



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
22/23 JULY 2023
16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A
GRANDPARENTS AND ELDERLY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Pulling Out Weeds

The subject, forgiveness, is hefty enough for Jesus to devote a well-known parable to it. In it, servants ask the master whether they should pull out weeds that have grown up within the wheat-field.

“No,” he replies. “If you pull up the weeds you might pull up the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest” (Gospel).

So, if you or I have sinned, then we have weeds growing up along with the good that is in us. Would we like that failed part of us to be uprooted? No. Instead, God lets us develop, without destruction, steadily forgiving our weeds.

So, what kind of reality is forgiveness?

For one thing, it reverses an attitude at the bottom of entire ancient cultures and still perhaps at the root of modern western entertainment. If someone harms me or my family (or ...), then I have the right and duty to destroy them. They are bad persons, not good, and no punishment is too severe.

This kind of “justice” does in fact work. Take a look at the heroes in movies fighting person to person across the tops of skyscrapers, bare-knuckle blows to the face, spinning kicks to the head, all leading ultimately of course to the fabulous plummet over the side, in which we are entertained with magnificent slow-motion shots of the crook’s terror as he heads for the inevitable splotch. Justice is established. Everyone is relieved and happy. Except, of course, the bad guy.

Just for fun, pretend that you are that bad guy. Is there a reason you are committing crimes, ones that merit such punishment? Is it possible that one part of you went haywire but that there is much good in you, much that could be brought back to life? Is there a part of you that says, “I wish I could stop this ugliness and be pardoned”?

If so, maybe you could look at the point of Sunday’s Gospel. When someone hurts us with their wrongs (or vice versa), maybe we can avoid rushing up to them to rip out weeds. Mixed with all the crab grass there are lovely flowers, and God loves very much all that they are.

Look, the crimes we commit don’t really agree totally with our inner self! None of the weeds growing up in us are wonderful, but they are only a part of who we are. Our urge to steal, to impress others falsely, to get what we want no matter what, to be lazy, petulant, or ... (please fill in the kind of wrong you yourself are drawn to). These are not a full description of who we are.

Let us do our best to tolerate the thorns and keep our hands off them. Our own weeds are treated with care. What if Jesus had said from the cross, “Father, damn them to hell forever because of what they are doing to me”? He said instead “forgive them, they know not what they do.” He knew there was good wheat in them, even alongside terrible weeds.

Forgiveness is letting go of an angering injury and giving God a chance to love. Wouldn’t you like to be loved and forgiven this way?

Once again, our reading from Matthew’s gospel brings us the teaching of Jesus about ‘the Kingdom’, in parable form. As before, the parables are invitations to learn what the coming of God’s liberating and life-giving reign should mean for us. Though our situation is very different from that of those who first heard these parables, they have a clear message for the Church of today. The gospel truth speaks to all ages. Wheat and weeds growing together – a perfect image, surely, of the world in which we live. How should Christians react in this situation?

While we must speak out for the truth, we may well be tempted to emphasise our faithfulness by our impatience and intolerance towards those who do not journey with us. The parable of Jesus warns us that this is not God’s way. The reading from the book of Wisdom shows us that, as the Old Testament was drawing to a close, devout thinkers in old Israel were recognising that ‘the virtuous person must be kindly to others’, learning from the mysterious patience of God. Only the Lord of the harvest – whose grace is at work in a hidden way in every human heart – can sort out the good from the bad when all is gathered in at the end. We who are blessed with the gift of faith must prepare for the final harvest by becoming an exemplary crop ourselves. There is a lesson here, also, for those who belong to the new movements emerging in the today’s Church. They must avoid a sectarian spirit that would see their way as the only way. There is room in God’s Church for many spiritualities and traditions. True ‘catholicity’ shows an openness to this.

