



## Welcopme to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**18 / 19 MAY 2024**  
**PENTECOST SUNDAY + YEAR B**  
**50 DAYS OF EASTER! ALLELUIA!**

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

### *Gone, but Lost Forever?*

This is the last Sunday of the Easter season! Its Mass is vivid and exciting.

“Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”

Wouldn't you have loved to be there? How thrilling it would have been!

Even more delightful, look at the wording. The noise was not an actual wind but something “like” the rush of a violent wind. And these were not tongues of fire, but tongues “as of fire” (i.e., “as if they were made of fire”). These were marvels that could not be described “as is.” So, the writer used metaphors.

Imagine it this way:

There was this sound that came from the sky, something that sounded like, uh, oh, let's see, uh, a violent wind! That's it. It wasn't wind but that is the closest I can get to it. And then stuff that looked sort of like chunks of fire, or maybe like tongues made out of fire. Only it wasn't really fire. Or tongues either. Oh, I can't describe it.



It was a presence that is very real but too deep for words. So, “as if” becomes a way to help us sense it. We call this procedure “metaphor,” or just “comparison.” It was “as if.”

Why aren't we allowed to prophesy and speak in other languages as the apostles did? St Paul handles this question beautifully in the Second Reading, but the answer is also found by recalling who the Holy Spirit is, as we have been doing in previous weeks.

The most essential thing we can say is that the Holy Spirit is completely and truly God. The third person of the Holy Trinity comes to dwell within us. No one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

No wonder it is hard to describe!

As time went by, the bestowal of the Spirit became less dramatic but just as real. For instance, look at Acts 19:1-8, in which St Paul came upon a dozen or so disciples who had never even heard of the Holy Spirit! He baptized them, and “as he laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

It was the sacrament of Baptism! Today, when we receive baptism and other sacraments, we are receiving the Holy Spirit! But gently and in ritual form. Christ and his Father come to dwell within us, but quietly.

Alright, then why do we not act as someone who has God within us?

Well, like anything planted so deep, the Spirit's presence must have time to make its way into our actions, our words, our deeds. Whenever we find acts of charity or joy in ourselves, or patience and kindness, or the ability to endure hardship and injuries; when we are tempted toward mildness and modesty, then we can know that the Holy Spirit is at work within us.

It is not as if violent winds and tongues of fire are raging, as in former days. But it is the same Spirit of Jesus and of the Father ...

... the one we have celebrated, this Easter season.

The reading from Acts sets the tone for today's celebration. Luke tells how the Church's universal mission was inaugurated, in the power of the Holy Spirit, as faithful Jews gathered for their Pentecost festival, fifty days after the Passover celebration.

Luke was conscious of his task of telling the world what had really happened – as he makes clear in introducing each of his two works. He faced a great challenge, however, as he set out to describe and interpret the vast complexity of the Church's early development. He met this difficulty by choosing several events that were turning points in the Church's history, and presenting them in a dramatic way that made clear their profound significance – a device used by other writers of the day.

Luke's story of the Church's first Pentecost is an example of this approach. The Church's first courageous witness, and its subsequent announcing of the Good New throughout the known world, was a remarkable fulfilment of the Saviour's promise that he would give his disciples courage and power through the gift of his own Spirit (Mark 13:9-11). The universality of the Church's mission is made clear. The Church's first witness is to ‘devout people from every nation’ - in the first place to ‘Jews’, but with the mention of ‘proselytes’ among the crowd addressed the conversion of the gentiles is also anticipated. In the continuation of our passage, Peter's sermon gives a summary of the Church's early witness. It is in the power of the Spirit that the Church takes up its mission. Today, before all days, the Church invites us to deepen our faith in the Saviour's gift of his own Spirit. Already in the Old



✚✚ Testament, 'the Spirit of God' was active as a life-giving force at work in creation. Anointed by the Spirit as God's 'Servant', in fulfilment of the prophecies of the Book of Isaiah, Jesus has led us to know the Spirit as a Person sharing the one divine life with the Father and the Son. Today's gospel reading is a meditation upon this shared life, and the way in which those who find faith in Christ are made to share in it. Those who have received the gift of the Spirit can tell the world the 'complete truth' about the Saviour of the world, and can announce 'the things to come', because the mystery of God's final plan for the world has been revealed in the events which took place in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover.

The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit is the very life principle of the Church; the Spirit dwells in each believer as our 'paraclete' – the companion who stands by us in all our trials, providing whatever is needed to survive every trial. We live 'in Christ' because he has given us his own Spirit. Paul's letter to the Galatians contrasts the ugly manifestations of a selfish abuse of our freedom with the 'fruits of the Spirit' which are to be seen in the lives of those who chose to 'belong to Christ Jesus': 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'. In these things, the Spirit gives us an intimation of 'the things to come', the fullness of God's Kingdom. There is only one heart and life over which each of us does have some control, and that is our own. So, if today we earnestly pray: 'Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth', what we are really praying is that we ourselves will be open to God's love and God's inspiration.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading Acts 2:1-11

- ✚ The disciples were just an insignificant group only minutes before, cowering behind locked doors. Suddenly they were filled with power, speaking with great courage and freedom "and in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." Can you explain the birth of the Church in terms of this reading? Was the Church "astounding" on the first Pentecost? How can/could it "astound" today?
- ✚ Did the Holy Spirit come only once in history, as in the upper room? Or do you see the Holy Spirit as dynamic and constant in all life? How were the disciples different after the Spirit's arrival? Are you confident that the Spirit is with you? Will the Spirit work through you in some way to change things that need changing: Climate crisis? Hunger? Immigration? Racial bias? Trafficking? Refugees? Bigotry? Discrimination? Prejudice?

### Second Reading Galatians 5:16-25

- ✚ How is a Christian – you – empowered to live by the Spirit? How much should we rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance and power in our lives? What acts in your life tend to entangle you?
- ✚ In what sense do love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control grow in a person – on you – much the way fruit grows on a tree? How can you cultivate the character qualities of the Holy Spirit in your life? How do you see the character of the Holy Spirit growing in your life?

### Gospel John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

- ✚ Jesus "breathed" on them. How does this relate to Genesis 2:7: "God formed human beings of dust from the ground, and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life?" What significance does this have for you? How important is the Holy Spirit in your life?
- ✚ According to Pope Francis, what is the Advocate, the Paraclete telling the Church today?

Let us go another step. We too are called to testify in the Holy Spirit, to become paracletes, comforters. The Spirit is asking us to embody the comfort he brings.

How can we do this? Not by making great speeches, but by drawing near to others. Not with trite words, but with prayer and closeness. Let us remember that closeness, compassion and tenderness are God's "trademark," always. The Paraclete is telling the Church that today is the time for comforting. It is more the time for joyfully proclaiming the Gospel than for combatting paganism. It is the time for bringing the joy of the Risen Lord, not for lamenting the drama of secularization.

It is the time for pouring out love upon the world, yet not embracing worldliness. It is the time for testifying to mercy, more than for inculcating rules and regulations. It is the time of the Paraclete! It is the time of freedom of heart, in the Paraclete.

– Pope Francis, *Pentecost Homily*, 23 May 2021

## LAUDATO SI' WEEK – 19 TO 26 MAY 2024 – SEEDS OF HOPE

"The **climate** is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all". (#23) "Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect." (#42) "Access to safe drinkable **water** is a basic and universal human right." (#30) "Our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her **air** and we receive life and refreshment from her waters." (#2) "There is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples." (#129) "There is a great variety of small-scale **food** production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples." (#129) "A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice." (#49) All creation reflects the beauty and blessing of God's image: in our climate, the weather that shapes our planet, the seasons that give a rhythm to our life, and our own internal fluctuations. Where were you most aware of these today? *Numbers in brackets refer to Laudato Si' – Pope Francis, 24 May 2015.*

# LETTER OF POPE FRANCIS TO PARISH PRIESTS – 2 MAY 2024

Dear Brother Priests. The International Meeting “Parish Priests for the Synod”, and the dialogue with all of you who have taken part, provide me with the opportunity to pray for the parish priests the world over. To all of you, I address these words with great affection.

It is so obvious as to sound almost banal, but that does not make it less true: the Church could not go on without your dedication and your pastoral service. So before all else, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the generous work that you do each day, sowing seeds of the Gospel in every kind of soil (cf. Mark 4:1-25).

As you have experienced in these days of sharing, the parishes in which you carry out your ministry vary widely, from those on the outskirts of great cities – as I know personally from Buenos Aires – to those in sparsely populated areas that are the size of vast provinces. They range from those in town centres in many European countries, where ancient basilicas house dwindling and aging communities, to those where celebrations are held beneath the branches of great trees and the songs of birds mix with the voices of small children.

Parish priests are well aware of this, since they know from within the life of God’s People their joys and hardships, their resources and their needs. For this reason, a synodal Church needs its parish priests. Without priests, we will never be able to learn how to walk together and to set out on the path of synodality, “the path which God expects of the Church of the third millennium”.

We will never become a synodal and missionary Church unless parish communities are distinguished by the sharing of all the baptized in the one mission of proclaiming the Gospel. If parishes are not synodal and missionary, neither will the Church be. The Synthesis Report of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops is very clear in this regard. Parishes, beginning with their structures and the organization of parish life, are called to think of themselves “primarily as being of service to the mission that the faithful carry out in society, in family life and the workplace, without concentrating exclusively on their own activities and their organizational needs” (8.1). Parish communities increasingly need to become places from which the baptized set out as missionary disciples and to which they return, full of joy, in order to share the wonders worked by the Lord through their witness (cf. Luke 10:17).

As pastors, we are called to accompany in this process the communities that we serve, and at the same time to commit ourselves with prayer, discernment and apostolic zeal in ensuring that our ministry is suited to the needs of a synodal and missionary Church. This challenge is set before the Pope, the bishops and the Roman Curia, and it is also set before you, as parish priests. The Lord who has called us and consecrated us asks us today to listen to the voice of his Spirit and to advance in the direction that he points out to us. Of one thing we can be sure: he will never leave us without his grace. Along the way, we will discover how to set our ministry free from the things that wear us down and rediscover its most authentic core, the proclamation of God’s word and the gathering of the community for the breaking of bread.

I encourage you, then, to accept this, the Lord’s call to be, as parish priests, builders of a synodal and missionary Church and to devote yourselves enthusiastically to achieving this goal. To this end, I would like to offer three suggestions that can help to inspire your lifestyle and activity as pastors.

1. I ask you first to *live out your specific ministerial charism in ever greater service to the varied gifts that the Spirit sows in the People of God*. It is urgent to “discover with faith, the many and varied charismatic gifts of the laity, be they of a humble or more exalted form” (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 9), which are indispensable for evangelizing any number of human situations and contexts. I am convinced that in this way you will bring to light many hidden treasures and feel less alone in the demanding task of evangelization. You will experience the joy of being true fathers, who do not dominate others but rather bring out in them, men and women alike, great and precious possibilities.

2. With all my heart, I suggest that you *learn to practise the art of communal discernment*, employing for this purpose the method of “conversation in the Spirit”, which has proved so helpful in the synodal journey and in the proceedings of the synodal Assembly itself. I am certain that you will reap from it many good fruits, not only in structures of communion such as parish councils, but in many other fields as well. As the Synthesis Report makes clear, discernment is a key element in the pastoral activity of a synodal Church: “It is important that the practice of discernment be exercised also in pastoral settings, in a way adapted to differing contexts, in order to illumine the concreteness of ecclesial life. This will help to recognize better the charisms present within the community, to distribute wisely different responsibilities and ministries, and to plan in the light of the Spirit pastoral projects that go beyond the mere programming of activities” (2.1).

3. Finally, I would like to urge you to *base everything you do in a spirit of sharing and fraternity among yourselves and with your bishops*. This is something that emerged forcefully from the International Conference for the Permanent Formation of Priests, on the theme, “Fan into Flame the Gift of God that You Possess” (2 Timothy 1:6), which took place last February here in Rome, with over 800 bishops, priests, lay and consecrated men and women, engaged in this area and representing some 18 countries. We cannot be authentic fathers unless we are first sons and brothers. And we cannot foster communion and participation in the communities entrusted to our care unless, before all else, we live out those realities among ourselves. I am quite aware that, amid the constant call of our pastoral responsibilities, this commitment may seem burdensome, even a waste of time, but the opposite is true: indeed, only in this way will we be credible and our activity not end up scattering what others have already gathered.



✠✠ 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.

Dear brothers, I am at your side in this process, in which I myself am taking part. I bless all of you from the heart, and in turn, I need to feel your closeness and the support of your prayers. Let us entrust ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary Hodegetria, Our Lady of the Way. She shows us the way; she leads us to Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

<b>Monday</b>	20 May	Mary, Mother of the Church	Acts 12:1-14	John 19:25-34
<b>Tuesday</b>	21 May	Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 7	James 4:1-10	Mark 9:30-37
<b>Wednesday</b>	22 May	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 7	James 4:13-17	Mark 9:38-40
<b>Thursday</b>	23 May	Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 7	James 5:1-6	Mark 9:41-50
<b>Friday</b>	24 May	Our Lady, Help of Christians	Proverbs 31	James 3:13-18 Luke 1:39-56
<b>Saturday</b>	25 May	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 7	James 5:13-20	Mark 10:13-16
<b>Sunday</b>	26 May	THE MOST HOLY TRINITY • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Weekend, 18/19 May**      **Thirlmere Festival of Steam** – <https://www.thirlmerefestivalofsteam.com.au/>
- ✦ **Thursday, 30 May**      **19:15**      **Baptism Preparation for June Baptisms**

## RAYMOND'S CHOC CHIP COOKIES

125g unsalted butter, 100g light brown sugar, 75g white granulated sugar, 1 medium egg, 1tsp vanilla (optional), 300g plain flour, 1½ tsp baking powder, ½tsp bicarbonate of soda, ½tsp sea salt, 300g chocolate chips (150g dark, 150g milk).

Add your butter and sugars to a bowl and beat until creamy. Add in your egg, and beat again. If using vanilla, add it in now! Add in the plain flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, and salt and beat until a cookie dough is formed! Add in your chocolate chips and beat till they're distributed well! Weigh your cookies out into eight cookie dough balls – they're about 120g each! Once they're rolled into balls, put your cookie dough in the freezer for at least 30 minutes, or in the fridge for an hour or so! Whilst the cookie dough is chilling, preheat your oven to 180°C fan, or 200°C regular! If your oven runs hot, go for 160°C–170°C. Take your cookies out of the freezer/fridge and put onto a lined baking tray. I put four cookies per tray! Bake the cookies in the oven for 12-14 minutes. I don't personally flatten the cookies, as they flatten enough during baking – however, if you like flat cookies, flatten them a bit before baking. Once baked, leave them to cool on the tray for at least 30 minutes, as they will continue to bake whilst cooling! Enjoy.

### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

#### PENTECOST SUNDAY • YEAR B

<b>1st Reading</b>	Acts 2:1-11
<b>2nd Reading</b>	Galatians 5:16-25
<b>Gospel</b>	John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

#### THE MOST HOLY TRINITY • YEAR B

<b>1st Reading</b>	Deuteronomy 4:32-34,39-40
<b>2nd Reading</b>	Romans 8:14-17
<b>Gospel</b>	Matthew 28:16-20

### SUNDAY

#### MASS TIMES

<b>Saturday</b>	17:30
<b>Sunday</b>	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

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