



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
16/17 SEPTEMBER 2023
24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A
BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Breaking the Chain

Forgiveness. It is the inner meaning of Sunday's Mass.

Our culture has some pretty diverse understandings of what forgiveness means. For some it is a condescending act performed only by one person who is higher than the other—a King or Queen, who leans down to grant pardon.

For others it means "I forgive the one who hurt me but I can never forget." Under such an attitude, one will remain angry forever but will never act upon it.

Which leads to another possible meaning, that a person might choke back their hurt and anger by a sheer act of the will. They may have been savaged by someone, but will choke down their reaction.

So, what is the real basis of forgiveness? On Easter Sunday of 1960, that great seer and lover of God, Dag Hammarskjöld, wrote an interpretation:

Forgiveness breaks the chain of causality because he who 'forgives' you—out of love—takes upon himself the consequences of what you have done. Forgiveness, therefore, always entails a sacrifice. The price you must pay for your own liberation through another's sacrifice is that you in turn must be willing to liberate in the same way, irrespective of the consequences to yourself. (Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, p.197)



So much to think about in these brief words.

The first reading, from the Book of Sirach, tells how hateful wrath and anger are, how the sinner "hugs them tight," a wonderful image. To let them go and forgive is such a good idea, but we wonder why it is the right one. Maybe one needs to be angry.

The Psalm speaks beautifully about God's forgiving love: Bless God, who forgives your sin, and heals every illness, who snatches you from death and enfolds you with tender care. And the second reading says we ought to live not for ourselves but for others. We should imitate God. But again, how?

The gospel illustrates what forgiveness means: the tale of the ungrateful servant.

Underneath this question is the answer we are looking for. The real motivation for forgiveness is gratitude, loving gratitude. If someone has had pity on me out of love, then my authentic reaction will be deep appreciation. I will want to give to someone else the liberation I have received, especially if that person has hurt me. I will want to pass the gift on.

God has loved us so kindly; can we feel grateful? Can we halt the cycle of retribution and pass along love instead of hate?

As you and I receive Christ's presence this Sunday, let us sense God's forgiving love signified so deeply in the sacraments. Let us allow our gratitude to flow out and become the same forgiving love toward others.

During this time of pilgrimage, sinfulness in the life of the Church obscures the reality of our life in Christ – a common life that should be a sign of hope for struggling humanity. It is not without reason that we begin the Church's most solemn liturgies with an acknowledgement of our sinfulness. It should not surprise us, therefore, that the passage of Matthew's gospel from which we are reading – concerning our life in the Church – is in large part about problems associated with the sinfulness of members of the Church. Last Sunday's reading discussed the reconciliation of members guilty of public crimes destructive of the community. Today's reading concerns the forgiveness called for within the community at a personal level.

As was so often the case, Peter's impulsiveness gives rise to an important lesson. Peter has received a commission that involves considerable power in the life of the community of disciples. He thinks he is expressing what Jesus expects of him in the exercise of his authority. The question he puts to Jesus implies that he will be ready to forgive 'seven times'. His round number really hints at an indefinite readiness to forgive. Apparently, the scribes of the day taught that one was not obliged to forgive after the third or fourth time. But the response of Jesus declares that this vagueness is not enough: 'Not seven, but seventy seven times' – there should be no limit to our readiness to forgive! Perhaps, as we hear this gospel, we are tempted to think that it has little to do with us – because we have never faced up to the ill will and resentments we have towards other members of our community, and to the gossiping and factions these attitudes give rise to. Though these attitudes may not seem seriously sinful, they can be very damaging, making it impossible for our parishes to live the kind of life that leads others to share in our faith. Resentment and the vengeful spirit have been part of the human story since the beginning. Living in covenant with living God, and learning God's ways, old Israel came to accept that vengeance must be left to the Lord. For peoples who did not know the covenant, there was no limit to the spirit of revenge. In fact, the response of Jesus reminds us of



✠✠ this spirit, as expressed in book of Genesis, where Lamech boasts that he will exact ‘vengeance seventy-seven fold’ (Genesis 4:24). Jesus is reminding us of his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew’s text, Jesus is remembered as teaching, ‘Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48). Because the meaning of the word, ‘perfect’, in the biblical tradition has not been properly understood, one contemporary Bible renders this verse, ‘Set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father sets none to his’. The parable of the unforgiving manager drives home this lesson. Clearly, the ruler’s generosity brings to mind the generosity of God. The debt forgiven was a fantastic amount, defying the imagination of Jesus’ audience, impossible to repay. We are invited to compare our unforgiving spirit with the boundless generosity of our God.

Let us examine our attitudes to others in our worshipping community. Have we failed to face up to our antagonisms, and tended to justify them by being judgmental of the attitudes of our fellow Christians? The great Church Father, John Chrysostom, has good advice for us as we examine our conscience. If we are not aware of our destructive attitudes, we shall never grow up spiritually. On the other hand, he tells us, awareness of our own failings helps us to find the wisdom, gentleness and compassion that should be ours as true followers of the Saviour.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Sirach 27:30-28:7

- ✠ Is it harder for you to forgive someone else or to receive forgiveness from them? As the reading asks, “... can he seek pardon for his own sins?” If you or your ancestors are the ones who need forgiveness, is there some way you might apologize/make reparation for actions that happened in the past, such as slavery or the destruction of the environment?
- ✠ When you want to “hug wrath and anger tight,” as the reading puts it, do you have ways, or people, or places that will help you calm down your anger?

Second Reading Romans 14:7-9

- ✠ Sometimes God asks people to do extraordinary things. But most of the time not. How do you live your ordinary life for the Lord? Can you find God there? If you did that regularly, would your life be, paradoxically, extraordinary?
- ✠ God created all things in love, entered creation, and God’s very self rescued us. God does not leave us alone in this world or the next. Does thinking in such a way help you know you are loved? And if you are a loving person, would you have time for things like holding grudges? Might you just want to “live for the Lord”?

Gospel Matthew 18:21-35

- ✠ Do you think God wants you to forgive your neighbour just for your neighbour’s sake, or for yours too? We know that we need unlimited forgiveness ourselves. God loves us so much God has forgiven all our sins. Should those thoughts help us forgive others?
- ✠ According to Pope Francis’ understanding of the parable in the Gospel, forgiveness can take one of two routes: justice or mercy. Which one works all the time?

In the parable we find two different attitudes: God’s—represented by the king who forgives a lot, because God always forgives—and that of the man. In the divine attitude justice is pervaded with mercy, whereas the human attitude is limited to justice. Jesus exhorts us to open ourselves with courage to the strength of forgiveness, because in life not everything can be resolved with justice. We know this. There is a need for that merciful love, which is also at the basis of the Lord’s answer to Peter’s question, which precedes the parable. Peter’s question goes like this: “Lord, how often should I forgive my brother or sister if they sin against me?” ...

How much suffering, how many wounds, how many wars could be avoided if forgiveness and mercy were the style of our life! ... How many disunited families, who do not know how to forgive each other. How many brothers and sisters bear this resentment within. It is necessary to apply merciful love to all human relationships: between spouses, between parents and children, within our communities, in the Church and also in society and politics.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2020.

CENTENARY OF THE PARISH – SATURDAY, 28 OCTOBER

All are invited to join our parish family, old and new, to celebrate the Parish’s first 100 years! Mass with Bishop Brian will be held at **17:30 on Saturday, 28 October**, followed by a community gathering: a BBQ in the school grounds for **all**. Further details to follow. In addition, to celebrate the Centenary, you will be able to order special mementos: **100 Year Anniversary Book; Centenary Wine Glasses; Centenary Wines – Sauvignon Blanc or Merlot**. Order forms are available in the church, from the Parish Office, or on the Parish’s website or with the Bulletin emails. **Orders** need to be placed by **Tuesday, 3 October the latest**. Hand or email in your order form to the Parish Office, or in a special box on the front seat in the church. **By 10 October**, please phone or email the Parish Office, or complete the sheet in the church indicating how many from your family will be attending the **BBQ dinner after the 17:30 Mass on Saturday, 28 October**. All are invited to attend.

Order Forms for mementos are available from the church, the Parish Office or online.

BAPTISM THIS WEEKEND – WELCOME TO CLEO!

WELCOME to **CLEO GENCO** 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, 18/19 November 2023**. The next Baptism meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 28 September** or **Thursday, 2 November 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.



THANK YOU FROM ANDREW

Dear Friends and Parishioners

My Golden Jubilee celebration was a wonderful occasion. A gathering of parishioners and friends at our Parish Eucharistic Table in the church then in the Parish Centre at the celebratory dinner tables.

GRATITUDE was a dominant emotion I felt on the occasion. Gratitude for:

- ♦ the awesome gift of priestly ministry over 50 years;
- ♦ 11½ years of years of living out that ministry within the Parish of St Michael as well as in the neighbouring Parishes of Helensburgh and Corrimal;
- ♦ for those involved in the preparations and organization of the Jubilee, both for the liturgy and dinner;
- ♦ for the many expressions of love and support through your good wishes/cards and gifts;
- ♦ for those who attended the celebration as well as those who were unable to be present who nonetheless communicated their good wishes...

Over the years folk have suggested I write-up my memoirs. This I now plan to do. My low vision gives me an added incentive! – for I firmly believe in that ancient truth – expressed by Confucius and certainly in the Gospels: it is not with our physical eyes that we truly see – rather with the eyes of the heart.

Thank you **one** and **all**.

Peace and All Good to **YOU** – Andrew Granc ofm.

REFERENDUM 2023 – INFORMATION SESSION, 11:00, 25 SEPTEMBER – ALL WELCOME

At the heart of the upcoming Voice to Parliament Referendum is the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the world's oldest continuing culture, in the Australian Constitution. As Catholics, we have a responsibility to listen to the voices of First Australians and to work towards a more just and equitable society.

The mission of the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council is to educate and inform our fellow Catholics on this pivotal moment in Australia's history. We have collated and created statements and resources – grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching – to help you on your process of discernment.

The Voice to Parliament Referendum provides all Catholics with a unique opportunity to come together as a community and draw upon our faith and moral grounding to make an informed decision. One Journey – Together. <https://indigenousvoice.church/>

In our Parish, the Pastoral Council has planned to have an **information session** for parishioners to find out about the Referendum. ***If you don't know, find out – don't be ignorant.*** All are welcome: **Monday, 25 September, 10:30am morning tea, then 11:00am in the church.** No booking required – just turn up.



BLESSING OF ANIMALS, MONDAY, 2 OCTOBER AT 9:30AM

As usual, the Blessing of Animals will take place on the **Monday** of the long weekend, **2 October at 9:30am** at the **Parish of Saint Michael, 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul**. The blessing takes place in the courtyard next to the church. All animals under 800kg and their carers are welcome, though please keep the larger crocodiles on a tight leash. The **feast of St Francis of Assisi** is on **Wednesday, 4 October**, with **Mass at 9:00am** – animals are welcome at that Mass.

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

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|-----------|--------|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| Monday | 18 Sep | Monday of Ordinary Time Week 24 | 1 Timothy 2:1-8 | Luke 7:1-10 |
| Tuesday | 19 Sep | Tuesday of Ordinary Time Week 24 | 1 Timothy 3:1-13 | Luke 7:11-17 |
| Wednesday | 20 Sep | St Andrew Kim Tae-gon ++, martyrs | 1 Timothy 3:14-16 | Luke 7:31-35 |
| Thursday | 21 Sep | St Matthew, apostle, evangelist | Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13 | Matthew 9:9-13 |
| Friday | 22 Sep | Friday of Ordinary Time Week 24 | 1 Timothy 6:2-12 | Luke 8:1-3 |
| Saturday | 23 Sep | St Pius of Pietrelcina, priest | 1 Timothy 6:13-16 | Luke 8:4-15 |
| Sunday | 24 Sep | 25 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i> | | |

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Anzac Slice with Cranberries

1 cup rolled oats; 1 cup plain flour; ½ cup sugar; ¾ cup desiccated coconut; 2 tbsp golden syrup; 125g butter; 1 tsp bicarbonate soda; 1 tbsp boiling water; 65g pepitas (pumpkin seeds); 150g cranberries; 125g white choc chips. Mix oats, flour, sugar and coconut together. Add cranberries, pepitas and white chocolate bits. Melt golden syrup and butter together. Mix soda and boiling water. Add to melted butter and syrup. Add to dry ingredients. Place in a lined slice tray. Bake in slow oven, 150°C fan-forced for 25–30 minutes.

Please send in your favourite recipe so it can be shared in the Bulletin – we need more recipes!

SPRING EQUINOX 16:50 ON SATURDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER

The equinox is the moment – time and date (twice each year) – at which the sun crosses – is directly above – the celestial equator, when day and night are of approximately equal length. On the day of the equinox – around 20 March and 23 September – the Sun appears to rise “due east” and set “due west”. The equinoxes are the only time when both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere experience roughly equal amounts of daytime and nighttime.

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

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|--------------------------|-------|--|
| ✦ Tuesday, 19 September | 15:45 | First Penance Class #1 |
| ✦ Friday, 22 September | | End of School Term 2 |
| ✦ Saturday, 23 September | | Surfing Season opens – SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS |
| | 16:50 | Spring Equinox – summer is getting even closer! |
| ✦ Thursday, 28 September | 19:15 | Baptism Preparation Meeting for November Baptisms |
| ✦ Sunday, 1 October | 02:00 | Daylight Saving begins ... spring FORWARD one hour |
| ✦ Monday, 2 October | 09:30 | Blessing of Animals in courtyard next to the church |



USED STAMPS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME – put them in the box in the sacristy.

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| <p>THIS Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Sirach 27:30–28:7</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 14:7-9</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 18:21-35</p> | <p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Isaiah 55:6-9</p> <p>2nd Reading Philippians 1:20-24</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 20:1-16</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>Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary</p> <p>Tues, Wed 09:00–15:00; Fri 08:30–15:00</p> | <p>www.thirroulcatholic.org.au:1-16</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> |