



**Welcome to the
Parish of St Michael
Thirroul and Wombarra**
www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

moving forward as a parish family

One of the Northern Illawarra Parishes



31 MARCH AND 1 APRIL 2018
EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION ✦ YEAR B
Welcome to the Newly Baptized!

THE EASTER BULLETIN 2018

The words with which John begins his letter are moving: “What we have heard and have seen with our own eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, I mean the Word who is Life...we are telling you of it” (1 John 1:1-3). His is an enviable experience, but unrepeatable. However, to become “witnesses” of Christ, it is not necessary to have walked with Jesus of Nazareth on the roads of Palestine.

Paul—who also did not know Jesus personally—is constituted a witness of the things he saw (Acts 26:16) and receives this task from the Lord: “As you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome” (Acts 23:11).

To be a witness, it’s enough to have seen the Lord really alive, beyond death.

Witnessing is not to give good example. This is certainly useful, but the testimony is something else. This can only be given by one who passed from death to life; one who can confirm that his existence is changed and acquired meaning when it was illuminated by the light of Easter; one who has made the experience that faith in Christ gives meaning to the joys and sorrows and illuminates the joyful and sad moments.

Let’s ask ourselves: is Christ’s resurrection a constant point of reference in all the projects we do, when we buy, sell, dialogue, divide an inheritance, choose to have another child... or do we believe that the realities of this world have nothing to do with Easter?

Anyone who has seen the Lord will do nothing more without him.

To internalize the message, we repeat: “*If our heart opens itself to the understanding of the Scriptures, we will see the Lord.*”

“Now, on the first day after the Sabbath, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark...” (v.1). In these first words of the gospel of Easter day one can perceive, almost breathe the signs of death’s victory. On earth it’s all silence, immobility, quietness. A woman, alone and frightened, moves in the darkness of the night. Death seems to dominate unchallenged and silence and darkness celebrate the triumph. Power, the principle of force, discrimination, injustice and the yeast of cunning seem to have definitely the better over the forces of life.

Let’s see what happens when Mary sees the empty tomb: the scene changes as if by magic. Caught by a sudden thrill, all the characters are shaken from their slumber and taken to move quickly. “Mary of Magdala runs to Simon Peter... who rushes out with the other disciple... They run together, but the other disciple, outruns him...” (vv. 2-4). Taking everyone by surprise, the day after the Sabbath, life explodes in all its force. God intervened and opened the tomb, but Mary of Magdala does not know it. She thinks that the corpse was stolen. And it’s a natural and spontaneous reaction. It is the first thought that crosses the mind of anyone running into an empty tomb.

One can stop at this first finding or continue searching for meaning of what one observes. In the face of death one can resign, cry or open the heart to the light from above.

The Magdalene exits the scene momentarily as if passing the baton, in the race toward the faith, to two other disciples. One is well known—Peter—the other has no name. It is generally said that it is the Evangelist John. But this identification took place much later, about a hundred years after the Apostle had died. It may be that it was he, the disciple that Jesus loved. However, in the Gospel of John, this figure certainly has a symbolic character and that should be understood.

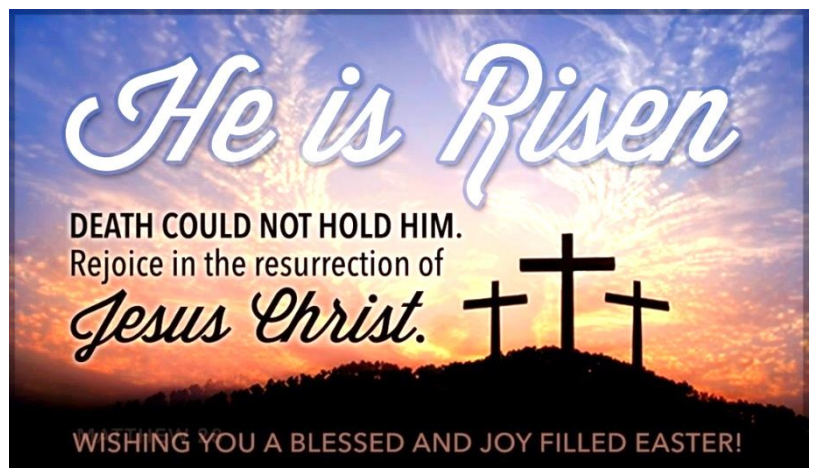
This unnamed disciple is always connected in some way to Peter: He enters the scene next to Andrew. One day the two see Jesus passing by. They ask him where he lives. They follow and stay with him all night. What about Peter? He enters because the nameless disciple reaches Jesus before him (John 1:35-40).

This disciple is no longer spoken about until the Last Supper when Jesus declares that among the twelve there is also a traitor. Who finds him out? Those who can recognize who is on the side of Jesus or who instead is against him? It’s not Peter but the unnamed disciple who reclines his head on the breast of the Lord (John 13:23-26).

During the passion, Peter stops and rejects the Master. The unnamed disciple has the courage to follow him into the house of the high priest and is close to Jesus during the process (John 18:15-27).

Peter is not on Calvary. He escaped. The disciple whom Jesus loves is instead with the Master. He is at the foot of the cross with his mother (John 19:25-27).

Then comes the passage in which Peter is again beaten both in the material race and in the spiritual one—as we shall see shortly (John 20:3-10).



☞☞ On the sea of Tiberias, it is still this disciple who recognizes the risen Christ in the man on the shore. Peter realizes it only later (John 21:7).

Finally, when he is invited by Jesus to follow him, Peter does not have the courage to do it alone. He feels the need to have at his side “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20-25).

Who is he then? Why has he no name?

He represents the authentic disciple, the one who just meets Jesus and does not hesitate. He immediately follows him and wants to know him. He even forgets to sleep just to be with him. Do you know him enough to immediately know who are his friends and enemies? He follows him also when it is necessary to offer his life. He has no name because everyone is invited to insert one's own name.

We see this pair of disciples run to the tomb. The unnamed disciple arrives first, bends, sees the linen cloths lying there, but does not enter. Simon Peter also arrives, enters and sees the linen cloths lying flat, and the napkin that was placed on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself.

Nothing miraculous! There is no appearance of angels; everywhere the signs of death are seen. Perhaps the two disciples have an intuition, the one formulated by John Chrysostom: “Whoever had taken the body, would not have stripped it before nor would have taken the trouble to remove and roll the napkin and leave it in a place by itself.” His body has therefore not been stolen.

Peter stops, astonished and amazed. He observes but cannot go further. His thoughts are locked before the evidence of death. The unnamed disciple instead takes a step forward: he sees and begins to believe (v.8). It is the climax moment of his journey of faith in the risen Lord. In front of the signs of death (the grave, the bandages, the shroud...), he begins to perceive the victory of life.

The following annotation unites the two disciples: “Scripture clearly said that Jesus must rise from the dead, but they had not yet understood that” (v.9). It seems illogical, at least as regards the disciple without name. But, at this point, the evangelist John is not compiling a cold chronicle of events, but is pointing to the Christians of his community the route through which one comes to faith. It starts from the signs—those documented by the Gospels (John 20:30-31). However, they remain mysterious and incomprehensible unless one is guided by the word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. These are those that open the mind and the heart and give the interior light that reveals the Risen One. The true disciple does not need further testing; the true disciple does not need the verification that Thomas will require.

Jesus said to his disciples: “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much fruit” (John 12:24). Whoever does not believe considers the free gift of life an absurdity, madness, because behind this gift one only sees the signs of death. In the light of Easter instead, the authentic disciple “begins to understand” that Christ's life given for all his sisters and brothers introduces one into the bliss of God.

The concluding verse of the episode: The two disciples “went back home again” (v.10). But it is not so. The two have known Jesus; they have witnessed the same facts and saw the same signs. Resuming the daily life, one continues discouraged and disappointed, and the other is guided by a new light and supported by a new hope.



Easter Sunday 31 March and 1 April 2018



Happy Easter from all at Caritas Australia!

Thank you for supporting us this year as we demonstrate how **A Just Future** is possible for all generations, backgrounds, cultures and communities, who are part of one human family. You are empowering young people to build a just future for themselves, their families and their communities. A Just Future has started with your support!

Thank you for supporting Caritas Australia's Project Compassion 2018 Lenten appeal.

www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion #projectcompassion 1800 024 413

Please return all Project Compassion envelopes and boxes by NEXT WEEKEND the latest.

PLEASE BRING ALONG: ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP VINNIES PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA Area

THANK YOU FROM THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Thank you to everyone who supported the Easter Raffle – your generosity is very much appreciated. The lucky winner of the fantastic Easter Basket donated by the Wollongong Diocese Catholic Development Fund was **Anne Morris**.

SWIM SAFELY

So far in Australia this season **5,916** surf rescues have been made! *Last week it was 5,658 – 258 rescues in a week!*

CHRISTMAS COLLECTION ... VINNIES TATHRA BUSHFIRE APPEAL

At the 2017 Christmas Masses, a total of **\$4,680.10** was donated – *thank you for your generosity*. In accordance with the policy of our Pastoral and Finance Councils, this money is used during 2018 for people in need. The Councils have decided to donate **\$5,000** of this to the **Vinnies Bushfire Appeal for the people of Tathra**. You too can donate at: www.vinnies.org.au

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be conferred by Bishop Brian on **Thursday, 28 June 2018** to Year 6 (or older) students. **Enrolment Forms** may be downloaded from our **Parish website**. Download and complete the Form, then return it to the Parish Office: thirroul@dow.org.au Enrolments close on **Monday, 14 May 2018**.

WELCOME TO THE NEWLY BAPTIZED

Welcome to our catechumens, now **neophytes**, **SAMARA JIRSA** and **DANIELE ROQUE DA SILVA WOODS**, baptized, confirmed and received the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

Welcome to **PIA KASSIS** baptized in our parish on Easter Sunday! Welcome to her parents, godparents and family.

Next Baptisms in our Parish will be during the weekend Masses on either **14/15 April** and then on either **19/20 May**. If you want your infant daughter or son baptized on **19/20 May**, at least one parent needs to attend the Baptism Preparation Class which will be held at **7:15pm** on **Thursday, 26 April**. Enrolment forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.

Baptism, the first sacrament of initiation, prepares us to celebrate the Eucharist. Baptisms are usually held on the third weekend of each month [except January and Lent], during either of the weekend Masses. Baptism forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.



THIRROUL SEASIDE AND ARTS FESTIVAL

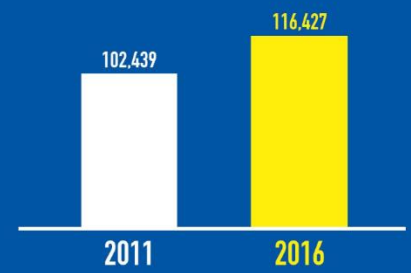
Support our local community at the Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival next weekend, **Saturday, 7 April** and on the beachfront on **Sunday, 8 April**.

OXFAM REPORT

According to a new report from Oxfam International the bottom 50% of the world's population saw no increase in wealth, whereas more than \$8 of every \$10 of wealth created last year went to the richest 1%.

Oxfam says the trend shows that the global economy is skewed in favour of the rich, rewarding wealth instead of work. "The billionaire boom is not a sign of a thriving economy but a symptom of a failing economic system," said Winnie Byanyima, executive director of Oxfam International. The head of the advocacy group argued that the people who "make our clothes, assemble our phones and grow our food" are being exploited in order to enrich corporations and the super wealthy.

RATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTRALIA HAS GROWN BY 13.7%



ANZAC DAY SERVICES

On **Monday, 9 April** at **10am** our local schools will hold a special **ANZAC DAY** service at the Thirroul Cenotaph. On **ANZAC DAY** itself, **25 April**, there will be the **6am ANZAC DAWN SERVICE** at the Thirroul Cenotaph. There will be the usual **ANZAC DAY MASS** at our Parish Church of St Michael, Thirroul at **8:30am**. **Lest we forget!** *Please bring rosemary to that Mass.*



WHY ARE SURF FLAGS RED AND YELLOW?

The red and yellow flag was initially used with great success in World War I particularly by ships and, when flying at full mast, indicated man overboard and all friendly ships in the vicinity commenced search procedures immediately. On 25 April 1915, the red and yellow flag was hoisted to symbolise mateship on the shores of Gallipoli. In order to ensure that the ANZACS could easily recognise friend from foe, the red and yellow flag was conceived to signal a safe haven for their own. Upon returning from overseas service, Australian soldiers saw the need to establish a common image in the early 1920s to represent safe swimming areas on Australian beaches. The red and yellow flag was born on Australian beaches at the instigation of those men who saw the flag as a representation of years of mateship, service and, above all, a duty to protect others.

The red and yellow flags have come to be an Australian icon, representing a culture founded on the need to be a true mate and put others first. The red and yellow cap branches from the foundations of the red and yellow flag and ensures the Surf Lifesavers are easily identifiable to the public, thereby providing beachgoers with the same security they have when they see the flags flying on a beach.



