

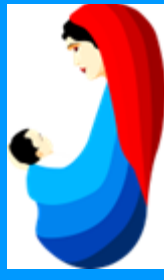


Welcome to
the Parish of
Saint Michael
Thirroul

THE HOLIDAY BULLETIN 2024 – 2025



Holy Family
28/29 December



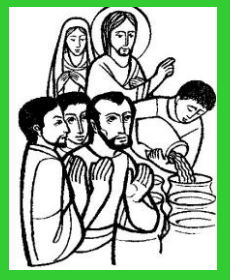
Mary Mother of God
1 January



Epiphany
4/5 January



Baptism of the Lord
11/12 January



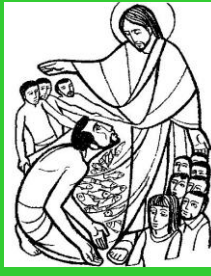
Ordinary 2 C
18/19 January



Australia Day
25/26 January



Presentation of the Lord
1/2 February



Ordinary 5 C
8/9 February



Ordinary 6 C
15/16 February

HOLIDAY MASS TIMES

Saturday	28 Dec	17:30
Sunday	29 Dec	08:00
Wednesday	1 Jan	09:00
Thursday	2 Jan	09:00
Friday Anointing	3 Jan	09:30

*Parish Office reopens 3 January
Usual Mass Schedule resumes
Parish Office open usual hours
closed 14-17 Jan and 4-7 Feb*

Welcome to the "Holiday Bulletin" for January – for avid readers! The Bulletin will resume on **22/23 February**. Enjoy Pope Francis' message for World Day of Peace. Thank you to all who have worked for and been of service to our Parish in so many, many ways over the last year. Your responsible, regular service, generosity, cheerfulness, support, hospitality, courtesy, integrity and deep faith are most appreciated. We continue to pray the Spirit will be our guiding Star.

OTHER FEAST DAYS

1 January	World Day of Peace – 09:00 Mass
2 January	Sts Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen
7 January	St Raymond of Peñafort, priest, lawyer
17 January	St Anthony, abbot
21 January	St Agnes, virgin, martyr
24 January	St Francis de Sales, bishop, doctor
25 January	Conversion of St Paul
26 January	Australia Day
28 January	St Thomas Aquinas, priest, doctor
31 January	St John Bosco, priest
2 February	Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas)
5 February	St Agatha, virgin, martyr

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAY MASSES

Holy Family – Year C – 28/29 December	
1 st Reading	1 Samuel 1:20-22,24-28
2 nd Reading	1 John 3:1-2,21-24
Gospel	Luke 2:41-52
Mary, Mother of God – Year C – 1 January	
1 st Reading	Numbers 6:22-27
2 nd Reading	Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel	Luke 2:16-21
Epiphany of the Lord – Year C – 4/5 January	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 60:1-6
2 nd Reading	Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6
Gospel	Matthew 2:1-12
Baptism of the Lord – Year C – 11/12 January	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11
2 nd Reading	Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7
Gospel	Luke 3:15-16,21-22

Ordinary 2 – Year C – 18/19 January	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 62:1-5
2 nd Reading	1 Corinthians 12:4-11
Gospel	John 2:1-11
Australia Day – Year C – 25/26 January	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 32:15-18
2 nd Reading	1 Corinthians 12:4-11
Gospel	Matthew 5:1-12
Presentation of the Lord – 1/2 February	
1 st Reading	Malachi 3:1-4
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 2:14-18
Gospel	Luke 2:22-40

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael - Thirroul
Saturday – 17:30
Sunday – 08:00

Bulli	Sunday	08:30, 17:30
Corrimal	Saturday	18:00
	Sunday	09:30

WEEKDAYS FROM 2 JAN

Monday		
Tuesday	Thirroul	17:30
Wednesday	Thirroul	09:00
Thursday	Thirroul	09:00
Friday	Thirroul	09:30

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays	09:00 – 15:00
Wednesdays	09:00 – 15:00
Fridays	08:30 – 15:00

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FRANCIS, BISHOP OF ROME
58TH MESSAGE FOR
WORLD DAY OF PEACE
1 JANUARY 2025

**Forgive us our trespasses:
grant us your peace**

I. *Listening to the plea of an endangered humanity*

1. At the dawn of this New Year given to us by our heavenly Father, a year of Jubilee in the spirit of hope, I offer heartfelt good wishes of peace to every man and woman. I think especially of those who feel downtrodden, burdened by their past mistakes, oppressed by the judgment of others and incapable of perceiving even a glimmer of hope for their own lives. Upon everyone I invoke hope and peace, for this is a Year of Grace born of the Heart of the Redeemer!



2. Throughout this year, the Catholic Church celebrates the Jubilee, an event that fills hearts with hope. The “jubilee” recalls an ancient Jewish practice, when, every forty-ninth year, the sound of a ram’s horn (in Hebrew, *jibe*) would proclaim a year of forgiveness and freedom for the entire people (cf. *Lev* 25:10). His solemn proclamation was meant to echo throughout the land (cf. *Lev* 25:9) and to restore God’s justice in every aspect of life: in the use of the land, in the possession of goods and in relationships with others, above all the poor and the dispossessed. The blowing of the horn reminded the entire people, rich and poor alike, that no one comes into this world doomed to oppression: all of us are brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Father, born to live in freedom, in accordance with the Lord’s will (cf. *Lev* 25:17, 25, 43, 46, 55).

3. In our day too, the Jubilee is an event that inspires us to seek to establish the liberating justice of God in our world. In place of the ram’s horn, at the start of this Year of Grace we wish to hear the “desperate plea for help” that, like the cry of the blood of Abel (cf. *Gen*

4:10), rises up from so many parts of our world – a plea that God never fails to hear. We for our part feel bound to cry out and denounce the many situations in which the earth is exploited and our neighbours oppressed. These injustices can appear at times in the form of what Saint John Paul II called “structures of sin”, that arise not only from injustice on the part of some but are also consolidated and maintained by a network of complicity.

4. Each of us must feel in some way responsible for the devastation to which the earth, our common home, has been subjected, beginning with those actions that, albeit only indirectly, fuel the conflicts that presently plague our human family. Systemic challenges, distinct yet interconnected, are thus created and together cause havoc in our world. I think, in particular, of all manner of disparities, the inhuman treatment meted out to migrants, environmental decay, the confusion wilfully created by disinformation, the refusal to engage in any form of dialogue and the immense resources spent on the industry of war. All these, taken together, represent a threat to the existence of humanity as a whole. At the beginning of this year, then, we desire to heed the plea of suffering humankind in order to feel called, together and as individuals, to break the bonds of injustice and to proclaim God’s justice. Sporadic acts of philanthropy are not enough. Cultural and structural changes are necessary, so that enduring change may come about.

II. *A cultural change: all of us are debtors*

5. The celebration of the Jubilee spurs us to make a number of changes in order to confront the present state of injustice and inequality by reminding ourselves that the goods of the earth are meant not for a privileged few, but for everyone. We do well to recall the words of Saint Basil of Caesarea: “Tell me, what things belong to you? Where did you find them to make them part of your life? ... Did you not come forth naked from the womb of your mother? Will you not return naked to the ground? Where did your property come from? If you say that it comes to you naturally by luck, you would deny God by not recognizing the Creator and being grateful to the Giver”. Without gratitude, we are unable to recognize God’s gifts. Yet in his infinite mercy the Lord does not abandon sinful humanity, but instead reaffirms his *gift* of life by the saving *forgiveness* offered to all through Jesus Christ. That is why, in teaching us the “Our Father”, Jesus told us to pray: “Forgive us our trespasses” (*Mt* 6:12).

6. Once we lose sight of our relationship to the Father, we begin to cherish

the illusion that our relationships with others can be governed by a logic of exploitation and oppression, where might makes right. Like the elites at the time of Jesus, who profited from the suffering of the poor, so today, in our interconnected global village, the international system, unless it is inspired by a spirit of solidarity and interdependence, gives rise to injustices, aggravated by corruption, which leave the poorer countries trapped. A mentality that exploits the indebted can serve as a shorthand description of the present “debt crisis” that weighs upon a number of countries, above all in the global South.



