



# St Michael's Parish Nowra

Incorporates the Church communities of St Michael's - Nowra, St Patrick's - Berry, Sacred Heart - Bomaderry

Mary Help of Christians – Culburra, Holy Spirit - Vincentia & St Joseph's – Kangaroo Valley

Telephone: 4423 1712 Email: [office@nowraparish.org.au](mailto:office@nowraparish.org.au) Web: [www.nowraparish.org.au](http://www.nowraparish.org.au)

## The Ascension of the Lord 24th May 2020



### The Ascension of the Lord

Over many generations the Ascension of the Lord was celebrated on a Thursday, which marked the end of the 40-day period, during which the Risen Lord remained on earth following His Resurrection. The celebration of the Feast was transferred to the Sunday in Australia as in other countries, in 1992.



The Feast is not so much about 'going-away' as it is about a new form of presence. Pope Leo the Great (5<sup>th</sup> cent.) has left us a magnificent expression of the significance of the Feast. He wrote:

***“What was visible in Christ has now passed over into the Sacraments of the Church. And so that faith might be more noble and strong, it is now grounded not on sight but doctrine...”***

This is a Feast of Mission; the Disciples are commissioned and exhorted to Go and Witness to the Lord's death and Resurrection and indeed to the Gospel message Jesus personally preached.

The Ascension is an opportunity to reflect on the very mission of the Church, and indeed our own destiny.

**“St Matthew in today's Gospel does not portray Jesus departing from the earth. He who at his birth was named 'Emmanuel' – 'God is with us' (1:23) – will remain 'Emmanuel' for his missionary Church till the end of time”** Fr Brendan Byrne sj



**The priests of the parish continue to celebrate Mass for parishioners, anniversaries, the sick, and special needs.**

**Each Sunday at 9am, the Diocese currently broadcasts Sunday Mass with Bishop Brian. You can view it on the Diocesan website [www.dow.org.au](http://www.dow.org.au) or [YouTube Channel](#) or [Facebook page](#).**

### MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS – May 25<sup>th</sup>

The concept of a Patron is a familiar practice in many spheres of life. A patron is one we look to for both inspiration and challenge. Mary, the mother of Jesus has been invoked as a patron by Australian Catholics ever since the building of the first Catholic chapel in 1821. In that year Fr. John Joseph Therry dedicated a small church or chapel on the site of the present-day St. Mary's Cathedral, to Mary. It was known simply as St. Mary's. The magnificent St Mary's Cathedral (Sydney) now standing on that site, is regarded as Australia's mother Church; it's original title was **Mary Immaculate, Help of Christians.**



Archbishop Polding (Australia's first Bishop) made it his practice to meet the convicts as they arrived in the colony. He was permitted to offer the Catholic convicts days of retreat on their arrival. He did this for hundreds of convicts between 1836-41. He encouraged them to pray to Mary as the one who was a refuge for sinners, and a source of comfort to the sorrowful. Thus, he fostered a devotion to Mary among the unfortunate convicts.

In 1844 the Catholic Church in Australia held its first official Synod (Meeting). Present were 3 Bishops & 37 priests. It was decided to place the Catholic Church (Australia) under the patronage of Mary, Help of Christians. In fact, Australia was the first country in the world to have as Patroness, Mary Help of Christians and the first to celebrate the Feast on May 24<sup>th</sup> in 1852.

At the recent Plenary Conference of the Australian Catholic Bishops it was decided to entrust our nation again, in this time of challenge and uncertainty, to the care and intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary under the title of Our Lady Help of Christians.

**'The Chosen' Discussion groups** will commence this coming week in the Parish Centre. 'The Chosen' is an eight-episode series that portrays Jesus "through the eyes of those who met him". It is a moving drama that means so much more to us as Christians. The Chosen is free on YouTube for everyone to watch and you are welcome to watch it ahead of time, however, it isn't necessary as each meeting will start with the episode, followed by refreshments and the discussion. With the current COVID-19 regulations, we are limited to 8 guests per group, which is why you will need to book your place in a group. Groups will run on Monday 7pm – 8:30pm, Tuesday 9:30am – 11am and Tuesday 7pm – 8:30pm. Please contact Frances for more information: 0413539370.

#### Living our faith at home.

**Faith Circles:** The Diocesan weekly resource offers a copy of the upcoming Sunday Gospel, commentary (often by Pope Francis), questions for reflection/sharing and brief prayer points. Would you like to be part of a small group, meeting by Zoom from the comfort of your own lounge room, but don't feel like facilitating a group yourself?

Sue sgs is willing to facilitate a small group if anyone interested. Suggested time: **Thurs 10.30 – 11.30 am.** Expressions of interest: ring parish office this week.

#### The Eucharist - Exploring our Catholic Faith

We are all missing the Eucharist - but what does this mean? In this 4-part series, we will refresh & deepen our understanding of the Eucharist. **Mon 1<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June or Fri 5<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June all at 4pm via Zoom.**

To register email [darren.mcdowell@dow.org.au](mailto:darren.mcdowell@dow.org.au)



We prayerfully remember **John Tanti** (S.Point) who died this past week. We also remember: **Martha Stevens** and **Juanna**

**Petilla** and all those whose anniversaries occur.

Also all who have died from the Covid-19 virus, in Australia and worldwide. May they rest in peace.



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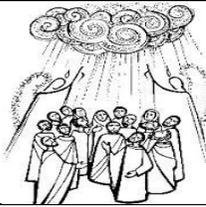
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## The Ascension of the Lord

24th May 2020



### **First Reading - A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. 'It is' he had said, 'what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'

Now having met together, they asked him, 'Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father has decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.'

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there.'

### **Responsorial Psalm**

**(R.) God mounts his throne to shouts of joy: a blare of trumpets for the Lord.**

1. All peoples, clap your hands,  
cry to God with shouts of joy!  
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,  
great king over all the earth. (R.)
2. God goes up with shouts of joy;  
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.  
Sing praise for God, sing praise,  
sing praise to our king, sing praise. (R.)
3. God is king of all the earth.  
Sing praise with all your skill.  
God is king over the nations;  
God reigns on his holy throne. (R.)

### **Second Reading - A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians**

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories he has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he has exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of his power at work in Christ, when he used it to raise him from the dead and to make him sit at his right hand, in heaven, far above every Sovereignty, Authority, Power, or Domination, or any other name that can be named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. He has put all things under his feet, and made him, as the ruler of everything, the head of the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills the whole creation.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.  
I am with you always, until the end of the world.  
Alleluia!

### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him, they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commandments I gave to you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

### **A Thought for The Feast:**

The Ascension of the Lord is understood in Scripture as the completion of the Resurrection, this is especially true for St. John in his Gospel. However, it is figuratively and dramatically described in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles.

Significantly the disciples are instructed not to spend too much time lingering over the questions of HOW or WHY?

The Ascension is an opportunity to reflect on the very mission of the Church and indeed our own destiny. St. Paul prays that our minds might be enlightened so that we might appreciate the destiny to which God is calling us in Jesus Christ.