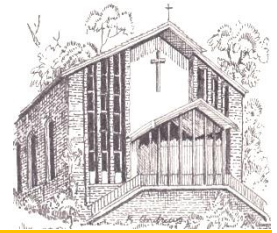




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



16 / 17 MAY 2020
SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ❖ YEAR A
Day 36 of the 50 Days of Easter

THIS WEEK'S READINGS *Loving the Lord and Keeping Your Conscience Clear*

The Second Reading commands Christians to keep their conscience clear. But this commandment is hard to hear, isn't it? If we are honest with ourselves, we know how unclear our consciences are.

Of course, we might think confusedly, we do not need to be too worried about our unclear consciences, because, after all, no one is saved by doing good works or keeping one's conscience clear. Our contribution to our salvation is not to try to do the works of the law. Our contribution to our salvation is just to love the Lord.



And this thought might be comforting to us when our unclear conscience hurts us, except for this uncomfortable, nagging question: what is love of the Lord?

In the Gospel Reading, the Lord himself explains the answer to this question: "The one who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me."

And now, unfortunately, we have come full circle. Christians are commanded to keep their consciences clear. To do so, they need to love the Lord. To love the Lord, they need to keep his commandments. And to keep his commandments they apparently need to keep their consciences clear. What sense can be made of this?


Here it helps to consider Peter himself, who is the author of the Second Reading. Peter betrayed the Lord in the Lord's great hour of need. Is this keeping one's conscience clear? Is this keeping the commandments of the Lord?

But when, in the days after his Resurrection, the Lord asks Peter, "do you love me?" what does Peter answer? He says, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you."

In spite of his betrayal of the Lord, Peter does not let go of Christ. He is willing to affirm his commitment to Christ in spite of his own failings.

So here is the thing to notice. In saying that he loves Christ, Peter is keeping the commandment of the Lord. The first and great commandment is to love the Lord.

And this is why Peter, the rock on which the Church is founded, is the pattern for all Christians. The way to keep one's conscience clear is to cleave to the Lord in love when one's conscience is not clear.

In the Risen Lord, his disciples were confronted by God's final achievement in a transformed creation. The overwhelming and mysterious nature of this experience 

☞☞ – an encounter that involved every level of their being – is reflected in the various passages of the gospels that attempt to communicate it. On the surface, the symbolic imagery and circumstantial detail they use are difficult to reconcile. Beneath the surface, however, they have a remarkable unity: against all



expectations they know the Jesus who has been so long in their company, triumphant in his humanity over death; he greets them generously, and initiates a new relationship with them that they find challenging; he entrusts them with a mission to the whole world, announcing the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Today, our Easter liturgy aims to awaken in us the recognition that we too are called to share in this mission – through the gift of Christ’s own Spirit. In our gospel reading from John, ‘Advocate’ translates the word, ‘paraclete’, used several times in this gospel. This term indicates far more than one who will speak for us when we are on trial. It signifies someone who will stand by us whatever our need – our ‘champion’ we could say. The work of the Spirit is clearly expressed in the words of Jesus: ‘I will not leave you orphans, he says, ‘I will come back to you’. He will be present, however, in a new way, as his own Spirit leads the faith-filled community in a fuller understanding of all that he said and did.

This union with the Saviour, through his Spirit, is to be far more than a comforting spiritual union. ‘If you love me you will keep my commandments’, he says. What are these commandments? Immediately before the passage selected for our liturgy, Jesus has spoken of the ‘works’ that will be a sign of true belief in him. In the tradition that gave us John’s gospel, we know, all is summed up in a single commandment, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’. The Spirit will lead us into the fullness of truth and life brought by the Risen Lord, as we give ourselves to practical love and service.

In our reading from Acts we see the first Christian community taking up the mission they have received. Philip, one of its seven ‘deacons’ – remembering, no doubt, the example of Jesus – takes the Good News of reconciliation to the Samaritans, the hated enemies of old Israel. It was through the leadership of the apostles, this incident shows, that the Spirit built up the Church’s communion of love and service.