7. I have repeatedly stated that foreign debt has become a means of control whereby certain governments and private financial institutions of the richer countries unscrupulously and indiscriminately exploit the human and natural resources of poorer countries, simply to satisfy the demands of their own markets. In addition, different peoples, already burdened by international debt, find themselves also forced to bear the burden of the “ecological debt” incurred by the more developed countries. Foreign debt and ecological debt are two sides of the same coin, namely the mindset of exploitation that has culminated in the debt crisis. In the spirit of this Jubilee Year, I urge the international community to work towards forgiving foreign debt in recognition of the ecological debt existing between the North and the South of this world. This is an appeal for solidarity, but above all for justice.

8. The cultural and structural change needed to surmount this crisis will come about when we finally recognize that we are all sons and daughters of the one Father, that we are all in his debt but also that we need one another, in a spirit of shared and diversified responsibility. We will be able to “rediscover once for all that we need one another” and are indebted one to another.

III. *A journey of hope: three proposals*

9. If we take to heart these much-needed changes, the Jubilee Year of Grace can serve to set each of us on a renewed journey of hope, born of the experience of God’s unlimited mercy.

God owes nothing to anyone, yet he constantly bestows his grace and mercy upon all. As Isaac of Nineveh, a seventh-century Father of the Eastern Church, put it in one of his prayers: “Your love, Lord, is greater than my trespasses. The waves of the sea are nothing with respect to the multitude of my sins, but placed on a scale and weighed against your love, they vanish like a speck of dust”. God does not weigh up the evils we commit; rather, he is immensely “rich in mercy, for the great love with which he loved us” (*Eph* 2:4). Yet he also hears the plea of the poor and the cry of the earth. We would do well simply to stop for a moment, at the beginning of this year, to think of the mercy with which he constantly forgives our sins and forgives our every debt, so that our hearts may overflow with hope and peace.



10. In teaching us to pray the “Our Father”, Jesus begins by asking the Father to forgive our trespasses, but passes immediately to the challenging words: “as we forgive those who trespass against us” (cf. *Mt* 6:12). In order to forgive others their trespasses and to offer them hope, we need for our own lives to be filled with that same hope, the fruit of our experience of God’s mercy. Hope overflows in generosity; it is free of calculation, makes no hidden demands, is unconcerned with gain, but aims at one thing alone: to raise up those who have fallen, to heal hearts that are broken and to set us free from every kind of bondage.

11. Consequently, at the beginning of this Year of Grace, I would like to offer three proposals capable of restoring dignity to the lives of entire peoples and enabling them to set them out anew on the journey of hope. In this way, the debt crisis can be overcome and all of us can once more realize that we are debtors whose debts have been forgiven.

First, I renew the appeal launched by Saint John Paul II on the occasion of

the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 to consider “reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt which seriously threatens the future of many nations”. In recognition of their ecological debt, the more prosperous countries ought to feel called to do everything possible to forgive the debts of those countries that are in no condition to repay the amount they owe. Naturally, lest this prove merely an isolated act of charity that simply reboots the vicious cycle of financing and indebtedness, a new financial framework must be devised, leading to the creation of a global financial Charter based on solidarity and harmony between peoples.

I also ask for a firm commitment to respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, so that each person can cherish his or her own life and all may look with hope to a future of prosperity and happiness for themselves and for their children. Without hope for the future, it becomes hard for the young to look forward to bringing new lives into the world. Here I would like once more to propose a concrete gesture that can help foster the culture of life, namely the elimination of the death penalty in all nations. This penalty not only compromises the inviolability of life but eliminates every human hope of forgiveness and rehabilitation.

In addition, following in the footsteps of Saint Paul VI and Benedict XVI, I do not hesitate to make yet another appeal, for the sake of future generations. In this time marked by wars, let us use at least a fixed percentage of the money earmarked for armaments to establish a global Fund to eradicate hunger and facilitate in the poorer countries educational activities aimed at promoting sustainable development and combating climate change. We need to work at eliminating every pretext that encourages young people to regard their future as hopeless or dominated by the thirst to avenge the blood of their dear ones. The future is a gift meant to enable us to go beyond past failures and to pave new paths of peace.

IV. *The goal of peace*

12. Those who take up these proposals and set out on the journey of hope will surely glimpse the dawn of the greatly desired goal of peace. The Psalmist promises us that “steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss” (*Ps* 85:10). When I divest myself of the weapon of credit and restore the path of hope to one of my brothers or sisters, I contribute to the restoration of God’s justice on this earth and, with that person, I advance towards the goal of peace. As Saint

John XXIII observed, true peace can be born only from a heart “disarmed” of anxiety and the fear of war.

13. May 2025 be a year in which peace flourishes! A true and lasting peace that goes beyond quibbling over the details of agreements and human compromises. May we seek the true peace that is granted by God to hearts disarmed: hearts not set on calculating what is mine and what is yours; hearts that turn selfishness into readiness to reach out to others; hearts that see themselves as indebted to God and thus prepared to forgive the debts that oppress others; hearts that replace anxiety about the future with the hope that every individual can be a resource for the building of a better world.



14. Disarming hearts is a job for everyone, great and small, rich and poor alike. At times, something quite simple will do, such as “a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed”. With such gestures, we progress towards the goal of peace. We will arrive all the more quickly if, in the course of journeying alongside our brothers and sisters, we discover that we have changed from the time we first set out. Peace does not only come with the end of wars but with the dawn of a new world, a world in which we realize that we are different, closer and more fraternal than we ever thought possible.

15. Lord, grant us your peace! This is my prayer to God as I now offer my cordial good wishes for the New Year to the Heads of State and Government, to the leaders of International Organizations, to the leaders of the various religions and to every person of good will.

Forgive us our trespasses, Lord, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

In this cycle of forgiveness, grant us your peace, the peace that you alone can give to those who let themselves be disarmed in heart, to those who choose in hope to forgive the debts of their brothers and sisters, to those who are unafraid to confess their debt to you, and to those who do not close their ears to the cry of the poor.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2024

FRANCISCUS

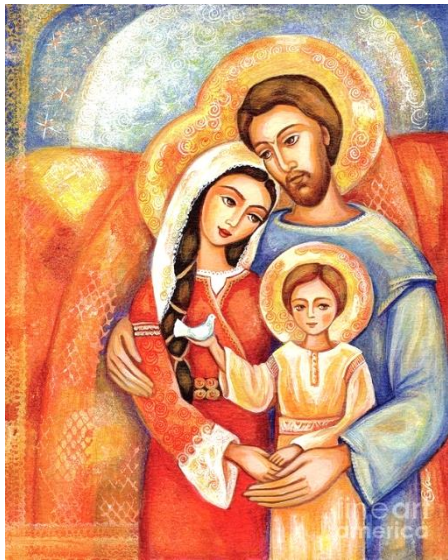


THE SUNDAY READINGS

SUNDAY, 28/29 DECEMBER 2024

HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

The Saviour has been born to us! The liturgies of the Christmas season invite us to reflect upon this basic truth of Christian faith: the eternal son has become one of us and shared our life experience. He grew up in a family; parental authority shaped his human development; at the age prescribed for Jewish youths, he attended the Passover festival with his parents; a self-reliant lad, he was presumed throughout a whole day to be somewhere else in the caravan returning from Jerusalem.



We speak of family 'bonds' and 'ties'. If they are not transformed into adult-to-adult relationships, as we grow up, these family ties can become a bondage that inhibits personal development. The story Luke hands on to us in today's gospel reminds us that, as his life choices were made, the relationship Jesus had with Mary and Joseph had to be transformed. The first reading from 1 Samuel recounts an old story of Samuel, the prophetic leader who anointed David as king. Despite similarities between this story and the story told by Luke – a family going up to Jerusalem, a child's destiny foreshadowed – there are significant differences. The Old Testament story is a legend that serves as an introduction to a collection of historical traditions in which Samuel plays a key role. If we recognise the hand of God in Samuel's young life of service in the temple, it does not come about through his own choice, but through that of his devout mother. Luke's story is closer to our common human experience – Mary has to come to terms with intimations of a decision that will lead Jesus to leave home to take up the life of a wanderer, carrying out the mission that will shape his life – and will ultimately lead to his death. She begins to know the 'sword' Simeon foretold would pierce her soul.

