

The Ascension of the Lord, Year A

21 May 2023

First Reading

Acts 1:1-11

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.'

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 46:2-3. 6-9. R. v.6

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

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.)**

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.)**

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

Eph 1:17-23

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.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt 28:19, 20

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Mt 28:16-20

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ 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.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.



**REFLECTION
BY FR MICHAEL TATE**

Where is the Body?

Our Risen Lord Jesus Christ could have continued to appear to groups of followers, century after century – until now!

But, he didn't, because the disciples had to be weaned of his Risen-mode of appearance among them lest they think that the victory over Death is meant for human beings alone.

But, as St Paul says, the Risen Lord is the One who 'fills all creation' with His power radiating out from his Risen Humanity.

However, disappearance is not the same as absence. We believe that Our Risen Lord is present in many modes, including as St Paul says '... the Church which is His Body'.

That is why the figures in white rebuke the disciples: 'Why do you stand looking into Heaven?'

The Disciples had, rather, to ready themselves to be the Spirit-filled body of Jesus Christ in their own time and place. As we do.

We might pause for a moment to stop staring into Heaven, to ready ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost in order to be 'The Church which is His Body.'

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ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens? This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven will return as you saw him go, alleluia.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, alleluia.

NEXT WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Pentecost – Year A

1st Reading: Acts 2:1-11

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13

Gospel: Jn 20:19-23

MYSTERY OF FAITH

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free

Parish Contacts

Parish Priest	Rev Thomas Chirackal	Presbytery: 6578 9651	Email: Thomas.chirackal@mn.catholic.org.au
Parish Secretary	Mrs Erica Janssen	Parish Office: 02 5507 4048 (Tues-Fri, 9am-3pm) Unit 5, 16 Cambridge St, Singleton	Email: singleton.branxton@mn.catholic.org.au Web: www.singletoncatholicparish.org.au
Facebook	Catholic Parishes of Singleton and Branxton		YouTube Twitter singletonbranxton @parish_sb
PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Singleton	<i>St Patrick's Church</i>	Queen Street Singleton 2330	Contact: 02 5507 4048
Broke	<i>Immaculate Conception Catholic Church</i>	Wollombi Street, Broke	Contact: 0407 488 872 or 0458 626 299
Glendon Brook	<i>St. Paul's Catholic Church</i>	874 Glendonbrook Road, Glendon Brook	Contact: 6577 6168
PLEASE PHONE THE PARISH OFFICE FOR BOOKINGS OF PARISH CHURCHES (5507 4048)			
Branxton	St Brigid's Catholic Church	Station St, Branxton 2335	Contact: 0407 381 525
Greta	St Catherine's Catholic Church	Branxton Street, Greta 2334	Contact: 0428 485 025

Schools in our Parishes

St. Catherine's Catholic College	Principal: Mrs Niamh Marzol	K-12 Office: 02 6578 9600	Email: admin@singleton.catholic.edu.au
Rosary Park Catholic School	Principal: Miss Sallyanne Stanbridge	K-6 Office: 02 4938 1541	Email: admin@branxton.mn.catholic.edu.au
St Nicholas Early Education Singleton	Director: Ms Madison Keevill	Office: 02 4015 2860	Email: singleton@stnicholasmn.org.au
St Nicholas Early Education Branxton	Director: Ms Alex Stafford	Office: 02 4931 1220	Email: branxton@stnicholasmn.org.au

MASS ROSTER - SUNDAY 28 MAY 2023

	Branxton Saturday 6pm	Greta Sunday 8am	Singleton Sunday 7am	Singleton Sunday 10am	Singleton Sunday 5pm	Counters 9.30am Tuesday
Welcomer	E Bendeich	D & J Clarke	C Crow	J Dries		J Woolley
Commentator		M Ingold	G Cattermole			
Readers	M Thomas C Harvey	D Lerch	H Ruigrok S Bates	R James D Cantrall	H Rapp O Brackenrig C Brackenrig	
Prayers		M Ingold	E Thomas	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	A Skardon	<i>Welcomers are required each week.</i>
Offertory	K Jones K Jones	G Wilton	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
Rosary Leader		D Clarke				

Faithful and compassionate God, your Spirit guides the Church and makes it holy; hear the prayers we offer, that in the ministry to which you have called us, may we serve you faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Weekly Mass Diary

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
22 May <i>St Rita of Cascia</i>	23 May	24 May <i>Our Lady, Help of Christians, Patron of Australia</i>	25 May <i>St Bede the Venerable, St Gregory VII, St Mary Magdalene</i>	26 May <i>St Philip Neri</i>	27 May <i>St Augustine of Canterbury</i>	28 May PENTECOST SUNDAY, YEAR A
OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE CLOSED	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN	OFFICE OPEN		
<u>8.00am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton	<u>9.20am</u> Anointing Mass St Patrick's Singleton <u>9.20am</u> Mass Elizabeth Gates	<u>9.00am</u> Novena <u>9.20am</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton <u>5.00pm</u> SCAE Glendonbrook	<u>7.00am</u> Mass <u>10.00am</u> Mass <u>5.00pm</u> Mass St Patrick's Singleton
	<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta		<u>9.20am</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton		<u>6.00pm</u> Mass St Brigid's Branxton	<u>7.35am</u> Rosary <u>8.15am</u> Mass St Catherine's Greta

