



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
15/16 JULY 2023
15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A
BAPTISMS – WELCOME

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

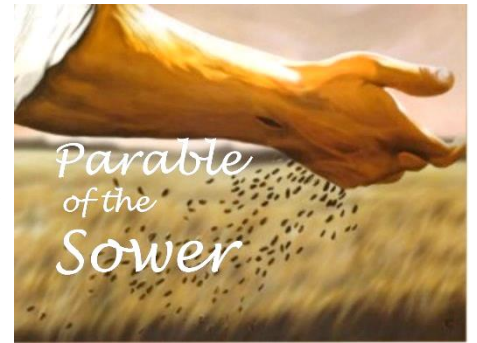
Yearning for God's Goodness

The readings for this coming mid-winter Sunday reflect the beauties of the earth, its golden harvests, its astonishing Spring, its delicate birds, beasts, mountains, hills and plains. Infinite surprise for those whose eyes can see.

The Lord uses the ebb and flow of seasons in the first reading to show how God's visceral love for the earth works. Just as the rain and snow come to earth, God says, so too does God's word, which then returns to the heavens when it has done its job of watering. It does not return until it has moistened and nourished life in every single creature that will receive it. A fruitful harvest, says the Psalm.

St Paul speaks of all creation groaning in labour pains even until now (second reading). Human beings too groan within themselves like seeds which break open and push their way through tough ground and then evolve into full trees that stretch for Christ's light.

Can such rich images apply to you and me? How good is our own soil? God pours God's grace into it always. Do you and I groan and yearn for the goodness of God which is ready to be lavished upon us? Do we take time each day to let love in? Or do we listen on Sunday, perhaps with some interest, but then forget everything by Monday? Or not at all?



Jesus lists a number of things we might have to correct in order to accept the gifts he has ready for us. We might be shallow ground, he says. Or rocky soil. Weeds might choke us. How discouraging. Must I pretend to be rich soil, though I know my shallowness? No. I must be fully myself and allow God to do the rest.

That great poet from India, Tagore, put it this way: "The cloud stood humbly in a corner of the sky. The morning crowned it with splendour."

Let's us be humble! Let's join in the revolving refreshment of all earthly things! Open our leaves! Allow in the sun!

As has been indicated already, Matthew's gospel alternates narrative passages with passages presenting the teaching of Jesus. Last week's reading was from a narrative sequence describing the difficulties Jesus encountered in his Galilean ministry. Today's reading is from the section that follows; it contains seven parables of 'the Kingdom' – a central theme of this gospel. It begins dramatically with the parable of the Sower. People have come to hear Jesus crowd the shore of the lake, and he speaks to them from a boat. His parable – to an audience of rural Galileans – is about farming. But this farming is very different from the farming we are familiar with. The single spike ploughs used were not very effective; they would hardly make an impression on the hard ground of paths through the field; they left patches of brambles behind them; the Palestinian soil they ploughed was in many places a shallow covering of the underlying rock; much of the seed, broadcast by hand, would therefore come to nothing, while some that fell in soil made ready by the ploughing would produce the miracle of a fresh harvest. Parables are common in the Scriptures, and their appeal to the imagination, to convey a challenging message, was often used by the Jewish rabbis. The parables of Jesus were distinctive, however. He had already announced the essential message of his preaching in clear words – 'Make yourselves ready, the reign of God you have looked forward to is upon you!' His parables describing the coming of this reign were intended to puzzle his hearers – 'Listen anyone who has ears'. He wanted them to discover a meaning that brought home to them how different the Kingdom he proclaimed was from popular expectations – expectations that looked forward to a political vindication of the nation. (The reply Jesus gave, when asked why he taught through parables, does not mean – as we might expect – that he wanted to withhold the truth from his hearers; it means that he recognised – as the prophet Isaiah recognised before him, in the text he quoted – that many of his hearers would not have the dispositions necessary to find the meaning he wishes to convey.)

If we disregard the detailed explanation of the parable at the end of today's reading – probably an addition made by preachers in the early Church tradition, as they adapted this parable of Jesus to a very different audience – the meaning of Jesus' parable on the shore of the lake is not difficult to grasp. His preaching – and that of the evangelisers who will carry on his mission – will encounter difficulties of many kinds (like the seed of the Sower). He has already encountered reversals in Galilee; and as he looked at the crowds curious to hear him he must have realised that his teaching would have little effect on many of them. Nevertheless, the meaning to be found in his parable is forthright: the harvest is certain, and it will be abundant; and there is a note of urgency: God's time has come; there is no second chance – there is only one sowing for each harvest.

Early Christian preachers, as we have said, developed an explanation of the parable for an audience in a very different situation from the crowd on the shore of the lake. That this addition is included in the gospel has an important lesson for later times. The message of Jesus must be applied to the changing circumstances of the Church's life. If the original parable urged the disciples of Jesus to sow the word with confidence, now those who have heard the word must show its fruits in their lives. In today's Church, the biblical revival opens the way for us.



✠✠ Saint Francis of Assisi stands out as a saint who felt this wonderful harmony between his soul's yearning and that of creation. Saint Bonaventure, one of his disciples, wrote in his biography of Francis: 'Aroused by all things to the love of God, Francis rejoiced in all the works of the Lord's hands. As a manifestation of God, creation brought Francis great joy, and took him to its life-giving principle and cause. In beautiful things Francis saw and fell in love with God who is Beauty itself and through the signs of God's presence imprinted on creation Francis followed his beloved everywhere. For Francis all things were a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace him who alone could satisfy his heart' (Bonaventure Life of Francis IX,1).

The longing of which Paul is speaking (in today's second reading) is a longing for freedom. But what a price freedom demands! It can be found only in a transcending of self in love, and who wants to do what is demanded if we are truly to transcend the insecure and demanding thing we experience as 'self'? Who is going to dare to face the impotence, and the shabbiness, and the folly of much that we experience as our 'self', and let the hidden self grow strong? Who is going to let go and allow God to make of us what God wills: a channel of love and peace that 'works' only so long as we are open to the Source and continue to call on the life-Spirit whose breath alone sustains and nourishes us?

We are willing slaves to 'decadence', and its fascinating and distracting allurements continues to entice us. Do we really want to be free? The only way is to let God reveal us as his 'sons': that is, to see ourselves, women and men alike, in the Son, Jesus. It is Jesus who shows us who God is and God shows us how to be free as human beings, and how to remain free, come what may. But who doesn't want to duck or bypass the cross, or shift ground when things become uncomfortable?

In the gospel, a parable is like a shaft of light breaking through the clouds of our accustomed thinking. The shock is in the final words. Sure, much of the grain is lost – which is to be expected granted the necessity of paths and of stones to terrace the sparse soil on the rugged slopes. But surely the point of the parable is that the grain is such that if even a little bit gets into good soil the harvest will more than make up for all the lost grain. So 'Listen, anyone who has ears!' In other words, it is never too late to listen. We may feel like the Jews living in exile. Nothing has worked out for us. We are failures in our own eyes and in everyone else's perhaps. We have squandered grace. We have not really listened to God's word. Our prayer has been formal, and our heart distracted. Okay, says Jesus, then listen now! The soil of your mind and heart is still good: God doesn't make things badly! So, start now, today, this Sunday, and let the word in. Whatever of the past, if you long now for a harvest of love it will be given to you,

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading **Isaiah 55:10-11**

↳ The rain originates in the heavens, and falls to the earth making it fertile, helping to produce fruit for our consumption. Accomplishing its mission, it returns to the heavens. In what way is God's word reliable in this manner? "So shall my word be, ... achieving the end for which I sent it." What is the end for which God sent God's Son?

↳ Rain makes the seed germinate and grow. Apply this to God's grace. Now apply it to God's grace in your own life. Discuss.

Second Reading **Romans 8:18-23**

↳ "We know that all creation is groaning in labour pains even until now." Does God continually create us moment by moment?

↳ What do you think is the corruption from which creation is trying to free itself? Is there some pain involved in trying to end war, birth a cleaner environment for the planet, and establish new and better kinds of race relations? If God continually creates us moment by moment, will God help with these difficult births?

Gospel **Matthew 13:1-23**

↳ Jesus mentions "cares of the world and lure of wealth" as rocky ground and thorns that keep the seed from taking root. What is your "rocky ground"? Are you a busy pathway where the Word is sown but then is trampled? And can the thorns of worldly anxiety choke the Word when it comes to you?

↳ According to Pope Francis, no one, not one person, is excluded from receiving the seed. What kinds of things might you do to allow such seed to grow?

This Parable of the Sower is somewhat the 'mother' of all parables, because it speaks about listening to the Word. It reminds us that the Word of God is a seed which in itself is fruitful and effective; and God scatters it everywhere, paying no mind to waste. Such is the heart of God!

Each one of us is ground on which the seed of the Word falls; no one is excluded! The Word is given to each one of us. We can ask ourselves what type of terrain am I? Do I resemble the path, the rocky ground, the bramble bush? With the grace of God, if we want, we can become good soil, ploughed and carefully cultivated, to help ripen the seed of the Word. It is already present in our heart, but making it fruitful depends on us; it depends on the embrace that we reserve for this seed.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time A, 12 July 2020

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL Total for the Appeal so far: **\$4,926!**

You can continue donate online to the Thirroul Vinnies Conference – go to this link to donate:

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

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Peace must be based on reason, not passion; magnanimous, not selfish. Peace must be not inert and passive, but dynamic, active, and progressive according as the just demands of the declared and equitable rights of man require new and better expressions of peace. Peace must not be weak, inefficient, and servile, but strong in the moral reasons that justify it and in the solid support of the nations that must uphold it.

BAPTISMS THIS WEEKEND – WELCOME

WELCOME to **LOGAN KOSIAK** and **NOEMIE GARSIA** baptised in our Parish this Saturday during the 17:30 Mass, and to **EVERLY DODDS** baptised this Sunday during the 08:00 Mass: **welcome** and **thank you** to their parents, godparents, families and friends for bringing the children to our Parish community.



The next Baptisms to be held in our Parish will be during Masses **Saturday** or **Sunday, 19/20 August 2023**. The next Baptism meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 27 July 2023 at 19:15**. Call in to the Parish Office to collect the Baptism Enrolment Forms.

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Christian Initiation, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist. In most of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the three Sacraments are celebrated together as is done in the Latin Catholic Church with adults and children over the age of reason.

AUSTRALIA'S TERRITORIES

Australia has ten territories, eight of which are inhabited. Starting with the internal territories, there is Australian Capital Territory which is landlocked within the State of New South Wales. The Jervis Bay Territory is a separate territory that is partly administered by the ACT. The Northern Territory has a population of around 250,000 people. The external territories of Heard Island and McDonald Islands, as well as Ashmore and Cartier Islands are also known to be uninhabited. The Coral Sea Islands are a large group of uninhabited islands, except for Willis Island. The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are 27 islands, with only two of them being inhabited. Christmas Island is located almost 1,500 kilometres from mainland Australia. Norfolk Island is located between New Zealand and New Caledonia, and Australia claims the largest area of Antarctica of any country; it is known as the Antarctic Territory.

HAVING OR HAD A SIGNIFICANT WEDDING ANNIVERSARY IN 2023?

If you are celebrating 25, 40, 50, 60 or over 60 years of marriage this year, you are invited to the celebration of Significant Marriage Anniversaries, to be celebrated with Bishop Brian Mascord on **Sunday, 17 September 2023** at 2pm at the St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong. Mass will be followed by light refreshments in the Xavier Centre Conference Room. Please register online at <https://dow.sh/ma23> or contact Helen Bennett at the Office of the Bishop at **4222 2403**, or via email helen.bennett@dow.org.au by no later than Friday 4 August 2023.

TWO UPCOMING SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 26 August 17:30 Mass Special Mass for the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Andrew Granc ofm as a friar priest ... dinner to follow in the Hall.

Saturday, 28 October 17:30 Mass Bishop Brian to celebrate Mass for the Centenary of our Parish dinner and entertainment to follow in the Hall.

BECOME A CATECHIST OR ASSISTANT IN A LOCAL STATE SCHOOL

Catechists and Assistants teach Special Religious Education to young Catholic students in one of the four State Primary Schools in our parish. The classes last only thirty minutes, and it is a great way to bring the Word of God to many who have no other connection with the Church. A Level 1 Catechist course is commencing soon in Wollongong. You can attend in person or online. 09:30 to 13:30 on Fridays 4, 11, 18, 25 August and 1 September. To enrol contact Cindy Oliver at support@ccdwoollongong.com There is a real need in our parish for this ministry, so please consider volunteering. It is a rewarding ministry helping our young people on their faith journey.

VINNIES NO INTEREST LOANS SCHEME [NILS]

No Interest Loans [NILS] provide individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair, affordable credit with **no fees or charges applied**, If you hold a Health Care Card or Pension Card, or earn less than \$70,000 before tax (\$100,000 for couples or people with dependents), and if you have lived at your current address for at least 3 months (* some exceptions apply), and if you can show you can afford to repay the loan, you are eligible for a loan – loans are available up to \$2,000 for essential goods and services including: household items; car repairs and registration; medical and dental services; technology; furniture; education. Loans are not available for bills, debts, fines, cash, food, penalties. Apply 1800 484 664 or nils@vinnies.org.au *Pass this information on ...*

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	17 Jul	Monday of Ordinary Time Week 15	Exodus 1:9-14,22	Matthew 10:34-11:1
Tuesday	18 Jul	Tuesday of Ordinary Time Week 15	Exodus 2:1-15	Matthew 11:20-24
Wednesday	19 Jul	Wednesday of Ordinary Time Week 15	Exodus 3:1-6,9-12	Matthew 11:25-27
Thursday	20 Jul	Thursday of Ordinary Time Week 15	Exodus 3:13-20	Matthew 11:28-30
Friday	21 Jul	Friday of Ordinary Time Week 15	Exodus 11:10-12:14	Matthew 12:1-8
Saturday	22 Jul	St Mary Magdalene	Song of Songs 3:1-4	John 20:1-2,11-18
Sunday	23 Jul	16 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Creamy Bacon Potato Salad

1kg baby potatoes; 250g bacon; 3 eggs; 240g mayo; 60g sour cream; 1 heaped tbsp chives, finely diced (plus extra to garnish); 1 heaped tbsp fresh parsley, finely diced; 1 tbsp Dijon mustard; ½ lemon, juice only; ½ small red onion, finely diced; ½ tsp sugar; or to taste 1 tsp + ½ tsp salt, or to taste ¼ white pepper.

Slice the potatoes into 5mm rounds and place in a large pot of cold water with 1 tsp salt. Bring to boil and cook for 7-10 minutes or until fork tender. Don't overcook them or they'll turn to mush. Drain (don't rinse) and leave to steam dry and completely cook to room temperature – important! As the potatoes boil, cook the bacon using your preferred method and to your preferred texture. Leave to completely cool, then dice. Hard boil the eggs using your preferred method*, then peel and dice, or cut using a wire rack. In a small bowl, combine the mayo, sour cream, Dijon mustard, sugar, lemon juice, chives, parsley, white pepper and ½ tsp salt (or to taste). In a larger bowl, add the potatoes with the egg, bacon red onion and sauce. Gently fold until completely coated. Pop in the fridge for the flavours to marry. Serve with an extra sprinkle of chives and enjoy! * Guidance for hard boiled eggs: add eggs to a pot and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil until eggs start dancing, then immediately turn off the heat and pop the lid on. Leave for exactly 10 minutes, then transfer eggs to a bowl of ice water (to stop the cooking process). Once cool enough to handle, peel away the shell.

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:

Biscuits, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, baked beans & spaghetti, tinned seafood, spreads

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Monday, 17 July School Term 3 commences
- ✦ Wednesday, 19 July 10:45 Bishop's Mass with Year 6 students, West Wollongong
- ✦ Weekend, 22/23 July WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY
- ✦ Thursday, 27 July 19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for August Baptisms

More Counters are needed for the Roster ... once very 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>15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Isaiah 55:10-11</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 8:18-23</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 13:1-23</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Wisdom 12:13,16-19</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 8:26-27</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 13:24-30</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>