Jesus, as the liturgy of Christmas Day has reminded us, is 'the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart', came into the world to make the Father known. He

grew up as a dutiful son of his human parents; but as he 'grew in wisdom' – through his contact with the faith traditions of his people – he knew in the mysterious depths of his human experience the call to identify with the great mission that had brought him into the world: 'Why are you looking for me? Did you not know that I must give myself to my Father's affairs?' Bringing us this brief narrative, Luke intimates what lies ahead. His gospel narrative moves towards its climax when Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem to meet his fate. Ultimately, it is 'after three days' that he is restored to his disciples as their Risen Lord.

As the bonds that unite parent and child mature, they are both blessed. In the background of Luke's story, we recognise the ongoing fidelity of Mary, as she came to accept and identify with the response of her Son, as the first of all his disciples. The second reading from the first letter of John chimes in with our reflections upon the shared life of the Holy Family. In the end, the mission of Jesus was to open the way to our sharing in his risen life, sharing all things with the Father – sharing in the family life of God, as it were. The choices he made, in the freedom he shares with us, can inspire us to make our life choices, knowing that each of us has a unique place in the Father's loving plan.

1 JANUARY 2025

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Today's liturgy invites us to reflect upon Mary's place in the beginnings of our salvation. Although she played a central part, hers is an unobtrusive presence. Her centrality is so subtly described in the New Testament that in the controversies of the past, Protestants claimed that Catholic tradition's veneration of Mary had not basis in the Scriptures. Today's scholarship makes it clear that Mary's unselfish commitment from the beginning to all that her Son stood for made her a model of discipleship for all Christians.



Today's gospel presents another of the remarkable scenes created by the genius of Luke. In this tableau, he emphasises the unassuming greatness of Mary by setting up a contrast, in the story of the Saviour's birth, between the boisterous shepherd messengers and the contemplative silence of the young mother of Jesus. Luke has a special interest, as we know, in 'the poor', the 'anawim', whose trust in God kept alive the true faith of God's people – though they were looked down upon by those who prided themselves in their ritual observances, because in their

struggle to survive they did not have the time or the resources to take part in these many observances. The shepherds are representatives of this group – sometimes disreputable, unwashed strugglers who were the very opposite of the Pharisees with their ritual purity. Luke presents this group as the first human bearers of the Gospel in his narrative; and as the story of Jesus unfolds, he will preach the Good News of the Kingdom to simple folk like this, with all their shortcomings.

Very skilfully, Luke sets up a contrast between the bustle and chatter of the shepherds, as they burst in upon the nativity scene, and the contemplative silence of Mary, who 'treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart'. The role of the shepherds – as it is described by Luke – anticipates great themes of the Gospel: Mary's child is to bring to the world. Like God's messengers in the past, their commission is given in a meeting with 'the glory of the Lord' – the incomparable greatness of God, encountered as a source of blessings. They are made bearers of the good news of God – 'news of great joy to be shared by all the people' – 'in the town of David' is born 'Christ the Lord'. This is an astounding declaration: the messiah has finally come; and he is declared to be 'the Lord' himself – a title that for Old Testament faith belonged exclusively to God. They are given 'a sign'; in a manger – a feeding trough – they will find the one who is to call himself 'the bread come from heaven', as nourishment for the whole world. And finally, the message the shepherds announce is one of 'peace for all who enjoy God's favour' – it is God's 'grace' that will bring a final wholeness to the human family, because the Saviour will make himself 'our peace' (Ephesians 2:14)

The point of the contrast between the chattering shepherds, and the young mother who treasures all that she hears is now clear. It was impossible for the unlettered messengers to understand the full implications of their astounding announcement. Mary, on the other hand, was beginning the journey that – during her earthly life – would lead her into the fullness of faith in all that was being proclaimed. Through this journey, she is given to us all as the model of discipleship, as the Mother of the family of the Lord's disciples.

4/5 JANUARY 2025

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

The Magi appear at the Crib

Through the Incarnation, the generosity and mercy of God have finally appeared among us - in the life of one who is the very expression of the Father's greatness. And so, from earliest times the Church's Christmas celebration has made reference to the Epiphany, or 'Manifestation' of the Lord – symbolised in the story of today's gospel, but also realised in a

special way in the Lord's baptism, and in the 'first sign' he worked at the marriage in Cana. It comes as no surprise, when we hear it read, to find that today's first reading from Isaiah has a very ancient association with this festival: 'Arise, shine out Jerusalem. The nations come to your light and kings to your brightness'. This passage – from the writings of the Isaian tradition from the period after the return from the exile – expresses a vision of Israel fulfilling its role as 'a light to the nations'. Sharing in the 'glory' (or incomparable greatness) of the Lord himself, the holy city will attract the wealth of the nations as the kings of the earth share in its rebuilding.



This Old Testament text and its parallels (see Ps 72:10) may have inspired the story recounted by Matthew in today's gospel. It is possible that an unusual astronomical event may also have contributed to its inspiration, calling to mind the prophecy of Balaam, 'a star is emerging from Jacob' (Num 24:17). As it stands, the story is filled with symbolic meaning. The Magi represent the nations of the earth finding the Saviour of the world – in contrast to the scribes of Israel, familiar with the scriptures but not recognising their fulfilment; the gifts of the Magi are symbolic of the world's confession of faith in Christ – gold for royalty, frankincense for priesthood, myrrh for the one who is to die; notoriously ruthless Herod reminds us of earthly powers that obstruct the designs of God. We should note, especially, the significance of the words, 'going in they saw the child with his mother, Mary'. While Luke's narrative of Christ's conception and birth has Mary as its central figure, Matthew's account of the virgin birth is centred on Joseph. The words we have quoted, however, reflect the importance already given to Mary in the community that gave us Matthew's gospel.

The second reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians continues the theme of 'manifestation', as it takes us into the depths of Paul's vision of faith in Christ. For Paul, of course, God's dealings with the human family have come to a magnificent climax in what God has done for the world in Christ. As we read in the opening lines of the letter to the Ephesians, Paul interprets Christ's saving work as the revelation of a great 'mystery' – the real purpose God has had in mind since the beginning of creation: 'He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, to bring

everything together under Christ as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth'. Through his ministry, Paul has seen the realisation of what is symbolised in the story of the Magi – the whole human race is called with old Israel, to share 'the same inheritance', to be 'parts of the same body', to share in 'promise' that the 'gospel' has brought to the world 'in Christ Jesus'. But what about people who lack the advantages of the priests and magi and who have no power to command others? How are they to know? Does God make provision only for the fortunate?

Consider the shepherds. They lacked the money needed for education, and so they lacked the ability to use Scripture or stars to know the birth of the Messiah. They had no power to command others to share the fruits of their education with them either.

But it isn't powerlessness or poverty that keeps a person from knowing the birth of the Messiah. In the end, it was not the shepherds but the powerful and wealthy King Herod, with his evil-hearted intentions, who didn't know the baby Jesus was the Messiah. The magi didn't tell him because God warned them in a dream not to. And so, Herod the King didn't know.

In spite of their lack of all worldly advantages, the shepherds in fact outranked the king and all the others. They were by the side of the Messiah first, and they didn't have to figure it out for themselves either.

The shepherds may have been poor and simple, but they were trusting and open-hearted, too. And so, they knew Christ Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem that cold winter night because they heard the angels sing.

Through the Incarnation, the generosity and mercy of God have finally appeared among us – in the life of one who is the very expression of the Father's greatness. And so, from earliest times the Church's Christmas celebration has made reference the Epiphany, or 'Manifestation' of the Lord – symbolised in the story of today's gospel, but also realised in a special way in the Lord's baptism, and in the 'first sign' he worked at the marriage in Cana. It comes as no surprise, when we hear it read, to find that today's first reading from Isaiah has a very ancient association with this festival: 'Arise, shine out Jerusalem. The nations come to your light and kings to your brightness'. This



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11/12 JANUARY 2025 BAPTISM OF THE LORD

After his baptism by John in the Jordan, Jesus emerged from obscurity and began his public ministry. Recalling the humility of the Baptiser – who declared himself unworthy to perform even the slave's act of loosening the straps of the messiah's sandals – Luke underlines how amazing

is the event that is to take place, as Jesus submits himself to John's baptism of repentance. 'I baptize with water', John declares, 'He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' – Luke's narrative of the first Pentecost is clearly foreshadowed.



Believers of every generation have been puzzled by this unexpected turn of events. Seeking the reason why, takes us to the heart of God's plan of salvation. This plan, in the words of the Greek Fathers of the early Church, is an expression of the divine 'condescension' – God would open the way to eternal life for a lost world, not by a remote divine edict, but in a way that gives expression to the mystery of God's active love for the human family. The Father 'gave his only Son' (John 3:16); the Son 'emptied himself, taking the form of a slave' – he would give expression to God's compassion and generosity for a world that was lost, by taking upon himself the only way that can lead from our world's destructive darkness and selfishness, into the light and life for which we were made. By his sharing in that way he consecrates it; and in the Paschal Mystery its mysteriously foreshadowed he is to become our 'Way' (John 14:6).

Today's first reading is the opening passage of 'The Book of Consolation' of the Isaian writings. These writings had an encouraging message for God's people in their exile – a message that resonates with messianic expectations. Though all may seem to be lost, they must trust in the promises brought by their faith. Their returning to their homeland will be like a new Exodus, as the desert wilderness is transformed into a 'way for the Lord', the valleys are filled and the mountains laid low; 'the glory of the Lord' will lead the way, just as it did in the first Exodus (see Exodus 40:36). (It is not surprising that the New Testament writers associated this passage with the herald ministry of John the Baptist.)

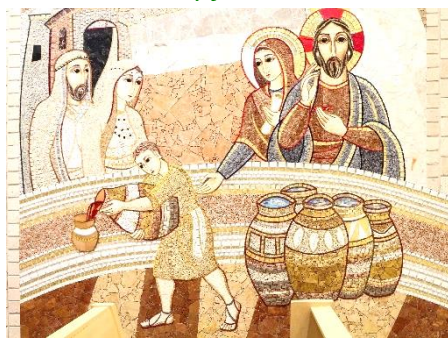
After foreshadowing how he will make himself the way forward for struggling humanity, Jesus gives himself to prayer, and the tangible presence of the Father and the Spirit point to the full implications of the saving mystery that is to come. There is a symmetry in the gospel story – if the Saviour's public life ends with the climax of the Paschal Mystery, it begins with a foreshadowing of this same mystery, as Jesus goes into the waters of the world's sinfulness and emerges into

the glory of the Father's acceptance. Christian baptism has its meaning from both these events. As Paul writes, we 'were baptized into his death' that with him we might 'begin living a new life'. Today's reading from Paul's letter to Titus reminds us of the great benefits that are ours through baptism's 'cleansing water of rebirth', now that finally 'God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race'.

18/19 JANUARY 2025

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C

In today's liturgy – as we begin the cycle of the Sundays of the Year – the gospel reading from John tells the story of the 'first sign' worked by Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, in Cana in Galilee. With it we round off the celebration of the Lord's Epiphany, or 'manifestation'. The meditative tradition of the community that gave us this gospel has gathered together several 'signs' – miracles or works of Jesus – in which they have found a rich symbolism that nourishes their faith in the Eternal Son who came forth from the Father. As it concludes, this gospel is called a 'book of signs', put together so that the reader 'may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God', and believing this 'have life through him'. In this 'first' sign, it is solemnly announced, Jesus 'revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him'. We are given notice that we should find here far more than the moving story of a wedding celebration that was saved from disaster by a miracle worked by Jesus.



There are few occasions in our human experience that bring the joy and celebration brought by a wedding. The presence of Jesus and his recently-called disciples have unmistakable overtones. In the gospel's next chapter, John the Baptist will describe himself as 'the bridegroom's friend', who must disappear before Christ, 'the bridegroom who has the bride'. We are reminded that the great prophets of Israel dared to call Yahweh, the God of the covenant, the devoted 'Husband' of the Chosen People; reminded also that Jesus referred to himself as 'the Bridegroom' (Mt 9:15). This theme is taken up in the first reading - like last week's taken from the later writings of the Isaian tradition. Now the forthright message of hope is given to an exiled community struggling to re-establish themselves after their return from Babylon: 'I will not grow weary until Zion's

integrity shines out like the dawn'. Past infidelity will not be remembered, as the Lord bestows new names of endearment: 'As the bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so will your God rejoice in you'.

These great promises will be realized, the gospel tells us, with the coming of the Saviour's 'hour'. In the seven days described beforehand, Jesus has called his first disciples. Now they must look forward to something that far surpasses the grandeur of the first Creation – called to mind by the reference to seven days. The abundant wine reminds us of the 'new wine' spoken of by Jesus: the new order of things that he was inaugurating through his Paschal Mystery. In contrast, the water jars of 'the Jews' – representing those who refuse to believe in Christ – are empty. The quantity of wine produced (120 gallons – far more than required for the occasion!) underlines the abundant generosity of what is to be hoped for. When she makes her request on behalf of God's simple people, Mary – the 'woman' who personifies the Church, the new Bride - is reminded that the generous realization of the hopes of Israel depends entirely upon the will of the Father. In response, she shows herself a model disciple, with words that are meant for all of us: 'Do whatever he tells you.'

25/26 JANUARY 2025

AUSTRALIA DAY

"Each Australia Day invites us to reflect upon how well we are living our shared national values," Bishop Holohan, Bunbury.

Back in 2009, the-then Bishop of Rockhampton, Bishop Brian Heenan, gave a homily that captured the mood of the country, immediately after the formal apology to the Stolen Generation, by then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. Bishop Heenan's homily follows:

I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land on which we stand today, the Darumbal-Gangalu people. May I recall the words of our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, which he addressed to the Australian Parliament and to all the people of the nation on 13 February 2008:

"Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history. We reflect on their past mistreatment. We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations – this blemished chapter in our nation's history. The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians. We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.”



It is significant that this is the first Australia Day celebration since that formal, national apology was given. It is significant that this year Australian of the Year should be Professor Mick Dodson – sometimes called the “Father of Reconciliation”. We know well that many Indigenous Australians believe there is nothing to celebrate on this foundation day which they see as Invasion Day. Other Indigenous people see the day as an opportunity to begin a new relationship of respect.

We respect both points of view and to those Indigenous people here this morning, I extend to you a most sincere welcome, a welcome that you extend to all non-Indigenous people, for your people were here long before we or our forebears came to this land. As I have said before, may I say again as bishop that I am sorry for what happened and offer an unreserved apology for the injuries you suffered.

This magnificent country, endowed with such beauty and variation of climate, gentleness and ruggedness, mountains, valleys, endless flora and fauna is pure gift to us from a God who is an incredibly creative artist. Add to that the resources, the opportunities for growth and development and above all a freedom for its citizens which is not paralleled throughout our world. We speak about the Spirit of Australia, which while it might be exaggerated at times, expresses the pride of the vast number of its citizens and is an experience that those who come from

other lands, grow to appreciate very much.

Our call is to marvel at this treasure and yet to discover more and more about it as our scientists are doing, and to safeguard it by our avoidance of pollution of the atmosphere around us.

We have a great gift in our land, in its challenging and enriching environment, yet it is relationships and care of people that are paramount. And this is where things go awry and so Jesus affirms and supports those who are forgotten, disadvantaged, persecuted or misunderstood or denied their rights.

We are disciples of Jesus but also citizens of our world and not living in a Christian ghetto. We are the people of this land Australia and called to work together, with all our differences to live out our humanity with respect for all.

We are challenged to safeguard the precious gift of life, especially the most vulnerable of all, life in the womb, and to fly the flag for all life especially the sick and the elderly. We know that society in Australia is far from perfect, yet we do our best to make our contribution to wholeness, integrity and respect for every citizen.

So as we thank God today and reflect on our being so blessed, we are realistic about the challenges of being a great nation.

May I conclude with a few words from the Prime Minister, spoken on the occasion of the apology about a new future:

“For the future we take heart; resolving that this new page in the history of our great continent can now be written. We today take this first step by acknowledging the past and laying claim to a future that embraces all Australians. A future where we harness the determination of all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to close the gap that lies between us in life expectancy, educational achievement and economic opportunity. A future where we embrace the possibility of new solutions to enduring problems where old approaches have failed. A future based on mutual respect, mutual resolve and mutual responsibility. A future where all Australians, whatever their origins, are truly equal partners, with equal opportunities and with an equal stake in shaping the next chapter in the history of this great country, Australia.”

