



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
9 / 10 MAY 2026
SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A
HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!!

An Advocate

We live in an age when nostalgia sells. We have radio stations devoted to “oldies,” that is, the music of some former era. Television has endless recall of shows from Jack Benny to Leave it to Beaver to I Love Lucy to Hogan’s Heroes ... you name it. Such a human thing it is to remember the spirit of the past and to understand better what we have done and have been. Can all of it media hype, designed to “sell product”? We are tempted to say, yes, hype, hype and nothing but hype. Yet much of what our nostalgia dredges up was actually good in its day, and remains so.

Throughout Easter the Church is recalling the adventures of the Church in the weeks after Jesus died and then rose again. We sit around the campfire of our memories, telling stories about how it was then. Philip. Remember Philip who told Jesus, “just show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Of course, he was seeing Jesus and therefore was looking at the Father, but he did not know it.

And do you remember what Jesus said just before his passion and death? That he would send the Spirit of Truth into our hearts. And that we would not be left orphans. It was hard to understand then and it is still pretty difficult.

Let us go over it one more time. Jesus seemed to say, first, that God the Abba was so much within Jesus that every time you see him it is the same thing as seeing God. Second, Jesus said, I am going to be so much within you — yes, you normal people — that whenever people see you it will be the same thing as seeing me! And of course, the Father is in me, so they see the Father too!

“I almost have it,” Philip gulped.

So, Jesus said it again. You will not see me anymore. But that doesn’t make me absent from you. I and Abba will be within you so that your very spirit will hold the Spirit of me and of the Father. All you need to do is say “yes.”

Then Philip saw it. In the upper room he touched the truth. Very soon he was running from place to place doing miracles and preaching about the Messiah!

With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing. For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city (First Reading)

We ourselves touch the truth and receive it also. Maybe it is not so dramatic as Philip’s experience, but we have it every Sunday and any other day we choose to participate in Mass. We touch and receive Jesus in our bodies.

Simple? No.

Well, maybe it is simple. This Sunday let us remember again not hype but these deepest, dearest mysteries of our lives.

In the Risen Lord, his disciples were confronted by God’s final achievement in a transformed creation. The overwhelming and mysterious nature of this experience – an encounter that involved every level of their being – is reflected in the various passages of the gospels that attempt to communicate it. On the surface, the symbolic imagery and circumstantial detail they use are difficult to reconcile. Beneath the surface, however, they have a remarkable unity: against all expectations they know the Jesus who has been so long in their company, triumphant in his humanity over death; he greets them generously, and initiates a new relationship with them that they find challenging; he entrusts them with a mission to the whole world, announcing the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Today, our Easter liturgy aims to awaken in us the recognition that we too are called to share in this mission – through the gift of Christ’s own Spirit. In our gospel reading from John, ‘Advocate’ translates the word, ‘paraclete’, used several times in this gospel. This term indicates far more than one who will speak for us when we are on trial. It signifies someone who will stand by us whatever our need – our ‘champion’ we could say. The work of the Spirit is clearly expressed in the words of Jesus: ‘I will not leave you orphans, he says, ‘I will come back to you’. He will be present, however, in a new way, as his own Spirit leads the faith-filled community in a fuller understanding of all that he said and did.

This union with the Saviour, through his Spirit, is to be far more than a comforting spiritual union. ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments’, he says. What are these commandments? Immediately before the passage selected for our liturgy, Jesus has spoken of the ‘works’ that will be a sign of true belief in him. In the tradition that gave us John’s gospel, we know, all is summed up in a single commandment, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’. The Spirit will lead us into the fullness of truth and life brought by the Risen Lord, as we give ourselves to practical love and service.

In our reading from Acts we see the first Christian community taking up the mission they have received. Philip, one of its seven ‘deacons’ – remembering, no doubt, the example of Jesus – takes the Good News of reconciliation to the Samaritans, the hated enemies of old Israel. It was through the leadership of the apostles, this incident shows, that the Spirit built up the Church’s communion of love and service. If our union with the Risen Lord must find a practical expression, it is certainly, Peter tells us in his letter, a most personal bond: ‘Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts’ he tells us, and then your lives will bring true blessings to those around you.

In today’s Gospel Jesus promises us that “I will not leave you orphaned; I will come back to you, and you will have life.” Our faith, nurtured in this great paschal season, tells us that God-made-flesh is God-with-us, never abandoning us and always filling us with life. It should be a great comfort to all of us, who share in the pain and suffering of ordinary life, to know that



✠ the Spirit of Jesus is with us always. It should be especially comforting to know that Jesus will not leave orphaned all those whom the world casts aside: the poor and homeless, the racial and ethnic minorities, the sick and dying, the prisoner and the refugee. “Christ died for sins once for all, a just man for the sake of the unjust.” He rescued us from our attachment to injustice, and then he sent his Spirit to remain with us and within us. Our prayer is one of gratitude for such a gift and hope that “we feel its saving power in our daily life.” Jesus loves us so much that, even after his death, resurrection, and ascension, he remains with us. He is, after all, Emanuel, ‘God with us,’ but now through his living, sanctifying Spirit.

We now encounter him in new ways: in other human beings; in any place where people gather in his name; in the inspired words of Holy Scripture; in his Church, particularly her liturgical celebrations; in the person of his minister; and especially in the sacraments.

We have reached the climax of Jesus’ farewell speech to his disciples. Three times Jesus insists on covenant love as being the essential response required of us: ‘If you love me you will keep my commandments’ (14:15). ‘The one who receives my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me’ (14:21). ‘Those who love me will keep my word’ (14:23). Three times he assures us that we will not be left alone: ‘I will ask the Father who will give you the Spirit to be with you for ever’ (14:16). ‘I will come back to you ... I will show myself to you’ (14:18,21). ‘My Father and I will come to you and make our home in you’ (14:23). Each time he assures his disciples that this intimate communion with the Spirit, with himself, and with the Father is something that those who reject him (“the world”) cannot experience. It is a communion possible only for those who respond in love to what God is offering.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 8:5-8,14-17

- ✠ Why did the crowds “pay attention” to what Philip was saying? What gets your attention in spiritual matters?
- ✠ The Samaritans saw many signs and were filled with “great joy.” What are the signs of the presence of God in your life? Do such signs fill you with joy? Can you think of these signs as “everyday miracles”? Is it a “miraculous” sign when you see people on the news taking truckloads of food to the starving children of South Sudan?

Second Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18

- ✠ Does your life indicate that the Spirit inspires you? How do you “sanctify Christ as Lord” in all of life’s arena: home, government, church, world, and all creation?
- ✠ St Peter was the writer of this Second Reading. How does he recommend answering someone who asks about your hopefulness? In the gospels, do we find Peter always true to his advice? Did he do a lot better after he received the Spirit? Will the same Spirit help you??

Gospel John 14:15-21

- ✠ “Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” If studying or reading or discussion are your only approaches to God, what else is needed, according to this reading? How does love impact knowledge and understanding in any friendship?
- ✠ “And I will ask the Father, who will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth. ... ” According to Pope Francis—quoting St John Paul II—is the Holy Spirit able to untie the most “knotted” human affairs? Is there some small way you can allow the Holy Spirit to use your creativity to help untie the knots of hunger, gun violence and climate change?

To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds: ‘The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, even the most complex and inscrutable.’ (from St John Paul II).

Evangelium Gaudium, 178.

MOTHER’S DAY

Mother’s Day is a moment to honour the love, dedication, and sacrifices of mothers. At its heart, Mother’s Day is about gratitude. It’s a time to recognise the unconditional love, care and sacrifices that mothers make every day. Whether they’re biological, adoptive, foster or maternal figures, mothers shape lives, nurture futures, and provide the warmth of a family.

However, Mother’s Day is also a day of reflection and inclusivity. Not everyone has the opportunity to celebrate it with their mother. Some people have lost their mothers, some have strained relationships, and of course many children are confined in orphanages far from the love and care of family.

Modern Mother’s Day began in the US in 1908, championed by Anna Jarvis to honour mothers, becoming an official US holiday in 1914. While rooted in ancient mother-goddess festivals and the 16th century Christian “Mothering Sunday,” the modern, commercialized holiday spread globally in the 20th century, often celebrated with gifts, flowers, and family gatherings.

SOME HISTORY: Festivals in Ancient Greece and Rome honoured mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele. Mothering Sunday (UK/Europe): a 16th century tradition on the fourth Sunday of Lent, where people visited their “mother church.” It evolved into a day to visit and honour one’s own mother, often with flowers and cakes. Julia Ward Howe (1870): following the American Civil War, poet and activist Julia Ward Howe called for a “Mother’s Peace Day” to honour mothers and promote anti-war efforts.

A BLESSING OF MOTHERS: Tender, gentle God of love, bend down your ear: bless the mothers of our families. Bless them with the strength of your Spirit, as they taught their children to walk. Bless them with the melody of your love, as they shared how to talk and sing. Bless them with a place at your eternal dinner table, they who fed and nurtured life. Bless them today with good things, with good health, with pride in their children, with joy, love and laughter. Surround them with many good friends. May they who carried life in their wombs be carried one day to your divine embrace. May your blessings descend on all mothers. Amen!

WORDS OF POPE LEO, 22 APRIL 2026, BATA PRISON, EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Dear brothers and sisters, In some places, it is said that rain is a sign of God's blessing. Let us pray that this may indeed be the case. And let us also live this moment as a sign of God's closeness, a God who never abandons us.

I have listened carefully to your words. Thank you for your sincerity, and for showing us that human dignity and hope are never lost, even in the midst of difficulties.

Today, I am here to tell you something simple: no one is excluded from God's love! Each of us, with our unique stories, mistakes and sufferings, remains precious in the Lord's eyes. We can say this with certainty, because Jesus revealed it to us in every encounter, every gesture and every word. Even when he was arrested, condemned and put to death through no fault of his own, he loved us to the very end. In doing so, he showed us that he believed in the power of love to change even the hardest of hearts.

On this journey, I have experienced Equatorial Guinea as a land rich in cultures, languages and traditions. Your families, communities and faith are a great source of strength for this nation. You, too, are also part of this country. The administration of justice aims to protect society. To be effective, however, it must always promote the dignity and potential of every person. True justice seeks not so much to punish as to help rebuild the lives of victims, offenders and communities wounded by evil. There is no justice without reconciliation. This is an immense undertaking. Part of it can happen within prisons, but the greater part must involve the entire national community, in order to prevent and heal the wounds caused by injustice.

Above all, I would like to speak to you about hope and change. Although prison may seem like a lonely and desolate place, as has been said, it can also become a space for reflection, reconciliation and personal growth. Every effort should be made to ensure that you are given the opportunity to study and to work with dignity while in prison. Life is not defined solely by one's mistakes, which are often the result of difficult and complex circumstances. There is always the possibility to start over, learn and become a new person.

Brothers and sisters, you are not alone. Your families love you and are waiting for you. Many people outside these walls are praying for you. If any of you fear being abandoned by everyone, know that God will never abandon you, and that the Church will stand by your side. Think of your country and the young people of Equatorial Guinea who need examples of perseverance, responsibility and faith. Every effort toward reconciliation and every act of kindness can spark hope in others.

I would also like to thank the people who work at this correctional facility: the director, the officers and the chaplain. By combining security with respect and kindness, they provide an essential service that ensures the necessary conditions that allow inmates to reintegrate into society and rebuild their lives.

Dear brothers and sisters, God never grows tired of forgiving. He always opens a new door for those who recognize their mistakes and desire to change. Do not let the past rob you of hope for the future. Every day can be a new beginning.

Let us entrust this journey to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy. May she accompany you, console you and protect your families. Today, I wish to assure you of my closeness and of my prayers for you and all the people of Equatorial Guinea. Always remember that a person who gets back up after falling is stronger than before. May the Lord grant you peace, hope and strength to begin anew.

Brothers and sisters, under this rain, which is a blessing from God, let us recite the prayer that Christ himself taught us, saying: Our Father And may the Almighty God bless you, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

AUDIENCE WITH MEMBERS OF THE "PAPAL FOUNDATION", 2 MAY 2026

Dear brothers and sisters,

I warmly welcome all of you, especially the Members, Trustees and Stewards of The Papal Foundation, and I offer my prayerful good wishes for your pilgrimage to Rome. While this is our first opportunity to meet since I was called to take on the role of Bishop of Rome and Pope, I have already been aware of your work, especially during my years of service as Bishop of Chiclayo, where I saw first-hand the positive impact of the Foundation's grants, as both the Diocese and a religious community were blessed to receive assistance on various projects, thanks to your generosity. In just this first year of my Pontificate, I have been edified to see the global reach of the Foundation. I am, therefore, deeply grateful for your ongoing commitment to assist the Successor of Peter in his mission to care for the needs of the universal Church. In this regard, I was pleased to learn that membership in the Foundation continues to grow each year and that you have expressed an openness to increase the support provided as well as find new ways of being of service.

Your visit occurs during the Easter season, a time focusing on mission as well as peace. After the Resurrection, Jesus commissioned the Apostles to be his messengers, promising to accompany them in their work and promising to be with them always (cf. *Mark* 16:20, *Matthew* 28:20). The Pope and the bishops, as successors of the Apostles, continue this task through preaching and works of evangelization. Yet all members of the Church, by virtue of our Baptism, share the responsibility to proclaim the Gospel today with words as well as with charitable deeds. As Saint James wrote to the early Christian community, faith without works is dead and has no power to save (cf. *James* 2:17), and the Gospels teach us that the Lord expects his disciples to care for the needs of the poorest and the most vulnerable (cf. *Matthew* 25:31-46).