The other parables carry us further. “The Kingdom is upon you”, Jesus has announced. In the parable of the tiny mustard seed, he refers to the modest inauguration of the Kingdom. His hearers must have been puzzled,



✠✠ as they saw the teacher who spoke with spellbinding power gathering twelve of his followers to symbolise the New Israel. Few of these followers had much to commend them, and some would have been considered positively disreputable. Jesus, however, is carrying forward the mission he has been given by the Father. He looks confidently beyond these humble beginnings, and he urges those ‘who have ears to hear’ to share his confidence: ‘No need to be afraid, little flock’, he tells this unpromising group, ‘for it has pleased your Father to give you the Kingdom’ (Luke 12:32). And those for whom Matthew wrote could already see faith in the Kingdom announced by Jesus spreading beyond the boundaries of Palestine. As they heard the parable of the seed that became a tree sheltering the birds of the air, they could recall that more than one of the prophets used the same image, speaking of the worldwide reign of God that was to come (cf. Daniel 4, Ezekiel 17 and 31). As the Church’s new era of evangelisation makes a faltering start, we too must take heart from the message of the parable. ‘God chooses the weak to shame the strong’ (1 Corinthians 2:27). The parable of the yeast tells of the hidden designs of God being worked out in the chaos of history. Though we are all tempted to judge by appearances, we recognise that the good things that happen in our own faith communities are usually the fruit of long years of fidelity and generosity. ‘Three measures of flour’ would have made something like three dozen gallons of dough ready for baking! Though God’s designs are hidden, they are boundless in their promise. The explanation of the mixed harvest parable – an addition of early Christian teachers – warns those within the Church who are unfaithful to their calling that they must be converted.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

✠ Care, justice, mercy, leniency. What would world history be like if all leaders had possessed these qualities? Are all people who work in law enforcement full of mercy, kindness and caring or could some use a little “topping off”?

✠ Does it give you hope that you can repent for sins? How does this translate into your dealings with other people?

Second Reading Romans 8:26-27

✠ Discuss this quote from *Prayer* by Hans Urs von Balthasar.

I have the conviction that my inadequate attempt to understand is supported by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit dwelling within me, that my acts of worship, petition and thanksgiving are borne along and remodelled by the Spirit’s infinite and eternal acts.”... “The Spirit breaks forth out of the very core of the believer’s spiritual life, showing him (her) the way, stirring him to action, thinking, willing and praying with him (her).

✠ Do you remember that the Spirit is present with you? What gives nobility to your small efforts, sufferings and weaknesses? Do you ever call on the Spirit when you are in need? Think of all the ways the Spirit has come to your aid when you have needed help.

Gospel Matthew 13:24-43

✠ According to Pope Francis, what is another reason that the man who sowed good seed in his field decides not to destroy the “weeds” right away?

The servants’ intention is to eliminate evil immediately, that is, evil people. But the master is wiser, he sees farther. ... Certainly, evil must be rejected, but those who do evil are people with whom it is necessary to be patient. This does not mean that type of hypocritical tolerance that hides ambiguity; but rather, justice tempered by mercy. If Jesus came to seek sinners more than the righteous, to cure the sick first before the healthy (cf. Mt 9:12-13), then our actions too as his disciples should be focused not on suppressing the wicked, but on saving them. Patience lies here. – Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 19 July 2020.

✠ Can you always tell the weeds from the flowers, or saints from sinners? If you are quick to judge might you mistake a saint for a sinner? Is God patient with you regarding the “weeds” in your own garden? How patient are you with others? With yourself?

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 **4283 3730** or nils@vinnies.org.au *Please pass this information on ...*

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.

POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE – 3RD WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS & ELDERLY

Dear brothers and sisters! “His mercy is from age to age” (Luke 1:50). This is the theme of the Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, and it takes us back to the joyful meeting between the young Mary and her elderly relative Elizabeth (cf. Luke 1:39-56). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth addressed the Mother of God with words that, millennia later, continue to echo in our daily prayer: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (v. 42). The Holy Spirit, who had earlier descended upon Mary, prompted her to respond with the Magnificat, in which she proclaimed that the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation. That same Spirit blesses and accompanies every fruitful encounter between different generations: between grandparents and grandchildren, between young and old. God wants young people to bring joy to the hearts of the elderly, as Mary did to Elizabeth, and gain wisdom from their experiences. Yet, above all, the Lord wants us not to abandon the elderly or to push them to the margins of life, as tragically happens all too often in our time.

This year, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly takes place close to World Youth Day. Both celebrations remind us of the “haste” (cf. v. 39) with which Mary set out to visit Elizabeth. In this way, they invite us to reflect on the bond that unites young and old. The Lord trusts that young people, through their relationships with the elderly, will realize that they are called to cultivate memory and recognize the beauty of being part of a much larger history. Friendship with an older person can help the young to see life not only in terms of the present and realize that not everything depends on them and their abilities. For the elderly, the presence of a young person in their lives can give them hope that their experience will not be lost and that their dreams can find fulfilment. Mary’s visit to Elizabeth and their shared awareness that the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation remind us that, alone, we cannot move forward, much less save ourselves, and that God’s presence and activity are always part of something greater, the history of a people. Mary herself said this in the Magnificat, as she rejoiced in God, who, in fidelity to the promise he had made to Abraham, had worked new and unexpected wonders (cf. vv. 51-55).

To better appreciate God’s way of acting, let us remember that our life is meant to be lived to the full, and that our greatest hopes and dreams are not achieved instantly but through a process of growth and maturation, in dialogue and in relationship with others. Those who focus only on the here and now, on money and possessions, on “having it all now”, are blind to the way God works. His loving plan spans past, present and future; it embraces and connects the generations. It is greater than we are, yet includes each of us and calls us at every moment to keep pressing forward. For the young, this means being ready to break free from the fleeting present in which virtual reality can entrap us, preventing us from doing something productive. For the elderly, it means not dwelling on the loss of physical strength and thinking with regret about missed opportunities. Let us all look ahead! And allow ourselves to be shaped by God’s grace, which from generation to generation frees us from inertia and from dwelling on the past! In the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth, between young and old, God points us towards the future that he is opening up before us. Indeed, Mary’s visit and Elizabeth’s greeting open our eyes to the dawn of salvation: in their embrace, God’s mercy quietly breaks into human history amid abundant joy. I encourage everyone to reflect on that meeting, to picture, like a snapshot, that embrace between the young Mother of God and the elderly mother of Saint John the Baptist, and to frame it in their minds and hearts as a radiant icon.

Next, I would invite you to make a concrete gesture that would include grandparents and the elderly. Let us not abandon them. Their presence in families and communities is a precious one, for it reminds us that we share the same heritage and are part of a people committed to preserving its roots. From the elderly we received the gift of belonging to God’s holy people. The Church, as well as society, needs them, for they entrust to the present the past that is needed to build the future. Let us honour them, neither depriving ourselves of their company nor depriving them of ours. May we never allow the elderly to be cast aside!

The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is meant to be a small but precious sign of hope for them and for the whole Church. I renew my invitation to everyone – dioceses, parishes, associations and communities – to celebrate this Day and to make it the occasion of a joyful and renewed encounter between young and old. To you, the young who are preparing to meet in Lisbon or to celebrate World Youth Day in your own countries, I would ask: before you set out on your journey, visit your grandparents or an elderly person who lives alone! Their prayers will protect you and you will carry in your heart the blessing of that encounter. I ask you, the elderly among us, to accompany by your prayers the young people about to celebrate World Youth Day. Those young people are God’s answer to your prayers, the fruits of all that you have sown, the sign that God does not abandon his people, but always rejuvenates them with the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

Dear grandparents, dear elderly brothers and sisters, may the blessing of the embrace between Mary and Elizabeth come upon you and fill your hearts with peace. With great affection, I give you my blessing. And I ask you, please, to pray for me. – Rome, Saint John Lateran, 31 May 2023, *Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Francis.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY, PARISH SECRETARY, THIRROUL

Thirroul parish is seeking the services of a part-time secretary for 17 hrs per week – currently Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but negotiable. The position requires skills in administration, bookkeeping, maintaining a database, and high level of skills in MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The parish secretary needs to be a person who is supportive of the Catholic ethos of the Parish, who bears witness to Christ and Christian values in their own lives and in their work. **Applications close 5pm Monday, 31 July 2023.** If interested, please make contact via email to request an application pack for this position to frances.vanleerdam@dow.org.au

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	24 Jul	Monday of Ordinary Time Week 16	Exodus 14:5-18	Matthew 12:38-42
Tuesday	25 Jul	St James, apostle	2 Corinthians 4:7-15	Matthew 20:20-28
Wednesday	26 Jul	Sts Joachim and Anne, parents of Mary	Exodus 16:1-5,9-15	Matthew 13:1-9
Thursday	27 Jul	Thursday of Ordinary Time Week 16	Exodus 19:1-2,9-11,16-20	Matthew 13:10-17
Friday	28 Jul	Friday of Ordinary Time Week 16	Exodus 20:1-17	Matthew 13:18-23
Saturday	29 Jul	Sts Martha, Mary and Lazarus	1 John 4:7-16	John 11:19-27
Sunday	30 Jul	17 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Year A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Pound Cake with Walnuts and Milk

3 eggs; 1½ cups sugar; ¼ cup oil; 1 cup milk; 2½ cups plain flour; 50g walnuts; 1 tbsp cocoa; 1 tbsp baking powder; 1 tbsp vanilla essence; powdered (icing) sugar for sprinkling.

The eggs and sugar are beaten with a mixer until they double in volume. Baking powder, oil and milk are added to them and beaten again with a mixer. Then pour the flour and grinded walnuts. Stir the mixture well with a spoon until a smooth consistency is obtained. The pound cake mix is poured into a greased and floured baking pan, by leaving a small portion in the bowl. The cocoa is placed on top of it and then poured into the pound cake mould and with the help of a wooden skewer, swirling movements are made to make the patterns of the two-colour pound cake. This is followed by about 50 minutes of baking at 170°C [for non-fan-forced oven]. After the baked pound cake with walnuts and milk has cooled, take it out of the mould and sprinkle it with powdered sugar.

CROSS + GENERATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM BELLAMBI

Due to the popularity of the Cross + Generation technology program, CatholicCare Wollongong, Catholic Education DoW will again partner with our school, Holy Spirit College, Bellambi to help with technology: four Wednesdays commencing 25 October – register early as places fill up fast: **0417 018 152** or janeh@catholiccare.dow.org.au

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

✦ Thursday, 27 July	19:15	Baptism Preparation Meeting for August Baptisms
✦ Tuesday, 1 August		Horses' Birthday
✦ Friday, 4 August	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Friday, 11 August	09:30	Mary Mackillop Feast Day Mass with whole school Feast of Saint Clare of Assisi
✦ Saturday, 12 August	18:30	Andrew returns after his sabbatical Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Saturday, 26 August	17:30	Andrew's 50 th Anniversary of Ordination – Mass and Dinner

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	Wisdom 12:13,16-19
2 nd Reading	Romans 8:26-27
Gospel	Matthew 13:24-30

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	1 Kings 3:5,7-12
2 nd Reading	Romans 8:28-30
Gospel	Matthew 13:44-52

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday	17:30
Sunday	08:00
☞ Saturday Mass recorded	

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

*One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes
Moving forward as a Parish Family*

Patrick Vaughan • *Parish Priest*

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

Lauren Faulks • *Parish Secretary*
Tues, Wed 09:00-15:30; Fri 09:30-14:30

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

☎ 4267 2560

USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	☞ 17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	