

CARERS INSPIRED BY THE ASCENSION & PENTECOST

The Ascension - Seventh Sunday of Easter – 21 May 2023



A SPECIAL WELCOME TO NINA

Good morning Nina,
on this very special and joyful day in your life,
Margaret as your catechist, will present you to the parish community
and Lawrie as your sponsor, will speak of your faith journey.

DESCRIBING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We begin the homily with a quote from India, from a group of Sisters,
who have the courage and commitment to make a difference.
Facing such an enormous challenge, they know that they are not alone.
Their journey with Jesus.

The Congregation of Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross describe the Kingdom of God:
“The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of human rights, justice, equality, dignity, compassion
and peace for all. Today, we are called upon to build His Kingdom, and especially ‘to set at
liberty those who are oppressed’ and ‘to preach good news to the poor’ (cf. Lk 4:18). In this
world of tragic and complex human abuse of women and children, particularly from
vulnerable classes, trafficking of women and children is an obscene affront to their dignity
and rights”.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-05/sisters-project-mercy-holy-cross-india-human-trafficking.html>

TEN DAYS BETWEEN ASCENSION AND PENTECOST – PREPARING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

After three years of learning from Jesus, Jesus ascended into heaven.

We could describe the **ten days of waiting** for the early disciples,
between the Ascension of Jesus Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost,

- As a ten day prayer retreat as they adjusted to a new reality.
- As ten days of questioning, of evaluation, of searching,
- As ten days of growing realization of their mission to make a difference
- As ten days of preparing for an incredible gift that would make it possible
to call upon God, not only in Israel, but throughout the world.

Like the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross in India, or ourselves in Australia, we realize that it is the Holy Spirit that leads us, and shows us how to make a difference. At this time in May, we celebrate making a difference

- for the earth, this Laudato Si' Week.
- for humanity, this National Volunteers Week.
- as well follow on from the Brisbane Archdiocesan Summit that concluded yesterday

LAUDATO SI' WEEK

The Vatican suggests that during Laudato Si' Week, we use the Guide available on this link: <https://www.humandevlopment.va/content/dam/sviluppoumano/news/2023-news/2023-booklet-sei/booklet/EN-20p-Our-Common-Home-SEI-Vatican-20221128.pdf>

It is called '*Our common home A guide to caring for our living planet*'.

In the introduction, it states that the Guide

"is inspired by Pope Francis' second encyclical, Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home, which explores our ecological crisis and its roots in over-consumption and current models of economic development. These questions are a priority for Pope Francis, the Catholic Church and all believers, the scientific community, and all citizens, as we answer the call to protect and regenerate our common home."

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK

Recently I read a small book '**The Salt of the Earth**' by Thom Blake about the work of the volunteer members of the Red Hill Sacred Heart St Vincent De Paul Conference. Over the generations they have cared for people through the Depression of the early 1890s during which eight of the eleven Queensland –owned banks closed, and the Great Depression 1929-1934, several major floods, two pandemics, two world wars, and other times of poverty and unemployment. Their story is inspiring.

Assisting them over several years was a committed group of volunteers in the local Sewing Guild.

We acknowledge and pray today for **all volunteers** as community change-makers

- in our parish family
- and more than 10,000 volunteers across the Brisbane Archdiocese

We thank you for your inspiration, dedication and care.

May God bless you abundantly.

THE ASCENSION

In Australia, Ascension Thursday is not a public holiday, and it can be difficult for people on a workday to get to Mass.

So we reduce the ten days from Ascension Thursday to Pentecost, to seven days from the Sunday after the Ascension to Pentecost Sunday)

This Ascension Celebration, we remember that when Jesus ascended to heaven,

- He had already prepared the disciples,
- He commissioned them
- He told them to look for the signs and
- He promised the Holy Spirit would come to them.

BAPTISM

Nina, you have prepared during your enquiry time and during the catechumenate. You have prayed and journeyed with Jesus who calls you. Today you will be baptised during this Sunday 7.30am Mass, your regular weekly Mass. You will be baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. You will profess your faith, not alone, but with the parish members present. You will be anointed with the Oil of Chrism, after receiving the blessing of your senses at Easter. You will receive the Light of Christ into your Life.

CONFIRMATION

After being baptised at the baptismal font at the entrance to your church, you will be called forward to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Your sponsor will accompany you as you walk up the centre aisle, supported by the community on your left and on your right.

We look briefly at what the Word of God shares this weekend. From today's first reading in **Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11** you heard that during the forty days between Easter and his Ascension, Jesus 'continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God.' Before he ascended, Jesus promised the apostles: '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.'

Nina,

- you are called to be open to the gift of the Holy Spirit,
- to share with others about the Kingdom of God
- and to be a witness to Jesus Christ wherever you go.

In today's second reading, **Ephesians 1:17-23**, we remember that St Paul prayed for the disciples, that God

- would give them 'a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed,'
- would enlighten the eyes of their minds,
- would enable them to know "the strength of his power at work in Christ"

In today's **Gospel of Matthew 28:16-20**, you learnt of the great command of Jesus. Jesus said to the eleven disciples gathered on a mountain in Galilee, and to his disciples today throughout the world '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 commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

Today Nina, you acknowledge your mission as a disciple and friend of Jesus Christ and that Jesus Christ is with you always, yes to the end of time.

EUCCHARIST

Today we celebrate the *180th anniversary of weekly Eucharist in Queensland*, beginning at Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island) in May, and in Brisbane later in that year.

We celebrate in words, song and action, the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Nina, you will receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

There are three sacraments of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Blessed by God, you will never be alone. God will be with you, Nina, forever.

Let us pray ‘[A prayer for our earth](#)’ provided by Pope Francis in **Laudato Si’** (246)

“All-powerful God,

you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as siblings, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. “

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/052123-Ascension.cfm>

Pope Francis ‘Laudato Si’ – On Care for Our Common Home’ <https://bit.ly/FrancisLS2015>