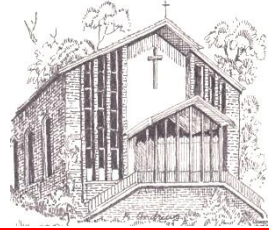




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



30 / 31 MAY 2020
PENTECOST SUNDAY ❖ YEAR A
The 50th Day of the 50 Days of Easter

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Outpouring of the Spirit

In the Old Testament, God promised that in the last days, in the days of the Messiah, he would pour out his spirit on all of his people. In Acts (2:14-18) the apostle Peter quotes this promise to explain what is happening when the apostles speak in tongues at Pentecost. This outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost marks the beginning of the period promised so long ago.

But why would God want to mark this great new beginning, the fulfilment of the Messianic promise, the start of the Church, by having the apostles speak in all the myriad languages of the polyglot world of their time? There are so many other things the Spirit might have done! Later, filled with the Spirit, the apostles heal the lame, cure the sick, cast out demons. Why didn't God mark the beginning of the outpouring of his Spirit by something more glorious than the ability to communicate with others without a translator?



Here we should remember the story of the Tower of Babel, told early in Genesis, not so long after the Fall. The people building the Tower of Babel all spoke one language; but they used the power that the commonality of language gave them for evil, to build a tower that reached to heaven. God defeated them by the simple expedient of multiplying their languages and leaving them unable to understand each other.

Now, in the new age, Christ offers all people salvation from their sin, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In this age of the Spirit-filled church, all human beings are invited into communion with the Lord and with each other. Human beings can be trusted with unity when they are incorporated into the one body of the Lord.

And maybe that is why God marks the beginning of the reign of his Spirit in the Church by overturning the Babel of human language. Filled with the Holy Spirit, human beings can be given again what they lost at the Tower of Babel, not for storming heaven, but for proclaiming the kingdom of heaven on earth.

The liturgies of the Easter season bring home to us the work of the Holy Spirit in the Saviour's Paschal Mystery. Our New Testament readings have made frequent mention of the Holy Spirit, looking forward to the coming of the Spirit as its final culmination.

Luke's account of the coming of the Spirit upon the apostles associates this coming with the 'day of Pentecost', a Jewish festival celebrated fifty days after Passover – a harvest festival that later became a celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses. The basis





of Luke's vivid dramatization may well have been the fact that, on this popular festival, the apostles – still uncertain how to undertake the enormous mission they had been given – joined the pilgrims crowding Jerusalem, and for the first time found the courage to proclaim their faith in the Risen Lord. In the joy and success they found on this occasion, they recognised the 'baptism with the Holy Spirit' they had been promised. In the Acts of the Apostles Luke tells the story of the Church of the beginnings using a device in use at the time by writers of popular history – taking important events in the history they are presenting, and dramatizing them in a way that brings out their far-reaching significance. Thus, in Luke's account, what begins as an event on one room of the city – 'a noise that filled the whole house', 'something that seemed like tongues of fire', the apostles 'speaking in foreign languages' – suddenly involves the whole crowded city, as faith in the Risen Lord is preached 'to devout men from every nation under heaven'. As Luke's dramatization continues in the passage that follows our reading, Peter's preaching leads to the baptising of three thousand people – a number designed to bring out the momentous nature of what is taking place, and the universal mission that will flow from it, rather than giving a precise historical detail. As we know, Luke is writing a sequel to his gospel: the story of the Holy Spirit's life-giving guidance of the early Church. In later ages, our instinct has been sound, in celebrating Pentecost as the birthday of the Church.



The other readings point to other dimensions of the workings of the Spirit in our lives. Our life in Christ is filled, from beginning to end, with God's generous gifts. And all of these gifts come from 'one and the same Spirit' – from our faith in Christ as our 'Lord and God', to the Individual contributions we are able to make to the life of our community.

In John's gospel, as we are reminded in today's reading, the Spirit was given on the evening of Resurrection Day itself. 'Peace be with you', Jesus repeats, and 'breathing on them' he says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. John's gospel reminds us that if the Spirit is responsible for the great things in which God is present in the life of the Church, the Spirit is also evident in our personal lives, in the true 'peace' and contentment that comes to those who give themselves generously to the Lord. In John's gospel, Jesus, at the Last Supper, associates the gift of the Spirit he promises with a peace that is his special gift: 'My own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give this is my gift to you' (John 14:27).

How varied are the gifts of the Spirit. In this era of change and renewal, let us become more aware of our dependence upon them.

'The tongues of fire separated and came to rest on each one's head'. We each have to learn to love in our own way. We each have our own contribution to make, our own way of speaking the word, our own way of singing the song. What keeps the community together as church is the fact that it is Jesus' word that we are speaking; it is Jesus' song of love that we are singing; it is his Spirit that fires our hearts. Saint Irenaeus, writing in the second century, says that 'God put the human race together in many ways to effect a symphony of salvation'. The music of the symphony comes from the heart of Jesus. The music is of love.

