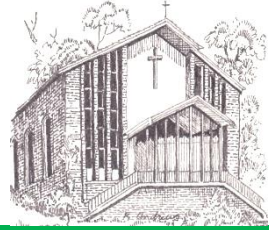




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



26 / 27 OCTOBER 2019
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C
CATECHISTS SUNDAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Today's first reading and the Responsorial Psalm which is a reflection upon it reminds us of the fact that the best of what we have in our judicial system has its roots in the Jewish culture which recognises God as a God of justice who hears the cry of the poor. We also have the example and teaching of Jesus who frequently castigated injustice and who demanded of his followers that we love one another. But we must remain ever vigilant, for those with power can and do distort the system to ensure that it serves their interests. Government, instead of fulfilling its primary role, which is to organise society in a way that protects justice, is in danger of defaulting on this obligation and using its considerable power to protect the rich against the poor.

Today's readings have a lot to say to those of us in positions of power in society, but it has a lot to say to all of us. Just public institutions are among the most important fruits of a just community. We all have to learn to be just in all our dealings, and today's readings offer us some key reflections.

God's judgment is always true, that is, it is always in accordance with the way things really are. Since God is love, God's judgment is always faithful to love; it is always merciful. This is the key theme of the readings of today's Mass. We might be able to deceive ourselves, and we might be able to deceive others. We cannot deceive God. Because God is love God sees with the eyes of love. But love neither distorts nor lies. God sees us exactly as we really are. God sees us from the inside. God knows our hearts.

Our faith tells us that, even if we manage to avoid the consequences of our sinful behaviour here on earth, we have to stand before God who sees who we really are and what we have really done. God does not punish. God simply acknowledges the truth. What we call 'punishment' is the necessarily negative effects of our negative behaviour. The ultimately disastrous effect of our sinful behaviour is what we call hell. Let us not pretend that there is no hell. It is clearly taught by Jesus and by the whole tradition of the Church. At the same time let us not think of it as some kind of punishment arbitrarily inflicted on a sinner by a vengeful God. A lot of people have an image like this and they wonder how a merciful God could possibly send anyone to hell. God does not send to hell. Hell is where we decide to be when we refuse God's love and persist in behaviour that is destructive of others and is self-destructive. The Catholic Catechism is clear: 'To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from God for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell"'(n.1033).

Pharisaism





Most imagine hell as a fire. It is important to realise that this is only an image. The reality is that we choose not to be in communion with God, and a God of love cannot force us to change. Love respects freedom, however stupidly and destructively we exercise it. God's judgment is simply the recognition by God of the truth of our determined and obstinate will. Hell is something we choose. We can choose it here, where we can hide behind distractions or blame others. After death there will be nothing to hide behind. The experience of hell is the experience of absolute frustration of being for ever separate from the source of life and love and from the life of the blessed. We can think of nothing worse. No image of pain could capture the awfulness of such a condition.



But God is not cruel. God will remain loving for all eternity. We think of the father of the prodigal son, unable to drag the boy home, and waiting in love for any sign of his return. Here on earth there is always hope of repentance. Death sets a seal upon our choices, so let us not put off our response to grace till it is too late.

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector speaks so clearly to us that it needs little commentary. We can recognise the deep implications Luke saw in this story, when we situate it within the compilation made by the evangelist – that we have followed during the past weeks. As Jesus courageously takes the road to meet his fate, he is giving his final instructions to the disciples he will leave behind. Faith, he has taught them is an obedient openness to God's coming in their lives, and to the plan of God about to reach its moment of climax. Their prayer should be the living expression of this faith, teaching them to trust in the Father who will show his care for them – whatever the difficulties they may have to face. In the end they should see themselves as God's 'unprofitable servants'. Today's short parable sums up what his teaching should have brought home to them – in a few words, everything depends, in the end, not on our own efforts, but upon the grace and mercy of God. It is this outlook that has shaped the lives of the outstanding disciples of Jesus, one after the other, down through the ages.

The Pharisees are a tragic group in the gospel story. Theirs was a movement of popular piety that aimed to promote a revival of Israel's traditions. Many of them were honourable; and not a few found faith in Christ. This parable, however, highlights the issue that brought some of them into conflict with Jesus. These people thought they were 'at rights with God', and faithful to the God of the covenant, through their strict observance of the externals of the Law's requirements. Luke has already described Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees for preferring external observance to 'justice and the love of God' (11:42), and for a love of money that had no thought for almsgiving (16:14). The Pharisee in the story is pleased with himself, because he does more than the Law requires in his fasting and the tithes he gives. He brings these practices of his to the Lord, as establishing his claim on God's favour. His spirit of self-sufficiency is echoed ironically in the telling of the story – in his prayer, he is speaking 'to himself'.

The only attitude on our part, that opens a genuine meeting with God, is one of humility. We should stand naked before the Lord, aware that there is nothing we can bring to God that is not, in the first place, his gift. All that we bring before him that is truly our own is our sinfulness. The tax collector, on the other hand, 'went home at rights with God' because of the humble confession that made up his prayer. The generous mercy of God is emphasised by the fact that a repentant tax collector would probably bring before God an impossible situation, as far as recompense was concerned. Despised by his people for being the agent of the occupying power, and constantly tempted to take advantage of his position by defrauding the people, he was bound to make restitution of the amount unjustly taken, plus twenty per cent.

CATECHISTS: PROVIDING SRE IN OUR STATE SCHOOLS

Catechists are parishioners who volunteer to provide Catholic students and their families with Special Religious Education that is centred around an encounter with Jesus through prayer, Christian moral and ethical teaching, rich religious tradition and practice, and a holistic approach to life and faith. In New South Wales religious education is mandated by the Education Act (1990) which gives approved Church authorities, and those they authorise, permission to teach what is called 'Special Religious Education' [SRE] to children in government schools. Parents of these children give permission for them to join a religious group each week for what is often called "Scripture". The Catholic Church sees the education of Catholic children in the Faith as integral and key to its mission. The NSW Department of Education describes SRE "as an integral part of school activities." SRE can be seen then, as part of "a well-rounded education that values and supports the intellectual, creative, physical, social and emotional development of each child." Catechists come from all walks of life but share the common mission of providing Catholic religious instruction for Catholic children in State Schools.



SRE classes are provided for 30 minutes each week during most of each school term. Encouraging children and young people to develop a relationship with Jesus is a key part of Catholic SRE. The curriculums used by Catholic SRE teachers (Catechists) aim to help children and young people make moral choices that are life-giving for themselves and others. Through the exploration of the teachings of Jesus and the stories in the Christian Scriptures, and by encouraging students to pray, Catholic SRE aims to provide children and young people with a framework to help them make choices that recognise the value and importance of our relationship with God, others and our world.

SRE teachers and assistants (Catechists) are provided with training and resources. **Thank you to all our local Catechists. If you can help, please contact our Parish Office.**

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 – DISCERNMENT STAGE

This is a process of communal discernment in which we pray, reflect, share, think nationally, think locally and respond with proposals for action will take place across three of the Northern Suburbs Parishes over the next few months. You are invited to read about the national themes for discernment, prayerfully contemplate them, and then come to one or more of the sessions across our parishes. Each session has a cut-off date for registrations to allow the Animators time to distribute materials and prepare.

Session times and dates are below. How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is ↻:

	↻ 2:00pm ↻	↻ 7:30pm ↻	at	↻ Register by ↻
inclusive, participatory, synodal	Saturday, 9 Nov	Monday, 11 Nov	Corrimal	Sunday, 27 Oct
prayerful and Eucharistic	Saturday, 23 Nov	Monday, 25 Nov	Bulli	Sunday, 10 Nov
joyful, hope-filled, servant	Saturday, 30 Nov	Monday, 2 Dec	Thirroul	Sunday, 17 Nov

Sign-up sheets are in the church ... sign up to make practical suggestions.

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA**

THANK YOU TO MONSIGNOR DAVID O'BRIEN

Thank you to Monsignor David O'Brien and to Andrew Granc ofm who have been filling in for Ken who is away until 30 October.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Weekend 26-27 Oct Catechists Sunday
Monday 28 Oct Sts Simon and Jude, apostles
Tuesday 29 Oct 3:45pm, Class for 1st Penance
Wednesday 30 Oct 7:00pm, First Penance

THURSDAY 31 OCT HALLOWEEN

Friday 1 Nov All Saints Day – Mass at 9:30am
Saturday 2 Nov All Souls Day – Mass at 9:00am



ALL SAINTS DAY – ALL SOULS DAY

All Saints Day is on Friday, 1 November and Mass will be at 9:30am. All Souls Day is on Saturday, 2 November and there will be a special Mass at 9am on next Saturday, 2 November. All during November, we will pray for the dead, especially those in our Book of the Dead.

SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Our surfing season is well underway and runs until 26 April 2020! Please be safe on our beaches and waterways. So far, since 1 July, there have already been **176** rescues! Last season there were **122** coastal and ocean drowning deaths in Australia, and **10,176** rescues by surf lifesavers. Be safe!



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE ANNUAL MASS

Thirrour Catholic Women's League – we will be celebrating our 55th Anniversary on Wednesday, 6 November, with Mass at 10:30am, followed by a luncheon at Thirrour Bowling Club at 12 noon. All are welcome to join us! Cost \$30. Bookings/enquiries/payment to Lucy 4268 5405 or Maureen 0438 674 997 by 30 October. Thank you to our CWL!

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading Exodus 17:8-13
2nd Reading 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2
Gospel Luke 18:1-8

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading Sirach 35:12-14,16-19
2nd Reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8
Gospel Luke 18:9-14

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirrour
 Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am
Bulli • Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm
Corrimal • Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Wombarra [Liturgy] Monday 4:30pm
Thirrour Tuesday 5:30pm
Wednesday 9:00am
Thursday 9:00am
Friday 9:30am

Parish of St Michael – Thirrour and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive
 4268 1910 4268 1976

PO Box 44 • Thirrour 2515

thirrour@dow.org.au

Parish Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires
10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic

www.thirrourcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael 4267 2560