If our union with the Risen Lord must find a practical expression, it is certainly, Peter tells us in his letter, a most personal bond: ‘In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord’ he tells us, and then your lives will bring true blessings to those around 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!

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.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Christian identity, both individual and corporate, seems on the wane under contemporary pressures; it may be traceable in large part to the attenuation of the experience and sense of basic orientation in the Church's initiatory practices. **The dignity of one's baptism needs more than drops of water, dabs of oil, taps on the cheek and plasticized bread dipped in a modicum of wine. Baptism into Christ demands enough water to be washed in and to die in, oil so fragrant and in such quantity that it becomes the Easter aroma, kisses and hugs, bread and wine enough to feed and rejoice hearts. And rooms of glory filled with life and laughter, rather than crumpled vestments and stacks of folding chairs.**

Immersing and anointing bodies can be done unashamedly without being indecorous, but these things cannot be done in fonts so small that even a sparrow would have difficulty getting damp, let alone wet. The sealing of baptism in confirmation should, however, be normally set amidst the whole community. In all things, the purpose must be to allow the power and vigour of those events which make a Christian to emerge from the constrictions that have hemmed them in for centuries. The end is the Church's rediscovery of itself as the glorious Body of Christ, washed with his blood and fragrant with his own anointing at his Father's hands, and knowing that smell of the sheep as the Good Shepherd surely did. The experience and sense of this in the memory of every Christian is where renewal has always begun throughout the Church in all its members, for it is the point at which the Church is constantly being born.



SIGNIFICANT WEDDING ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR?

Are you celebrating a significant wedding anniversary this year, **25, 50, 60 or more years?** If so, please contact the Parish Office **as soon as possible**, so we can celebrate with you.

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.

AN EASTER THOUGHT

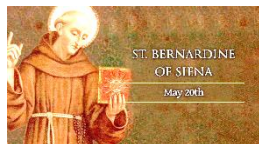
Easter means that nothing can keep us from the joy that God wants to give us. Nothing can steal that joy away. Sure, at times we will struggle just as Jesus did in the Agony of the Garden and the *Via Dolorosa* (the Way of the Cross), but those sufferings will not win. The Resurrection won with Christ and it will win with us when we cling to Christ. Jesus persevered and, in the end, rose victorious. This is Easter!

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Weekend 16/17 May Sixth Sunday of Easter

Wednesday 20 May St Bernardine of Siena, friar priest

Weekend 23/24 May Ascension of the Lord



POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE World Communications Day

I would like to devote this year's [2020] Message to the theme of storytelling, because I believe that, so as not to lose our bearings, we need to make our own the truth contained in good stories. Stories that build up, not tear down; stories that help us rediscover our roots and the strength needed to move forward together. Amid the cacophony of voices and messages that surround us, we need a human story that can speak of ourselves and of the beauty all around us. A narrative that can regard our world and its happenings with a tender gaze. A narrative that can tell us that we are part of a living and interconnected tapestry. A narrative that can reveal the interweaving of the threads which connect us to one another.

Human beings are storytellers. From childhood we hunger for stories just as we hunger for food. Stories influence our lives, whether in the form of fairy tales, novels, films, songs, news, even if we do not always realize it. Often we decide what is right or wrong based on characters and stories we have made our own. Stories leave their mark on us; they shape our convictions and our behaviour. They can help us understand and communicate who we are. We are not just the only beings who need clothing to cover our vulnerability (cf. Genesis 3: 21); we are also the only ones who need to be "clothed" with stories to protect our lives. We weave not only clothing, but also stories: indeed, the human capacity to "weave" (Latin *texere*) gives us not only the word textile but also text. The stories of different ages all have a common "loom": the thread of their narrative involves "heroes", including everyday heroes, who in following a dream confront difficult situations and combat evil, driven by a force that makes them courageous, the force of love. *(continued next week)*

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Sixth Sunday of Easter • Year A

1st Reading Acts 8:5-8,14-17

2nd Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18

Gospel John 14:15-21

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Ascension of the Lord • Year A

1st Reading Acts 1:1-11

2nd Reading Ephesians 1:17-23

Gospel Matthew 28:16-20

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