

Spirituality of the Readings - Gone for Good?

Jesus is with us by means of the presence of his Spirit in us.

Imagine the emotional turmoil inside the disciples.

First he was here. Then he was gone. Then he was here again. And then he was gone for good.

Let's look.

≈ "First he was here. Then he was gone." They had lived with Jesus in his public life and they loved it. They thought it would last forever. Not so. Abruptly he was gone. They were not at all prepared for the enormity of his torture and killing, the destruction of their lives, of their friend and their Lord.

Gone, gone, gone.

≈ "Then he was here again." We know how difficult his resurrection was for the apostles. They doubted it and rejected it, even as the women welcomed it with full hearts. He appeared many times and kindly helped his followers to accept the fact that he was alive again.

≈ "And then he was gone for good." When they had gotten used to his new presence, guess what? The Ascension took place. This presented the obvious question. Does the story really end with Jesus being "gone, gone, gone," ascended to heaven? The point of God's taking flesh had been to show how completely present he is to us always, living in our material world. So has he now absented himself forever? Are we back to where we started?

You and I must look for the answer, because it contains the entire Christian reality. We can do it using the readings for this Sunday.

Look upon the First Reading as a continuation of Jesus' frequent talks about how he will send the Holy Spirit to us after he has ascended to the Father. All who believe and who open their hearts will receive the Spirit.

Stay with this line of reasoning.

What is the Spirit? Is it simply a dose of "grace" that we earn or receive in order to be holy? Or that Jesus and the Father sent to give us a break? Or a "help"? Or some kind of power coming from God? Listen well: the Holy Spirit is all of these and none of these. The Spirit is:

GOD.

Not just a representative of God, not just a descending dove, not even just a point of fire over our heads. It is the complete, true reality of God. And it is marked forever by Jesus' entire life, death and resurrection.

This Spirit quietly makes us able to say yes to faith. Not by brutalising us or overriding us. The Second Reading and the Gospel are all about what I call "respectful love." I define respectful love as that love which never overpowers us but always respects our choice(s). Rather than a dictator, the Spirit wants to be a companion in our lives, esteeming our being, not contradicting it, bringing out what is most truly our own self.

So Jesus is with us by means of the presence of his Spirit in us.

He hopes we will accept his offer of this Spirit. If we do, our souls *minge* with God's own reality and we become new flesh for the incarnate God.

This is called the mystical body of Christ on earth.

Your reply? Well great, but why am I so weak in belief, so far from Christ, so prone to sin? This Holy Spirit must be pretty anaemic.

No, and again, here is the reason.

The Spirit always waits, waits, waits for us to open to Jesus' life. Jesus is not gone, he is inside us, knocking at our inner door. We can say no. But we can also say yes with our lives.

Through respectful love.

John Foley, SJ

Fr. John Foley, SJ, is a composer and scholar at Saint Louis University

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



Parish Website:

Parish Facebook Page:

Parish Priest:

Assistant Priest:

Parish Pastoral Council:

Parish Office Hours:

Weekend Masses:

Weekday Mass:

Rosary & Devotions:

Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet:

Intercession & Adoration:

Baptisms:

Reconciliation:

Weddings:

Funerals:

Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am

Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am

2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7.30 - 8.30 pm

None until further notice

2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment

By request

By appointment - restricted numbers

By appointment - restricted numbers

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Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 Emergency ONLY: 0418 461 316

Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 Emergency ONLY: 0415 077 969

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Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

A Poem to Sit With

"As the Father loves me, so I also love you.

Remain in my love"

Do not be afraid
I have shown you
how to live

I have shown you
how to pray
I have shown you
how to care
for your brothers
and sisters

why do you worry?

didn't I tell you
time and time again
you have a Father
who cares for you

who understands you

he knows all about
you he even has the hairs
of
your head numbered
counted

J.Janda

THE SECOND READING

1 John 4:7-10

*In this way the love of God was revealed to us:
God sent his only Son into the world
so that we might have life through him.*

God
spoke a
Word to us,

healing
the afflicted ones,
feeding the hungry ones,

laying down his life to show love's extent.

In fact, the Word was Love.

His name is
Jesus.

Jesus, let us love one another
in you.

Anne Osdieck

Today's Readings: Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 Jn 4:7-10; Jn 15:9-17

Entrance Antiphon: You have been buried with Christ in Baptism, through which you also rose again by faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead, alleluia.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 99:1-3, 5

R. Let all the earth cry out to God with joy or Alleluia!

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Father, I pray for them, that they may be one in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me, says the Lord, alleluia.

Next Week: The ASCENSION of the LORD Acts 1:1-11; Eph 4:1-13 or Eph 1:17-23; Mk 16:15-20

We acknowledge the Darug and Gundugarra people, the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to elders both past and present.



Sick: James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, Luca Hurley and all Private Intentions.

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

Parish and Local Community News

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR (SRE) MEETING: Please note in your diaries - **Thursday 13th May, 10.00am**, there will be a meeting at the Church, directly after Mass, for all SRE Teachers, helpers or those who might be interested in this amazing voluntary role. For further information, please contact Wilhelmina de Raadt on 4751 3319.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY? You may be interested in Christians Together for Climate, a Blue Mountains ecumenical group that is looking to take some political action inspired by our faith calling to care for the Earth. The group is meeting **via Zoom once per month** and has a broad range of Churches involved from across the region and with other groups across the nation. For further enquiries, please contact Dennis Farrar 4751 7096 or Sally Butler at Catholic Care, Springwood 8843 2545.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE INVITATION: Sister Linda Ferrington RSC (many of our Parishioners will know Sr Linda), will be our guest speaker on Friday, 21st May. Sr Linda will engage us in conversation and focus on **THE YEAR OF ST JOSEPH**. A very warm invitation is extended to **ALL PARISHIONERS**, men and women, to join us on this occasion. The meeting will be held **in the Church, immediately after 9.30am Mass**. For further details please contact Colleen Kime on 4754 4335 or Josephine Mac Kenzie on 4751 1002.

PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETS 1ST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH: St Thomas Aquinas Pastoral Parish Council meets on the 1st Wednesday of every month. Next Meeting: Wednesday 2nd June at 7:30 pm, STA Church. Please Email - springwoodppc@gmail.com if you would like to contact the Parish Council.

IF YOU ARE OVER THE AGE OF 18, THIS MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU: The 2021 ACU Prize for Poetry will be awarded for outstanding poetry with the theme Resilience, reflecting on Jaeda De Walt's supposition, "When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience," and Sharon Salzberg's thesis, "Resilience is based on compassion for ourselves as well as compassion for others." To enter, please go to: <https://catholicoutlook.org/18000-prize-purse-for-2021-acu-prize-for-poetry/> **GOOD LUCK!**

WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND ELDERLY: Place the 25th July into your diary for a day of celebrating being a grandparent. The theme "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20) expresses the closeness of the Lord and the Church to every older person, especially in these challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic. More information to follow.

BELOVED 2021 WOMEN'S RETREAT: A retreat filled with peace, prayerfulness, adoration, Mass, reconciliation, inspiring guest speakers, praise and worship. St Finbar's Catholic Church, Glenbrook, 12th June 2021 from 8.30am to 8.30pm. Registration is \$60, and with places limited please register now at <https://forms.gle/KkBaTAvm1qkYYCzm8>. For enquiries, email beloved2021info@gmail.com.

Commissioning Mass for our SRE Educators - Sunday, 16th May, 9.30am

Our SRE Educators are active members of our parish that have volunteered to commit their own time in sharing their faith with the children in our local State schools (*Springwood Primary School, Winmalee Primary School, Winmalee High School, Ellison Primary School and Faulconbridge Primary School*). This amazing group of people enter the schools and teach **CATHOLIC SCRIPTURE**. They all have training from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) in Parramatta. If you are interested in becoming a helper, or teacher, please also come forward at this Mass. *You are all most welcome.*

Join us in praying with them, and for them on Sunday, 16th May at our 9.30am Mass.

