



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
7 / 8 OCTOBER 2023
27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A
"I HAVE A DREAM"

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Real Story

There is a very powerful truth-telling device, as we saw two Sundays ago: the device called *story*.

Our brains love stories because they include events with “before-and-after” built right in, along with suspense, action, relationships and intercommunication; not to mention emotion and elation and disappointment and so on. These elements are the most like daily experience of any device we have in the language.

So, on Sunday we hear several stories of a vineyard.

The first tells about “a friend” who carefully built a vineyard – clearing stones, building a watchtower, planting the choicest vines (first reading). He even “hewed out a wine vat.” But the vineyard yielded bad grapes. God tells the people of Jerusalem and Judah in vivid language that they themselves are this vineyard, and that he is going to destroy it, trample it down. They would not let God's love grow up among them.

In the gospel, Jesus embroiders this tale. In just one sentence he handles the part about planting a vineyard, digging out a wine press, building a tower. Then he goes further.

In this version he says that the owner rents his rich vineyard to tenants, as was the custom, and he trusts them to raise choice grapes for him. In due season he sends his servants to collect the yield—which must have been great because the tenants dishonestly want to keep everything including the vineyard. So, they beat or stone or even kill the servants!

Next, a surprising, seemingly implausible twist to the tale. The owner decides to send his own son, thinking that the tenants will surely respect him. Would you have done the same? Wouldn't you have said, “I will keep my family away from these criminals”?

Most people surely would. But not the owner. He sends his only son into the trap and the tenants kill him.

The details of the two stories are different, but is it the same story, about God punishing those who fail to produce? Actually, the two parables are not the same. There is much, much more in the gospel. Jesus hints at this afterwards: “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’?”

This is a new metaphor, and it is the key to the gospel tale. It fills the story with dramatic new meaning.

The son sent into the vineyard is Jesus himself!

He is to be rejected and killed, just as the prophets and the owner's son were. But here is the difference: as God's son he is entirely willing to go among the sinning people. He lives by compassion, and danger takes second place.

If the main character in the Gospel were called Life, and it had its own choices to make, it would desire to turn into another being, one called Love. Life always yearns to go back to its source, the everlasting union called by that simple name, love.

Greed and disregard stop this progress. True Life gets buried. It rises again when we look to Jesus on Sundays. He is love. He is there for us in our vineyard.

God sent his own son into the trap of human life not because life is perfect, but because love is.

Seen from a human point of view, salvation history (the story of God's dealings with humanity) is a tragedy; but the divine mercy and generosity has turned this tragedy into God's triumph. This great drama comes to its climax, of course, in the life, death and resurrection of the Saviour: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son’. The parable of Jesus in today's reading from Matthew's gospel refers to the tragedy that he now recognises to be inevitable. We have already become familiar with the original form of the parables of Jesus: a story that leaves his hearers confronted by an unsettling question. Today's study of the formation of the gospels makes it clear that, as these parable stories were retold in the preaching of the early Church, they were often added to, to bring out lessons for later audiences. And it is evident that this parable – originally a challenge to leaders of the Jewish nation – has become, for those who have suffered persecution from the synagogue, a condemnation of the ‘chief priests and elders of the people’. The fact that Jesus foretells his death, but makes no reference to the resurrection that was so central to the faith of the first Christians, makes it clear that the parable is not a creation of the later Christian community, but is recalled as having been told by Jesus himself.

It is not difficult to identify the main elements of the original parable. A story that reflects common experience captures the attention of the audience, and unfolds predictably; the services of tenant farmers was commonly made use of by absentee landlords – a situation that not infrequently gave rise to disputes and conflicts, particularly ↗ ↘



✠✠ if the landlord was not close at hand. At the same time, however, in the back of the minds of the audience is an awareness that, in the traditions of Israel, the vineyard theme has often been used to describe God's dealings with Israel. We are told that the prophet Isaiah's 'Song of love for the vineyard', echoed in the parable, was so well known in the time of Jesus that many people knew it by heart. It is a remarkable declaration – a moving expression of faith in the mysterious love and generosity that found expression in the election of Israel in the plan of God; and at the same time it is an acknowledgement of infidelity and failure. According to the usual pattern, as the story unfolds the audience is suddenly confronted by an unexpected turn of events. In this case it is the unreasonable decision of the landlord to send his own son on an errand that has led to so much violence and bloodshed: 'They will respect my son'. Against the background of the vineyard theme, Jesus, who has come to recognise that his death is inevitable, confronts his hearers with the final expression of the folly of divine love.

As Matthew's community tells the story of the parable, some of the modifications are obvious enough. In their account, the question Jesus puts to the leaders of the people has been added – the lesson of the parable is brought out more clearly, as the leaders are condemned out of their own lips. The reference to the psalm's 'stone rejected by the builders', often repeated in the New Testament, is an explanatory addition, as is the conclusion: 'The Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit'. Matthew's community knows that the parable is also a challenge for them – as the New Israel, they are now God's vineyard: 'Every branch in me that bears no fruit', Jesus declares, 'my Father cuts away'. Paul tells the Philippians that, if they bear good fruit, 'The God of peace will be with them'.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Isaiah 5:1-7

- ↳ "What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Could we have done anything to prevent discrimination? What could we have done to prevent global warming? What can we do now to rectify other wrongs? Might these crises be comparable to the "wild grapes" Isaiah sings about in his friend's vineyard?
- ↳ What are some things you could do if you discover that all the "grapes" in your spiritual garden were all turning out small or sickly?

Second Reading Philippians 4:6-9

- ↳ How do you feel about the God of peace standing guard over your mind and heart? What does St Paul say takes the place of anxiety and the worries? Are his words true for you?
- ↳ What would happen to anxieties in the world right now (e.g., global warming, gun violence, immigration, racial injustice) if all people embraced whatever is true, whatever is honourable, or just, or pure, or lovely, or gracious, ... anything worthy of praise?

Gospel Matthew 21:33-43

- ↳ Who are God's messengers right now? What changes in society do they advocate? How can you somehow be God's envoy in your community, work, Church or the world? Will you move toward necessary changes in society?
- ↳ According to Pope Francis what does superficial religiosity refer to? Is God always beside us to help us if we need it? Does God tire of waiting for us to change our minds?

[My brothers and sisters, God does not avenge himself. God loves. ... He waits for us to forgive us, to embrace us. Through the "rejected stones"—and Christ is the first stone that the builders rejected—through situations of weakness and sin, God continues to circulate "the new wine" of his vineyard, namely mercy. This is the new wine of the Lord's vineyard: mercy....

The urgency of replying with good fruits to the call of the Lord, who asks us to become his vineyard, helps us understand what is new and original about the Christian faith. It is not so much the sum of precepts and moral norms but rather, it is first and foremost a proposal of love which God makes through Jesus and continues to make with humankind. It is an invitation to enter into this love story, by becoming a lively and open vine, rich in fruits and hope for everyone. A closed vineyard can become wild and produce wild grapes. We are called to leave this vineyard to put ourselves at the service of our brothers and sisters who are not with us, in order to shake each other and encourage each other, to remind ourselves that we must be the Lord's vineyard in every environment, even the more distant and challenging ones.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 8 October 2017.

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. **Please complete Order Forms AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. 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.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S "I HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH – 28 AUGUST 1963

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But 100 years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself in exile in his own land. And so, we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check.

When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men — yes, Black men as well as white men — would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of colour are concerned. Instead of honouring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked insufficient funds. But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt.

We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to his hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism.

Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. 1963 is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual.

There will be neither rest nor tranquillity in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvellous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny.

And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, when will you be satisfied? We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities.

We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: for whites only.

We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote.

No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our Northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.



... to conclude next week.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

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|-----------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Monday | 9 Oct | Monday of Ordinary Time Week 27 | Jonah 1:1-2:1,11 | Luke 10:25-37 |
| Tuesday ✱ | 10 Oct | Tuesday of Ordinary Time Week 27 | Jonah 3:1-10 | Luke 10:38-42 |
| Wednesday | 11 Oct | St Kenneth (Canice), priest | Jonah 4:1-11 | Luke 11:1-4 |
| Thursday | 12 Oct | Thursday of Ordinary Time Week 27 | Malachi 3:13-20 | Luke 11:5-13 |
| Friday | 13 Oct | Friday of Ordinary Time Week 27 | Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2 | Luke 11:15-26 |
| Saturday | 14 Oct | Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 27 | Joel 4:12-21 | Luke 11:27-28 |
| Sunday | 15 Oct | 28 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i> | | |

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Mars Bar Slice

3 cups Rice Bubbles; 3 Mars Bars; 90 grams butter.

Melt Mars Bars and butter over a low heat. Mix well until smooth. Pour into Rice Bubbles and mix well. Press into a slice tin.

Topping: 200 grams milk chocolate (chopped); 30 grams butter. Melt butter and chocolate together. Spread slice with topping and refrigerate. Cut to size. Enjoy! 😊 😊 😊

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

MASSES NOT 'TELEVISED' FROM 2 TO 27 OCTOBER

Each Saturday evening and Tuesday evening, the Masses at Thirroul are 'recorded' and an email link is sent out so people can watch the Mass. This service seems to be appreciated by not a number of people. As Ken will be away from **2 to 27 October**, in the USA and Canada, attending Canon Law Conferences, Masses from Thirroul will not be 'televised' during that time. The next Mass to be 'televised' will be the Centenary of the Parish Mass, the 17:30 Mass on Saturday, 28 October. In the meantime, you may wish to view Mass from another parish ... St Francis Xavier Parish, Box Hill, Victoria. **Daily Mass** is available from Box Hill Parish. Click on this link: <https://www.facebook.com/GBHparish> Mass is "live streamed": **Weekdays (Monday-Friday): 12:00; Saturday: 17.30; Sunday 10.15.** The Masses are available on the Parish of Box Hill facebook page if you do not want to watch them live. *If you do not have a facebook account*, when you click on the above link, it will ask you to either log in or create an account – but if you dismiss the dialogue box you can then access the Mass. You don't have to have or create a facebook account.



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.

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

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|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------|
| ✦ Saturday, 14 October | 18:30 | Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass |
| ✦ Friday, 27 October | 06:55 | Ken returns from Canon Law Conferences |
| ✦ Saturday, 28 October | 17:30 | Centenary Mass with Bishop Brian, then Centenary BBQ |
| ✦ Wednesday, 1 November | 09:00 | All Saints Day Mass |
| | 19:00 | First Penance – Reconciliation Rite II |
| ✦ Thursday, 2 November | 09:00 | All Souls Day Mass |
| ✦ Friday, 3 November | 09:30 | Anointing of the Sick during Mass |



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

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|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 st Reading | Isaiah 5:1-7 |
| 2 nd Reading | Philippians 4:6-9 |
| Gospel | Matthew 21:33-43 |

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 st Reading | Isaiah 25:6-10 |
| 2 nd Reading | Philippians 4:12-14,19-20 |
| Gospel | Matthew 22:1-14 |

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

| | |
|----------|-------|
| Saturday | 17:30 |
| Sunday | 08:00 |

No Masses recorded 2 to 27 Oct

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 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00

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Parish School of St Michael

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USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| Monday | — |
| Tuesday ✱ | 17:30 |
| Wednesday | 09:00 |
| Thursday | 09:00 |
| Friday | 09:30 |

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday