



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
1/2 JUNE 2024

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST ✦ YEAR B

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

A Question

You say you are eating someone's body and drinking their blood?

Here is an indelicate question: why?

You walk up the aisle and receive what appears to be bread and wine, but which is, according to your beliefs, Christ's Body and Blood. The Roman historian Pliny the Elder (23-79AD) therefore described Christians as cannibals. Many of Jesus' followers simply went away when he said, "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him." (John 6:56 ff) It is a hard saying.

An answer can be found in the word "sacrifice." I do not mean the word in today's signification, which today is, you give up something you like for Lent. Or, as parents might say: "I sacrificed my own interests in order to raise you kids."

There is a longer history of the word sacrifice, and significantly, it involves body and blood.

Once upon a time, the tribes of the world tried to please whatever gods their tradition held, in order to get the heavenly avoidance of storms, or drought, or starvation, and so on. By giving up their best, they hoped to win over the gods.

And they often killed what was being offered! Why would they do this?

Because slaughtering the best lamb from the herd made it a best gift for the gods. The lamb or dove (or young girl!) represented the superlative things that belonged to earth, but which death freed from earth by sending the gift(s) to heaven. Think of it this way: *send the best of earth to heaven so that the best of heaven could come down to earth.*

It was a uniting of heaven and earth. Often, the people ate the flesh and drank the blood of their offering in order to include themselves as an integral part of this "sacrifice."

This desire to be at one with the gods, at one with their gifts and good things, is lodged deep in human culture and human nature. Therefore, in the fullness of time, the One God gave his people a connection with God's own self—the real God, not the ones pagans had fancied. You guessed it, he did this through sacrifice. But he reversed the order of things by sending his own self to be sacrificed.

Notice the difference.

Instead of peoples sending the best of earth to heaven so that the best of heaven could come down to earth, Abba gave the reverse: *send the best of heaven to earth order that the best of earth can go up to heaven (Christ on the cross).*

Christ came from the kingdom of heaven and yet was of the world. Therefore, he achieved for us the perfect unity of heaven and earth. Animals could not choose to be sacrificed, but Christ did freely choose it, out of love, on our behalf.

So, on the night before he suffered Jesus gave his disciples sacramental signs of what would be fulfilled the next day: he handed them his body and blood under the appearance of bread and wine. He told them to consume it. Thus, it became a re-presentation for all time of the bloody sacrifice of the cross, now in an unbloody form.

So, the answer to the question with which we began, "why do you and I eat his body and drink his blood"? From the above we know that it is *in order to take part in Christ's sacrificial presentation of all humanity to the Father.* It is a presentation of us, even our sinfulness, our errors, our forgetfulness, all of which he takes unto himself and pays the price of love and forgiveness.

We are in the afterglow of our Easter celebration. Last week we reflected upon the divine life of the Trinity, shared with us through the Saviour's Paschal Mystery. This year's Corpus Christi liturgy calls us to a deeper understanding of the Eucharist – the enduring presence in our midst of the Paschal Mystery in its entirety, the very 'foundation and centre' of the Church's life, as Vatican II reminds us. Today's readings take up the theme of Mark's gospel, 'the blood of the covenant poured out' for the whole human family.

To grasp what these readings have to say to us, we must take account of the profound symbolism blood had for old Israel – not a symbol of violence, but the sacred embodiment of life. As Moses ratified the old covenant with God, therefore, the blood – sprinkled on the altar (representing God) and on the people – expressed the life-giving union with God that was to become the very destiny of Israel. In his Eucharistic words, Jesus deliberately gives a new meaning to this old theme, repeating the words of Moses, 'This is the blood of the covenant', and adding a reference to the Servant Song of Isaiah 53 – his blood will be a source of life for the whole world ('for many' is a Semitic expression used by the Isaian text, meaning 'for all').



✠✠ For many people, the blood of Calvary has been associated almost exclusively with Christ's horrendous suffering. While not denying that awareness of the Saviour's passion is essential to Christian faith, the message of the Scriptures invites us to enlarge our perspective. St Paul's message to the first Christian generation was 'whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes' (1 Corinthians 11: 26). The Letter to the Hebrews spells out the magnificent implications of what Paul is saying. In the Saviour's death and resurrection he gives the world its one great act of true worship. He is the 'priest' who 'offers himself as a perfect sacrifice'; his life-giving 'blood' enables us to 'serve the living God'; as he enacts a final 'covenant', he takes us with him beyond the old Temple and its foreshadowing in the ritual of Mount Sinai, beyond 'this created order', into the very presence of God; in the Eucharistic sacrament, he fulfils 'what was promised' – in the Eucharist is fulfilled, the promise of 'new wine' in 'the Kingdom of God', with which Mark's reading ends. The Church has always seen the Eucharistic banquet as a foretaste of the joys of the Kingdom.

Today's liturgy, therefore, invites us to reflect upon a theme of great importance for the renewal of the Church's liturgy. The Eucharist is far more than Christ's 'real presence' among us, as a kind of substitute for the fact that he is no longer among us as he was in his earthly life. In its fullness, the Eucharist is an action ('Take and eat', 'Take and drink'; 'Do this'). It is the central action of the Church's life because of the presence of the Lord himself, giving himself into the hands of his Father, as creation's perfect act of worship, and giving himself to us as food and drink, that we may make his Paschal Mystery our nourishment for eternal life.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Exodus 24:3-8

- ✠ "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you." Why was blood so significant in those ancient ceremonies? Why was it used to seal solemn agreements? Is there a relationship between blood and life? Between blood and death?
- ✠ Have you ever made solemn agreements (covenants)? What do they tell you about God's covenant with the Israelites?

Second Reading Hebrews 9:11-15

- ✠ Elsewhere Jesus says "I wish that where I am they also may be with me ..." (John 17:24). In today's reading Jesus "entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption." Did he bring us along into the sanctuary with him, redeemed now though his love?
- ✠ Jesus entered the sanctuary once for all of us, the one not of this creation, so that we may receive the promised eternal inheritance. Christ's love is beyond all comprehension. Is there any response for all of us other than awesome reverence and love? What could some other actions be? Work for eco-justice? Do something to end racial bias? Feed the hungry?

Gospel Mark 14:12-16,22-26

- ✠ Is anyone "worthy" to receive Christ in the Eucharist? Where should the "worthy" decision lie? In the conscience of the receiver? In the conscience of the priest? Of the Eucharistic minister?
- ✠ What does Pope Francis say Jesus does for us in the Eucharist? What does he say Jesus wants us to do with that gift?

And thus, with simplicity, Jesus gives us the greatest sacrament. His is a humble gesture of giving, a gesture of sharing. At the culmination of his life, he does not distribute an abundance of bread to feed the multitudes, but breaks himself apart at the Passover supper with the disciples. In this way Jesus shows us that the aim of life lies in self-giving, that the greatest thing is to serve.

And today once more we find the greatness of God in a piece of Bread, in a fragility that overflows with love, that overflows with sharing. ... In the Eucharist fragility is strength: the strength of the love that becomes small so it can be welcomed and not feared; the strength of the love that is broken and shared so as to nourish and give life; the strength of the love that is split apart so as to join all of us in unity. . . .

... The Eucharist heals because it unites with Jesus: it makes us assimilate his way of living, his ability to break himself apart and give himself to brothers and sisters, to respond to evil with good. He gives us the courage to go outside of ourselves and bend down with love toward the fragility of others. As God does with us. This is the logic of the Eucharist: we receive Jesus who loves us and heals our fragilities in order to love others and help them in their fragilities; and this lasts our entire life.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Body and Blood of Christ, 6 June 2021

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS – 18 MAY 2024 ... continued

Many of these saints and holy men and women of the nineteenth century were among their contemporaries and, immersed in the turbulent history of their time, through the imagination of charity animated by the Holy Spirit, they succeeded in creating a kind of "holy fraternity," capable of meeting the needs of the most marginalized and the poorest and caring for their wounds. Do not forget this: the wounds of the Church, the wounds of the poor. Do not forget the Good Samaritan, who stops and goes there to heal the wounds. A faith that was translated into the boldness of mission. We need this today as well: the boldness of witness and proclamation, the joy of an industrious faith in charity, the resourcefulness of a Church that knows how to grasp the signs of our times and respond ✠✠

✠✠ to the needs of those who struggle the most. Boldness, courage, the ability to start over, the ability to risk. To all, I repeat, to all we must bring the caress of God's mercy. And in this regard, dear brother priests, I will dwell on something – I am addressing the priests, who are ministers of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please, forgive everything, forgive everything. And when people come to confess, do not go and enquire: "But, how?", nothing. And if you are not capable of understanding in that moment, go forward, the Lord has understood. But please, do not torture the penitent. A great Cardinal, who was penitentiary; he was quite conservative, but before penance, I heard him say, "When a person comes to me and I feel that they find it difficult to say something, I say, 'I understand, move on'. I haven't understood, but God has understood". This, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please, may it not be a torture session. Please, forgive everything. Everything. And forgive without causing suffering, forgive opening your heart to hope. I ask this of you priests, the Church needs forgiveness and you are the tools to forgive. Everyone. We must bring to everyone the caress of God's mercy, especially to those who thirst for hope, to those who find themselves forced to live on the margins, wounded by life, or by some mistake made, or by the injustices of society, which always come at the expense of the most fragile. Have you understood? Forgive everyone.

The boldness of an industrious faith in charity, you have inherited from your history. And so, I would like to say to you with St Paul, "Do not be discouraged in doing good". Do not give in to discouragement: be bold in your mission, know how to still be a Church that makes itself close, that approaches crossroads, that heals wounds, that bears witness to God's mercy. It is in this way that the Lord's boat, in the midst of the storms of the world, can bring to safety so many who otherwise risk being shipwrecked. Storms, as we know, are not lacking in our day; there are many of them, there is no shortage. Many of them have their root in avarice, greed, the unbridled pursuit of self-satisfaction, and are nurtured in an individualistic, indifferent and violent culture. The storms, for the most part, come from this.

And so timely in this regard are the words of St Zeno, who states, "It is not an isolated fault – beloved brethren – to let oneself be ensnared by the shackles of covetousness. But since the whole world has been burned by the fire of this unquenchable plague, avarice, by all accounts, has ceased to be a guilt, because it has left no one to move to reproach it. Everyone throws himself headlong into vile gain, and no one has been found to impose the bite of justice on it. Therefore it happens that all nations fall moment by moment as a result of each other's injuries".

The risk is this, even for us: that evil becomes "normal," – "This is normal, this is normal...". No. It is a risk, this. Evil is not normal; it must not be normal. In hell yes, but here no. Evil must not be normal. That we become accustomed to bad things: "The whole world does it, so I will too". And so, we become accomplices! Instead, speaking to the people of Verona, St Zeno says: "Your houses are open to all wayfarers, under you no one either living or dead was long seen naked. Now our poor are ignorant of what it is to beg for food". May these words be true for you today!

Brothers and sisters, thank you! Thank you for giving your lives to the Lord and for your commitment to the apostolate. A few days ago I met with "retired" priests, with forty or more years in the priesthood, and I saw those priests who have given their life to the Lord, and they have that wisdom of the heart; I said the same to them: thank you for your commitment to the apostolate. Go forward with courage. Better: let us move forward with courage, everyone! We have the grace and joy of being together on the ship of the Church, amidst wonderful horizons and alarming storms, but without fear, because the Lord is always with us, and it is He who has the rudder, who guides us, who sustains us. And I say this not only to the priests, but also to you, men and women religious. Go forward with courage! It is up to us to accept the call and be bold in our mission. As one of your great saints, Daniele Comboni, said, "Holy and capable. The one without the other is worth little to those who beat the apostolic career. The missionary, male and female cannot go alone to heaven. Alone they will go to hell. The missionary and the missionary woman must go to heaven accompanied by the saved souls. So, first: saints, but it is not enough: it takes charity", both things.

This I wish for you and your communities: a "capable holiness," a living faith that with bold charity sows the Kingdom of God in every situation of daily life. And if Shakespeare's genius was inspired by the beauty of this place to tell us the tormented stories of two lovers, hindered by the hatred of their respective families, let us Christians, inspired by the Gospel, commit ourselves to sow love everywhere: where there is hatred, may I place love, where there is hatred may I be capable of sowing love. A love stronger than hatred – today there is so much hatred in the world – sow a love stronger than hatred and stronger than death. Dream of it thus: dream of Verona as the city of love, not only in literature, but in life. And may God's love accompany you and bless you. And please, I ask you to pray for me. But pray for, not against! Thank you!


✠✠ It is not only the synodal and missionary Church that needs parish priests, but also the ongoing process of the 2021-2024 Synod, "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission", as we look forward to the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which will take place in the coming month of October. In order to prepare for it, we need to hear your voice.

For this reason, I invite those who have taken part in the International Meeting "Parish Priests for the Synod" to be missionaries of synodality, among yourselves and, once you return home, with your fellow parish priests. I ask you to encourage reflection, with a synodal and missionary mindset, on the renewal of the ministry of parish priests, and enable the General Secretariat of the Synod to gather your distinctive contributions in view of the preparation of the *Instrumentum Laboris*. The purpose of the present International Meeting was to listen to parish priests, but that cannot finish today: we need to continue to hear from you.

– Rome, Saint John Lateran, 2 May 2024. FRANCIS.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	3 Jun	Sts Charles Lwanga ++, martyrs	2 Peter 1:2-7	Mark 12:1-12	
Tuesday 	4 Jun	Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 9	2 Peter 3:11-15,17-18	Mark 12:13-17	
Wednesday	5 Jun	St Boniface, bishop, martyr	2 Timothy 1:1-3,6-12	Mark 12:18-27	
Thursday	6 Jun	Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 9	2 Timothy 2:8-15	Mark 12:28-34	
Friday	7 Jun	The Sacred Heart of Jesus	Hosea 11:1,3-4,8-9	Ephesians 3:8-12,14-19	John 19:31-37
Saturday	8 Jun	The Immaculate Heart of Mary	Isaiah 61:9-11	Luke 2:41-51	
Sunday	9 Jun	10 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>			

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Tuesday, 4 June	19:30	Confirmation Parent Meeting
✦ Wednesday, 5 June	19:30	Spirituality on the Sofa – “Let’s Talk About Homelessness”
✦ Friday, 7 June	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Weekend, 8/9 June		Blessing of June Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays during Masses
✦ Saturday, 8 June	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
✦ Sunday, 9 June		until Friday, 21 June, Ken teaching at Baulkham Hills [back 15/16 June]

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK – 27 MAY TO 3 JUNE

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia. The National Reconciliation Week theme for 2024, **Now More Than Ever**, is a reminder to all of us that no matter what, the fight for justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will —and must —continue. There have been many moments in Australia’s reconciliation journey that make us want to turn away. But when things are divisive, the worst thing we can do is disengage or disconnect. Now more than ever, we need to tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation. We know that the 6.2 million Australians who voted YES are committed to better outcomes for First Nations people, and are with us. Reconciliation supporters must stand up to defend and uphold the rights of First Nations peoples. To call out racism wherever we encounter it, and to actively reinforce the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this continent. Now more than ever, the work continues. In treaty making, in truth-telling, in understanding our history, in education, and in tackling racism. *We need connection, respect. We need action. And we need change. Now more than ever, we need reconciliation.* <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>

SPIRITUALITY ON THE SOFA – WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE, 19:30 TO 21:00

Come and meet via Zoom, two powerful and imaginative leaders who will share with us some of their experiences in dealing with the challenges of homelessness. And perhaps some of us – as well as participating by “deep listening” – might feel like sharing some of our thoughts and experiences when our evening is opened up for contributions from “the floor”... **Sue Mowbray** joined the Mercy Foundation in 2009 and has managed its grants programs, collaborated on projects and is experienced in working with communities to end homelessness. Pastor Jon Owen has been pastor and CEO of Wayside Chapel since 2018, he has spent his life creating a community with no ‘us and them’. Start Zoom and enter the following: Meeting ID: **881 9482 4050** Passcode: **101016** — **19:30 on 5 June.**

THIRROUL SEASIDE AND ARTS FESTIVAL – 31 MAY, 1 AND 2 JUNE

Enjoy the world famous Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival. <https://www.thirroulfestival.com.au/festival-events>
Friday evening and Saturday at Thirroul Community Centre, and Sunday at Thirroul Beach! Enjoy the weekend!

THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Exodus 24:3-8
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 9:11-15
Gospel	Mark 14:12-16,22-26

NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website

10 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Genesis 3:9-15
2 nd Reading	2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1
Gospel	Mark 3:20-35

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 	17:30
Sunday	08:00
 Saturday Mass is recorded.	

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

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

Patrick Vaughan • *Parish Priest*

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 09:00–15:00; Fri 08:30–15:00

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Parish School of St Michael

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THIS WEEK’S LITURGIES

Monday	_____
Tuesday 	17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	