



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
1/2 JULY 2023
13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A
VINNIES WINTER APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

He Said What?!

Had you ever noticed the number of flat-out contradictions in scripture? For example,

- take the lowest seat if you want to have the highest;
- the Son of Man came to serve, not to be served;
- an old woman with an old husband will give birth to a child;
- ... and so on.
- the last shall be first;
- lose your life to find it;
- a virgin will conceive;

We might have said that if we want to be first, we would have to get into the front of the line, not the end. And, if we want to be alive, we must make some moves not to lose our lives. And so on. These are common sense, aren't they?

Instead, this Sunday's readings are introducing us, gently and partially, to ways in which such common sense opinions do not go deep enough. Try this on:

- we have to be like lifeless, empty earthen vessels, so that God can pour life and love into us.

In the first reading a distinguished lady in the little village of Schunem shows great hospitality to the prophet Elisha, even to the point of building and furnishing a little room on the second floor of her house, with a bed, table, chair, and lamp for him for whenever he visits. Another contradiction: she is childless, yet Elisha promises that in one year she will be fondling her own baby son. She is shocked. But the promise comes true.

Then, when the boy becomes a young man, he suddenly dies (2 Kings 4:18-37). Elisha comes from over thirty kilometres away and brings him back to life.

Life is given twice where there was no hope of life: death triumphing but life restored. It is contradictory, but is this the way of the Lord?

Then in the second reading, Saint Paul writes to the Church in Rome that they are baptized into Christ's death and are buried with him!

A grim statement. But then Paul says, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, ... and the life he lives, he lives to God.

Die in order to live?

In the gospel Jesus makes a most enigmatic, not to say contradictory, statement: "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."

No matter how we try to explain away that statement and neuter its content, it still means what it says. Losing your life is the only way to possess it. Letting go is the only way to hold on. How can such contrary claims simultaneously be true?

Here is a metaphor. A glass has to start out empty in order to succeed as a glass. If it is sealed up, or if it is solid, or if it is already full, nothing can be poured in.

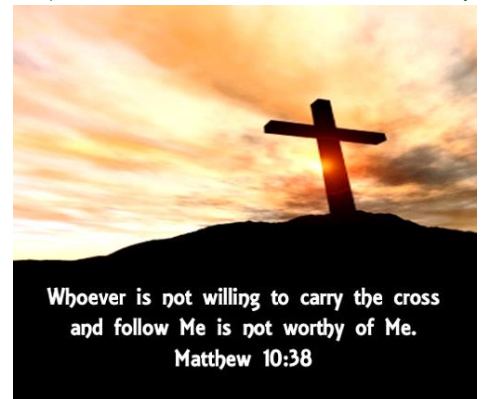
Does this sound like one more contradiction? No. A container has to be empty if it is to be filled.

The same goes for us. We have to be like empty earthen vessels, so that God can pour life and love into us. This is the source of all the "contradictions" in the gospels and certainly in the readings this Sunday.

We have to empty out if we are to be filled up with God's gifts.

On the last two Sundays, the gospel readings have brought us the instructions of the Saviour for those he calls to share in the mission he has received from his Father. Today's reading is the conclusion of the passage we have been reading. Not surprisingly, it takes us to the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Our life as disciples has its beginning in our personal call to follow Jesus. Now he speaks to us of the nature of the relationship he has called us to.

It is a unique relationship – the absolute allegiance to which only God has a right. The original words of Jesus would have used the stark contrast of Semitic expressions – the disciple who 'loves' the Saviour must 'hate' those of their families (cf. Luke 14:26). In presenting these words of Jesus, Matthew removes the danger of misunderstanding. A right relationship with the Saviour will not destroy our human relationships, but deepen them and make them more wholesome. Even the greatest of these, however, must not compromise the allegiance we owe to the Lord – even if this allegiance brings a sharing in his cross, through persecution and rejection. For the community that gave us Matthew's gospel, these words would have had practical implications. The following of Christ would have divided some families, and would have been met with hatred from those who used to be their friends in the synagogue. But if Jesus calls for the allegiance that is owing to the Lord himself, he assures us – in words that ring with



