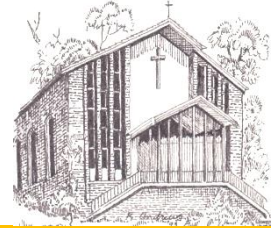




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



28 / 29 APRIL 2018

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER ✦ YEAR B

An Easter Reflection ✦ End of the Surfing Season

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Who Cares?

The heart of Christian community is the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. Living within the vine, we “will produce abundantly.” Separated from the vine, we are, “a withered, rejected branch which can do nothing.”

The commandment that binds together this community is twofold: to believe in Jesus and to “love one another as he commanded us.” When following this commandment of faith and love, “we are at peace before him.” Such a community of faith, love and peace is possible, and Luke assures us that “throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria the church was at peace.”

Our world is not at peace; there is war and division everywhere. For our Church to speak peace to this world, it will have to be a peaceful community. There must be that faith in, and reliance on Jesus, and there must also be that love for one another. The world must be able to look at us and say that we are at peace. Only then will our message of peace get through to others.

“That the Church may really be the sign of that solidarity which the family of nations desires, it should show in its own life greater cooperation between the churches of rich and poor regions through spiritual communion and division of human and material resources.”

– Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 1971: 59

Today’s gospel reading, ‘I am the true vine’, brings us another of John’s ‘I AM’ meditations. It takes up an important theme developed by the Old Testament prophets and one of the psalms: the old Israel was God’s ‘vine’, lovingly planted and tended; but it brought forth only bitter fruits. In Jesus, however, this divine project has been taken up again by the Father – coming forth from his Paschal Mystery, he is the true vine which will bear fruits which give eternal ‘glory’ to the Father.

Thus our liturgy carries forward our Easter reflection upon what the Saviour’s Paschal Mystery means in our lives and in the life of the Church. One of the central themes of the New Testament is the solidarity we have with Christ through what was achieved by God through his death and resurrection. For Paul we live ‘in Christ’, we are ‘limbs of his body’. John often repeats that Christ (and his Father) now ‘dwell’ or ‘make their home’ in us.

We could easily overlook the fact that what comes through clearly in this gospel is the call to fruitfulness – sharing with the Son all that makes him the ‘true’ vine, beloved of the Father who has given him over for the sake of the whole world. The vine’s branches are ‘pruned’ by the Father by means of ‘the word’ – a clear call to nourish our ...



✚✚ Resurrection life through a knowledge and love of the Scriptures. The fruits we will bear are primarily the witness we must give to others, and the outreach through which we are called to embody the Saviour's presence in our world. Israel was called to be 'a light to the nations' but failed; the New Israel, brought into existence through our solidarity with Jesus in his Paschal Mystery, must fulfil that great mission – an apparently impossible task, until we recall that what is at stake is the Father's great design in creation, and we recognise that all that is to be achieved derives from the One who is 'the true vine'.

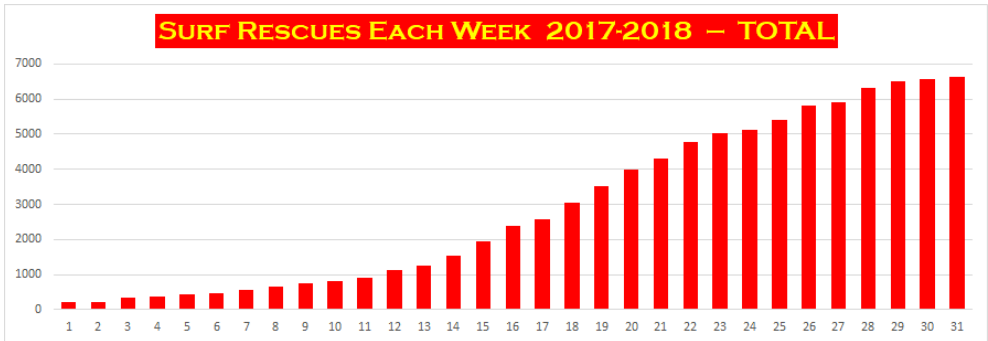


In the first reading from Acts of Apostles (written by Luke), the story of the apostolic Church, energised by its Resurrection faith, continues. The conversion of Paul – through his meeting with the Risen Lord – is a great turning point in this story. As now, the difficulties to be overcome, if the community of believers was to bear life-giving fruits, were both internal and external. It was not easy to accept and trust as a brother Paul, the man who had been so violent against them. And the message of life – brought to a lost world – was hated by those who preferred darkness to the light.

If the fruits of life 'in the vine' stressed in the gospel are the Church's effective witness and outreach, the 'discipleship' referred to at the end of the gospel's teaching brings great personal blessings to each believer. The reading from John's letter spells out some of them: learning from the Saviour what authentic 'love' is; finding the trust in God which overcomes all our deepest fears and self-doubts; the unspeakable privilege of the divine indwelling; and finally the gift of God's own Spirit.

SWIM SAFELY

So far in Australia **this season 6,635** rescues have been made! *Last week it was 6,567!* **That's ONLY 68 rescues performed in the last week!** The surfing season concludes this weekend **Sunday, 29 April. SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS.**



PEACE

"Peace firstly means there are no wars ... but it also means that there is friendship between all, that every day a step forward is made for justice, so that there are no more children who are hungry, that there are no more sick children who do not have the possibility of receiving healthcare. Doing all of this means making peace. Peace involves work, it is not about staying calm and doing nothing. No! True peace means working so that everyone has a solution to the problems, to the needs, that they have in their land, in their homeland, in their family, in their society."

– Pope Francis, 12 May 2015

AN EASTER REFLECTION

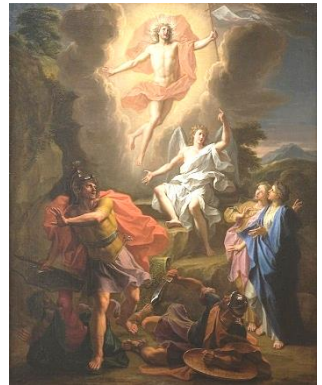
There is a kind of worldly wisdom that can bleach the colour out of life. As, over the course of a lifetime, we gradually accumulate experience of the way the world works, life can begin to lose its capacity to surprise us. We can come to believe that we have seen it all—that there is nothing new under the sun. We can catch ourselves mouthing old sores about death and taxes and the futility of human striving. When we encounter idealism, we are inclined to feel condescension, cynicism or pity. Expressions of hope elicit from us a sad smirk or a world-weary shrug. Even if we continue to say the “right” things to the young about life’s infinite possibilities, it can feel as if we are sheltering them from harsh realities. Let them dream while they can.

G K Chesterton believed that, like individuals, civilizations could grow old, and fall prey to a world-weary wisdom. The result was a loss of cultural suppleness and of the capacity to innovate that he associated with the ancient civilizations of Asia. He contended that by the time of Christ, Greco-Roman civilization too was growing old. A consensus was growing that everything that could be thought had been thought. Nothing could happen that had not already happened. Hope for change was illusory. What really mattered were wealth, privilege, power and pleasure.

But before this conventional wisdom could calcify, Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, and the world was made young again. Here was something new under the sun. If this could happen, anything could. The world was infused anew with a sense of hope and wonder. Now, the mighty could be cast down and the lowly lifted up. Now life, not death, had the last word.

Coypel’s *The Resurrection* captures the moment that all this happens. The light of the risen Christ imbues the painting with colour, as it does the world. The Roman soldiers, emblematic of their hardheaded, pragmatic civilization, are overthrown and astounded.

As we gaze upon the painting, we might be inclined to consider whether our own culture is growing old and sclerotic in the way Chesterton described, and whether it might, as a result, be aching unawares for the good news of the Resurrection. Or, we might let our reflection be introspective. We could allow our hearts to be filled with gratitude for this glorious feast



of Easter, which yearly makes of our Lord’s Resurrection a gift of new life to each of us, keeping us child-like enough to enter the kingdom of heaven. We could search out dark corners of our assumptions about life, into which the good news of Easter has not yet penetrated, and throw them open to the light of the risen Christ. We could allow the blessed hope, holy wonder and sacred imagination of Easter to dissipate the miasma of self-fulfilling prophecies that masquerades as wisdom, so that only the Wisdom who is Christ abides.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Wednesday 2 May St Athanasius, bishop, doctor
 Thursday 3 May Sts Philip and James, apostles
 Friday 4 May Anointing of the Sick, 9:30am



ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA

DATES FOR YOUR MAY DIARY

Friday 4 May Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick during 9:30am Mass
 Thursday 10 May Andrew Granc ofm reaches four score and ten
 Monday 14 May Enrolments for the Sacrament of Confirmation close
 Saturday 19 May After 5:30pm Mass, celebration of Andrew's age [details later]
 Sunday 20 May ... until Friday, 1 June, Ken teaching canon law, Baulkham Hills
 Wednesday 30 May Thirroul Parish Ladies Dinner [details later]



ROSEMARY ON ANZAC DAY

ANZAC biscuits and dawn services aren't the only traditions surrounding 25 April. Have you ever wondered why rosemary is worn? Since ancient times this aromatic herb has been believed to have properties to improve the memory. Perhaps because of this, rosemary became an emblem of both fidelity and remembrance in literature and folklore. Traditionally, sprigs of rosemary are worn on ANZAC Day and sometimes on Remembrance Day, and are usually handed out by Legacy and the RSL. Rosemary has particular significance for Australians, as it is found growing wild all over the Gallipoli peninsula..

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p>Fifth Sunday of Easter • Year B 1st Reading Acts 9:26-31 2nd Reading 1 John 3:18-24 Gospel John 15:1-8</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p>Sixth Sunday of Easter • Year B 1st Reading Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48 2nd Reading 1 John 4:7-10 Gospel John 15:9-17</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 4:30pm Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm Wednesday 9:00am Thursday 9:00am Anointing of the Sick Friday 9:30am</p>

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

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Parish Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires
 10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic