

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
12/13 AUGUST 2023
19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A
DINNER ON 26 AUGUST

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Feelings

This Sunday most of us will notice mainly the story of Jesus walking on water, together with Peter sinking into it. But there is another very interesting spiritual dimension.

What do you think was going on in Jesus' own heart and soul during these events?

We know that Jesus had emotions. We have seen them before, as when Lazarus died. In last week's Gospel [18th Sunday], Jesus had been hit hard by news of John the Baptist's death. So, he had taken a boat to a deserted place in order to grieve, quietly, by himself. But the crowd got there first and immediately pressed him into service when he arrived. Instead of the hushed time for grief he needed, Jesus' heart had been moved by the needs of the suffering people before him. He spent hour after hour, healing and curing and feeding. Exhausting.

Then came the story for this Sunday. Jesus sends the crowd away at last. And notice a strange thing, usually ignored: he "made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side." Why send them ahead? Why stay there alone? The answer is easy. He still needed to be alone to process John's death, which he had not yet gotten to do.

He climbed up the mountainside and took his own time to commune with his heavenly Father. The Gospel says that by now it was evening, and that Jesus prayed well into the night. A gusty wind came up.

He could not have been comfortable.

Wonder what his prayer was like? He had studied the scriptures since his youth, so maybe the story in our first reading came to mind. There the prophet Elijah too was up on a mountain-side, and there too, a heavy wind came up. The Lord was not in the wind, we are told. Nor in the earthquake that followed. Nor in the fire that came next. The Lord God was in the "sound of sheer silence" that followed.

Jesus on the mountain-side heard this voice too. But what did he feel? Let's take a shot at it.



He opened his bruised trust to the Father, and lay this trust alongside his very personal loss. Perhaps Abba reassured him that even against the evidence all human beings have to rely on God, especially when it seems that tragedy has the upper hand. Jesus was divine, but divine consciousness and knowledge rested only in the deepest realm of his soul, and needed this silent time to emerge.

In prayer, Jesus returned to his normal level of trust in God, but stronger now. In the same way that he "learned obedience through what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8), maybe he had to learn a higher level of trust through loss. Trusting is not a sheer act of the will, not simply a blind decision, but a quiet re-emergence of God's faithful love.

Then, at last, Jesus does walk on water. How must it feel to leave the solid ground and walk on slushy liquid? Perhaps this walking was symbolic of the trust he had come to in his night of prayer.

Maybe trust feels like walking on water.

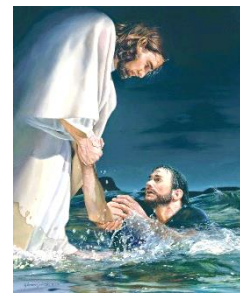
The people who gave us the scriptures had a very different outlook from ours. Because they had no doubt that miracles frequently occur, their traditions in the scriptures often make use of miracle stories to express their faith that God has been active in their history. Elijah was a 9th century prophet who profoundly influenced the faith of old Israel, teaching the incomparable greatness of the divine mystery. He is remembered through stories like that in today's first reading. This story describes Elijah meeting the Lord at Mount Horeb (Sinai). Whereas God's presence was shown to Moses at Sinai, through earthquake and fire, Elijah's meeting was very different – in 'a sound of sheer silence'. Clearly, such things as the wind's shattering of rocks are contrived, to show how Elijah's teaching about God went even beyond that of Moses.

Historically, there is no doubt that Jesus worked miracles – raising people to life, and healing them in a manner that defied explanation. A very limited number of such events are recalled in the gospel narratives. Studies made of these narratives show that do not have the form of 'wonder stories' – the wonder is not emphasised; Jesus even discourages the awakening of popular enthusiasm, wanting those involved to recognise in faith that what has happened is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom he is proclaiming. The fact that this common pattern is not found in this narrative has led many interpreters to see the miraculous events of today's gospel reading as a symbolic creation of early Christian teachers, expressing the lessons of Jesus for his disciples. This reading, we should recall, belongs to a narrative section of Matthew's gospel describing the formation Jesus is giving to his disciples. Perhaps it is related to the story of the calming of the storm by Jesus, that Matthew has included in an earlier chapter (8:23-27).

Sudden storms are frequent on the Sea of Galilee. For the people of the Middle East, the waters of the sea were a mysterious and menacing element of creation, kept in place by divine power. They provided a ready symbol of forces hostile to God's designs. This narrative is also found in the gospels of Mark and John. Neither of them,

✠✠ however, mentions the astonishing experience of Peter. In Matthew's gospel, on the other hand, this incident is one of three that single out Peter's place among the disciples (Matthew 16:17-19; 17:24-27). Let us not be distracted by the question of the origin of this unusual narrative. As a symbolic account of the formation Jesus was giving it has great value for the Church of every generation.

Sending his disciples on their way, Jesus gives himself to prayer. Only his living relation with his Father, *Abba*, explains the authority and serene courage that were so evident in his life. He invites us to learn from his example. The symbol of the Church as 'the barque [ship] of Peter' has long been part of Catholic awareness. Those in the boat are sustained by the words of Jesus, promising that, in the end, he will rejoin them, when they reach the shore to which he has directed them. More than that, they are assured that, despite the hostile forces of the sea and the deepest darkness of the night, they will experience the Saviour's mysterious presence assisting them. His words, 'It is I! Do not be afraid', are the turning point in all three gospel accounts. In Matthew's account, it is the inimitable Peter – the one who is to 'strengthen his brothers' in their doubts (Luke 22:31) – who leads the others to recognise the Lord's presence, and make their confession of faith, 'Truly, you are the Son of God'.



Today's Gospel takes us to the very heart of our Christian faith. How often we find ourselves unable to cope. Everything around us is crashing in on us and we feel we are being overwhelmed. We are afraid and when we pray, God seems to be far away. There is no answer. That is the situation of the apostles in the boat out on the lake.

Matthew presents this portrait for his community which was in a similar situation. Refugees were pouring in from Judea, trying to escape the war with the occupying Roman army. As Jews who had joined the Christian community, they were being accused of failing to support the Jewish cause. Jesus had taught them to forgive and to work for peace, and now, over and above the terrible Roman-Jewish war, their fellow Jews and members of their own family were turning against them. Incidentally, some of the pain of this is expressed in today's beautiful second reading in which Paul expresses the suffering he experienced because of his fellow Jews who did not open their minds and hearts to Jesus and to the community of Jesus' disciples who were experiencing the fulfilment of the dreams and hopes of Israel.

What happens to Peter shows us that a disciple too can also rise above the surrounding chaos. Peter left his nets to follow Jesus. Now he must walk towards Jesus across the water. He knows that he can do so, however, only if invited by Jesus, and so he cries out: 'If it is you, tell me to come to you across the water'. Jesus' response is so simple, so trusting and so encouraging. He simply says: 'Come'. On Jesus' invitation, Peter leaves the boat. Matthew shows him as starting to walk toward Jesus on the water. However, instead of keeping his heart and his eyes on Jesus, he notices the danger and loses heart. I'm sure we all know that feeling. Now let us watch carefully. What does Peter do when he loses courage? In his distress, he cries to the Lord and immediately Jesus reaches out and holds him. Matthew is telling us that of course Jesus will not let us go under. The waves are real and the boat is threatened, but Jesus, our Saviour, is calling to us and will receive us if we cry to him and allow him to hold us.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a

- ✠ Some of us have to find a "great wind," "earthquake," or "fire" in our lives before we look for God. But do you ever take time to listen for the "tiny whispering sound", the "sound of sheer silence"? If you created a quiet time in your life each day could you do this?
- ✠ Discuss all the traces of God in your life, or the ways God can/does speak to you. When is it easiest to hear? When in your life is it the hardest? At the end of the day do you ask yourself when you saw these traces?

Second Reading Romans 9:1-5

- ✠ Paul is in "great sorrow and constant anguish" because some of his own people have not accepted the fact that the Messiah has come. Is this because he wishes the best for them and would even sacrifice himself to help them? What do you do when your loved ones reject some beliefs that are important to you?
- ✠ How can Paul say, "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh"? Is it really moral to give away not just your life but your eternal salvation for the sake of others? Or is Paul exaggerating for the sake of emphasis?

Gospel Matthew 14:22-33

- ✠ How is living with a pandemic + environmental crisis + racial problem similar to the raging sea on which Peter was trying to walk toward Jesus? What do you think would have helped Peter to keep walking? Ignore the wind? Keep his eyes on Jesus? What might give you help now?

- ✠ According to Pope Francis, how is the Church today like the boat full of disciples in the storm?

[Here] is an effective image of the Church: a boat which must brave the storms and sometimes seems on the point of capsizing. What saves her is not the skill and courage of her crew members, but faith which allows her to walk, even in the dark, amid hardships. Faith gives us the certainty of Jesus' presence always beside us, of his hand which grasps us to pull us back from danger. We are all on this boat, and we feel secure here despite our limitations and our weaknesses.

– Pope Francis, Angelus, 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A, 10 August 2014.

PARISH SECRETARY, LAUREN FAULKS

Lauren has been employed as our Parish Secretary for some two years now. A few weeks ago, Lauren tendered her resignation and she finished at the Parish on Friday, 11 August. Thanks to Lauren for her service and work over the last two years, and we wish her well in the future. Thank you, Lauren!

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 for ALL to follow in the Hall.

Invitation to the Celebration of Andrew's 50th Anniversary as a Friar Priest

All – that means you! – are invited to celebrate this great occasion by attending the special Mass at 17:30 on Saturday, 26 August, after which **dinner and refreshments** will be provided for all. *Food [big baked hot dinner!] and drinks will be provided, but you are also welcome to BYO extra refreshments.*

However, for catering purposes, numbers for dinner are required by **Friday, 18 August.**

If you will be coming for dinner, please fill in the form at Masses, or phone or email the Parish Office with your surname and the numbers attending. ALL are welcome!



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. Further details next month.

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 ...*

PARISH CENTENARY – 28 OCTOBER 2023

100 years is a long time, and it should be celebrated in style! Bishop Brian will be the main celebrant at the 17:30 Mass on Saturday, 28 October. Afterwards there will be dinner and entertainment in the Parish Hall – the McCarthy Centre – and in the school grounds. **All are welcome.**

What other ways can we celebrate?! One suggestion so far is during November we have a Parish Centenary Lawn Bowls Night at Club Thirroul – for all ages, up to 100! **Do you have any other ideas as to how we can celebrate the Centenary of our Parish?** If so, please see one of the Pastoral Councillors or call/email the Parish Office.

Are you the oldest person in our Parish? Are you the longest resident in our Parish? Do you have the most family members living in the Parish? Are there any other significant milestones (kilometre stones) in our Parish that should be celebrated at this time? If so, please see one of the Pastoral Councillors.

What about giving our church and grounds a spruce up for the Centenary?! Do you have a **high pressure water hose** – if you have, then it can be used (by yourself or another parishioner) to clean the concrete paths around the church! The “Peace Garden” with the statue of Saint Francis of Assisi is looked after by Pat Mirabito – is there anything you could help with around the gardens? Are there any pointing touch ups that are needed? What about a good, thorough “spring clean” of the church inside and out – would you like to lend a hand there? Any ideas you have, please contact a Pastoral Councillor – the Pastoral Council is meeting this Wednesday evening. Whatever help you can give – large or small – will help all parishioners and others celebrate our Centenary.

BECOME A CATECHIST OR ASSISTANT TEACHING SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Catechists and Assistants are needed for one-half hour per week in our local State Primary Schools. Education and Training is provided. The Level One course is being held in Wollongong, 09:30 to 13:30 on Fridays, 18, 25 August and 1 September – or you can attend via Zoom. You will be doing a great service in our parish for young people to hear the Good News. **Thank you** to the Catechists already working in our parish, giving 30 minutes each week!

ORDINATION TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

At St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong, on Saturday, 2 September, Bishop Brian will ordain **Lawrence Burns** and **Rodney Mackrill** to the permanent diaconate. Both are married men with families. All are welcome.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	14 Aug	St Maximilian Kolbe, friar priest, martyr	Deuteronomy 10:12-22	Matthew 17:22-27	
Tuesday	15 Aug	The Assumption of Mary	Revelation 11:19,12:1-6,10	1 Corinthians 15:20-26	Luke 1:39-56
Wednesday	16 Aug	Wednesday of Ordinary Time Week 19	Deuteronomy 34:1-12	Matthew 18:15-20	
Thursday	17 Aug	Thursday of Ordinary Time Week 19	Joshua 3:7-11,13-17	Matthew 18:21-19:1	
Friday	18 Aug	Friday of Ordinary Time Week 19	Joshua 24:1-13	Matthew 19:3-12	
Saturday	19 Aug	Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 19	Joshua 24:14-29	Matthew 19:13-15	
Sunday	20 Aug	20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – Scripture Readings are listed below.			

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Caramel Oat Slice *from Pat*

Base: 125g butter ½ cup sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, 1 cup coconut, 1 cup plain flour. Melt butter, add sugar, vanilla, coconut and flour. Press into 18cm x 28cm tin and bake for 20min. Cool slightly and top with filling.

Filling: 410g condensed milk, 60g butter, 2 tbsp golden syrup. Put all filling ingredients into a saucepan, stir over a low heat until butter melts. Increase heat and simmer gently, stirring continually until mixture is a light golden brown. Spread hot caramel over the base.

Topping: 1 cup coconut, ½ cup rolled oats, 60g butter, 1 tbsp golden syrup. Combine all dry ingredients in a bowl. Melt the butter and syrup and add to the dry ingredients. Sprinkle over the filling. Return to oven and bake for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Allow to cool before cutting.

The manager at the local IKEA is retiring, so I sent him a cake.



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, long life milk, tea bags, small coffee, tinned seafood, spreads

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 12 August	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Sunday, 13 August	09:30	Andrew returns after his sabbatical
✦ Tuesday, 15 August	11:00	Funeral of Pamela O'Donnell
✦ Tuesday, 15 August	17:30	Mass of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
✦ Friday, 18 August	09:30	Years 2 and 4 attending Mass
✦ Saturday, 19 August	17:30	One Baptism during Mass
✦ Sunday, 20 August		Last chance to book in for dinner next Saturday, Andrew's 50 th !
✦ Friday, 25 August	09:30	Years 1 and 6 attending Mass
✦ Saturday, 26 August	17:30	Andrew's 50 th Anniversary of Ordination – Mass and Dinner
✦ Friday, 1 September	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass Year 3 attending Mass

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

1st Reading 1 Kings 19:9,11-13

2nd Reading Romans 9:1-5

Gospel Matthew 14:22-33

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

1st Reading Isaiah 56:1,6-7

2nd Reading Romans 11:13-15,29-32

Gospel Matthew 15:21-28

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 17:30

Sunday 08:00

☞ Saturday Mass recorded

USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday _____

Tuesday ☞ 17:30

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday

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

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