Peter Dodds McCormick migrated from Scotland to Bronte and Waverley. He wrote the original Advance Australia Fair in the 1870s. In 1998 another verse was written:

With Christ our head and cornerstone, we'll build our Nation's might, whose way and truth and light alone can guide our path aright. Our lives, a sacrifice of love, reflect our Master's care. With faces turned to heaven above, Advance Australia fair. In joyful strains then let us sing, Advance Australia fair!

1/2 FEBRUARY 2025 PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

CANDLEMAS

40 days after Christmas – At the end of the fourth century, a woman named Etheria made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Her journal, discovered in 1887, gives an unprecedented glimpse of liturgical life there. Among the celebrations she describes is the Epiphany (January 6), the observance of Christ's birth, and the gala procession in honour of his Presentation in the Temple 40 days later — 15 February. (Under the Mo-saic Law, a woman was ritually “unclean” for 40 days after childbirth, when she was to present herself to the priests and offer sacrifice—her “purification.”)

Contact with anyone who had brushed against mystery—birth or death—excluded a person from Jewish worship.) This feast emphasizes Jesus' first appearance in the Temple more than Mary's purification.

The observance spread throughout the Western Church in the fifth and sixth centuries. Because the Church in the West celebrated Jesus' birth on 25 December, the Presentation was moved to 2 February, 40 days after Christmas.



At the beginning of the eighth century, Pope Sergius inaugurated a candle-light procession; at the end of the same century the blessing and distribution of candles which continues to this day became part of the celebration, giving the feast its popular name: Candlemas.

In Luke's account, Jesus was welcomed in the temple by two elderly people, Simeon and the widow Anna. They embody Israel in their patient expectation; they acknowledge the infant Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. Early references to the Roman feast dub it the feast of St Simeon, the old man who burst into a song of joy which the Church still sings at day's end.

The event is described in the Gospel of Luke 2:22–40. According to the gospel, Mary and Joseph took the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem for-ty days after his birth to complete Mary's purification after childbirth, and to perform the redemption of the firstborn, in obedience to the Law of Moses.

Upon bringing Jesus into the temple, the Holy Family encountered Simeon the Righteous. The Gospel records that Simeon had been promised that “he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord.” (Luke 2:26) Simeon prayed the prayer that would become known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, or *Canticle of Simeon*, which prophesied the redemption of the world by Jesus: (Luke 2:29-32).

“Lord, I am your servant, and now I can die in peace, because you have kept your promise to me. With my own eyes I have seen what you have done to save your people, and foreign nations will also see this. Your mighty power is a light for all nations, and it will bring honour to your people Israel.”

Simeon then prophesied to Mary: “This child of yours will cause many people in Israel to fall and others to stand. The child will be like a warning sign. Many people will reject him, and you, Mary, will suffer as though you had been stabbed by a dagger. But all this will show what people are really thinking.” (Luke 2:34-35).

The elderly prophetess Anna was also in the Temple, and offered prayers and praise to God for Jesus, and spoke to everyone there about Jesus and his role in the redemption of Israel.

Traditionally, Candlemas had been the last feast day in the Christian year that was dated by reference to Christmas. Prior to the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, Candlemas in the Roman Catholic Church marked the end of the Christmas and Epiphany season. The present Roman calendar substitutes the Saturday before the Baptism of the Lord as the final day of the Christmas liturgical season.



Traditionally the Western term “**Candlemas**” (or *Candle Mass*) referred to the practice whereby a priest on 2 February blessed beeswax candles with holy water for use throughout the year, some of which were distributed to the faithful for use in the home. In Poland the feast is called *Matka Boska Gromniczna* (*Matka Boska*, “Mother of God” + *Gromnica*, “beeswax candle”).

Within the Roman Catholic Church, since the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, this feast has been referred to as the Feast of Presentation of the Lord, with references to candles and the purification of Mary de-emphasised in favour of the Prophecy of Simeon the

Righteous. Pope John Paul II connected the feast day with the renewal of religious vows.

The coming of the child Jesus to the temple to be presented to God according to the Law of Moses took place forty days after his birth. Today’s feast day echoes themes of our Christmas celebration. Traditionally it has been a festival of light, with processions of blessed candles. The coming of Spring in the northern hemisphere provided a symbolic setting for recalling the appearing of the Light of the World.

The gospel reading from Luke’s *Infancy Narrative* is a masterpiece, an apparently simple account that weaves together several themes that are fundamental to the gospel story he is about to tell. What a contrast between the prophet Malachi’s description of the Lord coming to his temple and the scene sketched by Luke – in which all the characters are from the *anawim*, the poor and humble ones of God’s people to whom first and foremost the messianic blessings were promised. Luke underlines the fact that the Holy Family made the presentation in fulfilment of the Law of Moses. Until his “hour” had come, Jesus himself was a faithful observer of the Law, the God-given prelude and foreshadowing to which he would bring fulfilment. He was truly one with us in the life we lead, as the reading from Hebrews reminds us: “because he has himself been through temptation, he is able to help those who are tempted”. Luke includes a moving detail, pointing to the fact that Joseph and Mary were not well off. The offering prescribed, in *Leviticus 12*, was a lamb; the pair of birds was the offering of those who could not afford the lamb.

The meeting with Simeon and Anna introduced the dimension of prophecy; Simeon gave God thanks and praise – echoing the phrases used by the prophets of old he declared what they foretold was being fulfilled: “a light to enlighten the pagans, and the glory of your people.”

It is Mary that is at the centre of Luke’s *Infancy Narrative*. He closes the scene with the mysterious prophecy of Simeon pointing to Mary’s place in this work of God. Christian history was to bring a remarkable fulfilment of Simeon’s words to the humble mother of Jesus. May our eyes, too, see the light of salvation.

8/9 FEBRUARY 2025

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C

1st Reading Isaiah 6:1-8

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Gospel Luke 5:1-11

Scholarly analysis of today’s gospel reading shows how skilfully, and prayerfully, Luke has made use of the materials available to him. Presenting elements that are used differently in other gospels, he creates a tableau rich in meaning, expressing the optimistic outlook of the Church

community in which Luke has been nurtured in the faith – probably Antioch in Syria. Jesus is portrayed bringing the Good News of the ‘word of God’ to an eager crowd. He calls Peter and his associates to join him, becoming ‘fishers of people’; and they leave everything to follow him. Luke’s narrative is centred, of course, on the Lord; but the figure of Peter stands out in a remarkable way. It is Peter’s boat that Jesus teaches from; Peter speaks up for the group; it is Peter who falls on his knees, overwhelmed by his sense of unworthiness. We are left in no doubt that Luke reveres Peter. His warm portrayal invites us to share his reverence for the man to whom Jesus had given a new and symbolic name. Reference to Peter’s human frailty is not lacking – Luke is the only evangelist to refer to Christ’s prayer for Peter: that ‘his faith not fail’, so that he may ‘strengthen his brothers’ (Lk 22:32). In the Acts of the Apostles – Luke’s story of the early Church – Peter is leader and anchor-man. Luke is reflecting the importance Peter had for the first generation of Christians.



In his portrayal, Luke is anticipating the outlook of the Fathers of the early Christian centuries, who not only saw Peter as the leader and spokesman of the apostolic Church, but also saw him as giving expression to all that the Church is called to be: in his faith and his response to the call of Jesus – sharing in Jesus’ way of life, given completely to the spreading of the Good News of God. There is a rich symbolism to be found in this portrayal of the origins of the Church’s response to the call of the Saviour: Peter is the first person in Luke’s gospel to respond to the call of Jesus (as time and again, in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter will be the first to make decisive moves in the life of the emerging Church); it is from the boat of Peter that Christ’s true teaching is heard; Christ’s encouraging words, ‘Put out into the deep for a catch’, echo down through the ages, bringing encouragement to the Church in all its difficulties and setbacks; Peter’s humility in the presence of what Christ has done is an eloquent reminder to all members of the Church, great and small, that the successes of the Church – as it responds to Christ’s call – are all the Lord’s doing.

For all the human warmth with which it is portrayed, Peter’s call is a mystery that has its origins in the eternal designs of God’s love and freedom. We are reminded that we too have a place in those designs. Today’s first reading – describing the awe-inspiring call of the prophet Isaiah – provides, therefore, a suitable complement to the gospel reading,

inviting us to join in the response of the prophet, 'Here I am. Send me'. Paul, too, was to respond to the call to become a 'fisher of men'. In today's second reading, he assures us that the teaching through which he carries out his ministry is one with the teaching of those who first responded to Christ's call.

15/16 FEBRUARY 2025

6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C

1st Reading Jeremiah 17:5-8

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:12,16-20

Gospel Luke 6:17,20-26

This gospel passage (and its parallel, Matthew 5:1-11) has great importance for those who claim to be followers of Jesus. It brings his answer to the question: Where am I to find true happiness? – the ultimate concern, surely, in all our striving. Happiness – which is often confused in people's minds with the superficial contentment we call 'a good time' – will only be found in the things that meet our deepest needs as persons. And, in the end, only the things of God that will fill the 'depths' that are in every human person (John Paul II). As the world's true Saviour, Jesus shows us how we can fill these depths – all that he stood for as he shared our life shows us the way to true happiness, even in this present life; and he promises to share with us his own happiness in the life to come. In today's gospel he points out the way to those who want to be his true followers.



Note how Luke sets the scene. The audience addressed by Jesus is made up of two groups, 'a large gathering of his disciples' (those who have made a commitment to what Jesus stands for), and 'a great crowd of people from all parts' (those who are drawn to him but hesitate to commit themselves more fully). Jesus 'fixes his eyes' on the first group and addresses his teaching concerning true happiness to them. Note, however, that in the scene as Luke describes it there is no hard boundary dividing the two groups. Though the words of Jesus are addressed to the first group, they are also an invitation to those in the second group to find the joy that will be theirs if they take his paradoxical invitation seriously. And, because our Christian communities have always contained these two groups, Luke is inviting us to ask ourselves where we stand.

'How happy are you who are poor'. Jesus' teaching on true happiness – to be continued, we should note, in next week's

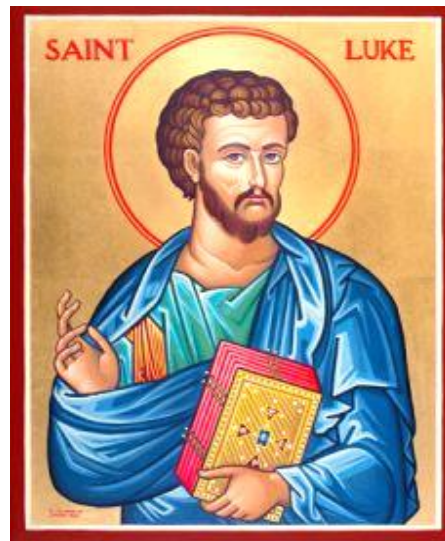
reading – overturns the assumptions of worldly wisdom. In Matthew we find a different wording: 'Blessed (with true happiness) are the poor in spirit'. There is a subtle difference in what the two evangelists wish to convey of the teaching of Jesus. Luke does not canonise a state of material deprivation - in what follows, as we shall see, Jesus urges those who have material resources to use them with a generosity learned from their heavenly Father: what Matthew calls being 'poor in spirit'. But it must also be recognised that Luke is calling to mind a fundamental biblical theme: those who are materially poor are privileged, not because they are morally superior, but because they are the object of God's special concern: 'God hears the cry of the poor'. Those who have learned to trust in this truth have found great blessings – whether their deprivation has been imposed on them by circumstance, or they have embraced a life of poverty that is voluntary, in imitation of the Saviour's own life.

In our pursuit of happiness, God respects our freedom. As the first reading reminds us, the outcome depends on the choices that shape our lives. Jesus contrasts true happiness with the 'woes' of an empty life. Perhaps we can see in today's troubled world 'a fulfilment of the woes Jesus directed against a rich, abundant, laughing, self-congratulating social order' (Paul Tillich).

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

This year, Year C of the three-year cycle of Scripture readings, the Gospel of Luke is read.

It is clear that Luke sees himself as a historian. He is interested in 'events' and in 'eyewitnesses' and he has investigated everything carefully, including prior written sources. Most scholars agree that the gospel of Mark is the source for about one third of Luke's material.



Today we have strict expectations of the style and method we judge appropriate for historians. We do not expect poetry or drama from them, and, while they should be imaginative in the way they arrange their material, they should present

the 'facts' without adornment. No such restrictions were placed on historians in Luke's day. They were not writing fiction, so they were expected to be concerned with events, rather than with creative writing that gave expression to their own fancies. In presenting what they believed to be the real meaning of events, however, they were allowed all the verve and imagination they could muster, to communicate this meaning in the richest and most effective way.

The fact that Luke's gospel was treasured by the Christian community gives us confidence that Luke's fellow Christians judged that he did express valid insights into the person and ministry of Jesus, and into the life of the early Christian communities. We can be confident that, when complemented by the gospels of Mark, Matthew and John, and by the letters and other works of the New Testament, the gospel of Luke preserves for us an authentic portrait of Jesus, which the Church came to treasure as a fruit of divine inspiration and so as a gift of God.

As a first century historian, Luke's desire was to reassure his readers of the truth of what they had learned about Jesus. Therefore, he carefully investigated everything, and then chose the most appropriate way of bringing out for his readers the significance of what he learned. As an historian, Luke is an artist who orders his material in the way he judges will best achieve his goal.

It will become clear from the beginning of his work that Luke is especially interested in what he sees as God's controlling purpose, seen in the ministry of Jesus and carried forward in the ministry of the apostles and Paul. He therefore divides his work into two volumes: the gospel, which is the object of this present study, and the Acts of the Apostles.

As he says in his introduction, he wants to present the story of Jesus 'from the beginning', that is, from Jesus' first emergence into public life at the baptism. He also wants to trace everything back 'from the very first', an expression better translated 'from its origins'. Permeating both books is the presence and action of God's Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit who is the origin of all that Jesus is and does and who provides the link between the prophets and Jesus, and between Jesus and his apostles. On every step of his journey, Jesus is responding to the powerful and personal influence of God's Spirit. It is the same with those who walk with Jesus and who follow on after him.

Throughout both books Luke is inviting his readers to examine their own religious experience and to discover, especially in their experience of God's forgiveness and in their endurance as disciples, the action of God's Holy Spirit binding them to Jesus and gracing them to persevere as Jesus' disciples, continuing his mission in the world.

– Michael Fallon MSC

<https://mbfallon.com/>

THIRROUL PARISH



THIRROUL: a Wodi Wodi Aboriginal word, 'Thurrural' meaning 'the valley of the cabbage tree palms'.

It all started with a meeting at Mrs McGrade's shop in Main Street, Thirroul, on 28 August 1918. The Parish Priest of Bulli, Fr Peter Power, had decided there was a need for a Thirroul Church in the Bulli Parish, which stretched from Corrimal to Clifton.

It was decided to buy land as the site for the present church, and the cost was £300 (\$32,000 today – that's just based on inflation, not on land values!). Collections were sought at Austinmer, Thirroul East and Thirroul West!

Archbishop Kelly in Sydney had approved a name for the proposed Thirroul Church, St Kevin's. Later he suggested another name, because St Kevin was already the patron of a church at Eastwood.

Fr Power got most enthusiastic with St Molua, "one of the great early Irish saints" and proposed it as the church name. On 8 May 1921, Archbishop Kelly blessed the foundation stone under the joint patronage of St Michael and St Molua.

The money for the new church did not roll in at first, but after collections, bazaars (*what are they?*) and concerts, a meeting was held on 21 July 1920 at Mrs Ryan's Hotel, when it was decided to see a loan of £2,500 from the ESA (now ANZ) Bank at 6% interest.

In the meantime, Mass was celebrated every second Sunday in the local School of Arts (which became the RSL Club, now 'The Bowlo' or Club Thirroul) – with an annual rental of £6/10/–.

At their February 1921 meeting in Ryan's Pub, members of the committee had eight tenders before them, but four of those were above £3,000 and were passed over. The lowest tender was from Winley Brothers and was accepted – *Fr Power did not disclose the figures in his notes.*

About 500 people turned out for the opening of Thirroul's Catholic Church on 30 October 1921. Bishop Hayden, Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes, blessed and opened the church, as Archbishop Kelly was unable to attend.

Two years later, on 31 October 1923, the Thirroul Parish was established with the arrival of Fr O'Donnell from Araluen as Parish Priest. For a short time, he lived in a rented cottage in George Street. The current presbytery was opened on 10 October 1924.

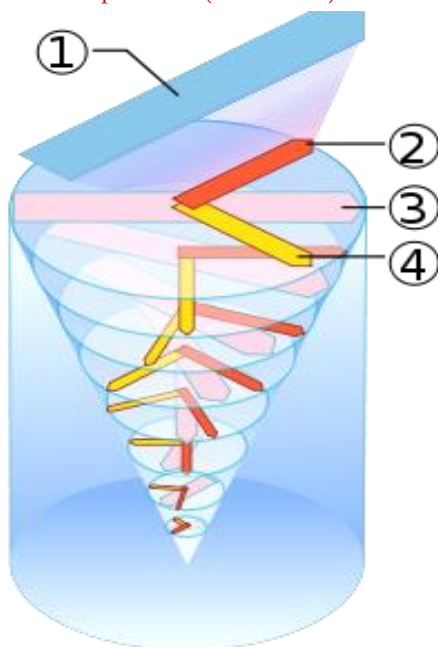
THE EKMAN SPIRAL

Ever wondered why the wind from the north brings in a cold current in the surf ... and a southerly brings in a warm current?

The Ekman spiral, named after Swedish scientist Vagn Walfrid Ekman (1874-1954) who first theorized it in 1902, is a consequence of the Coriolis effect.

The Ekman Spiral is a consequence of the [Coriolis effect](#) which causes objects to move to the right of applied forces in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the Southern Hemisphere. Thus, when the wind blows on the ocean surface in the northern hemisphere, the surface current moves to the right of the wind and in the southern hemisphere, the surface current moves to the left of the wind.

The deflection of surface currents was first noticed by the Norwegian oceanographer [Fridtjof Nansen](#) during the Fram expedition (1893-1896).



The diagram shows the forces associated with the Ekman spiral in the north hemisphere. The force from above is (2) (beginning with the wind blowing over the water surface), the Coriolis force (at right angles to the force from above) is (4) and the net resultant water movement is (3). (3) then becomes the force acting on the layer below it, accounting for the gradual clockwise spiral motion as you move down. The classic Ekman spiral has been observed under sea ice, but is not found in most open-ocean conditions.

Thus, Ekman transport away from the eastern Australian coast (caused by prolonged northerly winds) results in the rise of colder, deep ocean waters along a coast due to the movement of surface water away from the coast. Conversely a prolonged southerly moves the warm top layer onshore.

SURF SEASON 2024-2025



Getting ready for a day at the beach:

- ♦ check the tides and the sea condition, waves etc.
- ♦ download the **Beachsafe** app ... <https://beachsafe.org.au/apps>
- ♦ is the beach patrolled by lifesavers today? what times?
- ♦ what hazards are at the beach?
- ♦ how strong is the sun today?
- ♦ pack items to keep you safe at the beach: good sunscreen; swim clothes [don't swim in ordinary clothes]; leave the alcohol at home but take plenty of water.
- ♦ swim between the red and yellow flags; look for beach safety signs; speak to a lifesaver – ask how to recognize a rip!
- ♦ never swim alone.
- ♦ where waves are breaking is safer than where no waves are breaking – "white is right, green is mean".
- ♦ if you get into trouble in the water, stay calm and raise one arm.
- ♦ in an emergency call **000**.

With over **198,000** members and **315** affiliated Surf Life Saving clubs, Surf Life Saving Australia represents the largest volunteer movement of its kind in the world.



Stay safe and swim between the flags.

SACRAMENTS IN 2025

The Sacrament of Confirmation for Year 6 students or older will be celebrated on **Thursday, 3 July 2025**. Enrolment forms are available on the Parish website, and enrolments close on **Monday, 12 May 2025**.

The Sacraments of First Penance and First Communion are celebrated after a child turns seven – usually from Year 2 or older. In 2025, the Sacrament of **First Penance** will be celebrated on **Wednesday, 29 October 2025**, and **First Communion** on the weekend **29/30 November 2025 OR any later weekend**. Enrolment forms are available on the Parish website, and enrolments close on **9 September 2025**.

All families in our Parish are welcome to enrol their children.

JUBILEE 2025

At a ceremony in St Peter's Basilica on Ascension Thursday, 9 May 2024, Pope Francis solemnly proclaims the upcoming Jubilee Year 2025, consigning the Bull of Indiction – "*Spes non confundit*." Hope does not disappoint" – to the Archpriests of the Papal Basilicas and representatives of the world's bishops.

"Hope" is the overarching theme of the upcoming Ordinary Jubilee of 2025, a theme reflected in the opening words of the [Bull of Indiction](#), entitled "*Spes non confundit*. Hope does not disappoint."

Long passages of the Bull were read out ahead of Vespers on Ascension Thursday, during a ceremony in which the document was solemnly consigned to the Archpriests of the four Papal Basilicas, the Pro-Prefects of the Dicastery for Evangelization, and representatives of the world's Bishops.

In *Spes non confundit*, Pope Francis announces that the Jubilee Year will begin with the opening of the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, 2024.

Later, on 29 December 2024, the Pope will open the Holy Door of the Archbasilica of St John Lateran, the Cathedral of Rome. On the same day, every Cathedral and co-Cathedral throughout the world will have Mass celebrated by the local Bishop to mark the opening of the Jubilee.

On the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, 1 January 2025, Pope Francis will open the Holy Door for the Basilica of St Mary Major, with the Holy Door for the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls being opened on Sunday, 5 January, the Vigil of Epiphany.

"In the course of the year," Pope Francis writes, "every effort should be made to enable the People of God to participate fully in its proclamation of hope in God's grace and in the signs that attest to their efficacy."

The Jubilee will end in the particular Churches throughout the world on 28 December 2025, with the Holy Doors of St John Lateran, St Mary Major, and St Paul's Outside the Walls being closed on that same date.

And finally, the Jubilee Year will draw to a close in Rome on the Solemnity of Epiphany, 6 January 2026.

An opportunity to be renewed in hope

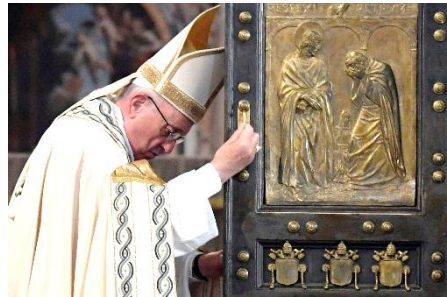
"Everyone knows what it is to hope," the Pope wrote in the introduction to the Bull. "In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring."

Expressing his desire that the Jubilee might be "an opportunity for us to be renewed in hope, Pope Francis recalled that pilgrimage is "a fundamental event of every Jubilee event," traditionally associated with the human quest for the

meaning of life. The artistic masterpieces and the beauty of creation we see on our journey inspire us to praise and thank God for His wondrous works.

In particular, he invited all the particular churches throughout the world to prepare priests and the faithful for Sacramental Confession, which should be readily available throughout the year.

In a special way, Pope Francis invited the faithful of the Eastern Churches, especially those already in union with the Successor of Peter, to take part in the Jubilee, and to feel welcome in the city of Rome, noting how many are already "enduring their own way of the Cross," forced to leave their lands by violence and instability.



The light of Christian hope

The Holy Father prayed, too, that during the Holy Year, "the light of Christian hope might illumine every man and woman, as a message of God's love addressed to all," and that "the Church might bear faithful witness to this message in every part of the world."

Reading the "signs of the times," Pope Francis noted the desire for peace in a world increasingly marked by violence and conflict, and the loss of a desire to have children, with many countries facing a "demographic winter." He called for a social covenant to support and foster hope.



The Pope appealed especially for prisoners, recalling the tradition of offering amnesty or pardons during Jubilees, and said he hopes to personally open a Holy Door in a prison, "as a sign inviting prisoners to look to the future with hope and a renewed sense of confidence." And he called for prisoners to be treated in accord with their rights and dignity, while once again pleading for the abolition of the death penalty.

The Bull continues with Pope Francis urging that hope be offered to the sick, to the young and to the elderly – especially grandparents, to migrants and to the poor.

The Holy Father recalled that the fruits of the earth are intended for all, and encouraged everyone to come to the assistance of the poor. In particular, he called on richer nations to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them.

Recalling that 2025 is the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council, Pope Francis urged expressions of synodality, and renewed efforts to further Christian unity. He appealed especially for progress to be made toward a common celebration of Easter, noting that in 2025, providentially, all Christians will celebrate the Paschal mystery on the same date.