THANK YOU

Dear Parishioners,
I want to sincerely thank you all for your prayers, cards, flowers and many kindnesses you've given to my family and me since the death of our John. Thank you also for coming to his funeral. Be assured that your support has been a comfort to us and I will pray for you also.
Love,
Angela Hoare

Celebrating our Mother's and other Special Women in our lives this Sunday

On Sunday many of us will spend the day celebrating our mothers and other special women in our lives.

Some mums may be given cards, flowers and gifts, while others may enjoy breakfast in bed or a picnic. Mother's Day has long been a part of the Australian calendar, but did you ever wonder where the idea to dedicate the second Sunday in May to honouring mother's came from?

The modern Australian celebration of Mother's Day actually grew out of calls for peace and anti-war campaigns following the American Civil War (1861-65).

In 1870, American writer and women's rights activist Julia Ward Howe, best known as the author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, appealed to women to unite and bring peace throughout the world (later known as the Mother's Day Proclamation). She proposed that a Mother's Day for peace be commemorated every year in June but the idea of a Mother's Day did not gain traction until 1908, when West Virginia woman Anna Marie Jarvis held a church memorial to honour the legacy of her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis.

Ann Reeves Jarvis had been a peace activist who nursed wounded soldiers during the Civil War and created mother's day work clubs to address public health issues. Anna Jarvis wanted to continue her mother's work and pushed to have a day set aside to honour all mothers. *American woman, Anna Marie Jarvis spent her life campaigning for Mother's Day.*

In 1914 her campaigning paid off, when US president Woodrow Wilson officially declared the second Sunday in May to be Mother's Day. "The impact of the Civil War was still there ... and there was also a rising concern that America might find itself involved in another war, particularly given what was happening in Europe," said Richard Waterhouse, emeritus professor of Australian history at Sydney University.

Mother's Day in Australia

It was not until 1924, following the losses of World War I, that Mother's Day was first held in Australia. Sydney woman Janet Heyden started the tradition after becoming concerned for the lonely, forgotten aged mothers at Newington State Hospital where she regularly visited a friend. Janet successfully campaigned for local schools and businesses to donate gifts to the ladies.

"There were so many mothers who were no longer mothers, so many wives who were now widowed because of WW1, and there were also so many women who never had the prospect of becoming mothers or wives because a whole generation had been wiped out in the trenches of the Western Front," Professor Waterhouse said.

"There was this mood for Mother's Day, and the American Mother's Day fitted better than other mother's days that were celebrated in other countries."

A time for Family Reunions

While Mother's Day initially began to promote peace and support women, over the years it has become an occasion for family reunions in Australia.

"It's not just about recognising the role of mothers, though that's still there, but it's really recognising Mother's Day as a day in which families can get together," Professor Waterhouse said. "That's becoming increasingly important because in the busy world in which we live, families don't get together as much as they used to."

Reference: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-13/history-of-mothers-day-from-civil-war-to-family-reunions/8517898>

Lord,

Thank you for all mothers.

For the new ones, who endure sleepless nights with infants in arms.

For the busy ones, who juggle the pressures of home and family life.

For the steadfast ones, who nurture and care for our special vulnerable children.

For the patient ones, who always seek to forgive and engage with their pre-teens.

For the persistent ones, who cleverly find new ways to connect with their mini-adults.

For the mother aunts, who step in to cradle and care for nieces and nephews.

For all grandmas, who love and support their precious grandchildren.

For the foster mums that are called to gather and cover the fragile ones.

For the Sunday mums who care for our children and lead them in faith.

For the mums who give far beyond their own resources, who overcome disability to cherish and love.

Thank you Lord for all our beautiful mothers. Help us to support them and keep them in our prayers.

May you bless them now on this their special day.

Amen.

