

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
11 / 12 APRIL 2026
SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A
THE FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!!

Incredible, Unbelievable?

The word “incredible!” has been so badly over-used in our day that it now means little more than “surprising.” But the word’s true meaning—unbelievable—is on this day appropriate: an event that is so unexpected that the mind actually cannot believe it is true. Jesus is risen.

In spite of his cynicism, Thomas had always belonged to Jesus.

Especially when a person dies suddenly, we think they will come back. A car might pull up to the house and a voice in us might say, “It must be him; he is here after all!”

Anyone who has grieved knows how this is. Your mind keeps denying the loss. You have to correct yourself when you say, “she is such a wonderful cook ... oh dear, I mean she ... was such a wonderful cook.” Tears come. The deep but of course false hope lingers, reluctant to give up its wishing and longing.

Doubting Thomas was no different. He had what he thought were false hopes—“Jesus just cannot be dead, not Jesus.” So, to correct his error, he erected a staunch wall against the resurrection story. It would hurt too much if he allowed hope to come back again and then watch it shatter like Humpty Dumpty. Have you ever noticed how people run away from what they most desire to be true?

“Jesus was actually here with us!” the Apostles tell Thomas. “The doors were all locked and he suddenly was standing right there! He talked to us!”

Thomas’s reaction? NO. NO. No way. Incredible. I cannot accept it. Better to deny what could not be possible. He was like someone imagining their grandfather walking through the door as he always did. So, Thomas had to dam up this child’s way of imagining. His leader was dead, and nothing in this world could change it.

So, Christ appeared and showed him. It was not only seeing Christ in person but actually touching the wounds in his hands and his side. Too much to believe, but suddenly impossible to disbelieve. Thomas gave in. His embarrassment revealed how much he had wanted this. How long would it take you or me to admit how wrong our doubts were?

We need to pray about the status of our own belief. Can we find within ourselves that we do need the Resurrection to be true? Can we locate the places where our doubts are lurking? How are they sabotaging us? Can we pray for the ability to believe, to trust, even if we have not seen and touched?

Blessed, joyful trust is what this Sunday is all about.

Forget the discomfort that the pews gave you and the kneelers, and the extreme length of the passion story, and the fact that you really could not hear the second reader because of the microphones, and so on. If nothing else, simply know that you and I are like Thomas. We so much want the Jesus story to be true that we turn our faces away from it, choosing distraction instead.

Yet the story is not “incredible!” at all. Jesus’ suffering and diminishment and death give way to the deeper reality of love. Yes, Death wins. But the quiet of love undercuts that win.

Our faith is grounded in the witness of the apostles. This witness had its origins in an overwhelming experience: a meeting, against all their expectations, with the final achievement in God’s work of creation, the greatness of the Risen Lord. The gospel accounts echo this experience. Meditating on them gives us a greater appreciation of this foundation of our faith – the ‘teaching of the apostles’ that has gathered the Church in faith, since its beginnings in Jerusalem.

John’s gospel, as we know, is the product of profound reflection on this gospel tradition. The more we come to know it, the more we recognise how much is implied in its apparently simple narrative (even, it seems, reference to the fact that the celebration of the Lord’s Resurrection on ‘the first day of the week’ had its origin in the generation of the apostles).

It has often been pointed out that our understanding of the Easter Mystery has been shaped by Luke’s schema of three distinct events: Resurrection; Ascension (40 days later); Pentecost (10 days later). In John’s gospel, the Easter Mystery, is already experienced in all its aspects on Easter Day itself. Meeting Mary of Magdala, Jesus speaks of his imminent ‘ascent’ to the Father; and when he comes to the apostles place of refuge, on the evening of that same day, the Saviour who had ‘emptied himself’ becoming as we all are, shows himself already one with the Father in divine greatness and authority, as he bestows ‘the Holy Spirit’ and commissions the apostles to undertake their great mission – ‘As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you’. John’s narrative tells of the apostles’ experience as a passing from apprehension and uncertainty – ‘the doors were closed for fear of the Jews’ – to the reassurance and joy brought by faith in the Risen Lord. Three times in this narrative he repeats his greeting, ‘Peace be with you’. Given the



✠✠ fact that this is their first encounter with the one they had abandoned to his fate, even denied, these words three times repeated are far more than a conventional greeting. They echo down through the ages as words of divine forgiveness and reconciliation for a world whose burdens he has taken upon himself in the terrible drama of the cross. The gospels all speak of the hesitations experienced by the group as they came to terms with their experience, and passed from fear and uncertainty to the joy of believing. In John's narrative, this is all dramatized in the story of Thomas, the outspoken enthusiast, who tells Jesus, 'We do not know where you are going, how we can know the way?' and urges the group, 'Let us go up and die with him!' As in other gospel accounts, Jesus makes it clear that what they have encountered is not a ghostly apparition, but his Incarnate Self: 'Put your finger here, your hand in my side. Doubt no longer but believe'. And so, as John's narrative comes to its climax in Thomas' confession – 'My Lord and my God' – we hear echoes of the gospel's opening, 'The Word became flesh' (1:18), and an echo of its meditation on the Eucharist, 'The bread that I shall give is my flesh for the life of the world' (6:51).



Even for the apostolic group, 'seeing' was not 'believing'. The 'seeing' of their extraordinary and mysterious encounter was an invitation to accept the Saviour's gift of faith. Each Easter brings the same invitation to us all: 'Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe'. Peter has this same message: 'You did not see him, yet you love him, filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described'.

There are times in everyone's life when we are tempted to doubt God's love or to think that it has come to an end. We find ourselves caught up in economic hardship and feel powerless to do anything about it. Someone in whom we have trusted betrays our trust. We discover that we, or someone we love, have a life-threatening disease. Our child has an accident. We have been trying for years to have a child, and just as we think everything is going well, something goes wrong and our hopes are dashed. There is too much pain and too much evil and too much darkness and too little love in our world. How can God be a God of love?

Sometimes our doubts arise from a false notion of God, as though God were some kind of puppeteer, and we think that if God loved us he would pull different strings and set everything right. We have to remind ourselves that the world is not a plaything that God manipulates as he wills. Many terrible things happen in our world because people resist grace and refuse to act according to the loving inspiration of God. If we want God to respect our freedom that is how it has to be. But even when we know this, we can be excused for wondering if perhaps God is not really all-powerful or has chosen to leave us to our own devices. The risen Christ is present among us this morning reminding us of God's fidelity to him, and sharing his Spirit with us so that we, like him, will cry out to God in our distress. He promises us that God will hear us just as God heard him. The heart of God knows that there are many people in our world who are in distress. The Lord is at their side, but for so many there is no one to tell them. They do not know to 'call on the Lord' (Psalm 118:5) believing that 'his love is without end'. There are many who are 'thrust down' and who fall because they do not know to lean on the One who is supporting them (Psalm 118:13).

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 2:42-47

- ✠ How could the early Christians "sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's needs"? Pope Francis says they "received mercy and lived with mercy: This is not some ideology: it is Christianity." Is it time to eliminate all inequalities and heal injustice?
- ✠ In the midst of the pandemic did your idea of community include all your brothers and sisters in the world? How is your faith strengthened by the faith of others? They ate their meals "with exultation." What fills you with "awe"?

Second Reading 1 Peter 1:3-9

- ✠ According to Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* 276, was Christ's resurrection just an event of the past? Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. Each day in our world beauty is born anew, and it rises transformed through the storms of history. Values always tend to reappear under new guises, and human beings have arisen time after time from situations that seemed doomed. Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelize are instruments of that power.

Evangelii Gaudium, n.276, 24 November 2013

- ✠ Hans Urs von Balthasar said the following: "We are not the ones who grasp Christ and anchor ourselves to him. Rather, Christ has caught up with us and grasped us." Which "grasping" makes you feel more secure? How does von Balthasar's sentence relate to this sentence from this reading: "God ... gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection?"

Gospel John 20:19-31

- ✠ "Jesus came in, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst." Can any doors be locked tight enough to keep Christ out? Explain. Do you have any "locked doors"? How is peace connected with forgiveness of sins?
- ✠ Resurrections weren't an everyday occurrence at the time this Gospel was written. Was it unusual for Thomas to be sceptical? Does mercy abandon those who stay behind like Thomas? Would John's Gospel story of Thomas help those through the ages who may have doubts about Jesus' resurrection?

