



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
8/9 JUNE 2024
11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B
ORDINARY TIME NOW UNTIL 30 NOV.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Kinfolk – Family

This week's Gospel reading can be puzzling. For instance:

Jesus is preaching, but his "relatives" come to "seize" him because "he is out of his mind." (Mark 3:21) Picture it. Who are these relatives? They seem to be identified as "his mother and his brothers"! This raises the question whether Jesus actually had brothers and sisters, and whether they, and Mary, the blessed mother, think that he is crazy!

First, did Jesus actually have brothers and sisters in our present-day sense? There are many theories, and this is one: In Semitic usage, the terms "brother," "sister" are applied not only to children of the same parents, but to nephews, nieces, cousins, half-brothers, and half-sisters.

So, going by this alternative, Jesus had cousins and other kin. Do you remember his pregnant mother's trip to see her cousin, Elizabeth? Today children of "first cousins" are called "second cousins," but they would have qualified as brothers and sisters in ancient Semitic usage. Jesus would not be different from other Nazarenes in this regard. Nor would there be a contradiction to anything central to the faith.



Second, could it be that his "mother and his brothers" were among those who thought of him as "out of his mind"? The Gospel of Mark asserts only the following: "His mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him."

Perhaps this was just familial interest on their part instead of a desire to "seize him" and carry him away. Conclusion: we do not have to think that his mother was being critical of Jesus when she arrived with other relatives.

Third: but now, Jesus seems to totally ignore his family. Hearing that they are calling out to him, Jesus says, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"

Some have taken this speech as Jesus rejecting Mary and his other relatives. Actually, it is a statement of Jesus' mission. He is showing that the most important reason for life is the love of God and of one's neighbours, as opposed to the easy and presumably self-enclosed way of staying home where relatives will take care of you. Growth in the biblical kind of love must come from God.

As Jesus says: "whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." He is widening our life-search to include others, not indeed instead of the family but including the family in the overall purpose of life itself: letting in the love of God and passing it along to everyone we know.

Fourth, we have now discovered the meaning of Jesus' words, "whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."

Sounds severe, but it is just repeating the message of love. If a person or a society turns against (blasphemes against) the Holy Spirit of God, they will have shut off the very source of love. As has been seen repeatedly, Christians discovered the Trinity of God by seeing it played out in this world: the love of the Father for the Son, together with the loving inclusion of everything in existence, which is the Holy Spirit.

Situating today's gospel reading in Mark's ongoing narrative can help us understand how Mark puts incidents together to convey the drama of the public life of Jesus. Its beginning in Galilee leaves us in no doubt that Jesus caused quite a stir: he taught with authority; crowds gathered where he was staying; he healed the sick and pronounced the forgiveness of sins; and he began to meet opposition. We are reminded of Mark's sub-text: Who is this man? In today's reading, that question confronts Jesus in two very different forms.

The reaction of the family of Jesus gives us a moving glimpse of his situation after leaving home and becoming a vagabond preacher. Following a very traditional way of life, his family were understandably concerned at what they heard, fearing that Jesus may have become unbalanced. But the mission Jesus is initiating aims to open up a world far beyond human loyalties and expectations. As the months that are follow will show, his teaching, his miracles, and the final witness of his death, are all undertaken to inaugurate nothing less than the new family of God, which he called 'the Kingdom'. This incident also helps us to know Mary, the courageous woman who is our model as she makes the journey of life in the darkness of faith. Several times the Gospels remember Mary 'pondering', 'wondering at what has been said', trusting in 'whatever he says to do'. Jesus' departure from the family home would not have been without pain and anxiety for her. Here we see her seeking to understand her son's mysterious mission along with the troubled family. Though it is not something that Mark adverts to as he recalls this moment, Mary is surely the greatest of all those who 'do the will of God'.



✠✠ The scribes brought a very different challenge. Their vicious attack seems to be an expression of frustration, such as would be expected later in Jesus' ministry – perhaps it is introduced here to underline the sub-text, that we should take with us as we set out to follow Mark's gospel story, Who is this man? Jesus found it easy to point out the inconsistency of his frustrated adversaries' accusation that he is an agent of 'the Prince of demons'. However, what are we to make of the declaration that 'a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven'? Christian faith tells us that there is no possible sin that is beyond the forgiveness of God. The meaning of Jesus teaching is simple enough: Those who, like these scribes, choose to be blind to the working of the Holy Spirit can never find forgiveness so long as they choose not to be open to God's truth.

Today's first reading takes us back to an ancient Near-Eastern myth preserved for us in the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis. In the story of Adam and Eve, the inspired author of Genesis explores the meaning of human existence. He speaks of man and woman as formed in the one creative act of God, and then wrenched apart, each incomplete without the other, each longing for the other in order to be made whole. The mythical drama portrays God as forming us out of the dust of the earth, and breathing into us his own Spirit in order that we might live.

