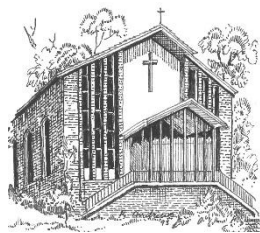


Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul



21 / 22 AUGUST 2021
21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
CURRENTLY IN LOCK DOWN UNTIL 28 AUGUST

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Tasting In Order To See

After the feast days on the last two Sundays, we now return to the conclusion of Chapter 6 of John's gospel. The readings this week highlight the importance of wisdom. But what is wisdom? And how do you get it?

In the world of Nazi Germany, everyone in the Nazi party got a party badge. Hitler's own party badge was made of gold. To the Nazis, Hitler's badge symbolized all the things in the world most worth having. At the end of his life, Hitler gave his gold badge as a gift to Magda Goebbels; and she said that it was the proudest moment of her life when he did. But he gave her that gold badge in the bunker under Berlin as Germany was losing the war. In that bunker in the last days of the war, Magda killed all six of her children and herself in an appallingly misguided act of loyalty to Hitler. When the invading soldiers of the Allied armies conquered Berlin and found her body, one of them took that little bit of a gold badge from her dress and pocketed it as a souvenir.


Magda shows us what folly is, doesn't she? She couldn't tell the real goods, the real gold, from the fake goods, the things that glitter but are worthless. The gold badge that symbolized what Magda Goebbels lived and died for is a fitting symbol of the terrible foolishness of her life.

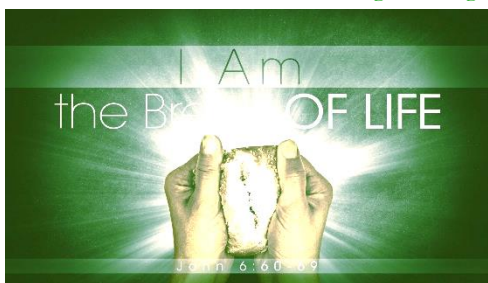
Wisdom is the very opposite. It is the ability to discern between the real goods and the shiny fakes. But among the very best of the really good things is the goodness of God. And so, wisdom is the ability to see the goodness of God wherever it is to be found in the world. The Psalm tells us how we get the capacity for seeing the goodness of God, so important for us if we are to live our lives wisely and not foolishly, like Magda Goebbels. We get this capacity by tasting! Taste and see that the Lord is good, the Psalm says.

Taste what?

The Gospel gives us the answer: Christ is the bread from heaven, and every person who tastes this bread will live. He will have the real goods, not the worthless fake goods; and he will see the difference between the two, because he will see God's goodness in Christ.

Here is the end of the story then: Taste the bread from heaven and see the goodness of the Lord. Wisdom lies in this!

Today's first reading from Joshua reminds us of the Old Testament framework that has provided the background for the meditation in John's gospel on the Eucharistic 



↪↪ mystery. Joshua assembles ‘all the tribes of Israel’. Their long journey to the Promised Land has united them; but as they now begin life in their new land they must declare their loyalty to the Lord, who has cared for them despite their constant rebellion and complaints.

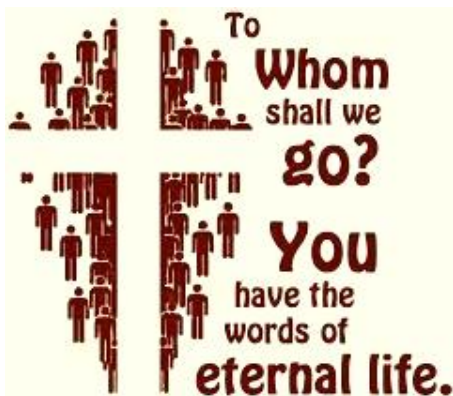
Some among ‘the followers of Jesus’ find the faith he is offering them ‘intolerable’. Aware of their ‘complaining’, he is again insistent, telling them that their faith will be asked to accept far more than this – when his Paschal Mystery is realised (cf. John 1: 50, to Nathanael): ‘It is the Spirit that gives life’, he tells them, recalling his words to Nicodemus, when he told him that we must be ‘born from above, from the Spirit’ if we are to find faith in him: ‘No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man’ (cf. John 3: 13).

The violent language and the dramatic and tragic outcome of this exchange – ‘many of his disciples went away and accompanied him no more’ – make it clear to us that this meditation is a response to disputes which are threatening to divide the community which gave us this gospel.

We know from the other gospels that Peter speaks in the name of the disciples of Jesus, in confessing that Jesus is the messiah through whom Israel’s hopes will be fulfilled. The hesitation of the waverers is countered finally by Peter’s confession. His words have sustained the Church in its Eucharistic life down through the centuries: “Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life; you are the Holy One of God”.

The Eucharist is the sacrament that makes present and active in our midst the Saviour’s Paschal Mystery. In the passage with which we conclude our readings from the letter to the Ephesians we see how central our sacramental sharing in the Paschal Mystery was for the communities cared for by St Paul. (The structure of the family in contemporary society is taken for granted in this exhortation – something which should not distract us from the deep truths expressed in this text.) The Ephesians are urged to live their family life inspired by the unselfish example of Christ. In the ‘mystery’ realised in Christ’s death and resurrection, the Lord has united believers to himself in a union so intimate and personal that it may be compared to the marital union – through this union the Saviour and his Church become ‘one body’. He is a loving Bridegroom who cares for his Bride, especially through the great sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist: he ‘washes her with a form of words’; and he ‘feeds’ the Church and sustains it.

In the verses just prior to today’s second reading, Paul expresses his desire that the Christian community be ‘filled with the Holy Spirit’ (Ephesians 5:18), and he speaks of what this should mean for community celebration of the Eucharist, which in his day was celebrated in a home. Gathered to celebrate the Eucharist, we are to ‘give way to one another in obedience to Christ’. If we really are filled with the Holy Spirit we will be like Jesus ‘gentle and humble of heart’ (Matthew 11:29). Like him we will look up to others with reverence, we will recognise how sacred each person is to God and always treat each and every person with respect. Jesus went so far as to give his life for others. As his disciples we are not to seek our own interest, our own life. If we do that, we will end up losing everything. We are to ‘give way to one another’ after the example of Jesus. In the context of the home, Paul uses the imagery of married love to speak of the relationship between the risen Jesus, seen as the bridegroom, and the community, seen as his bride. We are familiar with this ↪↪



✠✠ imagery from the Gospels (see Mark 2:19; John 2:1-11; 3:28-30). Paul takes us back to the familiar story from the Book of Genesis, and compares Christ to Adam and the Church to Eve. Christ, the bridegroom of the Church, continually offers his love to the Church, his bride. Paul tells us that ‘Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her’ (5:25). He did this ‘that he might sanctify her’ (5:26). In other words, Jesus gave himself to us in love in order to draw us into his heart to share with us the intimacy of his communion with God. Paul speaks of Baptism as Christ cleansing his bride the Church ‘by the washing of water with the word’ (5:26). Christ ‘nourishes and cherishes’ the church (5:29-30). Christ is the ‘head of the church, his body’ (5:23).

The fact that the love of Christ for the Church can be spoken of as the love of a bridegroom for a bride has implications for every relationship between Christians. We all belong to the Church. We are all part of the ‘Bride’ who is cherished by Christ. Should we not then cherish one another as sacred and, as Paul exhorts us, ‘give way to one another in obedience to Christ’?



In today’s reading Paul focuses on what this should mean for Christian spouses. Naturally, when Paul speaks of marriage he is speaking of the institution as he found it in the Jewish and Greco-Roman world of his day. In those cultures, and at that time, a husband was considered to have authority over his wife, and she was legally subject to him. This is not the case in our culture and we do violence to Paul’s intention if we quote him as intending to set in concrete the model of marriage that pertained in his own day. Instead, what we should be looking for in his words is the revolutionary dimension he introduces by seeing marriage itself in the light of the kind of divine love that Jesus revealed.

Paul’s key point is that a husband and a wife are to relate to each other in the way that Jesus relates to them. He takes it for granted that a wife will be subject to her husband, for he knew no other model. But the way in which she is to be subject is quite revolutionary. She is to be subject as the Church is subject to Christ. Here we have a special freedom, and reverence, and prayer, and spontaneous joy. He takes it for granted that a husband will exercise authority over his wife for he knew no other model. But the way in which he is to do this is quite revolutionary. He is asking the husband to exercise his authority as Christ exercises his authority over the Church – that is, with the fidelity, the generosity and the gentleness of Jesus. It is an authority of love, of self-sacrifice, of a life given that his wife may enjoy the freedom she has as a disciple of Jesus.

By introducing into marriage this profound principle of self-sacrificing Christ-love, Jesus has profoundly affected the institution of marriage itself. The more mature model of marriage which we experience today is itself a fruit of this Christian reflection. A man and a woman commit themselves together in love and as equals to a partnership in which they attempt to reach decisions in mutual respect and love. The husband, as Saint Paul says, is to be Christ for his wife. If Paul was writing today, he would add that the wife is to be Christ for her husband. Both belong to the community that is loved by Christ, and one complements the other in the Church in which Jesus’ Spirit dwells.

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
STILL NEEDED DURING LOCKDOWN**

DROP ITEMS ON THE FRONT VERANDAH OF THE PRESBYTERY

Vinnies Winter Appeal: please donate online by 31 August

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 24 Aug **Saint Bartholomew**, apostle
Friday 27 Aug **Saint Monica**, mother of Saint Augustine
Saturday 28 Aug **Saint Augustine**, bishop, doctor

Our church is currently closed – until at least 28 August. Please KEEP IN TOUCH.

PLENARY COUNCIL 2021

Plenary Council Prayer Campaign: People across the country are invited to participate in the “Fan the Flame” prayer campaign leading up to the first assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. The assembly starts on 3 October. Campaign materials include resources for personal and communal prayer, reflections, musical suggestions and multimedia content. Find the resources at: www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/fanthe flame/

RAY'S HEAVENLY RECIPE: SULTANA LOAF

Ingredients: 1 cup sultanas or raisins, 130g; 30g butter, diced; 1 tspn baking soda; 1 cup boiling water, 250ml; 1 cup sugar, 205g; 2 cups plain white flour, 260g; 1 tspn baking powder; 1 tspn cinnamon powder; pinch of salt; 1 egg, well beaten; 1 tablespoon Golden Syrup, 15ml; 1 tspn vanilla essence, 5ml.

Preheat the oven to 180°C; line a loaf tin with baking paper and set aside; in a medium sauce pan add the Sultanas (or raisins), butter, baking soda and boiling water, bring to the boil and cook for 3-5 minutes stirring occasionally; remove from the heat, pour this sultana mixture into a medium bowl and allow it to cool for 5-10 minutes, feel free to pop this in the refrigerator; add to the sultana mixture the sugar, flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt and stir through; then add a well beaten egg, golden syrup and vanilla. Combine all of these ingredients together until no flour remains visible. Pour this into the prepared loaf tin and bake for one hour. This loaf is cooked when a skewer or knife comes out clean, with only moist crumbs remaining but no batter. Thanks to **Raymond Cummins** for this recipe.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Joshua 24:1-2,15-18

2nd Reading Ephesians 5:21-32

Gospel John 6:60-69

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8

2nd Reading James 1:17-18,21-22,27

Gospel Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul

Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

**Church closed because of lock down
now closed until further notice**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul

**Church currently closed
because of lock down...
until further notice**

Monday 17:30

Tuesday 17:30

Wednesday 09:00


Friday 09:30

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

 4268 1910  4268 1976

 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish Office

Hours

Magda Pires – Parish Secretary

Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00am–3:30pm Friday 9:30am–2:30pm

 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael  4267 2560