Today we are given the gift of Jesus' own Spirit. Others saw a leper; Jesus saw a man loved by God and longing to be welcomed into the community. He embraced him. Others saw a prostitute; Jesus saw a woman who had so much loving to give and to receive. Others saw a criminal dying on a cross; Jesus saw a man who longed for peace and communion with God. He wept as we weep, but he refused to despair. He struggled in agony, as we struggle in agony, but he refused to stop pleading with God. Let us pray we have that Spirit.

ARE YOU AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT ROSTER?

The next ministry roster period runs from **20 June to 4 October**. The usual rosters will be drawn up by the Roster Coordinators, so the rosters will be in place. **If you will be unavailable anytime between 20 June and 4 October, please contact your Roster Coordinator** – not the Parish Office – by **Sunday, 31 May** to let your Roster Coordinator know, so that the Rosters can be drawn up in plenty of time. *Thanks to all on the Rosters!*

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
drop any items onto the front verandah of the presbytery**

ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Laudato Si', mi signore – 'Praise be to you, my Lord'. These are the words that open Pope Francis' encyclical letter on ecology and climate, subtitled "On Care for our Common Home". Words of praise, quoting St Francis of Assisi's beautiful Cantic of the Creatures; reminders to us that our common home is "like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us" (LS 1). The encyclical, signed and dated on 24 May 2015 (Pentecost) and released on 18 June 2015 is addressed to all people of goodwill.

Drawing extensively from the teaching of his predecessors, Pope Francis stresses that care for the things of the earth is necessarily bound together with our care of one another, especially the poor. This interdependency extends from the deep respect due to every human person to all living beings and to the earth where we make our home: "Each creature has its own purpose ... and the entire material universe speaks of God's love and boundless affection for us" (LS 84).

The Pope uses the term "integral ecology" to draw our attention to the rich treasury of thought that people of faith bring with them to conversations about humanity and the environment: "We must regain the conviction that we need each other, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it" (LS 229). For Pope Francis – as it was too for Francis of Assisi – care for the poor and care for the environment are thus two sides of the same coin in an integral ecology. *Laudato Si'* clearly has a relevance far greater than just the loss of plants, ecosystems and animal biodiversity from our rainforests and oceans; it is a reminder that as human beings, we are more interdependent on each other than we may care to admit.

Francis the Pope drew heavily on the inspiration of Francis the saint who loved true poverty and the poor, the saint who praised God the creator by singing of his creatures, the saint who 'humanised' the elements of the world, and even death, by naming them as brother and sister in his Cantic of the Creatures (1225). Pope Francis shares the vision of Saint Francis. They are both committed to creation because they worship the Creator: "If we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously for our common home" (LS 11).

Laudato Si' was acclaimed immediately after its release by people of all faiths and those of no professed faith. It is another keystone in the "body of the Church's social teaching" (LS 15) inaugurated by the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII in 1891. Five years on from its release, *Laudato Si'* deserves our urgent, renewed and continuous attention with honest dialogue about our human and natural environment: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?" (LS 160). *Laudato Si'* invites us to answer Pope Francis' call by re-committing to his message and growing in responsibility towards the common home that God has entrusted to us all.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday 1 Jun Mary, Mother of the Church
 Wednesday 3 Jun St Charles Lwanga and companions, martyrs
 Friday 5 Jun St Boniface, bishop, martyr



POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE World Communications Day

(continued from last week) In an age when falsification is increasingly sophisticated, reaching exponential levels (as in *deepfake*), we need wisdom to be able to welcome and create beautiful, true and good stories. We need courage to reject false and evil stories. We need patience and discernment to rediscover stories that help us not to lose the thread amid today's many troubles. We need stories that reveal who we truly are, also in the untold heroism of everyday life.

The Story of stories: Sacred Scripture is a Story of stories. How many events, peoples and individuals it sets before us! It shows us from the very beginning a God who is both creator and narrator. Indeed, God speaks his word and things come into existence (cf. Genesis 1). As narrator, God calls things into life, culminating in the creation of man and woman as his free dialogue partners, who make history alongside him. In one of the Psalms, the creature tells the creator: "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth" (139:13-15). We are not born complete, but need to be constantly "woven", "knitted together". Life is given to us as an invitation to continue to weave the "wonderful" mystery that we are. The Bible is thus the great love story between God and humanity. At its centre stands Jesus, whose own story brings to fulfilment both God's love for us and our love for God. Henceforth, in every generation, men and women are called to recount and commit to memory the most significant episodes of this Story of stories, those that best communicate its meaning.

(continued next week)

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Pentecost Sunday • Year A

1st Reading Acts 2:1-11
2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3-7,12-13
Gospel John 20:19-23

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Holy Trinity Sunday • Year A

1st Reading Exodus 34:4-6,8-9
2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Gospel John 3:16-18

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
 Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

Restricted numbers apply ... to attend ...
 you need to register with the Parish Office

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul	Monday	05:30
	Tuesday	17:30
	Wednesday	09:00
	Thursday	09:00
	Friday	09:30

Masses will be
 televised and emailed.
 Restricted attendance.

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