A Holy Year marked by hope

Pope Francis insisted that Christian hope, rooted in Christ's death and resurrection for each human person, points to our final destiny, eternal happiness with God in heaven. We are saved by God's mercy, seen especially in the gift of indulgences: While the Sacrament of Penance washes away our sins, indulgences – including the Jubilee Indulgence – remove the effects of sins forgiven in the Sacrament. In the Bull of Indiction, the Pope notes that the specific conditions for receiving the indulgence will be published soon.

The Holy Father concludes the Bull with a final note of hope, praying that "the coming Jubilee will be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God"; and that it might help us recover "the confident trust we require in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation."

"Let us even now be drawn to this hope!"

Spes non confundit ends with Pope Francis exclaiming, "Let us even now be drawn to this hope!" He calls on Christians to live a life in keeping with their faith, as a witness and an invitation to all to "hope in the Lord."

"May the power of hope fill our days," the Pope says, "as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever."

The Homily of Pope Francis

Amid shouts of joy, Jesus ascends to heaven, where he takes his seat at the right hand of the Father. As we have just heard, he embraced death so that we might be heirs to life eternal (cf. *1 Pet 3:22*). The Ascension of the Lord is not his separation or removal from us, but rather the fulfilment of his mission. Jesus first descended to us, so that we might ascend to the Father. He came down to us in order to raise us on high. He descended even to the depths of the earth, so that the gates of heaven might open wide above us. He destroyed our death, that we might receive life, forever.

This is the basis of our hope. Christ, in ascending to heaven, brings to the very heart of God our humanity, with all its hopes and expectations, so that that “we, his members, might be confident of following where he, our Head and Founder, has gone before” (*Preface I of the Ascension of the Lord*).

Brothers and sisters, it is this hope, based on Christ who died and rose again, that we wish to celebrate, ponder and proclaim to the whole world in the coming Jubilee, which is almost upon us. This hope has nothing to do with mere “human” optimism or the ephemeral expectation of some earthly benefit. No, it is something real, already accomplished in Christ, a gift daily bestowed upon us until the time when we will be one in the embrace of his love. Christian hope – as Saint Peter writes – is “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (*1 Pet 1:4*). Christian hope sustains the journey of our lives, even when the road ahead seems winding and exhausting. It opens our eyes to future possibilities whenever resignation or pessimism attempt to imprison us. It makes us see the promise of good at times when evil seems to prevail. Christian hope fills us with serenity when our hearts are burdened by sin and failure. It makes us dream of a new humanity and gives us courage in our efforts to build a fraternal and peaceful world, even when it seems barely worth the effort. Such is hope, the gift that the Lord bestowed on us in Baptism.

Dear brothers and sisters, in this Year of Prayer, as we prepare for the celebration of the Jubilee, let us lift up our hearts to Christ, and become *singers of hope* in a culture marked by much despair. By our actions, our words, the decisions we make each day, our patient efforts to sow seeds of beauty and kindness wherever we find ourselves, we want to sing of hope, so that its melody can touch the heartstrings of humanity and reawaken in every heart the joy and the courage to embrace life to the full.

What we – all of us – need, then, is hope. Hope does not disappoint: let us never forget this. Hope is needed by the society in which we live, often caught up only in the present and incapable of looking to the future. Hope is needed by our age, caught up in an individualism that is frequently content merely to scrape along from day to day. Hope is needed by God’s creation, gravely damaged and disfigured by human selfishness. Hope is needed by those peoples and nations who look to the future with anxiety and fear. As injustice and arrogance persist, the poor are discarded, wars sow seeds of death, the least of our brothers and sisters remain at the bottom of the pile, and the dream of a fraternal world seems an illusion. Hope is needed by our young people, often confused and uncertain, yet desirous of

living lives of happiness and fulfilment. Hope is needed by the elderly, no longer revered or listened to by a culture obsessed with efficiency and excess. Hope too is needed by the sick and those who suffer in body and spirit; they can find comfort in our closeness and care.

Furthermore, dear brothers and sisters, hope is needed by the Church, so that when she feels wearied by her exertions and burdened by her frailty, she will always remember that, as the Bride of Christ, she is loved with an eternal and faithful love, called to hold high the light of the Gospel, and sent forth to bring to all the fire that Jesus definitively brought to the world.

Each of us has need of hope in our lives, at times so weary and wounded, our hearts that thirst for truth, goodness and beauty, and our dreams that no darkness can dispel. Everything, within and outside of us, cries out for hope and continues to seek, even without knowing it, the closeness of God. To us it seems – as Romano Guardini once said – that ours is a time of distance from God, a time when the world gorges itself on material things and the word of the Lord goes unheard. Yet Guardini went on to say: “If, however, there comes a time, and it will come, once darkness has lifted, a time when people will ask God: ‘Lord, where were you?’, then they will once more hear his answer: ‘Closer to you than ever before!’ It may be that God is closer to our age than to the Baroque with its sumptuously decorated churches, to the Middle Ages with its rich profusion of symbols, to the Christianity of the origins with its youthful courage in the face of death... Yet God expects... that we remain faithful. From this, there may arise a faith that is no less firm, perhaps even more pure, and in any case more intense than it was even in the times of interior richness” (*Die Annahme seiner selbst. Den Menschen erkennt nur, wer von Gott weiß*, Mainz, 1987, 76-77).

Brothers and sisters, may the Lord, risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, grant us the grace to *rediscover* hope, to *proclaim* hope and to *build* hope.

In our Diocese, the faithful are invited to attend the Opening of the Jubilee to take place at 10:30 on Sunday, 29 December, the Feast of the Holy Family at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong. The celebration commences on the wettern grassed area of the Cathedral precinct.

Bishop Mascord has designated some Special Places of Pilgrimage for prayer, reconciliation, formation, celebration and to embrace the merciful indulgences intended to strengthen and revive faith and foster hope in the Church and the world. The two closest places to Thirroul are: St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong, and Immaculate Conception Parish Church, Unanderra.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

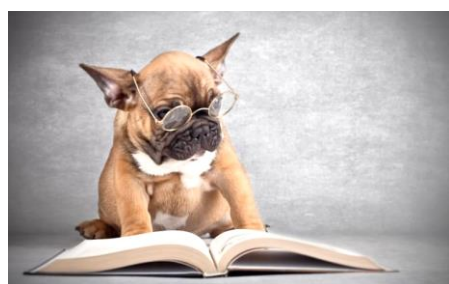
The Parish Office will be **closed** between Christmas and New Year. The Office will reopen on **Friday, 3 January** and be open the usual hours – Tuesdays and Wednesdays 09:00 to 15:00 and Fridays 08:30 to 15:00.

The Parish Office will be **closed from 14 to 17 January** while Kerry is on holidays, and also closed **4 to 7 February**.

A Merry Christmas Season from Kerry Fabon, our Parish Secretary.

A Joyful and Peace-filled Christmas Season to one and all from Andrew and Ken, Franciscan Friars.

Happy 2025 to all our Readers



BAPTISMS IN 2025

Baptism, the **first sacrament of initiation**, prepares us to celebrate the Eucharist. Families wishing to prepare their infants for initiation are asked to contact the Parish Office. Baptisms are held on the **third weekend** of each month [except Lent], usually during either of the weekend [Saturday or Sunday] Masses. Baptism enrolment forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.

At least one parent is required to attend a **Baptism Preparation Class** before the child’s baptism. Classes are usually held at **19:15**, usually on the **last Thursday of each month** [except December] in preparation for baptisms the following month.

The next scheduled baptisms in 2025 in our Parish are on **Saturday/Sunday 18/19 January** – after that, then next baptisms will be on **Easter Sunday, 20 April 2025**. If you wish to have your child baptised in January or April, then you need to collect the enrolment forms from the Parish Office and **at least one parent** needs to attend the **Baptism Preparation Class, 19:15 on Thursday, 30 January or Thursday, 6 March 2025**. Bring the completed enrolment form and photo to the preparation class [or email a photo to the Parish Office].

VINNIES IN OUR PARISH

Thank you to the members of the St Vincent de Paul Thirroul Conference for your efforts of helping the needy in our area – a wonderful job! *Thank you to all parishioners who support Vinnies.*