



## Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**19/20 AUGUST 2023**  
**20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A**  
**DINNER ON 26 AUGUST**

### **THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

### *Food for Dogs?*

Sunday's Gospel can give us a headache. Jesus refuses to hear a woman because she is, in his metaphor, one of the "dogs." **OUCH!**

The Canaanite woman cries out for help and Jesus at first will not even talk to her. The disciples demand that he send her away because she is a trouble-maker, and he seems to agree with them. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," he says.

She is from Canaan, not Israel.

Doesn't Christ's Holy Spirit smile within you and me when we ask for what we need?

Finally, the poor woman walks right up, does "homage" to Jesus and says, "Lord, help me." Jesus would never ignore such words, at least so we Christians believe. Nor should we ever be deaf to words like this in our own daily lives.

However, he says to her, "It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs."

**OUCH** indeed. This is the line that is so hard for us to understand. So un-Jesus-like.

There are clues. She first called out to him with the words "Son of David." This is a term hallowed by use in the ancient Hebrew scriptures, always referring to the Messiah. She is a Canaanite, and they did not believe in any Messiah-to-come, especially not one that would descend from David. Yet this woman, against her whole background, seems to have belief in Jesus as Messiah.

She calls him "Lord." In Matthew's Gospel this is an explicit admission that Jesus and God are one. Going just on her language, this is proof that she believed in him as the Savior.

Surely, he sensed this.

But Israelites and Canaanites had long been in strife. How could "they" with their strange gods produce a woman who believes in the one God and in Jesus as the Christ? Is it possible that Jesus was drawing her out, teasing her in order to strengthen her belief?

Perhaps he was quoting the word "dogs" as a reference to names the two peoples called each other. Something like this: "my people of Israel believe in the one God and your people do not. How can I give their food to you 'dogs,' as we call you?"

The woman's quick wit provides a wonderful, humble, bantering response that wins the day. "Even dogs eat scraps that fall from their master's table," she says. It is a riposte, a parry, a counter-thrust, and Jesus loves it. She is saying, "It does not matter what a person's status is as long as they believe. And I do believe."

I'll bet Jesus smiled a great smile as he told her how great her faith was. Maybe he laughed at her fast repartee. And of course he gladly gave her what she asked; he cured her daughter.

Doesn't Christ's Holy Spirit smile within you and me when we ask for what we need? When we let nothing stand in the way, like our own origins, our status in life, our sins, and maybe even our rejection by others?

Remember when we approached Communion and held out our hands and said in effect, "Son of David, have pity on me." This is a paraphrase of the Canaanite woman. Our response is "Amen," which means "I do believe," just like the woman.

Let us mean it this Sunday, when we attend Mass – or even if we "attend" only online.

Sometimes the gospel narrative has a ring of authenticity that is unmistakable. The response of Jesus to the Canaanite woman, in today's reading, must have been puzzling – even embarrassing – to Christian converts from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. Jesus, in fact, echoes the Jewish custom in his time, of referring to Gentiles as 'dogs'. It can only have been retained in the gospel tradition because it was what he had said. Those who heard the brave woman pleading for her daughter against all odds – she was an outsider appealing to a Jewish teacher, a plaintive voice in a very masculine world – must have remembered her story as a remarkable moment in the life of the Saviour. What is more, she is remembered as seeming to get the better of Jesus in their exchange. But this exchange leads, in the end, to a moment that those who witnessed it would never forget, confronting them with the generous and inclusive ways of God: 'Woman, your have great faith. Let your wish be granted'.

Once again we should recall that this incident is included in a narrative section of Matthew's gospel, in which Jesus is instructing his disciples. A significant part of the community for whom this gospel was written had belonged to a Jewish community that was extremely exclusive and intolerant. This attitude is puzzling, because the Old Testament scriptures included a remarkable vision of God's plan as ultimately inclusive of all peoples. Abraham was promised that he would be father of many nations; the prophets looked forward to the peoples of the world – even



✠✠ Israel's enemies – flocking to Jerusalem to worship the true God. In today's reading from Isaiah, the prophet declares, in the name of God, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples'. As they embraced the Christian faith, Matthew's community would have recognised that this great vision was being fulfilled with the inclusion of the Gentiles. But old ways die hard. They needed to renew their identification with the inclusive ways of God – something we too need to do as we meet the misconceptions and unfriendliness of today's post-Christian outlook.

But why did Jesus hesitate, seeming to share in the intolerance of his contemporaries? The immediate task of the mission he had received from his Father was to call the chosen people back to the role that had been given them in a plan that was to benefit the whole human family – 'I was sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel'. If they had been true to the covenant, learning to identify with the ways of God, they would have fulfilled their mission to be 'a light to the nations', a living invitation to find the true God. Jesus so angered the people of his own town of Nazareth, when he spoke of the inclusive ways of God, that they wanted to stone him. This issue was probably an important factor in the conflict that led to his death. In his exchange with the woman, he was probably referring to the messianic banquet of the end-time, that he had foretold would be shared by people coming from the East and the West. In the end, the extraordinary generosity of his words to the pagan woman, 'Woman, you have great faith', cancels out the apparent rejection of his first words to her. They invite us to rejoice that we share in her faith. We know he is the true 'light to the nations', fulfilling in his person the great destiny of Israel, bringing the whole human family to join in the messianic banquet.

Today's readings present a wonderfully universal perspective on God's offer of salvation. This is a perspective that is very dear to us as Catholic Christians. As you know 'Catholic' means universal. Jesus came to offer love to all, and all are invited to belong to the family of his disciples. As Catholics we are committed to an understanding of Christianity that is meant for all, that is offered to all and that belongs to all who want it. 'Catholic' was a name given to Christians very early when it became obvious to outsiders that Christians belonged to all walks of life and welcomed people from all racial and religious groups. The earliest extant example of the word 'Catholic' being used of the Church is from the first years of the Second Century in a letter from Ignatius of Antioch to the community in Smyrna. He makes the simple statement: 'Wherever Christ is, there is the Catholic Church' (Ignatius to the Community in Smyrna 8). The Spirit of God present in the Church has made clear to us the importance of freedom of religion, and has encouraged us to have an ecumenical heart as well as to respect the primacy of conscience. We are also constantly reminded to do what we can to create a welcoming community to provide a spiritual home for those searching to respond to God's love. Let us help each other be open to grace so that we become more loving, more forgiving, more gentle, more compassionate, more humble, more transparently pure and welcoming.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading      Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

- ✠ "Observe what is right, do what is just." Is Isaiah telling us to look at situations in our lives, discern what is right, and do a just action to change it? Are today's crises—racial, economic and environmental—offering us opportunities to discern and become prophets of change?
- ✠ "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Is God's house open to just a few people or all people? Did the chosen folks have to wrestle with that idea? Today, does racial bias relate to this problem? What is the message in this reading—to go find the excluded and bring them in?

### Second Reading      Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

- ✠ "The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable." According to this statement of St. Paul, will there ever be a change in God's mind, to stop loving us? "Even if we are faithless, he is faithful, because he cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). Explain?
- ✠ St Paul says that the Israelites disobeyed yet received mercy; the Gentiles disobeyed and received it too. Mercy is a profound characteristic of God. Trace Jesus' mercy in today's Gospel to the Canaanite woman?

### Gospel      Matthew 15:21-28

- ✠ What is it about her statement, "Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters" that prompts Jesus to grant her request? Do you think he might have understood his mission from the Father better, during this conversation?
- ✠ What risk did the Canaanite woman take when she cried, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David!" Who are the risk takers today? For the environment? For racial justice? For caring for people with the virus? Is anything great gained without risk?

The woman who was sick took a risk when she furtively touched the hem of Jesus' cloak: she risked being ridiculed. But she risked because she wanted to be cured, she wanted to reach Jesus. Remember the Canaanite woman. Women risk more than men do! That's true: they are better at it! We have to admit that. Do I take risks, or do I follow Jesus according to the rules of my insurance company? ... Do I put my faith in Jesus? Do I entrust my life to Jesus? Am I walking behind Jesus even if sometimes I seem ridiculous? Or am I sitting still, watching what others are doing.

– Pope Francis, Homily, Mass in Chapel of Santa Marta, 13 January 2017.

## NEW PARISH SECRETARY, KERRY FABON

A new Parish Secretary has been employed, **KERRY FABON**. Kerry has been the Parish Secretary at All Saints Catholic Parish, Shellharbour City, and she lives at Corrimal. Kerry will commence work on **Tuesday, 22 August**, and the Parish Office hours will remain the same. If you are passing, please call in and say "hi!" to Kerry. Welcome!



## TWO UPCOMING SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday, 26 August 17:30 Mass Special Mass for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of Andrew Granc ofm as a friar priest, followed by dinner for ALL to follow in the Hall.**

### INVITATION TO THE CELEBRATION OF ANDREW'S 50<sup>TH</sup> 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 **this Sunday the latest, 20 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!**

**If you can help prepare for the evening, please turn up to the hall in the school grounds at 13:00 on Saturday, 26 August – tables to be set up, decorations, etc. Please turn up if you can spare 30 minutes or so.**



**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.**

## BAPTISM THIS WEEKEND

**WELCOME to BEAR OVINGTON** baptised in our Parish this Saturday during the 17:30 Mass: **welcome and thank you** to Bear's parents, godparents, family and friends for bringing Bear to our Parish community.

The next Baptisms to be held in our Parish will be during Masses **Saturday or Sunday, 16/17 September 2023**. The next Baptism meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 31 August 2023 at 19:15**. Call in to the Parish Office to collect the Baptism Enrolment Forms.

**Please note there will be no Baptisms during October this year as Ken will be away during October.**

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.



## FIRST PENANCE AND FIRST COMMUNION 2023

The Sacrament of First Communion is given to children who have reached the age of reason, which is accepted as seven years old, that is, when a child is in Year 2. [Canons 913, 914] Prior to receiving First Communion, children are to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance [Reconciliation].

In order to prepare for these Sacraments, there is a preparation program consisting of the following: a parent information evening; two classes (after school hours) in preparation for First Penance; celebration of First Penance; two classes (after school hours) in preparation for First Communion.

**Enrolments close on 5 September 2023.** Enrolment Forms may be downloaded from the Parish website. Enrolment forms are to be **emailed or delivered to the Parish Office by 5 September 2023.**

**Dates for First Penance and First Communion** are listed on the Parish website.

## CONISTON HOMELESS HUB

The Homeless Hub centre is located at 12-16 Miller Street, Coniston. The Vinnies Van operates out of this centre and provides emergency food relief and items for daily living to people experiencing homelessness and those living in difficult circumstances, 5 days a week. The Vinnies Homeless Hub and the Vinnies Van would be grateful for any one off or regular donations of food items, small toiletry items, sleeping bags, warm jackets, gloves, beanies, and snacks/poppers for school aged children. To donate ☎ 4228 9355 or ✉ [vinniesvan@vinnies.org.au](mailto:vinniesvan@vinnies.org.au)

## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	21 Aug	St Pius X, pope	Judges 2:11-19	Matthew 19:16-22
Tuesday	22 Aug	The Queenship of Mary	Judges 6:11-14	Matthew 19:23-30
Wednesday	23 Aug	Wednesday of Ordinary Time Week 20	Judges 9:6-15	Matthew 20:1-16
Thursday	24 Aug	St Bartholomew, apostle	Revelation 21:9-14	John 1:45-51
Friday	25 Aug	Friday of Ordinary Time Week 20	Ruth 1:1,3-6,14-16	Matthew 22:34-40
Saturday	26 Aug	Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 20	Ruth 2:1-3,8-11; 4:13-17	Matthew 23:1-12
Sunday	27 Aug	21 <sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

### THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Egg Free Carrot Cake from Chef Raymond

1 cup wholemeal flour; 1 cup grated carrot; ½ cup castor sugar; 2 tbsp brown sugar; 1 tsp baking powder; 1 tsp baking soda; 1 tsp cinnamon powder; ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil; 1 cup milk; 1 cup chopped walnuts.

Frosting: 200g cream cheese; 1 tbsp butter; 2 tbsp powdered [icing] sugar; 1 tsp vanilla extract; Toasted coconut and chopped walnuts, to garnish.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Into a bowl sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon. Add in the milk, sugar, oil and combine. Finally, stir through the carrot and walnuts through the mixture. Place in a greased oven tin and bake for 30 to 35 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the frosting by whisking at high speed the cream cheese and butter together. Then add the sugar and vanilla and beat more slowly. When the cake is cooled – spread over the frosting and sprinkle with coconut and walnuts..

**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

✦ Sunday, 20 August	Last chance to book in for dinner next Saturday, Andrew's 50 <sup>th</sup> !
✦ Friday, 25 August	09:30 Years 1 and 6 attending Mass
✦ Saturday, 26 August	17:30 Andrew's 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination – Mass and Dinner
✦ Thursday, 31 August	19:15 Baptism preparation meeting for September Baptisms
✦ Friday, 1 September	09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass Year 3 attending Mass
✦ Saturday, 2 September	10:30 Lawrence Burns and Rodney Mackrill ordained as Deacons
✦ Weekend, 2/3 September	Blessing of Fathers for Father's Day at both weekend Masses
✦ Monday, 4 September	Ken at Canon Law Conference, Christchurch, until Thursday, 7 Sep
✦ Tuesday, 5 September	Enrolments for First Penance and First Communion CLOSE for 2023
✦ Tuesday, 12 September	19:30 Parents' Meeting for First Penance and First Communion

#### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

#### 20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 56:1,6-7

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Romans 11:13-15,29-32

Gospel Matthew 15:21-28

#### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

#### 21<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 22:19-23

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Romans 11:33-36

Gospel Matthew 16:13-20

#### 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

Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 09:00-15:30; Fri 09:30-14:30

🌐 [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

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Parish School of St Michael

☎ 4267 2560

#### USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday ☞ 17:30

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday