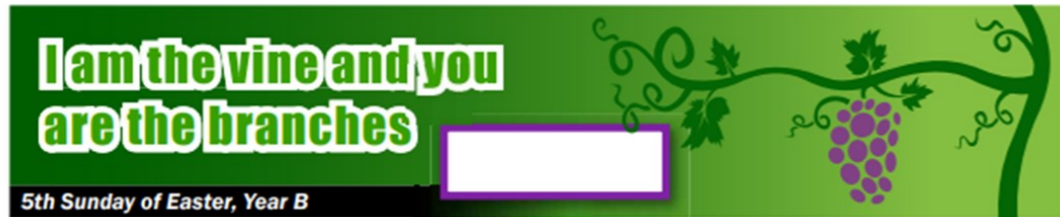


Date:	27th/28th April 2024		Fifth Sunday of Easter		
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading	Second Reading	Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ed Junis	Felix Kobus	Debbie Breytenbach	Colleen Baker	Chris Wilson
8:00 AM	Marek Grus	Loida Derbyshire	Cecilia Hunt	Vicky Walker	
9:30 AM	Bernard Ellis	Anne Ellis	Katherine Mahns	Peta Sparkes	Chris Wilson

Date:	4th/5th May 2024		Sixth Sunday of Easter		
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music	
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ian Miles	Colleen Baker	Felix Kobus	Andrew Wilson	
8:00 AM	Randall Noney	Cecilia Hunt	Jim Gresser		
9:30 AM	Phil Saville	Tanya Graham	Matt Aldous	Chris Wilson	
Morning Tea:	Disciples of Jesus				

Kid's Corner



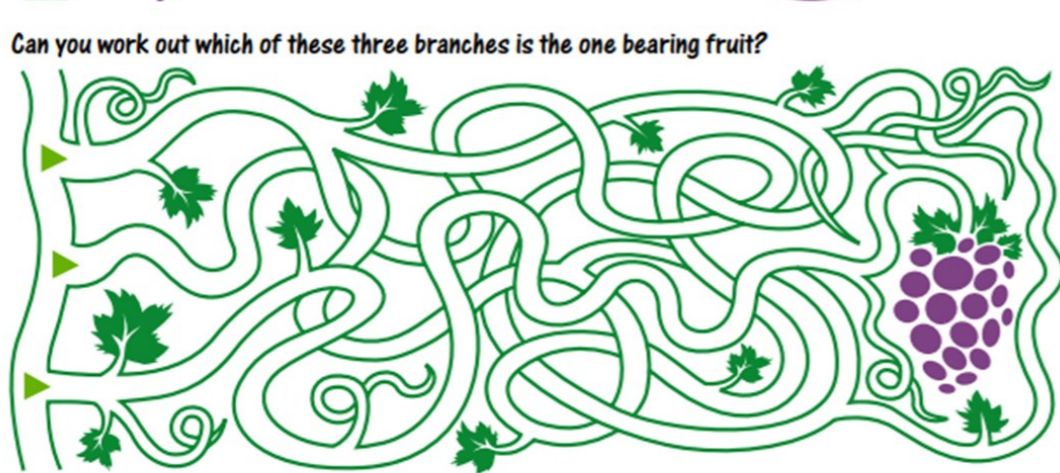
5th Sunday of Easter, Year B

Who are some people in your community who are like branches of the vine? On each branch, write down a name and how they contribute their 'fruit' to the community.

Jesus says that we must be fruitful disciples. What are some of the ways that you can be a disciple to Jesus? Write or draw your answers inside the grapes.

Mrs Smith

takes meals to elderly residents



St Thomas Aquinas Parish

168 Hawkesbury Road, Springwood, NSW, 2777
 PO Box 4410, Winmalee, NSW 2777
 Phone: 02 4754 1052; Emergency ONLY: 0474 631 168

Parish Email: email: springwood@parracatholic.org
Parish Website: www.stachurchspringwood.org.au
Parish Facebook Page: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Parish Administrator: Rev Christopher del Rosario (E: christopher.del-rosario@parracatholic.org)
Parish Pastoral Council: Email suggestions to springwoodparishpc@gmail.com
Parish Office Hours: Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 pm, Sunday 8:00 am and 9:30 am
Weekday Mass: Monday - Saturday 9:30 am
Adoration: Monday - Saturday from 8:15 am - 9:15 am
First Friday Adoration: Every first Friday of the month 7:00 pm
Reconciliation: Saturday after 9:30 am Mass and 4:00-5:00 pm before the Vigil Mass
Children's Liturgy: 3rd Sunday of every month, 9:30 am
Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 11:00 am and by appointment
Weddings: By appointment
Funerals: Please Contact the Parish Office



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We respect the Darug people and their elders both past and present, as the traditional custodians of this land on which we celebrate the Eucharist.

Divine Secateurs by Fr Timothy Radcliffe O.P.

My grandmother would venture out with her secateurs and pruning basket, expertly to prune the roses. It was an art that I never mastered. If you prune too vigorously, the rose bush died. If not strongly enough, the bush becomes straggly. Jesus tells his disciples in today's Gospel that he prunes every branch so that it bears more fruit. God is the artful gardener, who prunes our lives so that we flourish.

Jesus says, 'You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.' What word? I think it is every word that cuts through our fantasies and evasive thoughts and bring us back to the challenging essence of the Gospel. For example, just a little earlier Jesus had said: 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and died, it remains a single grain but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (John 12:24). The Lord invites us to all sorts of small deaths that we may live: to adolescence, to narcissism and so until finally our lives end and we die into eternity.

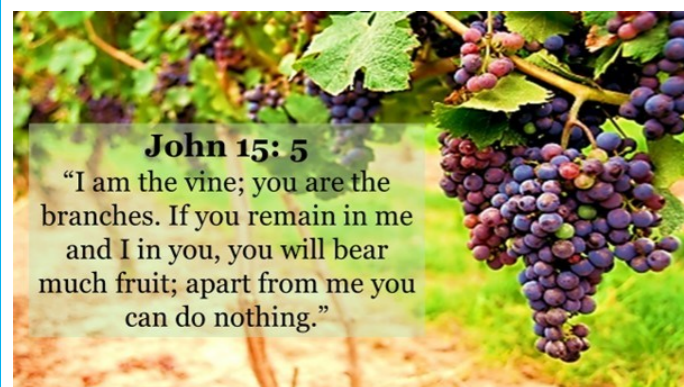
There are also experiences which prune away whatever is distracting and bring us back to the core of our faith. Father Hans-Joachim Lohre, an African missionary, was held captive by Al-Qaeda in Mali for a year. It was a time of acute deprivation but he called it a great gift from God, a time of intense prayer. Three years ago, I was in hospital for five weeks after surgery for cancer. My life was stripped back to essentials. I could not eat or drink and was entirely dependent on others. It was a pruning I never wish to endure again, but I was opened just a little to the free gift of the Lord's unmerited love.

Communities can also endure times of severe pruning which bring them close to God in a new way. The exile of Israel to Babylon during the sixth century BC, stripped away false images of God as a very powerful God who could beat up the other nations. Exile opened the way to a deeper understanding of monotheism and the utter transcendence of Israel's Lord.

We pray that the horrific exposure of the Church's sexual abuse of minors, the shameful exposure of her betrayal, will be a radical cutting back of clerical arrogance that will lead to new flourishing. The Greek word that is translating by 'pruning' also means to clean or purify. Jesus's word cleans us and gives us purity of heart. When I was young, I thought that a pure heart meant not thinking about sex! But in today's Gospel it means to live from the presence of the Lord at the very centre of one's being. 'Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.'

Our society is obsessed with identity: gender identity, sexual identity, ethnic identity and the politics of identity. Identity is to be chosen, constructed and defended. In *Barbie*, all the Barbies sing of their freedom to be whomever they want. But for Christians, our identity is hidden in God who is, as St Augustine wrote, 'closer to me than I am to myself.' God, who is beyond all rivalry, gives me to be myself. Simon Tugwell OP put it beautifully: 'To have a pure heart is to have a life which wells up in us from a source too deep for us to plumb.'

In moments of radical pruning, the little pompous identities that we have constructed, and that we struggle to present convincingly to the world, collapse; and we become aware of the one who sustains us in being and whose name is I AM. A pure, cleansed heart enables us to begin to see with the eyes of God, which mean is to see each other with compassion and how, for all the sin and violence of the world, God is present, even in Gaza. I admit that I have no desire to feel the divine secateurs but let us trust that it leads to our flourishing.



Second Reading [1 John 3:18-24](#)

A reading from the first letter of St John

His commandments are these: that we believe and that we love one another.

My children, our love is not to be just words or mere talk, but something real and active; only by this can we be certain that we are the children of the truth and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence, whatever accusations it may raise against us, because God is greater than our conscience and he knows everything.
My dear people, if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants.
His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to. Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him. We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

Gospel Acclamation [John 15:4-5](#)

Alleluia, alleluia!
Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord; my branches bear much fruit.
Alleluia!

Gospel [John 15:1-8](#)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

All who live in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more.

You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you.

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away – he withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

Communion Antiphon [Cf John 15:1,5](#)

I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.

Entrance Antiphon [Cf Psalm 97:1-2](#)

O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

First Reading [Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31](#)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

He explained how the Lord appeared to Saul and spoke to him on his journey.

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 21:26-28. 30-32.](#)

(R.) I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

1. My vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and shall have their fill. They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him. May their hearts live for ever and ever! (R.)
2. All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord, all families of the nations worship before him. They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust. (R.)
3. And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him. They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come, declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn: 'These things the Lord has done.' (R.)



Sick: Precious Tamayo, Aurea Hernandez, Julie Somerville, Fr Bob Bossini, Dane San Pedro, Marama Watson, Margaret Munro, 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 DIOCESAN NEWS

FINANCIALLY SUPPORTING OUR PARISH AND ITS WORKS:

There are a variety of ways you can support our Parish and its Mission:

- **QR Code:** located on the Bulletin Front Page.
- **EFTPOS Machines:** located at the back of the Church.
- **Direct Debit:** Please contact the Parish Office for more details.
- **Direct Deposit:** Details are as follows:
Bank Account Name: Springwood; BSB: 067-950
Bank Account Number: 00000560
Reference: Your name in full.
Thank you for your continued support.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY: Are you able to share your gifts one Sunday a month or when you are available? We are seeking parishioners who are interested in helping this important and fun ministry in our parish. If you would like more information please speak with Vicky Walker on a Sunday morning or email the parish office on springwood@parracatholic.org for more information.



HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS - 17 MAY: Please join us across the Diocese of pray for more vocations to the priesthood. Join us at St Thomas Aquinas Parish, Springwood with Fr Chris del Rosario, on Friday 17 May from 7pm. If you are interested in becoming a priest or would like more information, please contact our Director for Priestly Vocations, Fr Galbert Albino on (02) 4773 4321, 0450 821 12 or email galbert.albino@parracatholic.org

2024 Sacrament of CONFIRMATION

We invite you and your child to be part of our 2024 Sacrament of Confirmation program. Children in Year 5 or older in 2024, who have not yet received Confirmation, but have received Reconciliation and Holy Communion, are invited to participate. The Sacrament of Confirmation is a parish-based process. This means that you will do the preparation with your child, but we will help you through a process of guided reflection on a weekly basis by meetings in the church. The enrolment form, payment schedule and other sacramental program information is available on the front page of our website to download:

www.stachurchspringwood.org.au
Please send your completed application form to the parish office as soon as possible. Application copies are also available at the back of the church.

2024 Confirmation Sacramental Program Parent Information Sessions:

- Tuesday 21st May at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church
- Tuesday 28th May at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church
- Children and Parent Information Sessions:**
- Saturday 8th June at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Church
- Saturday 15th June at 11.00am, St Thomas Aquinas Church (and practice)

Confirmation will take place on Wednesday 19th June at 7.00pm, St Thomas Aquinas Church



FR CHRIS IS AWAY ON ANNUAL LEAVE FROM 15TH - 30TH APRIL: Please see the Parish Noticeboard, Facebook page or STA website for the schedule of Masses.

GREAT SAINTS OF ITALY: Join Fr Christopher Del Rosario on a breathtaking pilgrimage on the footsteps of some of Italy's most well-known saints. Follow their paths etched into our faith heritage, from the great Christian centre of Rome to sacred towns made famous by Padre Pio, St Francis, St Clare, St Catherine, and St Anthony. This is an amazing opportunity to deepen our faith and explore the rich tapestry of culture, art, and history that Italy has to offer. Pilgrimage commences 21 October 2024. For more details scan the code or visit harvestjourneys.com/Italy



TABLE TALK: "Laudato Si' Week – Seeds of Hope". You are invited to an engaging conversation about caring for God's creation. Hear and discuss inspiring stories, and play a role in creating positive change in the spirit of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. Monday 20 May, 6pm – 8:30pm, St Finbar's Parish Glenbrook. Light dinner will be provided on arrival. Please register by 12 May and find out more at tinyurl.com/laudatosi-table-talk

MEMORIALS, FEASTS & SOLEMNITIES FOR THE MONTH OF MAY:

- 1st May - St Joseph, the Worker
- 2nd May - St Athanasius
- 3rd May - Saints Philip & James, Apostles
- 12th May - The Ascension of the Lord
- 14th May - St Matthias
- 19th May - Pentecost Sunday
- 20th May - The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
- 24th May - Our Lady, Help of Christians
- 26th May - The Most Holy TRINITY
- 31st May - The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

BISHOP'S GOOD SHEPHERD APPEAL: Will you support our seminarians to "go out into the deep" and serve? Your compassionate generosity and prayers will help our future priests cast their nets wide to nurture faith and meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of our community. Please give generously to the Bishop's Good Shepherd Appeal at yourcatholicfoundation.org.au/appeal or scan this QR code. Thank you.



CARITAS AUSTRALIA would like to thank you for supporting Project Compassion 2024. If you still have your Project Compassion box or set of envelopes at home, please bring them back as soon as possible. Your generosity will empower the world's most vulnerable communities to grow stronger and lift themselves out of poverty. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow, for all future generations. We will be able to give our parish community a final donation total in the next week or so as we are still receiving envelopes. Thank you.

