



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
23 / 24 MAY 2026
PENTECOST SUNDAY • YEAR A
END OF THE FIFTY DAYS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!!

The Great Sharing

Pentecost is a feast equal to Christmas and Easter in importance. It is the official sending of the Holy Spirit into men and women.

We have been hearing Jesus talk about this moment in the Gospels for weeks now. We have been hearing that he will not leave us alone, but will send the Spirit, the Paraclete, to us.

Now it has happened.

- The Father is so much within Jesus that if you know Jesus you know the Father.
- Just as the Father is within Jesus, Jesus will be within us.
- This will happen through the sending of the Holy Spirit, who is the “insides” of Jesus and of the Father. The Spirit is the love they have for each other, the closeness, the great sharing.

The first sign is that the apostles begin speaking in tongues. People from all different lands and languages gather and each understands the disciples' words without any translation. No small thing.

The reading then tells who the people in the crowd were:

- Parthians, Medes and Elamites;
- inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia;
- Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene;
- travellers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism;
- Cretans and Arabs.

Language students of today wish they could talk in so many languages, don't they? But the real point is deeper than that. God's Holy Spirit means to bring us together, to allay differences, to let us hear other persons in the way they express themselves, not just to think about our own self. Each one has a “language” that expresses who they are (not a literal language, but an idiomatic way of speaking and acting that comes from the inside of who that person is). If you are able to hear, you can “listen through” characteristics and receive loving knowledge of that person, even if they have no intention of letting us in.

But that is so difficult, you say. Some people you run into are just plain annoying. “So-and-so just talks on and on and I think I will go crazy if there is a minute more.” How in the world can we “hear” another human being?

With the aid of the Holy Spirit.

It is not magic. The work of the Spirit is to listen for the “insides” of the other person, as we saw above. If you take Jesus seriously in the Gospel, you will hear with the aid of the Spirit, the Paraclete, which is Love given to the deepest part of you. Not Love instead of your own freedom, but Love as a help, a push (not a shove) toward caring for everything in God, of course, and what is best in other people, even troublesome ones.

It takes time to learn all this, of course, to clear the various blockages inside us that keep the Spirit at bay. Remember, we are being invited into the greatest closeness possible, the great sharing that is God himself. Yes, it does take time. And we make a lot of mistakes. But God is willing to make us “temples of the Holy Spirit,” and to stay with us, strengthening us, guiding us, helping us to make Love a root in us.

The liturgies of the Easter season bring home to us the work of the Holy Spirit in the Saviour's Paschal Mystery. Our New Testament readings have made frequent mention of the Holy Spirit, looking forward to the coming of the Spirit as its final culmination.

Luke's account of the coming of the Spirit upon the apostles associates this coming with the ‘day of Pentecost’, a Jewish festival celebrated fifty days after Passover – a harvest festival that later became a celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses. The basis of Luke's vivid dramatization may well have been the fact that, on this popular festival, the apostles – still uncertain how to undertake the enormous mission they had been given – joined the pilgrims crowding Jerusalem, and for the first time found the courage to proclaim their faith in the Risen Lord. In the joy and success, they found on this occasion, they recognised the ‘baptism with the Holy Spirit’ they had been promised. In the Acts of the Apostles Luke tells the story of the Church of the beginnings using a device in use at the time by writers of popular history – taking important events in the history they are presenting and dramatizing them in a way that brings out their far-reaching significance. Thus, in Luke's account, what begins as an event on one room of the city – ‘a noise that filled the whole house’, ‘something that seemed like tongues of fire’, the apostles



✚✚ ‘speaking in foreign languages’ – suddenly involves the whole crowded city, as faith in the Risen Lord is preached ‘to devout men from every nation under heaven’. As Luke’s dramatization continues in the passage that follows our reading, Peter’s preaching leads to the baptising of three thousand people – a number designed to bring out the momentous nature of what is taking place, and the universal mission that will flow from it, rather than giving a precise historical detail. As we know, Luke is writing a sequel to his gospel: the story of the Holy Spirit’s life-giving guidance of the early Church. In later ages, our instinct has been sound, in celebrating Pentecost as the birthday of the Church.

The other readings point to other dimensions of the workings of the Spirit in our lives. Our life in Christ is filled, from beginning to end, with God’s generous gifts. And all of these gifts come from ‘one and the same Spirit’ – from our faith in Christ as our ‘Lord and God’, to the individual contributions we are able to make to the life of our community.

In John’s gospel, as we are reminded in today’s reading, the Spirit was given on the evening of Resurrection Day itself. ‘Peace be with you’, Jesus repeats, and ‘breathing on them’ he says, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’. John’s gospel reminds us that if the Spirit is responsible for the great things in which God is present in the life of the Church, the Spirit is also evident in our personal lives, in the true ‘peace’ and contentment that comes to those who give themselves generously to the Lord. In John’s gospel, Jesus, at the Last Supper, associates the gift of the Spirit he promises with a peace that is his special gift: ‘My own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give this is my gift to you’. How varied are the gifts of the Spirit. In this era of change and renewal, let us become more aware of our dependence upon them. Jesus saw that his mission in life was to set this fire blazing: ‘I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!’ (Luke 12:49). He knew that God is Love and he gave himself in love to attract us to do the same, and to harness for God the immense energies of love that fill this wonderful world of ours. We are made for love, but there are forces outside ourselves and forces within that stifle love by trapping us in fear and seducing us along ways that do not lead to love but keep us bound to our own fickle desires. It is the final act of Jesus’ gift of love that we are celebrating today. From the heart of Jesus pierced on Calvary the fire of love was poured out upon his disciples gathered in prayer. Jesus offers the disciples, as he offers us, the gift of peace – a peace which is far deeper than the hurts and disturbances, indeed the torments, that we sometimes suffer. It is the peace of knowing that we are sharing in the communion of divine love that comes from his heart.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Acts 2:1-11

✚ Every nation was confused and amazed because everyone understood in his or her language what the apostles were saying. If you were completely open to the Holy Spirit, would you have a deeper understanding of all that you hear? Was the miracle in the speaking or the hearing? How does the Holy Spirit use the miracle of hearing with you?

✚ “When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. ...” Was fear present? What took the place of “fear” after the Holy Spirit rested on each one of them? According to Pope Francis, what are the implications of this for the Church today?

When they were locked in there, in the Upper Room, they were not strategizing, no, they were not drafting any pastoral plan. ...

The Spirit himself opens doors and pushes us to press beyond what has already been said and done, beyond the precincts of a timid and wary faith. In the world, unless there is tight organization and a clear strategy, things fall apart. In the Church, however, the Spirit guarantees unity to those who proclaim the message. The Apostles set off: unprepared yet putting their lives on the line. One thing kept them going: the desire to give what they received. The opening part of the first letter of Saint John is beautiful: “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you” (cf. 1 John 1:3). – Pope Francis, Pentecost Homily, 31 May 2020

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

✚ To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. ...” Were Vivaldi and Michelangelo, for instance, given gifts solely for their own pleasure? For whose benefit were they given? What are your gifts and for what benefit were they given to you and those around you? What gifts are you given to help with racism, gun violence, ending war or climate crisis? Are you a finder of solutions? A peace maker? A giver of food or money? One who prays?

✚ Could the gifts of the Spirit help eradicate many of our problems: gifts of knowledge, wisdom, understanding, reverence, courage, right judgment and awe and wonder in the presence of God?

Gospel John 20:19-23

✚ Jesus “breathed” on them. How does this relate to Genesis 2:7, “God formed the man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”? What is the significance for you? How important is the Holy Spirit to you?

✚ “... When the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews ...” How were the disciples different after the Spirit’s arrival? In your own life do you tend to see the Holy Spirit as dynamic and constant or as only occasional? Rate your belief in the Holy Spirit being your constant companion on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. Are you different when you are confident that the Spirit is with you? Explain.

LAUDATO SI' WEEK – 17 TO 24 MAY – THEME: FROM HOPE TO ACTION

The Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, has greatly inspired the Catholic Church and many people of goodwill. It has proven to be a source of dialogue. It has given rise to reflection groups, academic programs in schools and universities, and partnerships and projects of various kinds on every continent. Many dioceses and religious institutes have been moved to take action to care for our common home, helping once more to give priority to the poor and marginalized in the process. Its impact has even extended to international summits, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, economic and business circles, as well as theological and bioethical studies. The phrase “care for our common home” has also been included in academic, scientific and political addresses and speeches.

Pope Francis' concerns and recommendations have been appreciated and accepted not only by Catholics, but also many people outside the Church who feel understood, represented and supported during this specific moment in our history. His analysis of the situation (cf. chapter 1), proposal of the paradigm of integral ecology (cf. chapter 4), insistent call for dialogue (cf. chapter 5), and the appeal to address the root causes of problems and to “bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (no. 13) have aroused widespread interest. Let us give thanks to our Father in heaven for this gift we have inherited from Pope Francis! The challenges identified in *Laudato Si'* are in fact even more relevant today than they were ten years ago. These challenges are of a social and political nature, but first and foremost of a spiritual nature: they call for conversion.

As with every anniversary of this nature, we remember the past with gratitude, but we also ask ourselves what remains to be done. Over the years, we have transitioned from understanding and studying the Encyclical to putting it into practice. What must be done now to ensure that caring for our common home and listening to the cry of the earth and the poor do not appear as mere passing trends or, worse still, that they be seen and felt as divisive issues? In line with *Laudato Si'*, the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, published two years ago, noted that “some have chosen to deride” (no. 6) the increasingly evident signs of climate change, to “ridicule those who speak of global warming” (no. 7) and even to blame the poor for the very thing that affects them the most (cf. no. 9).

Besides spreading the message of the Encyclical, it is now more important than ever to return to the heart. In Scripture, the heart is not only the centre of feelings and emotions, but the locus of freedom. Although the heart includes reason, it transcends and transforms it, influencing and integrating all aspects of the person and his or her fundamental relationships. The heart is the place where external reality has the greatest impact, where the deepest searching takes place, where the most authentic desires are discovered, where one's ultimate identity is found, and where decisions are formed. It is only by returning to the heart that a true ecological conversion can take place. We must shift from collecting data to caring; and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and communal lifestyles. For believers, this conversion is in fact no different to the one that orients us towards the living God. We cannot love God, whom we cannot see, while despising his creatures. Nor can we call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ without participating in his outlook on creation and his care for all that is fragile and wounded.

Dear friends, let your faith inspire you to be bearers of the hope that comes from recognizing the presence of God already at work in history. Let us recall how Pope Francis described Saint Francis of Assisi: He “lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (*Laudato Si'*, 10). May each of us grow in these four relationships — with God, with others, with nature and with ourselves — through a constant attitude of conversion. Integral ecology thrives on all these relationships. Through our commitment to them, we can grow in hope by living out the interdisciplinary approach of *Laudato Si'* and the call to unity and collaboration that flows from it. We are one family, with one Father, who makes the sun to rise and sends rain on everyone (cf. *Matthew* 5:45). We inhabit the same planet, and we must care for it together. I therefore renew my strong appeal for unity around integral ecology and for peace! It is encouraging to see the variety of organizations represented at this conference, as well as the wide range of organizations that have joined the *Laudato Si'* Movement and the Platform for Action.

Moreover, Pope Francis emphasized that “the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international levels” (*Laudate Deum*, 69). Everyone in society, through non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups, must put pressure on governments to develop and implement more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls. Citizens need to take an active role in political decision-making at national, regional and local levels. Only then will it be possible to mitigate the damage done to the environment. Local legislation will also be more effective if neighbouring communities support the same environmental policies (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 179).

It is my hope that the upcoming international summits of the United Nations — the 2025 Climate Change Conference (COP 30), the 53rd Plenary Session of the Committee on World Food Security, and the 2026 Water Conference — will listen to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor, families, indigenous peoples, involuntary migrants and believers throughout the world. At the same time, I encourage everyone, especially young people, parents and those who work in local and national administrations and institutions, to play their part in finding solutions for today's “cultural, spiritual and educational challenges” (*Laudato Si'*, 202), always striving tenaciously for the common good. There is no room for indifference or resignation.

