

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
4 / 5 APRIL 2026

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION • YEAR A

HAPPY EASTER TO ALL – WELCOME TO THOSE BAPTISED

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!!

Soft Light

Night's dark soul stirs. Chirps of life tug at its ear. Just the smallest candle of light peeps through its shadows.

This is the balance-point of time.

Resurrection.

Original sin was not really a good or blessed event.

Good Friday had tempted us to guilt—about his wounds, about our sins. About his arms, branded by hurts. He uses them today to hold us, to enfold us. His wounds know somehow the shape of our small selves. Mothering Christ.

At Easter Vigil the cantor sings: Oh truly necessary sin of Adam, blotted out by the death of Christ! O blessed fault, which won so great a redeemer!

Singing in praise of sin? Even though Christ's death has taken their sin away, is it right to rejoice about sin? Original sin was not really a good or blessed event. Nor is our selfish penchant for misdeed.

Yet we rejoice. Without sin the reason for Christ's coming would have been absent. With it, Christ's healed arms can sweep us up, comfort and absolve and hold us. So, we are blessed beyond words.

In its midst, night carries the promise of light. In their revolt, sins carry the pledge of forgiveness. O truly blessed night, in which earth is wedded to heaven, and humans to God!

The light is coming. Several rows of people have their candles lit. Over there, several more. Soon half the church awakens to Christ's gentle light. Then all. Morning has eased their faces into daylight, into the soft, humble glow.

Christ became the night. Christ is the light.

Easter is about many things. We celebrate God's power to overcome death, sin, and injustice, but we also celebrate the voices and wounds of the ones who died on Good Friday.

To illustrate this, here is one such voice: that of an anonymous, young woman who was brutally raped and murdered by the Salvadoran military in 1981, at a place fittingly called La Cruz. The story was reported by Mark Danner, a journalist.

He describes how, after this particular massacre, some soldiers told how one of their victims haunted them and how they could not get her out of their minds long after her death.

They had plundered a village and raped many of the women. One of these was a young woman, an evangelical Christian, whom had been raped many times in a single afternoon and subsequently tortured. However, throughout this all, this young woman, clinging to her belief in Christ, had sung hymns.

Here's how one of the soldiers described it: She kept on singing, too, even after they had shot her in the chest. She had lain there in La Cruz with the blood flowing from her chest, and had kept on singing—a bit weaker than before, but still singing. And the soldiers, stupefied, had watched and pointed. Then they had grown tired of the game and shot her again, and she sang still, and their wonder began to turn to fear—until finally they unsheathed their machetes and hacked her neck and at last the singing stopped. (*The Massacre at El Mozote*, N.Y., Vintage Books 1994, pp. 78-79) Gil Bailie, who recounts this story in his monumental book on the cross and non-violence, notes not just the remarkable similarity between her death and that of Jesus, but also the fact that, in both cases, resurrection means that their voices live on when everything about their deaths suggest that their voices should have died.

In Jesus' case, nobody witnessing his humiliating death on a lonely hillside, with his followers absent, would have predicted that this would be the most remembered death in history. The same is true for this young woman. Her rape and murder occurred in a very remote place and all of those who might have wanted to immortalize her story were also killed. Yet her voice survives and will, on doubt, continue to grow in importance, long after all those who violated and killed her are forgotten. As both Jesus and this young girl illustrate, powerlessness and anonymity, linked to a heart that can sing the words: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!" while being raped and humiliated, ultimately become their opposite, power and immortality.

A death of this kind not only scars morally the conscience of its perpetrators and their sympathizers, it leaves something that can never be forgotten, a permanent echo that nobody will ever silence. What God raises up after Good Friday is also the voice of the one who died. A critic reviewing Danner's book in the New York Times, tells how, after reading this story, he kept "straining" to hear the sound of that singing.

The task of Easter is to rekindle the creed within ourselves. The earliest Christians, immediately upon experiencing the resurrected Jesus, spontaneously voiced a one-line creed: "Jesus is Lord!" That does, in fact, say it all. ✠ ✠



✠✠ When we affirm that Jesus has been raised from the dead and is Lord of this world, we are saying everything else within our faith as well.

In essence, we are saying that God is ultimately still in charge of this universe, despite any indications to the contrary; that brutality and rape notwithstanding, at the end of the day violence, injustice, and sin will be silenced and overcome; that graciousness and gentleness, as manifested in Jesus, are ultimately what lies at the root of all reality; that this young woman, so brutally violated, has now been raised and lives, joyfully, in the heart of God; and that her death, like Jesus', is redemptive precisely because, like him, she too, in the face of helplessness before the worst brutality the world could perpetrate, could still say: "Forgive them for they know not what they do!"

