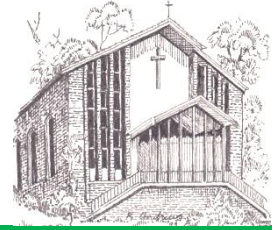




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



2 / 3 NOVEMBER 2019
31ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C
NATIONAL PRAYER FOR RAIN

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Up the Tree

Our universe is so tiny. Wait! It cannot be tiny. The Hubble telescope tells us just the opposite, how terribly vast the universe is. There could be billions of galaxies just like our Milky Way out there. And get this – each one contains literally millions or even trillions of stars.

A billion billions of stars! The universe is tiny?

Ok, but the first reading says, “the whole world is like a speck that tips the scales, and like a drop of morning dew that falls on the ground.” That writer had never looked through the Hubble telescope!



Is the universe large or small? Imagine this – picture an old-fashioned weighing scale (called a “balance” in the old days). It has pans on either side. Now add just a single grain of sand to one of the pans. Does the scale move? No. Now add the vast totality of all that exists (in other words, the entire universe) on one side, but place God on the other side with the one grain of sand.

They balance. Or maybe God does outweigh this universe, big time. Get ready for the worst part. Lodged within this miniscule universe are all of us. We are the size of microbes. Impossible that so huge a God could, or actually would, love microorganisms like us. We are smaller than small. Too small to make any difference whatsoever.

Alright, but don't be discouraged. The greatest surprise in the universe is waiting for us. The first reading reveals it, as it talks to God: “You love all things that exist, and detest none of the things you have made, for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living. For your immortal spirit is in all things.”

God's immortal spirit is in each grain of dust and each one is beloved to God. All of us are beloved to God. We are cherished by the “Lord and lover of the living.”

Let us bring this lesson down to earth. Look at Zacchaeus in Sunday's Gospel. Notice that he was small of stature, just like each of us is in our own way. But he was so small he had to climb a tree in order to see over the crowd to Jesus. Jesus laughed as he noticed Zacchaeus up in the tree. Laughed out loud! Then he said, in effect, “Zacchaeus, you are up a tree! Come down quickly. I want to have dinner in your house tonight. We don't want to dine out here on a tree branch!”

Zacchaeus is not a man who “lives right and does right.” He is a tax-collector, selfish and held in bad repute. Does God therefore withhold love and grace from him? No. ↗ ↘

🔗🔗 The Christ of God comes in person to his door and waits patiently for him to scramble down the tree. Christ wants to love the man's goodness into existence. Are we bold enough to have the master of the universe over to dinner? Even though our clothes may be torn and dirty? Even small and unworthy as we are?

Let us try it. God loves very well everything God has created. And the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the least specks in the universe – us.

The story of the rich tax collector, converted when Jesus visited him, is found in Luke's gospel alone. He makes it part of the Saviour's instructions on his way to Jerusalem – together with stories about the teaching of Jesus on faith and prayer, other stories about his receiving of outcasts, and his advice concerning this world's possessions. In a sense, all these themes are brought together in this incident so well described in today's reading.

Zacchaeus may have been small in stature, but he was a man of substance – a centre of attention, as he 'made his appearance'. As a senior tax collector, who presided over the collection of tolls and taxes in Jericho, an important centre because it was on the junction of two trade routes, Zacchaeus would have been a man of considerable wealth. The attention he attracted would certainly not have been friendly. His undignified ascent into the branches of a tree to be able to see Jesus over the heads of the crowd would have provoked amusement. But the incident gives us an insight into the forthright character of Zacchaeus – qualities that contributed, no doubt, to his worldly success. The attitude he displays in his encounter with Jesus also makes it clear that, for all his success, he is looking for more from life than the wealth he has accumulated. Drawn by what he has heard of the



Jesus Seeks a Sinful Man that Seeks After Him

Luke 19:1-10

**Jesus came
to save
sinners.**

teacher from Nazareth, he disregards the amusement of the crowd and climbs the tree to see for himself. When Jesus calls him down in order to visit his house, his reactions are wholehearted and generous, 'he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully'.

Zacchaeus is like so many people today who – though they are confused – are not far, in their generous outlook, from the kingdom of God. Those, on the other hand, who 'complain' that the Saviour has 'gone to stay at a sinner's house', are like the righteous who do not understand the generous mercy of God, and do not know how to reach out to those in need. With Jesus at his side, the forthright little tax official confounds his critics; he 'stands his ground', Luke tells us, and amazes the whole town by the generosity of the conversion to which he has been led by the words of Jesus. He is prepared to renounce his wealthy status, by giving half of his riches to the poor, and by repaying fourfold what he has gained unjustly by taking advantage of his position.

'Today', Jesus said, 'salvation has come to this house'. There are moments of grace in the lives of all of us, moments we shall never regret, if we respond trustingly and generously to the call of God. In his concern for the outcasts – stressed in the readings we have had from Luke's gospel in recent weeks – Jesus was giving expression to the true faith of old Israel, forgotten by so many of his contemporaries, and calling them back to that faith: clearly expressed in today's first reading from Wisdom. God loves all those God has brought into existence; if God 'corrects' and 'admonishes' it is that, as a 'lover, of life', the Lord may 'spare all'. All of this raises an issue which is at the heart of our Lord's ministry, and which is the key to his rejection as well. Jesus makes it clear that he has come to save sinners, including the Gentiles – the non-Jews.

RESULTS OF PARISH SURVEY

Thank you to all those parishioners who completed the recent parish survey. The Parish Pastoral Council has decided to trial the following activities. Starting on Saturday, 9 November, an informal gathering for dinner at the Thirroul Bowling Club will be held following the Saturday evening Mass on the 2nd Saturday of each month. No need to book, just turn up. Further adult faith formation sessions from Ken and Andrew will take place after Lent/Easter in 2020. There will be a parish picnic, probably in autumn 2020. The Parish Ladies' Dinner will also be held in 2020.



NEWMAN LECTURE, SATURDAY, 9 NOVEMBER, 6:30PM

Bulli Knights of the Southern Cross welcome all to the annual Newman Lecture to be held at the Railway Institute Hall, Thirroul. Guest speaker is Fr Frank Moloney SDB, renowned scripture scholar. Topic: "Contemporary Discipleship." Cost \$30, includes a two-course meal. BYO. Tickets Paul Tuckerman ☎ 4267 2535.

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 ☩
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.

BOOK OF THE DEAD

All during November we remember especially those who have died: our relatives, friends and those who have no one to pray for them. If you would like the name of someone who has died placed in the Book of the Dead, there are special forms available next to the baptism font in the church. Please complete them and put them on any of the collection baskets and the name will be added after November. May they rest in peace.

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

NATIONAL PRAYER CAMPAIGN FOR THE GIFT OF RAIN

The faithful across Australia are encouraged to pray for the gift of rain, for people affected by the drought and to provide practical support, where possible. The Australian bishops note that large parts of the country are directly affected by the drought, but the impact is national—and so should the response be national. For access to prayer resources and links to donate to the Diocese of Bathurst Drought Appeal and the Vinnies NSW Drought Appeal, visit: www.catholic.org.au/drought See the next page for the special prayer for rain and for those affected by the drought.

Maureen Franciskovic is on holidays in November, returning Friday, 6 December.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday 4 Nov St Charles Borromeo, bishop
 Tuesday 5 Nov Melbourne Cup
 Wednesday 6 Nov 10:30am CWL Mass [no 9am Mass]
 Saturday 9 Nov Dedication of the Lateran Basilica



6:30pm .. Informal dinner at Thirroul Bowling Club

Monday 11 Nov 10:30am Remembrance Day Service at Thirroul Cenotaph
 Tuesday 12 Nov 3:45pm Class #1 for First Communion

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 **334** rescues! Last season there were **122** coastal and ocean drowning deaths in Australia, and **10,176** rescues by surf lifesavers. **Be safe!**



PRAYER FOR RAIN AND THOSE AFFECTED

Eternal God, in wisdom and love you created our earth to sustain us and give us life. We turn to you now in faith, hope and love, asking you to look with favour on our drought-stricken land, on our starving animals, on our failing crops. Strengthen, sustain and give new heart to our farmers and to all who are affected by drought; be with those who support them. In your loving providence, send abundant rain and restore our parched earth. Father of all compassion, hear our prayer through Jesus Christ your Son, in whom the promise of new life has dawned, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of life: Renew your faithful people. Renew the face of the earth. Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Mary, help of Christians – Pray for us. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop – Pray for us!

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading Wisdom 11:22–12:2
2nd Reading 2 Thessalonians 1:11–2:2
Gospel Luke 19:1-10

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading 2 Maccabees 7:1-2,9-14
2nd Reading 2 Thessalonians 2:16–3:5
Gospel Luke 20:27-38

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
 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
 Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm
CWL Mass Wednesday 10:30am
 Thursday 9:00am
 Friday 9:30am

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul 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 • Thirroul 2515

📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

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

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael 📞 4267 2560