Whoever is not willing to carry the cross
and follow Me is not worthy of Me.
Matthew 10:38



✠✠ the fullness of his divine authority – that our absolute trust in him will never be misplaced; it will lead us to the fullness of life. This assurance of the Lord would have been a great source of inspiration to the Church of the beginning. As we have seen, the Saviour's commission was given to the apostles as representatives of the whole community of disciples. This is made very clear in Luke's gospel, in which this call to absolute allegiance is addressed to the 'great crowds that accompanied Jesus on his way' [Luke 14:25].

In the continuation of the text, Jesus promises those who generously entrust their lives to him, that – as they share in his mission – they will already begin to know the reward he promises. In the Jewish society of the time of Jesus, emissaries authorised to carry out a special commission were owed the respect owing to the one by whom they were commissioned. Applying this principle, Jesus promises those who carry out his mission will share in the 'welcome' owing to his coming, and the coming of his Father, through them. It is an experience that is familiar to all unselfish bearers of the gospel.

Paul's magnificent text, from the letter to the Romans – explaining the mystery of 'baptism in Christ Jesus' – is a perfect complement to the gospel reading. 'Anyone who loses their life for my sake will find it', Jesus tells us. The life he promises is nothing less than a sharing in the everlasting life manifested to the world in his resurrection. The crucified One – who came to share in the life of a world lost in selfishness and violence – has been 'raised from the dead' by the Father's glorious power, to become a sign of hope and a source of new life for the whole of creation. It is through our baptism that we are united to Jesus in the mission he received from his Father, and begin to share in all that has been realised in his resurrection – 'dead to sin, but alive for God in Christ Jesus'.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a

- ✠ What are today's prophets talking about? Ending gun violence? Clean air and water for third world countries? Justice for all races? If prophets speak to transform society, is there some corner of your world you can change for the better? If you feel inadequate about transforming society as a whole, is there anything in the readings that tells you it is all right to start small?
- ✠ Discuss how Elisha and the woman in the story each receive something from the other's graciousness. In the light of this story and our present problems, evaluate your community's racial hospitality?

Second Reading Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

- ✠ If we are living in the "newness of life" in the risen Jesus, are we "living for God"?
- ✠ Think of ways God might use you if your attitude is Christ's and you put yourself at the disposal of God's saving work in the world.

Gospel Matthew 10:37-42

- ✠ Could this quote from today's Gospel "And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink ... " relate to the problem of safe drinking water that Pope Francis speaks of in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*? Is there anything you can do to give someone in a poor country a cup of cold, safe, water?
... Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor!
– Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, On Care for Our Common Home, Section 30
- ✠ Who is blessed, the one who gives the help or the one who receives it? Are you always the giver or do you need to receive at times?

"POSTCARDS TO THE FRONT" IN UKRAINE

"Postcards to the Front" – last chance to hand them in this weekend as all cards will be sent to Ukraine via Melbourne this week. Thank you for your generous response.

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL – 1/2 JULY

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has launched its annual Vinnies Winter Appeal with a focus on the number of older women experiencing and at risk of homelessness. "The Vinnies Winter Appeal is crucially important in enabling our services and members to support people experiencing disadvantage and hardship, particularly the concerning number of older women experiencing or at risk of homelessness," said Yolanda Saiz, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW CEO. "The latest census figures revealed women over 55 remain one of the most at-risk demographics, increasing by 37% over the past decade to more than 7,300 across Australia." The second week of the appeal will be held in our Parish on this weekend. **Help end homelessness crisis devastating older women. Last week's total \$2,855!**

There will be a special collection at both Masses this weekend. You can donate cash or use your credit/debit card. You can also donate online to Thirroul Vinnies Conference: go to this link to donate:

<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way-conference/vinnies-thirroul-winter-appeal>



SPIRITUALITY ON THE SOFA – WEDNESDAY, 5 JULY AT 19:30

Here is the Zoom link to watch and participate in the next **Spirituality on the Sofa, 19:30 to 21:00 on Wednesday, 5 July** – <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88194824050?pwd=L3FZdVVibXFmREIDNmVEOGNwWGZaQT09>

The presenters will be **Norma Tracey** and **Matthew Smith** who will share some of their exciting and innovative life stories about how they continue to work side by side with Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of our community - striving to make a difference. **Norma** is a psychoanalytic therapist and a founder of Gunawirra, a not-for-profit organisation where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal professionals work side by side. **Matthew** is the managing director of Summit Education Australia. He is an experienced educator and school principal specialising in First Nations education and inclusion, trauma-informed practice, and behaviour.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF OUR PARISH

Our Parish of Saint Michael will be celebrating the parish centenary on **Saturday, 28 October 2023** at the **17:30 Mass** with Bishop Brian Mascord followed by community picnic/BBQ in the grounds of our Parish School. **Contributions** are due to be received by Judy Bull judy.bull@bigpond.com or 0407 672 417 **by 7 July the latest**.

FR FRANK BRENNAN'S HOMILY, 23 MAY 2023 – NAIDOC WEEK 2 TO 9 JULY

During this past week, our Parliament has for the first time been debating the bill for the proposed referendum on the Voice. One member who has sweated blood on the issue is Julian Leeser who resigned from the Opposition front bench so that he could campaign for a Yes vote even though he has serious, reasoned reservations about the proposed wording of the change to the Constitution. He told Parliament: 'Over thousands of years, Australia's Indigenous people have made their peace with this land, and it's become part of their soul. Lives infused by the land, the seasons and the stories of their ancestors. The 2021 Senior Australian of the Year, Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann, calls the contemplation of this land "deep listening", "*dadirri*"—the ability to stop, contemplate and listen. To listen to the deep waters of our country, to the present as well as times past; to listen and to hear the beckoning of change. This is such a moment for our country and for the home we share, Indigenous and immigrant, drawn from every creed and from every corner of the world.'

Sadly, there has been little evidence of that deep listening nor of the Spirit reconciling differences in our Parliament this past week. On Monday, Mr Peter Dutton made it abundantly clear that the Liberal Party will not support the Voice referendum in any shape or form, and will not propose any amendments to the proposed Bill. The Opposition's stance is a clear 'No'. That being the case, you would have to wonder why he ever appointed Julian Leeser as his Shadow Minister for Indigenous Australians, as well as Shadow Attorney General. Dutton told Parliament: 'Changing our Constitution to enshrine a Voice will take our country backwards, not forwards. The Voice is regressive, not progressive, and it should be very clear to Australians by now that the Prime Minister is dividing our country, not uniting us. But this referendum on the Voice will undermine our equality of citizenship. It's an overcorrection. The Voice will embed new procedural rights in our Constitution—rights which are conferred only on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. It will have an Orwellian effect, where all Australians are equal, but some Australians are more equal than others.'

On Thursday the Prime Minister responded forcefully making it just as clear that the Government will not accept any amendments to the proposed wording. From here on, it is 'crash or crash through'. He told Parliament: '[T]he Liberal Party frontbench had already locked themselves into saying no before the committee process that they called for and they said was important had even commenced its work. And the National Party decided to say no before the draft question had even been finalised. From the outset, instead of seeking ways to agree they have looked for excuses to disagree.'

Neither side of the parliamentary chamber has done what was needed to bring the country together, to bring reconciliation in our land, to bring the country to 'Yes'. Whichever way the referendum goes, we will be left with a country divided, and that is a tragedy. This Pentecost we pray for the Spirit of reconciliation to descend afresh on our land and for all Australians, whichever way they will eventually vote, to recommit themselves to a deep inner listening to each other and to our land. Let's recall the haunting words from the Uluru Statement from the Heart: '[The] ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty.'

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council published its statement supportive of a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament, saying: 'We acknowledge that people of goodwill who care for First Nations Peoples can come to different conclusions and form differing opinions from the same information. We must accept these opinions and respect each other's rights to express them. However, we offer these comments to encourage Australians to consider the benefits of the Voice to Parliament for helping to achieve reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. We urge all Australians, including our Members of Parliament, to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue on this issue. By working together in a spirit of solidarity, we can create a more just and equitable society for all.'

– *Extract from Homily of Fr Frank Brennan SJ, Pentecost Sunday, 23 May 2023.*

NAIDOC WEEK: Check out further reading at <https://www.naidoc.org.au/>

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	3 Jul St Thomas, apostle	Ephesians 2:19-22	John 20:24-29
Tuesday 📖	4 Jul Tuesday of Ordinary Time Week 13	Genesis 19:15-29	Matthew 8:23-27
Wednesday	5 Jul Wednesday of Ordinary Time Week 13	Genesis 21:5,8-20	Matthew 8:28-34
Thursday	6 Jul Thursday of Ordinary Time Week 13	Genesis 22:1-19	Matthew 9:1-8
Friday	7 Jul Friday of Ordinary Time Week 13	Genesis 23:1-4; 24:1-8	Matthew 9:9-13
Saturday	8 Jul Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 13	Genesis 27:1-5,15-29	Matthew 9:14-17
Sunday	9 Jul 14 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Cheese and Veggie Muffins from Chef Raymond

250g self-raising flour; 1tsp baking powder; 200g cheddar cheese, grated; 1 cup frozen corn, thawed and drained; 1 tbsp chives, finely chopped; 2 beaten eggs; 100ml extra virgin olive oil; 250ml milk; 1 cup baby spinach, chopped. Preheat the oven to 200°C. Prepare a muffin tray by greasing it with olive oil. In a bowl combine the flour, baking powder, cheese, corn, baby spinach and chives and stir to combine. Add the egg, milk, oil and ensure all ingredients are well combined. Season with pepper as desired. Scoop into the muffin tray – sprinkle some additional cheese on top if desired. Bake for 22-25 minutes until golden on top. Can freeze, great for kids, adults too, lunch boxes, snacks!

PLEASE BRING IN ...ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special plastic bins near the church entrances.

These items are currently in short supply:

Sweet biscuits, pasta & sauce, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, baked beans & spaghetti, and tinned seafood

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Weekend, 1/2 July	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday
✦ Weekend, 1/2 July	Vinnies Winter Appeal – Week 2
✦ Sunday, 2 July	08:00 to 16:00 St Michael's Parish School Bunnings Sausage Sizzle
✦ Wednesday, 5 July	19:30 Spirituality on the Sofa
✦ Thursday, 6 July	19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for July Baptisms
✦ Friday, 7 July	09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Weekend, 8/9 July	Blessing of July Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Saturday, 8 July	18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Weekend, 15/16 July	Baptisms during Masses

More Counters are needed for the Roster ... once every 16 weeks – please contact the parish office.

HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE 40TH ANNIVERSARY FORMAL DINNER SATURDAY, 22 JULY 2023

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1027283?eid=1027283&>

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading 2 Kings 4:8-11,14-16</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 6:3-4,8-11</p> <p>spel Matthew 10:37-42</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Zechariah 9:9-10</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 8:9,11-13</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 11:25-30</p>	<p>SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday 17:30</p> <p>Sunday 08:00</p> <p>📖 Saturday Mass recorded</p>
<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</p> <p><i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i></p> <p><i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i></p> <p>Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i></p> <p>Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i></p> <p>Lauren Faulks • <i>Parish Secretary</i></p> <p>Tues, Wed 09:00-15:30; Fri 09:30-14:30</p>	<p>🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</p> <p>📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive</p> <p>📧 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515</p> <p>☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976</p> <p>📧 thirroul@dow.org.au</p> <p>Parish School of St Michael</p> <p>☎ 4267 2560</p>	<p>USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES</p> <p>Monday _____</p> <p>Tuesday 📖 17:30</p> <p>Wednesday 09:00</p> <p>Thursday 09:00</p> <p>Friday 09:30</p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i></p>