To celebrate Easter is to affirm that all of this is true. But that also asks something of us: it asks, as the critic in the New York Times so aptly put it, that we strain to hear the sound of that girl's singing, that we struggle to keep her, and her song, in our hearts. She is still alive in God's heart, and we must keep her alive in ours as well.

Why? Not for sentimental reasons, nor simply because her story is exceptional. No. We must keep her alive in our hearts because her song is the leaven, the yeast, of the resurrection and that, that alone, can raise us up to become exceptional too.

One of the tasks of Easter is to strain to hear the voices of Good Friday.

We come to Easter Sunday's celebration filled with the memory of the liturgies of the greatest week of the Church's year – liturgies which have spoken for themselves, as they invited us to relive in faith the great things God has done for us, coming to a great climax in the Easter Vigil – captured in the words of St Paul read during the Vigil, 'As Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too' are called 'to live a new life'.

The days after Easter have a remarkable atmosphere. The Church's mood is not one of exuberant triumph, but one of wonder and calm. Faith must come to terms with the new creation brought into existence by the Paschal Mystery. And it is impossible to forget the price that has been paid: the one who 'went about doing good' has died 'hanging on a tree'.

Though they proclaim realities which are incomparable in their greatness and importance, the Church's liturgies do not strive to impress by creating effect. Only faith can fully appreciate the motivation that brought them into existence; they are a reflection of the Church's living response to what God has done for us. A group of people who have come through a great ordeal or an extraordinary experience will often find themselves in a mood of calm, reflection and gratitude. The liturgies of Easter Week have such a mood.

With Peter, in the first reading, we look back upon the gospel story that has led up to the great event in which we have been given to share. Peter recalls the ministry of Jesus 'anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power' and his tragic death; and as a privileged witness he announces the Lord's resurrection, to be 'the judge of the living and the dead', the one witnessed to by 'all the prophets'.

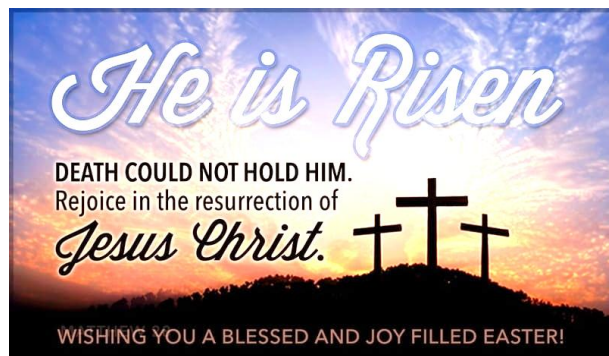
With Paul, in the second reading, we look forward with a hope that has no bounds. The destiny which is ours through the power of the Saviour's resurrection invites us to 'look for the things that are in heaven', because the life we now have 'is hidden with Christ in God'.

In the gospel reading – the story of Peter and the beloved disciple running to the empty tomb – the Church of the Apostles acknowledges that faith does not come easily: only a generous openness to God will find faith in the Risen Lord. This openness is linked especially with a knowledge of God's ways to be found in 'the teaching of scripture'.

The renewal of baptismal promises, which is customary at the Easter Day Mass, invites us to reflect upon the immense implications of our sharing in the Saviour's risen life, for the sake of the whole world.

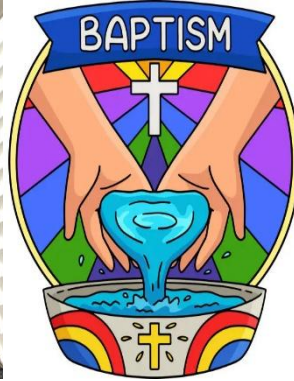
This is the day for which we have been preparing since the beginning of Lent. Jesus believed that his Father would not abandon him but would take him from the cross into his eternal embrace. It was this faith that sustained him especially throughout his suffering and crucifixion, the terrible ordeal on which we have been accompanying him over the past few days. Today, with great joy, we celebrate the triumph of love over death. Jesus is alive, and we know that what God did for Jesus he will do for all of us who place our trust in him. God made everyone for love and the faith which we have caught from Jesus is that it is God's will that every person be saved from sin, that is to say, from everything that separates us from God's love and hardens us against receiving God's loving Spirit. It is God's will that everyone be saved from death to enjoy forever the communion of love for which we are created. All of this we celebrate on this day of Easter, the foremost feast of the Church's liturgical year. Every Sunday Mass is a reliving throughout the year of the Easter Mass that we are celebrating together today.

The resurrection of Jesus is the proof that God is as Jesus believed him to be. It is the proof that though everyone else abandoned Jesus, God did not. It is the proof that good will ultimately triumph over evil, and that the wielders of unjust power do not have the final say. The resurrection of Jesus encourages us, as it encouraged Jesus' first followers, to follow the way he showed, even through apparent failure, for it proves that there is a justice that transcends death and the limited horizons within which we tend to live our lives. 'What convinced the first disciples that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead?' and 'How might we share this same conviction?'



CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME!

Congratulations and welcome to three of our Catechumens who received the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil: **Jarrah Robinson, Joshua Berry** and **Kymerlea Heffernan**. Welcome also to a younger parishioner, **Otis Clist** baptised on Easter Sunday morning. Thank you to their families as well.



THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

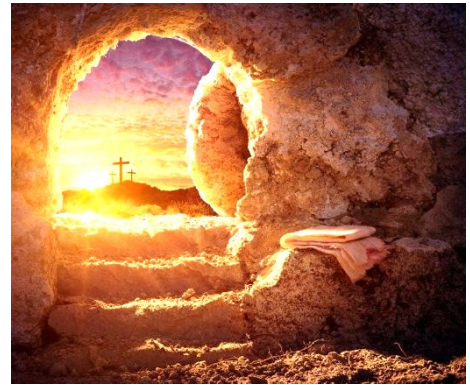
There are several differences between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and their respective descriptions of what happened on Easter Sunday morning. But the differences are not discrepancies. In other words, all four accounts are complementary and perfectly compatible with one another, even though there are some discrepancies. When we compare and align the four gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus, we derive certain truths.

Several women who witnessed the crucifixion and helped in the burial of Jesus were committed to caring for Jesus. They agreed to return on Sunday morning, after the Sabbath, to finish preparation of his body. Two women in particular, Joanna and Susanna, already had in their possession the spices needed to anoint Jesus (Luke 23:55-24:1). Early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome went to the market to purchase additional spices with which to anoint and prepare Jesus' body. These spices were used to offset odours that resulted from decomposition. The fact that they agreed to return to the tomb on Sunday indicates that they had no expectations of an immediate resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

The stone was moved away not to let Jesus out but to let the women and the other witnesses in. This brings up the subject of the nature of Jesus' resurrection body: he could pass through a sealed tomb; he could pass through closed doors (John 20:19,26); he was capable of being seen and touched and even ate food with his disciples (Luke 24:38-43); Jesus didn't eat because he needed nourishment – he ate with them to enjoy their fellowship and most of all to demonstrate that he was real and not some phantom or ghost ... he wanted to put their fears to rest; his was a spiritual body, not because it wasn't also physical, but in the sense that it was dominated and energized by the Spirit and gloriously adapted to life in a spiritual realm – he lived in time and space but was not hindered or restricted or in any way limited by it. The risen Jesus is no longer subject to the limits of space and time. What is consistent is that it was women who discovered the empty tomb. The gospel writers were not constrained by the need to write a 'traffic accident' report of what happened. So, they wrote about this *partly* to answer questions for people of their own day who asked 'naked eye' verification questions, but felt free to convey a complex event in ways that would go much more to what it meant theologically than what absolutely and only happened. Luke tidies up the whole spices thing by having the women prepare them on the night of Jesus' death (there is no waiting for the merchants to open up, after the sabbath, as in Mark). Matthew, much given to angels (see the Infancy Narrative) and worried about the argument that *someone* (maybe the disciples) robbed the tomb of its body, has a guard placed by the Jewish authorities, so that there is an independent, disinterested verification that a.) the tomb was not robbed; and b.) it was a heavenly intervention that rolled away the stone. The fact that four women were the first to receive the announcement that Jesus had risen is significant in that Jewish law declared the testimony of women to be worthless. They were not eligible to serve as legal witnesses. This again points to the integrity of the gospel accounts, for the early church would never have invented a story about the resurrection that they knew depended on the testimony of people whom society at large utterly discounted.

Peter and John enter the tomb after the women leave. Remember that Mary Magdalene had most likely run back to tell Peter and John of the removal of the stone before the other women had entered the tomb (John 20:1-2). She did not as yet know that Jesus had been raised. She was actually quite despondent over the prospect that his body had been stolen. She tells Peter what happened and he and John run to the tomb, leaving her behind. The mention of Mary Magdalene "touching" Jesus was made about 'holding on' to the physical manifestation of him, that the whole Christian community has to 'let go of', to move beyond, to a Spirit-animated knowledge of and encounter with, Jesus.

Jesus makes more appearances. The other women, either on their way back to Jerusalem or on their way to Bethany to tell the disciples, are met by Jesus on the road. Their response is one of wonder and joyful worship (Matthew 28:9-10). Jesus also appears to two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24).



 **Caritas AUSTRALIA** | **PROJECT COMPASSION**

Easter Sunday
4 – 5 April 2026

Happy Easter from all of us here at Caritas Australia!

Thank you for your continued support through Project Compassion. Your generosity is helping to empower the world's most vulnerable communities, enabling them to overcome challenges and lift themselves out of poverty. There is still time to donate!

 **UNITE AGAINST POVERTY**
this Lent

Please donate today.
You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate
Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty* this Lent.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	6 Apr	Easter Monday	Acts 2:14,22-33	Matthew 28:8-25
Tuesday	7 Apr	Easter Tuesday	Acts 2:36-41	John 20:11-18
Wednesday	8 Apr	Easter Wednesday	Acts 3:1-10	Luke 14:13-35
Thursday	9 Apr	Easter Thursday	Acts 3:11-26	Luke 24:35-48
Friday	10 Apr	Easter Friday	Acts 4:1-12	John 21:1-14
Saturday	11 Apr	Easter Saturday	Acts 4:13-21	Mark 16:9-15
Sunday	12 Apr	SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Sunday, 5 April	03:00	Daylight Saving Ends – Fall Back One Hour
✦ Wednesday, 8 April	11:00	CWL Meeting in the presbytery common room
✦ Friday, 10 April	09:30	Mass with Anointing of the Sick
✦ Weekend, 11/12 April		Blessing of April Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Saturday, 11 April	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
✦ Monday, 20 April	09:00	School Term II commences
✦ Friday, 24 April	14:30	School ANZAC Day Service – ALL WELCOME
✦ Saturday, 25 April	06:00	ANZAC Day Dawn Services at Thirroul, Austinmer, Coledale
	08:30	Special ANZAC Day Masa



RESUMPTION OF 'TELEVISED' MASSES

From Easter, the Tuesday and Saturday evening Masses will be recorded and an email sent with a link to watch the Mass. If you would like to be on the list to receive the link, please email the Parish Office – thirroul@dow.org.au

RESUMPTION OF COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

From Easter, Holy Communion will be offered under both kinds (the Body and Blood of Christ) at all Masses, weekends and weekdays. Communion under both kinds more fully reflects the sign of the Eucharist because it acts as a more explicit representation of the Last Supper and the heavenly banquet. Please continue to be health conscious regarding the Blood of Christ from the chalice. Chalices are washed and cleaned after each Mass.

PLEASE RETURN PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES OR ENVELOPES ASAP

Please return Project Compassion boxes or envelopes AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. *Thank you for your generosity!*

ROSEMARY NEEDED FOR ANZAC DAY – BY FRIDAY, 24 APRIL

On Good Friday, 3 April, during both the Way of the Cross (10:30) and the Liturgy of the Passion (15:00) small strips of rosemary are given to everyone. Please cut the rosemary into strips of about 10cm long and drop them into the church on Holy Thursday morning, 2 April.

PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA – FOOD ITEMS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED

BISHOP BRIAN'S EASTER 2026 MESSAGE † BLESSING OF YOUR HOME AND CARS

Attached to this edition of the Bulletin is Bishop Brian's Easter 2026 Message, along with a Blessing for your home and car(s). People attending Easter liturgies will be given a bottle of Easter Water, blessed at the Easter Vigil. Use this holy water to bless your home and car – holy water is not kept indefinitely, but after a month or so, can be poured into the garden.

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings – <i>on website</i></p> <p>SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 10:34,37-43 nd Reading Colossians 3:1-4 Gospel Matthew 28:1-10</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – <i>on website</i></p> <p>SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 2:42-47 2nd Reading 1 Peter 1:3-9 Gospel John 20:19-31</p>	<p>SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday 17:30 Sunday 08:00 Saturday Mass is recorded.</p>
<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i> Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i> Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</p>	<p>www.thirroulcatholic.org.au 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515 4268 1910 thirroul@dow.org.au Parish School of St Michael James Bryce Principal 4267 2560</p>	<p>THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES</p> <p>Monday Tuesday 17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i></p>