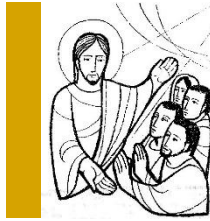


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
2 / 3 MAY 2026
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A
THE FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!!

Playing It Straight

“Playing it straight” is a phrase meaning “to do something seriously, without making jokes or demanding too much attention” or “to do something honestly”.

In Sunday’s Gospel, Philip and Thomas (of doubting fame) are “playing it straight” for Christ, who is explaining the very deepest meaning of Christianity.

“There are many rooms in my Father’s house,” Jesus says. “I will come back and take you there. You know the way to where I am going.”

Thomas asks rather naturally, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” He might as well have said, “Do your magic.”

So, Jesus makes a play on “the way.” Thomas thinks these words mean a roadway or a pathway. But Jesus means something else. He says, Thomas, you already know The Way quite well. It is me. **I AM** the Way and the Truth and the Light. **I AM** the Pathway to the Father. If you know me then you know the Father.

The early followers of Jesus actually called their Jesus movement, “the Way,” instead of “Christianity.” All puns aside, what does “the Way” mean?

It is the way to real life. Jesus is saying that the Father has been shown forth completely, in himself, the Christ. Jesus called him “abba,” but he is the God all ages have sought for, the One who is all good and all loving and all powerful. God. Do you want to know God? Look at Jesus. Follow his way.

Philip does want to know “the Father,” but he completely misses Jesus’ play on the words, “the Way.” He replies, “Master, just show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” We can’t understand your explanations, just give us the goods.

People throughout the ages had said the same thing. We want to know the goods. We want the favour of those exalted ones who have no suffering, no crop failures, no droughts, starvation, no AIDS, no genocide, no wars, no Covid, no death. We want what they have, a luxury, power, honour, and glory. Show us that Father, Philip says.

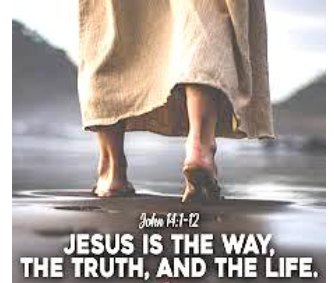
Maybe you and I say exactly the same thing! We are so attracted to the itches of our heart: to have exactly what we want, to avoid troubles, to live “the good life.” As television says, “it doesn't get any better than this.” Oh, doesn't it?

Jesus’ response: “show you the Father? What Are You Saying, Philip? **I AM** showing you the Father. God is so present in my life (and death and resurrection) that to know me is to know the Father.”

Let the meaning sink in. Jesus seems to say that God is totally within him. They are one. You can see infinite love revealed!

Can you or I look at the Cross and the Resurrection and see God’s infinite love embedded there? Can we see a love that is stronger than death, stronger than honour, power, riches, stronger than a “trouble-free life”?

It is The Way to freedom.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 6:1-7

✚ As the early church grew, problems arose and were addressed. For instance, the Hellenists neglected widows. Do you see areas of negligence today for which the Church might help to find solutions? School shootings and gun violence? Ecojustice? Homelessness? Immigration? Racial inequality?

✚ “The Hellenists complained. ... So, the Twelve called together the community of disciples. ... ” What is a “Synod”? Will Synodality involve the “community” in making needed changes?

Second Reading 1 Peter 2:4-9

✚ St Peter says that we are “a chosen race a royal priesthood and holy nation, a people of his own.” Do you “announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light”? Regularly? Sometimes? With words? With works?

✚ How do you “announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness” to the hungry on your streets? When there is eco-injustice in parts of your city? When there is racism in your office?

Gospel John 14:1-12

The disciples didn’t know where Jesus was going and certainly did not want him to leave. Can you relate to this desire to be with the people you love? How is human love either a reflection of divine love or else actually a participation in it?

✚ “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” What did Jesus tell his disciples (and us) in this reading to ensure that our hearts are not troubled, according to Pope Francis (below) on 10 May 2020?

Jesus is risen and lives precisely to be always by our side. We can thus say to him, “Jesus, I believe that you rose again and are beside me. I believe that you listen to me. I bring to you what upsets me, my troubles. ... “My Father’s house has many rooms ... I am going there to prepare a place for you.” ... he reserved a place in Heaven for us. He took our humanity upon himself to carry it beyond death, to a new place, to Heaven, so that we might also be where he is. ... God is in love with us; we are his children. ... We are in transit here. We are made for Heaven, for eternal life, to live forever. ... But how can we reach heaven? ... He says to us today: “I am the Way” ... to have a living relationship with him, to imitate him in love, to follow in his footsteps ... of service to others.

HOMILY OF POPE LEO, 26 APRIL 2026, ORDAINING TEN PRIESTS

Dear brothers and sisters, My greetings go in particular to those who were just presented for ordination to the priesthood, your families, the priests of Rome, many of whom were ordained on this fourth Sunday of Easter, and to all present.

This Sunday is full of life! Although death surrounds us, Jesus' promise is already coming true: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (*John* 10:10). We see great generosity and enthusiasm in the willingness of these young men whom the Church calls today to be ordained as priests. As a numerous and diverse community gathered around the one Master, we feel a presence that renews us. It is the Holy Spirit, who unites people and vocations in freedom, so that no one lives for themselves any longer. Every Sunday calls us out of the "tomb" of isolation and seclusion, so that we can meet in the garden of communion where the Risen One is our guardian.

The vocation of these our brothers invites us to reflect upon the priest's service, which is a ministry of communion. "Life in abundance," in fact, comes to us in a deeply personal encounter with the person of the Son, but it immediately opens our eyes to our brothers and sisters who are already experiencing, or who are still seeking, the "power to become children of God" (*John* 1:12). This is one secret for the life of the priest. Dear ordinands, the deeper your bond with Christ, the more radical your belonging to all of humanity. There is no opposition, nor competition, between heaven and earth; in Jesus they are united forever. This living and dynamic mystery binds the heart to an indissoluble love: it binds and fills it. Certainly, like the love of spouses, the love that inspires celibacy for the Kingdom of God must also be guarded and constantly renewed, for every true affection matures and becomes fruitful over time. You are called to a specific, delicate and difficult way of loving and, even more so, of allowing yourselves to be loved in freedom. This will make you not only good priests but also honest, helpful citizens, builders of peace and social friendship.

In this regard, it is striking that in the Gospel that was proclaimed (*John* 10:1-10), Jesus refers to aggressive figures and actions: strangers, thieves, and robbers who disregard boundaries and intrude between him and those he loves. They come, Jesus says, "only to steal and kill and destroy" (v. 10). Their voices are different from his own, and are unrecognizable (cf. v. 5). The Lord's words are full of realism. He knows the cruelty of the world, where he walks with us. With his words, he evokes not only forms of physical aggression, but above all of spiritual aggression. This does not, however, deter him from giving up his life. Denunciation does not become renunciation; danger does not lead to flight. This is another secret for the life of the priest: we must not be frightened by reality. It is the Lord of life who calls us. May the ministry entrusted to you, dear brothers, convey the peace of those who know that they are safe, even amid dangers.

Today the need for security makes people aggressive, causes communities to close in on themselves and leads people to seek out enemies and scapegoats. Fear is often present around us and perhaps within us. May your security not lie in the role you hold, but in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as well as in your participation, along with your people, in the story of salvation. This salvation is already at work in the many good deeds that are quietly carried out by people of goodwill in the parishes and settings where you will join them as fellow travellers. What you proclaim and celebrate will protect you, even in difficult times.

In the communities where you will be sent, the risen One is already present, and many have already followed him commendably. You will recognize his wounds and distinguish his voice. You will encounter people who will direct you towards him. These communities will also help you to become saints! For your part, help them to walk together, following Jesus, the Good Shepherd, so that they may become places — gardens — of life that rise anew and share themselves with others. People are often lacking a place where they can understand that it is better and beautiful to be together, and that it is possible to get along. Facilitating encounters, helping to bring together those who would otherwise never meet, and conciliating division is one and the same as celebrating the Eucharist and Reconciliation. Coming together always means planting the Church anew.

At one point in today's Gospel, Jesus begins to speak about himself using an important image. He was describing himself as the "shepherd," but those listening seemed not to understand. So, he changes the metaphor: "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep" (*John* 10:7). In Jerusalem, there was a gate called exactly that, "the gate of the sheep," near the pool of Bethesda. Sheep and lambs entered the temple through it, first being immersed in water, and then being destined for sacrifice. This image immediately reminds us of Baptism.

"I am the gate," Jesus said. The Jubilee showed us that this image continues to speak to the hearts of millions of people. For centuries, doors — often true portals — have invited people to cross the threshold of the Church. In some cases, the baptismal font was built outside, like the ancient Pool of Bethesda, beneath whose porticoes "lay many invalids — blind, lame, and paralysed" (*John* 5:3). Dear ordinands, consider yourselves to be part of this suffering humanity, which awaits abundant life. By introducing others to the faith, you will rekindle your own. Together with the baptized faithful, you will cross the threshold of the mystery every day — the threshold bearing the face and name of Jesus. Never hide this holy door. Do not block it; do not be an obstacle to those who wish to enter. "You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering" (*Luke* 11:52): this is Jesus' bitter rebuke to those who have hidden the key to a passage that was meant to be open to all.

Today more than ever, especially when statistics seem to indicate a divide between people and the Church, keep the door open! Let people in, and be prepared to go out. This is another secret for your life: you are a channel, not a filter. Many believe they already know what lies beyond the threshold. They carry memories with them, perhaps from a distant past. Often, there is something within them that is alive and has not died out; this draws them in. Other times, however, there is something else within them that still bleeds and repels them. The Lord knows, and he waits. Be a reflection of his patience and tenderness. You belong to everyone and are for everyone! Let this be the fundamental purpose of your mission: to keep the threshold open and direct others to it, without using too many words.

On the other hand, Jesus insists and clarifies: "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture" (*John* 10:9). He does not stifle our freedom. There are communities that suffocate; some groups are easy to enter but are almost impossible to leave. This is not the case of the Lord's Church, nor of the community of his disciples. Whoever is saved, says Jesus, can "come in and go out and find pasture." We all seek shelter, rest and care. The Church's doors are open, but not to cut us off from life: life does not end in a parish, in an association, in a movement, in a group. Whoever is saved can "go out and find pasture."

Dear brothers, go out and discover culture, people and life! Marvel at the things that God makes grow without our having sown them. The people you will serve as priests — lay faithful and families, young and old, children and the sick — inhabit pastures that you must come to know. At times it will seem to you that you lack the necessary maps. But the Good Shepherd has them; listen to his very familiar voice. So many people today feel lost! Many feel they can no longer find their bearings. In this regard, there is no more precious testimony than this: "He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake" (*Psalms* 23:2-3). His name is Jesus: "God saves"! You are witnesses to this. "Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (*Psalms* 23:6). Dear brothers, sisters, and young people: may it be so!

FREE TRIAL FOR NEW SCOUTS!

1st Thirroul Scouts welcomes boys and girls to try out Scouting particularly with our Cubs Section (8-11 Year Olds). Our Scouts Section welcomes those 11-14 Years.

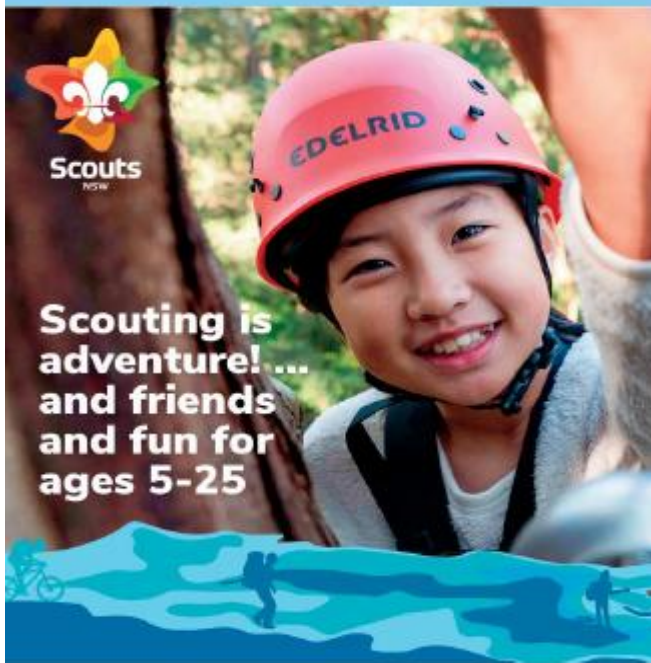
Cubs meet on Monday Nights (6:30-8pm)

Scouts meet on Tuesday Nights (7-8:30pm)

Contact Mark Roberts (Group Leader – 1st Thirroul) on 0408 411 485 or via mark.roberts@nsw.scouts.com.au

For more information:

scoutsnsw.com.au



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

There is much to celebrate and to be prayerfully hopeful about with growing openness to religious vocations amongst young people. The Wollongong Diocese vocations team are doing great work in opening young people up to prayerful discernment about God's call on their life. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is always calling us to life, and life to the full – the challenge for us is to be open to listening for his quiet voice in our lives. How can we become more open to the voice of the Good Shepherd in the big and small decisions of life? How do we know if we are called to marriage, priesthood or religious life, and how do you live your baptismal vocation more fully as a single young man? The Fourth Sunday of Easter is called "Good Shepherd Sunday" and is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. We take this opportunity to invite all unmarried young men aged 18-35 who are open to discerning God's call in their lives to join Bishop Brian Mascord, the priests of the Vocations Team and our Seminarians for lunch, formation, Q&A, one to one chats and Adoration. Register as soon as you can! dow.sh/Ephphatha Saturday 13 June, 12:30pm lunch.

SPIRITUALITY ON THE SOFA – 6 MAY

Professor Lesley Hughes and Bishop Vincent Long will lead the zoom presentation on "Peace with the Created World". Our world is in turmoil. War, environmental destruction and economic disruption all continue. We yearn for peace. 19:30 to 21:00 on Wednesday, 6 May: [Click here to join via Zoom](#)

CATHOLIC FAMILY CAMPING WEEKEND

Friday, 15 May or Saturday, 16 May to Sunday, 17 May at the Guntawang-Wooglemai Catholic facility, Oakdale, for \$50 per adult or \$100 per family – bringing together families of all ages, including couples with or without children, single parents and their children, and grandparents to celebrate the incredible gift of family life. For more information and registration, go to dow.sh/familycamping26

THE TRIBUNAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote that "charity and mercy demand that the Church, like a good mother, be near her children who feel themselves estranged from her." The Interdiocesan Tribunal of Sydney, which has an Office in the Diocese of Wollongong, is a service of the Church to assist with the pastoral care of Catholics and non-Catholics who are civilly divorced, and who are seeking to remarry or who want clarification of their standing in the Church. The Tribunal also assists remarried persons seeking to have their current marriage recognised in the Church, and remarried persons wishing to be baptised or received into the Catholic Church.

Any divorced person, or a divorced and remarried person is welcome to contact the Wollongong Office of the Tribunal to obtain further information, or to have their status within the Church clarified.

Brochures are available at the back of the church in the notice board area.

The Wollongong Office of the Tribunal is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. You are welcome to contact the Tribunal on 4222 2409 or tribunal@dow.org.au or visit www.tribunal.dow.org.au

BANANA OAT CHIA MUFFINS – healthy, nutritious and vegan from Raymond

1 tablespoon (6g) flax meal; 2 teaspoons apple cider or white vinegar; 2/3 cup (158ml) almond, oat, or soy milk (or another non-dairy milk of choice); 2 cups (240g) white whole wheat flour (substitute all-purpose, light spelt, or whole wheat pastry flour); 1 cup (100g) rolled oats; 2 teaspoons baking powder; 1/2 teaspoon salt; 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon; 3 tablespoons chia seeds; 1 cup (250g) mashed banana (3 large, *very* ripe bananas, mashed); 3/4 cup (144g) light or dark brown sugar; 1/3 cup (79ml) vegetable oil (such as grapeseed, refined avocado, or safflower).

Preheat oven to 175°C and lightly oil a 12-muffin baking pan. Whisk the ground flax with 3 tablespoons warm water and set aside. In a medium sized bowl, whisk together the milk and vinegar. In a large mixing bowl, combine together the flour, oats, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and chia seeds. Add the mashed banana, sugar, and oil to the milk and vinegar mixture. Stir in the flax mixture. Add these wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix with a spatula until the batter is evenly combined. Don't overmix: a few small lumps are OK! Add 1/3 cup batter to each well in the muffin pan. Sprinkle the tops with extra rolled oats and bake for about 22-25 minutes, or until muffins are browning and a toothpick comes out mostly clean. Store in an airtight container for 2 days, then in the fridge. *If you have a favourite recipe that you are willing to share, please email the Parish Office – much appreciated.*

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	4 May	Monday of the 5 th week of Easter	Acts 14:5-18	John 14:21-26
Tuesday	5 May	Tuesday of the 5 th week of Easter	Acts 14:19-28	John 14:27-31
Wednesday	6 May	Wednesday of the 5 th week of Easter	Acts 15:1-6	John 15:1-8
Thursday	7 May	Thursday of the 5 th week of Easter	Acts 15:7-21	John 15:9-11
Friday	8 May	Friday of the 5 th week of Easter	Acts 15:22-31	John 15:12-17
Saturday	9 May	Saturday of the 5 th week of Easter	Acts 16:1-10	John 15:18-21
Sunday	10 May	SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Month of May (4 weeks)	National Count of Attendance (Mass Count) at all Sunday Masses
✦ Weekend, 2/3 May	Blessing of those celebrating May Wedding Anniversaries or Birthdays
✦ Wednesday, 6 May	19:30 Spirituality on the Sofa – “Peace with the Created World”
✦ Weekend, 9/10 May	Mother’s Day – Blessing of Mothers, Grandmothers at both Masses
✦ Saturday, 9 May	18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
✦ Monday, 11 May	Enrolments for the Sacrament of Confirmation 2026 close
✦ Wednesday, 13 May	11:00 Catholic Women’s League monthly meeting
✦ Wednesday, 20 May	16:00 or 19:30 – Training for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2026 – ENROLMENTS CLOSE ON 11 MAY

Confirmation, one of the three Sacraments of Initiation, is celebrated in our Diocese for Year 6 students or older. This year the Sacrament will be celebrated on Thursday, 2 July. If you would like your daughter or son to receive Confirmation, you need to complete an enrolment form and return it to the Parish Office by 11 May. Details of Confirmation, including an Enrolment Form: <https://thirroulcatholic.org.au/confirmation/>

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

TRAINING FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

More Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are needed. If you would like to be commissioned for this ministry, please just turn up for training in the church, on Wednesday, 20 May at EITHER 16:00 OR 19:30. Please volunteer NOW. This service is needed by our Parish. No need to register beforehand, just turn up on 20 May.

SURF LIFESAVING IN THE ILLAWARRA

Flags have come down at Illawarra beaches after a season that saw volunteer lifesavers clock more than 51,000 patrol hours keeping swimmers safe. Surf Life Saving Illawarra says 17 clubs across the Wollongong LGA carried out 125 rescues and more than 5,400 preventative actions. More than 1,200 lifesavers patrolled local beaches this season, with membership up five per cent. Austinmer recorded the highest number of rescues with 34, followed by North Wollongong with 19. Crews also responded to 173 first aid cases, supported by drones, jet skis and duty officers. North Wollongong will remain the only patrolled beach over autumn and winter, staffed daily by council lifeguards.

“The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent”, and “violence can never lead to justice, stability, or peace” – Pope Leo, Easter *Urbi et Orbi* – 5 April 2026

<p>THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website</p> <p>FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 6:1-7 2nd Reading 1 Peter 2:4-9 Gospel John 14:1-12</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website</p> <p>SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 8:5-8,14-17 2nd Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18 Gospel John 14:15-21</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>