St Brigid, St Catherine, St Patrick, and St Paul – pray for us

Prayer Requests

Sick: Otis Cowburn, Cathy Dunn (Goulburn), Eleanor Gilfillan, Austin Hoffman, Mary-Rose Hopkins, Warren Markham, Harrison McLachlan, John Ottery, Jen Phillips, Gary Wills and Sharon Wood. **Bring healing, comfort, and peace to their bodies. Send strength to their carers**

Anniversaries: Lyn Karpel and Nell Meyn. **Having returned to the Father may they rest in peace.**

Recently Deceased: John Ferguson. **May they rest in peace and light perpetual shine upon them.**

Baptisms: Fraser Lobb and Nina Mann (Singleton). **Called by name to be a child of God.**

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK LIST WILL BE CLEARED ON 26 MAY – CONTACT OFFICE FOR NAME TO REMAIN ON LIST

Due to Privacy Laws, names of the sick and deceased can only be put in the bulletin with the permission of the immediate family.

Weekly Notices

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

We welcome visitors from all faith communities to our Parish Mass. If you are new members of our Parish, we ask that you take a Welcome Pack from the back of the church, complete and return the Member forms and one of our welcoming team will contact you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Wonnarua people, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

We acknowledge the lifelong trauma of abuse victims, survivors and their families, the failures of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond justly to children and vulnerable adults, and the consequent breach of trust.

Bulletin Changes

Parish Office Days will now be shown in the Weekly Mass Diary on page 2 of the bulletin. The **Mystery of Faith** to be used for the Sunday Mass will be shown under Next Week's Readings on page 2.

Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who made the bishop's visit to Branxton Parish very welcoming last weekend. He was very happy to have had time to meet everyone in Branxton and Greta.

Sacrament of Initiation: Confirmation

Candidates in both parishes will be attending formation sessions over the next few weeks in readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. **You are invited** to join the celebration with the candidate's family and friends in Branxton on **Friday 2 June at 6pm** and in Singleton on **Friday 9 June at 6.30pm**. Bishop Michael Kennedy will be conferring the sacrament at both liturgies.

The Singleton Sacramental Team is looking for musicians who are available to play at the liturgy. Please contact Leanne O'Brien or the Parish office if you can assist.

Bishop Visit to Singleton Parish

Singleton Parishioners are encouraged to mark their diaries for a visit from Bishop Michael Kennedy over the weekend of **9/10/11 June 2023**. Parishioners are invited to join the bishop for lunch on **Sunday 11 June** at Club Singleton. Please place your name on the sheet on the noticeboard by Sunday 4 June for booking purposes.

Parish Councils

If you are interested in joining the *Parish Pastoral Council* or the *Parish Finance Council*, please speak with Fr Thomas for more information and to register your interest.

Australia's Biggest Morning Tea - Greta

The Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea will be held in the Parish Room at St. Catherine's, Greta this **Sunday 21 May 2023** commencing at 9.00am (after 8.00am Mass).

This is a fundraiser for Cancer Council's vital research, prevention and support service programs. Entry is via a donation at the door. Everyone is asked to bring a plate to share for morning tea. For more information, please contact Joy Clarke on 0439 381 372.

St Brigid's Caritas Monthly Lunch

St. Brigid's Caritas Group will this year celebrate 30 years of being active in the Parish. Please join us for lunch on **Friday 23 June 2023** for 12pm at Miller Park. All welcome. If you wish to attend phone Mercia 0447 819 889.

MacKillop Place Pilgrimage

This year's pilgrimage to Mary MacKillop Place will be on **Friday 21 July 2023**. Bus will leave Branxton at 6.15am picking up at Greta/Lochinvar/Rutherford/East Maitland. Cost will be \$60 which includes bus and museum tour and upgraded morning tea lunch at North Ryde RSL. Fr Thomas will be joining the pilgrimage and will say Mass in the chapel. Bus will leave Sydney at 3pm. All are welcome! Contact Mercia on 0447 819 889 to book your spot and names and money to be finalised by **6 July 2023**.

Foreign Currency in Collections

Any donation to the collections at Mass and votive candles is very welcome. However, the parish is not able to exchange small foreign currency notes and coins. Please keep these for your next trip or your collection.

Offertory Roster Volunteers

Now that restrictions have ceased, the rosters need to be filled with volunteers to bring the Offertory gifts forward during Mass. If you would like to fill this ministry in Singleton, please place your name on the roster on the noticeboard. In Branxton, please speak with Mercia or Sue and in Greta please speak with Lydia. St Patrick's rosters also have some ministries that need volunteers. Please see the rosters and place your name in the vacant spots.

Mission: Transform Lives – Palms Australia

Communities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific are seeking Australians from a variety of professions and trades to share their skills and knowledge with those who have few other chances for training. Build enduring global relationships while assisting sustainable, self-reliant, community development.

Explore 35 positions by visiting: www.palms.org.au/current-opportunities/ On our website you can also see news including stories from those currently supported in Timor-Leste, Samoa, American Samoa and Thailand. For more information, call 02 9560 5333 or 0422 472 567 or visit www.palms.org.au.

National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week

May 26 marks **National Sorry Day**, remembering and acknowledging the hurt and trauma of the Stolen Generation, those forcibly removed from their families and communities. We observe National Sorry Day on the anniversary of the 1997 Bringing Them Home report, which exposed the racist history of government policy that enabled children to be removed from their families. Since the inaugural National Sorry Day some progress has been made, notably then-prime minister Kevin Rudd delivering a National Apology, however Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children still remain 10.6 times more likely than non-indigenous children to be removed from their family. Following National Sorry Day, we observe National Reconciliation Week, from 27 May – 3 June; an opportunity for Australians to take part in the process of reconciliation.

"In true reconciliation, through the remembering, the grieving and the healing we can come to terms with our conscience and become as one in the dreaming of this land." Dr Evelyn Scott, Chairperson. Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1997.

Sorry Day Webinar

Caritas Australia is pleased to invite your parish community to our Sorry Day Webinar with survivors from Kinchela Boys Home, one of the most notorious institutions associated with the Stolen Generations. In this special event, you will hear from Uncle Widdy (#36) and Uncle Bobby (#24), two survivors of Kinchela Boys Home. Caritas Australia's First Australians Programs team will also speak about what truth-telling and intergenerational healing means to our partners. The webinar will be held on Thursday 25 May from 11am-12pm via zoom. To register go to www.caritas.org.au/sorry-day-webinar

Our Lady Help of Christians, 24 May

The feast day to Mary Help of Christians has been celebrated in Australia since 1844 but the history to this day dates back to the start of the 1800's. Napoleon Bonaparte had jailed Pius VI who died in jail. When Pope Pius VII was elected, he too was jailed by Bonaparte, who kept him prisoner at Fontainebleau. The Holy Father vowed to God that if he were restored to the Roman See, he would institute a special feast in honour of Mary. The military eventually forced Bonaparte to release the Pope and on 24 May 1814, Pius VII returned in triumph to Rome. Twelve months later the Pope decreed that the feast of Mary Help of Christians be kept on 24 May.

The infant church in Australia had a special reason for turning to Mary. No priests were sent to the colony in its early days and Mass was not allowed except for one brief year until 1820. It was largely the Rosary in those early days that kept the faith alive. Catholic Australia remained faithful to Mary and was the first nation to choose her under the title Help of Christians, as principal Patroness. St Mary's Cathedral was dedicated in her honour by the Irish pioneer priest, Fr John Therry, who arrived in Sydney in 1820 and assumed responsibility for the planning and initial construction of the Cathedral. When Australia became the first country to have Mary Help of Christians as Patroness, it became the first country to have a mother-cathedral under the same title.

Mary Help of Christians patroness of Australia and of the Military Ordinariate

*Almighty God, deepen in our hearts
our love of Mary Help of Christians.
Through her prayers and under her
protection, may the light of Christ
shine over our land.*

*May Australia be granted harmony,
justice and peace.*

*Grant wisdom to our leaders and
integrity to our citizens.*

*Bless especially the men and women
of the Australian Defence Force and
their families.*

*We ask this through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.*

Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.



Hope Tree Project 13 – Playground for Anugraha School

Anugraha special school for the mentally challenged was started in 2000. The school is managed by Sangli Mission Society of MST Missionaries. The name Anugraha means Blessing.

The school is situated in a remote village named Khed, in the state of Maharashtra, India. After a survey in the area in 2000, it was found that there are many mentally challenged children who have no access to education or other services.

It was after the findings of this survey that the Sangli mission society decided to open the school to serve these children. At present there are 55 students at the school. Students are given training in ADL (activities of daily living), physiotherapy, speech therapy etc.

Students are from poor families, so they are only able to contribute very little towards the fees. The school relies on donations from benefactors to continue teaching the students and stay open. They do not receive any government grants towards running of the school.

The first principal of the school was Sr Rosebel. In 2001 she put up a playground for the students. After serving the school for about 15 years she was transferred to another school in Kerala state. Now she has come back to the school and found all the play equipment for the children in a dilapidated condition. She wants to repair and make a better playground for the students.

The cost to replace the existing equipment will total \$3500 AUD. Huge thank you to **St Catherine's Catholic College, Singleton** who have already raised \$1256.85 from out of uniform days at the school. This leaves a balance of \$2243.15. Sr Rosebel is so grateful for any assistance that can be given.

Our Hope Tree Group donation boxes will be out at Mass this weekend and next to take any donations you may wish to give towards this project. Last weekend a further \$200 was added to this Project including \$100 from the Legion of Mary in Greta.

