

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			

Date: 11th/12th May 2024		The Ascension of the Lord		
Mass Time:	Acolyte	First Reading & Responsorial Psalm	Second Reading & Prayer of the Faithful	Music
Vigil: 5:00 PM	Ed Junis	Tanya Baldwin	Margaret Smith	Chris Wilson
- Celebrant: To be advised				
8:00 AM	Marek Grus	Kim Crawford	Vicky Walker	
9:30 AM	Richard Merchant	Margaret Hickey	Peta Sparkes	Streeters

Kid's Corner

Love one another as I have loved you

6th Sunday of Easter, Year B

Gospel John 15:9-14

Jesus said to his disciples:
 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you.'

The people I love are...

Draw some pictures of the people you love and write a little bit about each of them.

Jesus is my friend...

Jesus is our friend. He loves us so much that he was prepared to give up his life for us. What are some things you can do to show Jesus that you are his friend?

Two large empty boxes for writing answers.

The scriptural quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers.

St Thomas Aquinas Parish

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Parish Website: www.stchurchspringwood.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.

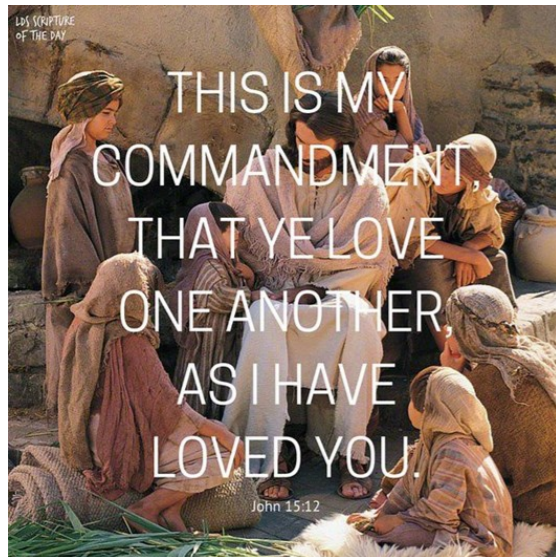
A Friend Request by Fr Luke Doherty O.P.

When we consider what makes a good friend, at a human level this means someone who is there when we need them. A friend is someone we can talk to in good times and bad times, generally someone who is dependable and understands us, because many things are shared in a friendship. A good friend is someone who would go the extra mile to help us in a time of need, and someone who offers gifts and not expecting anything in return. A friend is someone who makes you feel energised after talking to them, someone you can speak in complete confidence and assurance. Equally, someone is not a true friend if they manipulate you for their own benefit, or if the friendship is one-sided. If you find yourself having to pretend to be someone else when around them, this is not a good starting point. And if someone threatens you with violence, then this is not friendship.

Our understanding of friendship in a human context is a starting point for understanding how we could ever be friends with God. But trying to apply ideas about human-level friendships to a context of creating and maintaining a friendship with our creator is beyond our comprehension. But it is made more comprehensible in light of the Gospel passage for today. How could we be friends with God? We are friends with God if we do what he commands. This is a way of bridging the gap between humans and an omnipotent, all-knowing God.

Friendship with God should perhaps resemble what makes a good friendship at a human level, but we are not dealing with just any friend request. A friendship with God is something which is not going to end over time. When Jesus says 'I call you friends and no longer slaves or servants', this is not really the same thing as a human friendship. A friendship with God might mean that we do end up changing, although that is not the same as manipulation. This friendship with God is also inevitably elusive, as it invites us to fulfil the commands of Jesus to become friends and to remain friends into eternity, whatever that might mean. Love for others is central to this friendship, and love is what ultimately bridges the gap between us and God. Love for others is what makes us able to be friends with our creator. A shared divine life is ironically dependent on being friends with others at a human level, and if not friends then we need to love our enemies. We are called to build up the Kingdom of God in our own way, with exercise of charity even to strangers as an important way of following the commands of God.

The sort of love which we are dealing with in being called friends of God, is a love which is already unconditional for us. Although comparing this to friendships at a human level is something we can understand more easily, it's not like just accepting a friend request. The task of following the commands to remain in the love of Jesus is gradual, and this is based on giving ourselves in the service of others. Accepting God's friend request is something which keeps on happening.