EASTER MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER – POPE LEO XIV

Brothers and sisters, Christ is risen! Happy Easter!

For centuries, the Church has joyfully sung of the event that is the origin and foundation of her faith: “Yes, Christ my hope is arisen / Christ indeed from death is risen / Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning” (*Easter Sequence*).

Easter is the victory of life over death, of light over darkness, of love over hatred. It is a victory that came at a very high price: Christ, the Son of the living God (cf. *Matthew* 16:16), had to die — and die on a cross — after suffering an unjust condemnation, being mocked and tortured, and shedding all his blood. As the true immolated Lamb, he took upon himself the sin of the world (cf. *John* 1:29; *1 Peter* 1:18–19) and thus freed us all — and with us, all creation — from the dominion of evil.

But *how* was Jesus able to be victorious? What is the strength with which he defeated once and for all the ancient adversary, the prince of this world (cf. *John* 12:31)? What is the power with which he rose from the dead, not returning to his former life, but entering into eternal life and thus opening in his own flesh the passage from this world to the Father?

This strength, this power, is God himself for he is Love who creates and generates, Love who is faithful to the end and Love who forgives and redeems.

Christ, our “victorious King,” fought and won his battle through trusting abandonment to the Father’s will, to his plan of salvation (cf. *Matthew* 26:42). Thus, he walked the path of dialogue to the very end, not in words but in deeds: to find us who were lost, he became flesh; to free us who were slaves, he became a slave; to give life to us mortals, he allowed himself to be killed on the cross.

The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent. It is like that of a grain of wheat which, having rotted in the earth, grows, breaks through the clods, sprouts, and becomes a golden ear of wheat. It is even more like that of a human heart which, wounded by an offence, rejects the instinct for revenge and, filled with compassion, prays for the one who has committed the offence.

Brothers and sisters, this is the true strength that brings peace to humanity, because it fosters respectful relationships at every level: among individuals, families, social groups, and nations. It does not seek private interests, but the common good; it does not seek to impose its own plan, but to help design and carry out a plan together with others. Yes, Christ’s resurrection is the beginning of a new humanity; it is the entrance into the true promised land, where justice, freedom, and peace reign, where all recognize one another as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father who is Love, Life, and Light.

Brothers and sisters, through his resurrection, the Lord confronts us even more powerfully with the dramatic reality of our freedom. Before the empty tomb, we can be filled with hope and wonder, like the disciples, or with fear like the guards and the Pharisees, forced to resort to lies and subterfuge rather than acknowledge that the one who had been condemned is truly risen (cf. *Matthew* 28:11–15)!

In the light of Easter, let us allow ourselves to be amazed by Christ! Let us allow our hearts to be transformed by his immense love for us! Let those who have weapons lay them down! Let those who have the power to unleash wars choose peace! Not a peace imposed by force, but through dialogue! Not with the desire to dominate others, but to encounter them!

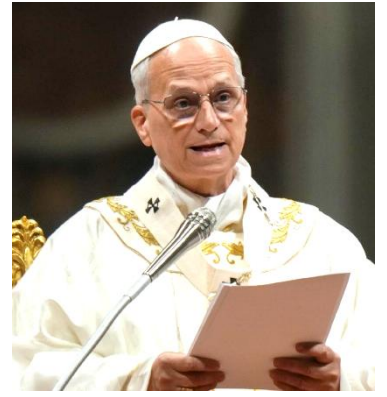
We are growing accustomed to violence, resigning ourselves to it, and becoming indifferent. Indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people. Indifferent to the repercussions of hatred and division that conflicts sow. Indifferent to the economic and social consequences they produce, which we all feel. There is an ever-increasing “globalization of indifference,” to borrow an expression dear to [Pope Francis](#), who one year ago from this loggia addressed his final words to the world, reminding us: “What a great thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of the world!” (*Urbi et Orbi Message*, 20 April 2025).

The cross of Christ always reminds us of the suffering and pain that surround death and the agony it entails. We are all afraid of death, and out of fear we turn away, preferring not to look. We cannot continue to be indifferent! And we cannot resign ourselves to evil! Saint Augustine teaches: “If you fear death, love the resurrection!” (*Sermon* 124, 4). Let us too love the resurrection, which reminds us that evil is not the last word, because it has been defeated by the Risen One.

He passed through death to give us life and peace: “I leave you peace; I give you my peace. Not as the world gives it, I give it to you” (*John* 14:27). The peace that Jesus gives us is not merely the silence of weapons, but the peace that touches and transforms the heart of each one of us! Let us allow ourselves to be transformed by the peace of Christ! Let us make heard the cry for peace that springs from our hearts! For this reason, I invite everyone to join me in a prayer vigil for peace that we will celebrate here in Saint Peter’s Basilica next Saturday, 11 April.

On this day of celebration, let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination, and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged by wars and marked by a hatred and indifference that make us feel powerless in the face of evil. To the Lord we entrust all hearts that suffer and await the true peace that only he can give. Let us entrust ourselves to him and open our hearts to him! He is the only one who makes all things new (cf. *Revelation* 21:5).

Happy Easter!



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	13 Apr	Monday of the 2 nd week of Easter	Acts 4:23-31	John 3:1-8
Tuesday	14 Apr	Tuesday of the 2 nd week of Easter	Acts 4:32-37	John 3:7-15
Wednesday	15 Apr	Wednesday of the 2 nd week of Easter	Acts 5:17-26	John 3:16-21
Thursday	16 Apr	Thursday of the 2 nd week of Easter	Acts 5:27-33	Luke 3:31-36
Friday	17 Apr	Friday of the 2 nd week of Easter	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15
Saturday	18 Apr	Saturday of the 2 nd week of Easter	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21
Sunday	19 Apr	THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 11 April	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
✦ Saturday, 18 April	17:30	2 RCIC Catechumens Baptised, Confirmed and Communion
✦ Monday, 20 April	09:00	School Term II commences
✦ Friday, 24 April	14:30	School ANZAC Day Service
✦ Saturday, 25 April	06:00	ANZAC Day Dawn Services
	08:30	Special ANZAC Day Mass



ANZAC DAY SERVICES – SATURDAY, 25 APRIL

Dawn Services will be held as usual at the Thirroul Cenotaph, Austinmer Beach and Coledale RSL Club – commencing at 06:00 on ANZAC Day. The special ANZAC Day Mass and Service will be at our parish church commencing at 08:30 on Saturday, 25 April. All are welcome – to wear medals, bring photos and other memorabilia. The Mass will be followed by a special morning tea – by all means, bring along ANZAC biscuits! All are welcome. Lest We Forget.

ROSEMARY NEEDED FOR ANZAC DAY – BY FRIDAY, 24 APRIL

On ANZAC Day, everyone is given a small strip of rosemary in remembrance of the fallen – the wearing of rosemary stems from its ability to grow wild on the Gallipoli peninsular in Turkey. If you can bring in rosemary, please cut the rosemary into strips of about 10cm long and drop them into the church by 24 April please.

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

THE FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER

Lent lasted forty days – not including the Sundays. Easter lasts **fifty days**, and, of course, does include the Sundays, from sundown on Easter Saturday until the Day of Pentecost! Every Sunday of the year is “Easter”. As the sacrament of new life, baptism is an Easter theme; as baptized Christians we take time during Easter to ponder the meaning of membership in Christ’s body, the Church. We look at events in the Church’s life, the sacraments, the accounts of resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to discover their meaning and what they tell us about how we as a community are to live the life of the Risen Lord. Like the two who walked the Emmaus road with Jesus, we can know Christ in the sharing of the word and in the breaking of bread at the Eucharist. The Great Fifty Days of Easter are the time when those who have reaffirmed their baptismal vows or have been baptized at the Easter Vigil reflect on the meaning of their baptism. Through the lectionary texts they explore the “mysteries” of their faith. The early Church called this period of the process *mystagogia*. The whole Church enters into this period of uncovering anew the mysteries of faith expressed in sacrament, word, and life lived for others.

PROJECT COMPASSION 2026 – RETURN BOXES AND THANK YOU!

<p>THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website</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>NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website</p> <p>THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 2:14,22-33 2nd Reading 1 Peter 1:17-21 Gospel Luke 24:13-35</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 • Parish Priest Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting 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>