By funding projects, humanitarian aid and scholarships for people from around the world, The Papal Foundation participates in the Church's ongoing evangelical mission. Your generosity has allowed countless people to experience in a concrete fashion the goodness and kindness of God in their own communities. Many priests and consecrated men and women have likewise been able to receive an advanced education from the Pontifical Universities in Rome that would otherwise not have been possible, forming them to be future leaders in the Church. You will probably never meet everyone who has benefitted from your kindness, so in their name I express heartfelt appreciation.

One of them is sitting next to me, however, who received a scholarship from you, and I am sure he will gladly say "thank you."

On Easter Sunday, the risen Lord greeted his Apostles by saying, "Peace be with you!" (*John* 20:19), and even today, Christ desires that his disciples be instruments of peace. In addition to furthering the Church's evangelical mission, the Foundation's efforts also help to foster peace on the regional and local levels. Saint Paul VI wrote that development is the new name of peace (cf. Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 87). By this he meant that true harmony is not simply the absence of conflict, but comes from actively promoting an authentic integral human development (cf. *ibid*, 76). Fostering genuine progress through tangible initiatives like those supported by the Foundation is a sure way to encourage concord among communities and individuals.

Dear sisters and brothers, with these sentiments I thank you for your presence here today as well as for all that you do to further the worthy mission of The Papal Foundation. I ask for your continued prayers for my ministry as the Successor of Saint Peter and for the needs of the Church. In entrusting you and your loved ones to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy in Christ our risen Lord. Thank you.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	11 May	Monday of the 6 th week of Easter	Acts 16:11-15	John 15:26–16:4
Tuesday	12 May	Tuesday of the 6 th week of Easter	Acts 16:22-34	John 16:5-11
Wednesday	13 May	Wednesday of the 6 th week of Easter	Acts 17:15,22–18:1	John 1:12-15
Thursday	14 May	St Matthias, apostle	Acts 1:15-17,20-26	John 15:9-17
Friday	15 May	Friday of the 6 th week of Easter	Acts 18:9-18	John 16:20-23
Saturday	16 May	Saturday of the 6 th week of Easter	Acts 18:23-28	John 16:23-28
Sunday	17 May	SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER • YEAR A – Scripture Readings are listed below		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Month of May (4 weeks)** National Count of Attendance (Mass Count) at all Sunday Masses
- ✦ **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
- ✦ **Weekend, 16/17 May** Saturday, 4 baptisms, 1 RCIC Candidate baptised; Sunday, 1 baptism
- ✦ **Wednesday, 20 May** 16:00 or 19:30 – Training for Extraordinary Ministers of Communion
- ✦ **Tue to Thu, 26-28 May** Clergy Inservice at the Catholic Club, Campbelltown

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**.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – RAFFLES FOR MOTHER'S DAY

Thank you to the ladies who sold the tickets before and after Mass last weekend, and thank you to the all the parishioners who supported CWL's raffles. A big thank you to the winners of the prizes: **Trish Roberts** – who won two prizes; **Benice Gray**; **Tanya Davis**; **Maria O'Leary** (it was her birthday Sunday). Profit for the day: **\$506**. The Catholic Women's League will meet **this Wednesday** at **11:00** in the parish hall. **All are welcome!**

"In light of Christ's Resurrection, the Church recognizes itself as being sent to all peoples — not by imposing itself, but by bearing witness to the truth in charity. Dialogue, in turn, strengthens communion, opens paths of understanding and serves the cause of peace. In this way, Christ draws all things to himself and makes the Church a sign of unity and hope for the world." – Pope Leo, *Address to members of the Archdiocese of Cologne* – 30 April 2026

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts: 8:5-8,14-17</p> <p>2nd Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18</p> <p>Gospel John 14:15-21</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Acts 1:1-11</p> <p>2nd Reading Ephesians 1:17-23</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 28:16-20</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUNDAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday 📺 17:30</p> <p>Sunday 08:00</p> <p>📺 Saturday Mass is recorded.</p>
<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</p> <p><i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i></p> <p>Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</p>	<p>🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</p> <p>📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive</p> <p>📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515</p> <p style="text-align: center;">☎ 4268 1910</p> <p>📧 thirroul@dow.org.au</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Parish School of St Michael</p> <p>James Bryce Principal ☎ 4267 2560</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES</p> <p>Monday _____</p> <p>Tuesday 📺 17:30</p> <p>Wednesday 09:00</p> <p>Thursday 09:00</p> <p>Friday 09:30</p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i></p>