I would like to conclude with a question that concerns each of us. God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created (cf. *Genesis* 2:15), for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters (cf. *Genesis* 4:9; *John* 13:34). What will be our answer?



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	25 May	Our Lady Help of Christians	Sirach 4:11-18	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	John 19:25-27
Tuesday	26 May	St Philip Neri, priest	1 Peter 1:10-16		Mark 10:28-31
Wednesday	27 May	Wednesday, 8 th Week Ordinary Time	1 Peter 1:18-25		Mark 10:32-45
Thursday	28 May	Thursday, 8 th Week Ordinary Time	1 Peter 2:2-5,9-12		Mark 10:46-52
Friday	29 May	Friday, 8 th Week Ordinary Time	1 Peter 4:7-13		Mark 11:11-26
Saturday	30 May	Saturday, 8 th Week Ordinary Time	Jude 17,20-25		Mark 11:27-33
Sunday	31 May	THE MOST HOLY TRINITY • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>			

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Month of May National Count of Attendance (Mass Count) at all Sunday Masses
- ✦ Tue to Thu, 26-28 May Clergy Inservice at the Catholic Club, Campbelltown
- ✦ Thursday, 28 May 19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for June Baptisms
- ✦ Friday, 5 June 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- 10:15 Catholic Care Information Morning – and morning tea
- ✦ Monday, 8 June Public Holiday – King's Birthday
- ✦ Tuesday, 9 June 19:30 Confirmation Parents' Meeting

AGEING WITH CONFIDENCE – WHAT'S AGE GOT TO DO WITH IT?!

Tuesday, 9 June, 10:00 to 13:00 at The Fraternity Club. Join CatholicCare for a free community event with Dr Emily Steel from the Australian Human Rights Commission, sharing practical approaches to ageing well. Morning tea and info stalls included. Register via the QR code, call 1800 967 894 or www.catholiccare.dow.org.au ... Enquiries to Jane Hollier, CatholicCare 0417 018 152 or janeh@catholiccare.dow.org.au



CATHOLIC CARE WOLLONGONG – AGED CARE CHAT – FRIDAY, 5 JUNE

CatholicCare will be present at and after the 09:30 Mass on Friday, 5 June to provide an information session about the new Support at Home aged care program and how it is changing the way older Australians access support. They will cover how to enter the aged care system, what the new Support at Home services mean for you or your loved ones, and the types of supports CatholicCare can provide to help people remain living safely and independently at home. Stay for a cuppa after Mass and a chat, no need to register for this one. All are welcome – and thank you to CatholicCare for providing this service.

THE FOUR WAYS OF CHRIST TRUE PRESENCE IN THE EUCHARIST

Based on the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, Christ is truly present in the Eucharistic liturgy in four distinct ways: in the gathered assembly; in the proclaimed Word; in the person of the priest; and most especially, in the consecrated bread and wine. Worth reading is this short article from Liturgy Lines, Archdiocese of Brisbane: <https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/resources/liturgy-lines/the-four-presences-of-christ/>

There is a four-part Zoom series exploring Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Three sessions feature a video series, with a final deep dive into the riches of the Church's teaching on the Eucharist. Each session includes opportunities to reflect on the content and to connect with other participants. The series will run on Zoom Tuesdays, 19:00 to 20:15, from 26 May to 16 June. Registration is free and you need to register here: tinyurl.com/RRPZoomSeries

CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

UOW students and staff are warmly invited to become involved with the UOW Catholic Society. Join us for Mass and lunch, 12:30pm Thursdays during semester in the Building 11 Clubs Room. See @uowcathsoc on social media to find out more.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

PENTECOST SUNDAY ♦ YEAR A

1st Reading Acts 2:1-11
 2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3-7,12-13
 Gospel John 20:19-23

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY ♦ YEAR A

1st Reading Exodus 34:4-6,8-9
 2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
 Gospel John 3:16-18

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 17:30
 Sunday 08:00
 Saturday Mass is recorded.

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes
 Moving forward as a Parish Family

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

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Parish School of St Michael

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THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday
 Tuesday 17:30
 Wednesday 09:00
 Thursday 09:00
 Friday 09:30
 Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday