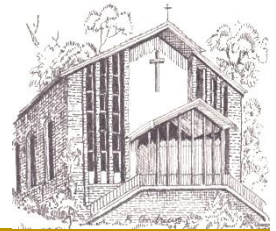




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



12 / 13 MAY 2018

ASCENSION OF THE LORD IN THE FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER ✦ YEAR B

Happy Mothers Day

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Love and Leadership

Ascension is an in-between time not unlike Advent. It is a time of strong experience, suspending us between promise and fulfilment with a fair share of anxiety and fear. How can this abandoned group of disciples explain a missing body and then start to explain that Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection? Yet, both the Ascension and the Pentecost events give unusual courage and power to this fledgling [newly 'hatched'] little band of followers, a transformation that can only be attributed to God's Spirit. For the promise of the Spirit is a gracious and decisive act of God. Other than Luke, the other evangelists do not emphasize the event which takes Jesus up to heaven. What is more remarkable, however, is what happened to the earliest Christians as a result of it.

"Go forth and announce the Gospel of the Lord." With these or similar words we are sent out of Mass into the world, in a similar fashion as Jesus sent his disciples and promised the Spirit. The Eucharist which we celebrate transforms us into the heart, hands and mind of Christ in order to bring the salvation of God. We are to realize the promise of God, a promise made to all creation in Christ Jesus. Strengthened by the Spirit of understanding we go forth and proclaim good news everywhere – Mark 16:20.



Forty days after the Resurrection Jesus left them in the flesh. I wonder if they felt what we feel when a loved one moves away or dies. Alone? Abandoned? Desolate? Or did they recall his promise, one that would be fulfilled in ten days? On Pentecost Jesus would return to them pouring out his Spirit. What a moment in time, between Ascension and Pentecost, between loss and promise. He does promise that we will see him again, as we will one day see our loved ones. But what should we do in the meantime?

As each day dawns, let's awaken to the gift that this day can be. It might be helpful to pray through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. His thoughts can fill us with excitement and courage to face the day. It's empowering to realize that we are not alone. Jesus' Spirit will accompany us through each day. We believe that each day, when we awaken, there is perched on each shoulder an angel of affirmation and a demon of discouragement. Whichever one you choose to listen to, so goes the day.

It's the call that each of us has, "to proclaim the Gospel to every creature." That call can be seen as overwhelming until we realize that with the call comes the gift of Jesus' indwelling Spirit, gracing and blessing my every effort. So let us begin – again. Or are we too busy? Do we find some other excuse? How practical is our faith?

From the moment of his resurrection triumph, the Saviour was living in the bosom of the Father. The faith of the Church had its beginnings in meetings with the Risen Lord ✨ ✨

✠✠ – in which he ‘showed himself alive’ and ‘told them about the kingdom of God’ – preparing them for the great mission that would be theirs. Today’s celebration reminds us that these meetings finally came to an end – after ‘forty days’, as Luke puts it in our reading from Acts. Luke is preparing us for what will occur after ‘not many days’: at the Pentecostal celebration, fifty days after the Passover.



Jesus is not abandoning his friends. On the contrary, he tells them to look forward to ‘what the Father has promised’. When they are ‘baptised with the Holy Spirit’ – the Spirit who is the very expression of the life he shares with the Father – he will be with them in all that they are called to be and do. The Lord’s new presence will fill with new life the Church which is about to be launched forth on its mission – to bring the power and blessings of the Lord’s Paschal Mystery ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Luke), ‘to all creation’ (Mark).

According to the Gospel of Luke the angels tell the disciples not to seek the Lord ‘in the sky’, but to take up the mission they have received, to be his ‘witnesses’ throughout their world. The era of the pilgrim Church that is about to begin – the angels tell them – will end when Jesus returns, and the Church’s life in faith and sacraments gives way to the absolute fulfilment of the final Kingdom.

Our readings describe the task of the Church as it journeys through history towards the final Kingdom, bringing the ‘Good News to all creation’. Its life together – in the power of the Resurrection – should be a living sign, confirming the message it brings. ‘Charity, selflessness, gentleness and patience’ should be an expression of the ‘unity of the Spirit’ – the unity which only God can give, the unity of the ‘one Body’ of Christ, the unity of those who know that they are called together by the ‘one God who is Father of all’.

United, through their ‘baptism’, in the blessings of the Paschal Mystery, Church members should share the many gifts they receive from ‘the one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things’. Doing so they will show their world the pattern of authentic human fulfilment, in ‘the fullness of Christ’

On Ascension Day we celebrate our Christian hope – where Jesus, our brother and our Lord has gone we shall follow. The pilgrim Church must bring to our struggling world the Good News that, through his Paschal Mystery, the Saviour calls the whole of the human family to live forever with him in the bosom of the Father.

PEACE ... WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS

Let us draw inspiration from the words of Saint John Paul II: “If the ‘dream’ of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees’ and migrants’ contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true ‘common home’.” Throughout history, many have believed in this “dream”, and their achievements are a testament to the fact that it is no mere utopia. Among these, we remember Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini in this year that marks the hundredth anniversary of her death. On this thirteenth day of November [2017], many ecclesial communities celebrate her memory. This remarkable woman, who devoted her life to the service of migrants and became their patron saint, taught us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate our brothers and sisters. Through her intercession, may the Lord enable all of us to experience that “a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” – *World Day of Peace Message 2018*

A BLESSING OF MOTHERS

Tender, gentle God of love, bend down your ear: bless the mothers of our families. Bless them with the strength of your Spirit, as they taught their children to walk. Bless them with the melody of your love, as they shared how to talk and sing. Bless them with a place at your eternal dinner table, they who fed and nurtured life. Bless them today with good things, with good health, with pride in their children, with joy, love and laughter. Surround them with many good friends. May they who carried life in their wombs be carried one day to your divine embrace. May your blessings descend on all mothers. Amen! Alleluia!



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 **THIS Monday, 14 May 2018**.

A REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

In Saint Peter's Square in 2013, Pope Francis spoke about how the Ascension is the culmination of Jesus' earthly life (until he returns to us). The pope primarily focused on Luke 24:50-53, which recounts Jesus' departure from his disciples and Blessed Mother by stating "While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. We have One who always defends us, who defends us from the snares of the devil, who defends us from ourselves and from our sins," said Pope Francis. He added "Let us not be afraid to turn to him to ask forgiveness, to ask for a blessing, to ask for mercy! He always pardons us, he is our Advocate: he always defends us! Don't forget this! The Ascension of Jesus into heaven acquaints us with this deeply consoling reality on our journey: in Christ, truly God and truly human, our humanity was taken to God. Christ opened the path to us. He is like a roped guide climbing a mountain who, on reaching the summit, pulls us up to him and leads us to God. If we entrust our life to him, if we let ourselves be guided by him, we are certain to be in safe hands, in the hands of our Saviour, of our Advocate." In the same address, Pope Francis spoke about the strength we receive from Jesus' Ascension. This is the invitation to base our contemplation on Christ's lordship, to find in him the strength to spread the Gospel and to witness to it in everyday life: contemplation and action, ora et labora, as St. Benedict taught, are both necessary in our life as Christians," said Pope Francis. "Dear brothers and sisters, the Ascension does not point to Jesus' absence, but tells us that he is alive in our midst in a new way. He is no longer in a specific place in the world as he was before the Ascension. He is now in the lordship of God, present in every space and time, close to each one of us. In our life we are never alone: we have this Advocate who awaits us, who defends us. We are never alone: the Crucified and Risen Lord guides us."

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Monday 14 May St Matthias, apostle
Enrolments for the Sacrament of Confirmation 2018 close

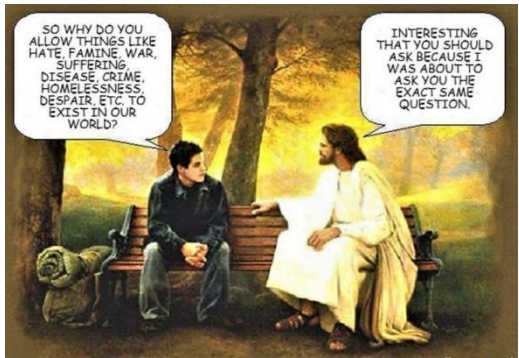
PARISH CELEBRATION ON NEXT SATURDAY, 19 MAY

There will be a parish celebration for Andrew's 70th Birthday on NEXT Saturday, 19 May in the McCarthy Centre following the 5:30pm Mass. Families are requested to bring a plate. Tea, coffee and cordial will be provided, BYO other refreshments. If you are attending, please leave your name and the food you are bringing on the list at the church, or ☎ Maureen Heydon on 0438 674 997 or Judy Bull on 0407 672 417. Thank you.

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

SOCIAL JUSTICE

A commitment to social justice is an essential characteristic of a life lived according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not possible, in the Catholic tradition, to live out a full life of faith in the absence of this commitment. The work for justice is an essential and urgent task for Christians since too many people are suffering and urgent reforms and bold transformations are required. The call to work for justice is clear – how have we acted upon it?



THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Ascension of the Lord • Year B
1st Reading Acts 1:1-11
2nd Reading Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13
Gospel Mark 16:15-20

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Pentecost • Year B
1st Reading Acts 2:1-11
2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3-7,12-13
Gospel John 15:26-27, 16:12-15

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am
Bulli • Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm
Corrimal • Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Wombarra [Liturgy] Monday 4:30pm
Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm
Wednesday 9:00am
Thursday 9:00am
Friday 9:30am

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