EASTER SEASON

The celebration of the **Easter Vigil** is the beginning of the season of Easter. The Vigil is the Christian feast *par excellence*, the feast of new birth, new beginnings, salvation renewed and humanity restored to the Lord. While the Vigil marks the end of the paschal fast, the end of the celebration of Holy Week, and the end of repentance and conversion for which Lent prepared the community, it is much more a beginning. It is the beginning of a new season of grace and a time of joy and thanksgiving, for Easter is not one day or one solemnity—it is a **fifty day celebration**, and the **seven weeks**, the **fifty days** from **Easter Sunday** to **Pentecost Sunday** together comprise what is termed "the great Sunday".

On this greatest day of the year, all fasting and sombre thoughts are banished. As St John Chrysostom announces in this famous Easter sermon, all are invited to the feast: *"Let all then enter the joy of Our Lord! Both the first and the last, and those who come after, enjoy your reward! Rich and poor, dance with one another; sober and slothful, celebrate the day. Those who have kept the fast and those who have not, rejoice today, for the table is richly spread. Fare royally upon it—the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. All of you, enjoy the banquet of faith! All enjoy the riches of God's goodness. Let no one cry over their poverty, for the universal Kingdom has appeared! Let no one mourn who has fallen again and again, for forgiveness has risen from the grave. Let none fear death, for the death of our Saviour has set us free. He has destroyed it by enduring it. He spoiled the power of hell when he descended thereto. Isaiah foretold this when he cried, 'Death has been frustrated in meeting him below!' It is frustrated, for it is destroyed. It is frustrated, for it is annihilated. It is frustrated, for now it is made captive. For it grabbed a body and discovered God. It took earth and behold, it encountered Heaven. It took what was visible, and was overcome by what was invisible. O Death, where is your sting? O Death, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and the demons are cast down. Christ is risen, and life is set free. Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of the dead. For Christ, having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits for those who sleep. To Christ be glory and power forever and ever! Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"*

he is alive
celebrate the resurrection

THE PASSION NARRATIVE IN MARK'S GOSPEL [Part 3] *(Parts 1 and 2 are in the last two Bulletins available on line)*

The scene shifts from Gethsemane to the residence of the High Priest where Jesus will be interrogated by the leaders. Mark's masterful narrative style is again in evidence. He frames the interrogation scene with that of Peter's denials, clearly contrasting the disciple's fear with Jesus' courage. A parade of false witnesses are brought forward against Jesus, but their accusations are contradictory. Some, however, bring up a charge that jogs the memory of the reader of the Gospel: "I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands." Earlier in the gospel Mark had presented Jesus as a prophet on fire with zeal, purging the temple and predicting its demise (11:15-19; 13:1-2). Indeed, the Risen Christ would be the new temple of God, the "rejected stone" that would become the cornerstone of a new sacred people in whom God would dwell (12:10-11). This accusation of the trial would be remembered when the veil of the sanctuary would tear apart at the moment of Jesus' death (15:38).

Frustrated by the flawed testimony of his witnesses, the High Priest poses the key question to Jesus: "Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" There is no hesitation in Jesus' reply, "I am." And he adds a challenge to his opponents: they would one day see their prisoner coming as the "Son of Man," that haunting figure who would experience humiliation and rejection, but then would be lifted up in exaltation by God and return in triumph at the end of the world. Jesus' bold declaration of his identity is rejected as blasphemous by his opponents; they condemn him to death and begin to abuse him. The reader who knows who Jesus truly is can only marvel in deep sadness at how spiritually blind we are all capable of becoming.

Mark shifts our attention from Jesus standing before his captors back to the courtyard below where Peter warily edges near a group of servants huddling around a warm fire. As if in slow motion, we watch the power of fear break down a disciple's resolve. Three times Peter denies he even knows Jesus, finally cursing and swearing as panic takes hold. A rooster crows and Peter remembers Jesus' warning at the supper. The terrible realization of his failure surges over him and he begins to weep.

The story is so familiar we may not be able to recapture its incredible shock. The full measure of the disciples' failure can be taken in this single tragic story: the leader of those whom Jesus called publicly to discipleship renounces his allegiance to his Master.

The leaders take Jesus to Pilate to have him condemned to crucifixion. Mark rivets our attention on a single issue – Jesus' identity as king – as for the first time the power of Rome enters the passion story.

The scene is full of irony. Pilate, the representative of imperial power, confronts this battered Jewish prisoner and questions him on his supposed pretensions to be "king of the Jews." While Jesus' own people reject their true king and choose Barabbas, a murderer, Pilate, a Gentile and a Roman, appears convinced of Jesus' innocence and seeks to have him released.

Underneath all of this is the issue of kingship, the most forceful expression of human political power known to Mark's readers. Pilate and Jesus' opponents agree on one thing: Jesus is no king. In Pilate's mind he is a harmless victim of the leaders' envy; to the leaders he is a false and dangerous claimant to religious authority. So ultimately Jesus is mocked for his pretensions to kingship: a cloak of purple, a crown of thorns, a reed sceptre, and a parody of homage that turns violent. But the reader of Mark's passion story knows that it is not Jesus but those symbols of imperial and abusive power that are being mocked. Jesus is a king but one whose power is expressed not in exploiting or "lording it over others" (10:42) but in giving them life. Earlier in the gospel during the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus had urged his disciples not to exercise that kind of power but only the power whose source and intent is to give life to others, the very power that animated Jesus himself (10:42-45). The passion story, therefore, stands in judgment over all forms of abusive power.

The end comes swiftly in Mark's account; the story is told in few words, as if it were too painful to say more. Pilate gives up his attempts to free Jesus and condemns him to crucifixion. An execution detail brings Jesus to Golgotha where he is offered a narcotic (which he refuses), stripped of his garments and nailed to the cross. Two rebels are crucified with Jesus one on each side of him, forming a sad entourage. The sign over the cross acclaims in derision: "The King of the Jews."

During the death watch, a parade of mockery dredges up the issues of the trial and hurls them at the man on the cross: his threats to the temple; his power to save others and now his inability to save himself. Mark casts this last taunt in strongly ironic tones: "Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe" (15:32). But the reader knows that Jesus' power is demonstrated not in shedding the cross but in carrying it, in giving his life for others. "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it" (8:34-37).

Darkness envelops Golgotha and out of that darkness comes Jesus' final lament: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It is the first verse of Psalm 22, the great Jewish prayer of suffering faith. Mark's passion story has been described as "dark passage" — Jesus stripped of his disciples, his freedom, his dignity, his life as he gives every fibre of his being for the sake of the world.

And so in Mark's account, Jesus dies with a wordless scream that echoes from that dread hill, splitting the veil of the temple and igniting faith in the centurion's heart. This unlikely witness sees in the manner of Jesus' death for others the true revelation of God. The sight of the Crucified Jesus triggers in him the full first confession of faith expressed in the gospel: "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (15:39). A startling revelation: God's power revealed not through staggering prodigies but in a selfless death motivated by love. Mark has an eye for the unlikely. The chosen disciples had long fled. But standing at a distance were other faithful followers, the women who had been drawn to Jesus in Galilee and had come to Jerusalem with him. They would stay with him now through death and burial, never abandoning him. Two of them, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus, would keep vigil at his burial and would be the first to discover the tomb empty and to know that Jesus was victorious over death (16:1-8). These "unlikely disciples" who proved true where others more prominent had failed, would be the ones to bring the Risen Christ's message of joy and reconciliation to the disciples who had failed. ... **Now the Easter story could begin.**

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p>Easter Sunday Morning • Year B</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 10:34,37-43</p> <p>2nd Reading Colossians 3:1-4</p> <p>Gospel Mark 16:1-7</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p>2nd Sunday of Easter • Year B</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 4:32-35</p> <p>2nd Reading 1 John 5:1-6</p> <p>Gospel John 20:19-31</p>	<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</p> <p>📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive 📮 PO Box 44, Thirroul NSW 2515 ☎ 4268 1910 📧 thirroul@dow.org.au 🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560</p> <p>Parish Office Hours Tuesdays, Wednesdays 9am to 3:30pm Fridays 10am to 3pm Magda Pires • Maureen Franciskovic</p> <p>Patrick Vaughan, Parish Priest Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm</p>
<p>SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Church of St Michael • Thirroul Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am</p> <p>Bulli Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm Corrimal Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am</p>	<p>LITURGIES THIS WEEK</p> <p>Wombarra [Liturgy] Monday n/a</p> <p>Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm Wednesday 9:00am Thursday 9:00am Friday 9:30am</p>	