Entrance Antiphon Cf Isaiah 48:20

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard;
proclaim to the ends of the earth:
The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

First Reading Acts of the Apostles 10:25-26. 34-35. 44-48

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

The gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the gentiles also.

As Peter reached the house Cornelius went out to meet him, knelt at his feet and prostrated himself. But Peter helped him up. 'Stand up,' he said, 'I am only a man after all!'

Then Peter addressed them: 'The truth I have now come to realise' he said, 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.'

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too, since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, 'Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?' He then gave orders for them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 97:1-4. R. see v.2

(R.) The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

1. Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. (R.)
2. The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations. He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel. (R.)
3. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy. (R.)

Second Reading 1 John 4:7-10

A reading from the first letter of St John

God is love.

My dear people,
let us love one another
since love comes from God
and everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love.
God's love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son so that we could have life through him; this is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God's love for us when he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

Gospel Acclamation John 14:23

Alleluia, alleluia!
All who love me will keep my words,
and my Father will love them and we will come to them.
Alleluia!

Gospel John 15:9-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you.
Remain in my love.
If you keep my commandments
you will remain in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and remain in his love.
I have told you this
so that my own joy may be in you
and your joy be complete.
This is my commandment:
love one another,
as I have loved you.
A man can have no greater love
than to lay down his life for his friends.
You are my friends,
if you do what I command you,
I shall not call you servants any more,
because a servant does not know
his master's business;
I call you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me,
no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you
to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last;
and then the Father will give you
anything you ask him in my name.
What I command you
is to love one another.'

Communion Antiphon John 14:15-16

If you love me, keep my commandments, says the Lord,
and I will ask the Father and he will send you another
Paraclete, to abide with you for ever, alleluia.



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 to 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 821 812 or email galbert.albino@parracatholic.org

2024 Sacrament of CONFIRMATION TWO WEEKS TO GO!

Children in Year 5 and older in 2024, who have not yet received Confirmation but have received Reconciliation and Holy Communion are invited to participate.

This is a parish-based process where we help you through a process of guided reflection on a weekly basis by meetings in the church.

Enrolment form, payment arrangements and other information is available on our website, at the back of the church or the parish office. Enrolment forms must be returned to the parish office prior to the first Parent Information Meeting.

Important Dates:

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

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



BIGGEST MORNING TEA: Please save this date: Friday 17th May from 10:30 am for Australia's Biggest Morning Tea conducted by the STA Ladies Fellowship. This will be held in the Parish Centre. It was a great social success last year for Parishioners attending as well as raising funds for a worthy cause - the CANCER COUNCIL of Australia. We all know someone who has been effected by cancer. Hope to see you there! For catering purposes please RSVP to Colleen Kime - 0407 125 427

25TH ANNIVERSARY TRIVIA NIGHT: An invitation from Springwood East Timor Support Group to join an evening of fun on Saturday 18th May at St Thomas Aquinas School Hall, 168 Hawkesbury Rd, Springwood 7pm for a 7:30pm start. Please see STA Notice Board for more details.

BISHOP'S GOOD SHEPHERD APPEAL: Thank you St Thomas Aquinas parish for playing an important role in preparing priests who are ready to meet the diverse spiritual and pastoral needs of our faith community. Our Bishop's Good Shepherd Appeal raised over \$350. Bishop Vincent, Parramatta Catholic Foundation and our Holy Spirit Seminarians thank you.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA: Thank you to our wonderful parish community for your incredible support towards Caritas Australia. Our parish has forwarded on an astonishing \$4,013.85 to Caritas. Together, we have helped vulnerable communities grow stronger and to face their challenges today to build a better tomorrow. Exceptional St Thomas Aquinas Parish. Absolutely exceptional!



SYNOD 2023 UPDATE - LOCAL THINK TANK

SESSIONS: Parishes and other local faith communities across the diocese are holding local Think Tank Sessions, giving local leaders and anyone involved in ministry to offer feedback on the Draft of the Diocesan Plan for a Synodal Church and contribute ideas for the practical implementation of our Diocesan Plan. Six Synod themes will be the focus of six local sessions. Penrith Parish has been assigned Theme 5: A Church that Reaches to the Margins to be held on Wednesday 29th May, 6:30pm - 9pm. Anyone interested in the local Think Tank Sessions may visit: <https://parracatholic.org/thinktanks> or parracatholic.org/synod for more information.