Prof Wiseman, a psychologist based at the University of Hertfordshire, concluded that there is a direct link between the time of year people are born and how lucky they feel (*but not necessarily are!*). People born in May are more likely to think themselves lucky in life, they tend to have a more positive outlook and consider themselves lucky, which leads to greater success in life.

Brilliant: People born in May are smart, they also possess clever minds.

Good Parents: They can be the best parents to their children, and can establish a very strong bond between children and themselves. In any given circumstances concerning their children, they are the best planner.

Good Leaders: People born in May have good leadership qualities.

Strength: People born in May are strong, emotionally and physically.

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!

PROJECT COMPASSION 2020

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!

SIGNIFICANT WEDDING ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR?

Are you celebrating a significant wedding anniversary this year, 25, 50, 60 or more years, please contact the Parish Office as soon as possible, so that arrangements can be made to inform the diocesan office so congratulations can be sent to you from our bishop.

USED STAMPS



Used stamps are worth money! That money can be used to help people in need in many and various ways. If you have any used stamps, please drop them in to the Parish Office or front verandah – there is a special box on the front verandah for used stamps.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM 2020

At present, except in case of emergency, all baptisms have been put on hold until such time as our Parish church is open for Masses on the weekends. However, if you want your child baptized this year, please call or email the Parish Office so that you will be contacted with details regarding the reopening of the church for Masses, including baptisms.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2020

Confirmation in our Parish was to be celebrated on 2 July. However, it is postponed to an unknown date at the moment ... The Sacrament of Confirmation in our Diocese is for young people in Year 6 or older. Enrolment Forms are available on the Parish website – if you want your daughter or son to receive Confirmation this year, please download the Enrolment Form from the Parish website and for complete the form now, so that you will be contacted with details regarding Confirmation as they come to hand.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Weekend 2/3 May Fourth Sunday of Easter
 Weekend 9/10 May Fifth Sunday of Easter

Mothers Day
 with Special Blessing for Mothers



COLLECT FROM THE FRONT VERANDAH

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

- ✓ Easter Holy Water blessed at the Easter Vigil
- ✓ Text of Blessings for your home and car

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.*

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!"?**

SWIM SAFELY – WHERE THE WAVES BREAK – OR IN AUSTINMER POOL

A kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom full of children when they were drawing. She occasionally walked around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "*I'm drawing God.*" The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "*They will in a minute.*"

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Fourth Sunday of Easter • Year **A**
 1st Reading Acts 2:14,36-41
 2nd Reading 1 Peter 2:20-25
 Gospel John 10:1-10

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Fifth Sunday of Easter • Year **A**
 1st Reading Acts 6:1-7
 2nd Reading 1 Peter 2:4-9
 Gospel John 14:1-12

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul

Sunday Mass at Thirroul
 will be celebrated about 4:45pm Saturday,
 and then will be emailed usually by 6:00pm

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul

Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday

Masses
 will be recorded
 and will be
 emailed usually
 by 7:30am

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
 ☎ 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