Behind this magnificent image lies a fundamental truth. We each experience the pull of the divine, calling us into dialogue with God, opening up infinite possibilities for our mind and heart, beckoning us to freedom, responsibility and community, calling us to reach beyond where we are in response to the invitation to live in communion with God. All this and more is expressed through the image of the breath breathed into our lungs by the kiss of love given us by our creator God. But there is more to us than that. There is another pull, towards the dust – the dust symbolised here by the serpent. This is the call of the irrational, the temptation to live without discretion, without choice, without freedom, without dialogue and without community. There are influences in our lives which support the spirit, and there are other influences which hold us back in the dust. We are both, and we do ill to ignore the Spirit as we give in to the call from the dust, just as we do ill to forget that we are from the dust while we follow the Spirit. We are meant to be whole human beings, honouring the complex reality which is ours, but we can do this only in listening to God, to the one who shaped us with so much love and gave us a share of his life-breath, the Spirit of love.

Jesus come to unbind us and set us free. But he cannot do so unless he first binds up the strong one who holds us prisoner. Adam and Eve, man and woman, refused to listen to God and to obey God's call. Am I going to follow their example and be excluded from paradise? Is my spirit going to be locked in the dust, unable to commune with the divine? Or am I going to hearken to Jesus and learn, like him, to do the will of the Father?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Genesis 3:9-15

- ✠ It all started with Adam and Eve and their refusal to do the will of God. Who did Adam blame? Who did Eve blame? Can we ourselves blame them that we are not living in the garden of paradise?
- ✠ Adam and Eve sinned and because they had free will. We still sin. There is no garden of Eden anymore, but did God the Father give us anything that makes our home on earth a holy place?

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1

- ✠ In this reading Paul says, "We look not at what can be seen, but at what cannot be seen." *What is seen: our outer self is wasting away; affliction; earthly dwelling; a tent that will be destroyed. What is unseen: grace in abundance; eternal weight of glory beyond comparison; overflowing thanksgiving; inner self renewed day by day; eternal life.* Which is the better place, the seen or the unseen? Can you get to the unseen from the seen?
- ✠ If Adam is responsible for the "seen" and Christ is responsible for the "unseen," could Adam's sin be a "happy fault"? It brought Christ into our world to bring us more of an abundance of grace than we would have had in the garden of Eden?

Gospel Mark 3:20-35

- ✠ Is the doing the will of God always easy? Do you think it was easy for Jesus when he figured out what God was asking him to do? Do you always know what the will of God is in a situation? What helps?
- ✠ Jesus faces two misunderstandings in this Gospel, one with the scribes and one with his family. What do we learn from the one with his family?

Today's Gospel also speaks to us about another, very different misunderstanding with regard to Jesus: that of his family. They were worried, because his new itinerant life seemed folly to them. In fact, he exhibited such openness toward the people, especially toward the sick and toward sinners, to the extent that he did not even have time to eat. Jesus was like that: people first; serving people; helping people; teaching people; healing people. He was for the people. Thus, his family decided to take him back home to Nazareth. ...

"Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you." And he replied: "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking around on those who sat about him, he said 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.'"

Jesus formed a new family, no longer based on natural ties, but on faith in him, his love which welcomes us and unites us to each other, in the Holy Spirit. All those who welcome Jesus' word are children of God and brothers and sisters among themselves.

GREETING OF POPE FRANCIS TO 50,000 FOR WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY, 25 MAY 2024

Dear children and young people!

Here we are! The adventure of World Children's Day has begun. We are gathered here at the Olympic Stadium, to "kick-off" the movement of girls and boys who want to build a world of peace, where we are all brothers and sisters, a world that has a future because we want to take care of the environment around us. Your song, "Beautiful World," says it all. Thank you for that!

In you, children, everything speaks of life and of the future. The Church, as a mother, welcomes you and accompanies you with tenderness and hope. Last 7 November, I had the joy of welcoming thousands of children from many parts of the world to the Vatican. You brought a wave of joy with you that day; and you shared with me your questions about the future. That meeting left a lasting impression in my heart. I realized that our conversation had to continue and expand to reach more children and young people. That is why we are here today: to keep the dialogue going, as well as to ask and answer questions.

I know wars make you sad, but I want to ask: are all of you truly saddened about the wars? [*Children respond*] "Yes!" – I don't hear you – [*children respond again*] "Yes!" Today I welcomed children who fled from Ukraine, and they were in a lot of pain due to the conflict. Some of them were even wounded. Is war a good thing? [*Children respond*] "No!" – I cannot hear you – [*children respond again*] "No!" Is peace a beautiful thing? [*children respond*] "Yes!" It makes me happy to hear children say this. You are hurting because many of your peers cannot go to school. There are so many girls and boys who cannot go to school. These are realities that I carry in my heart, and I pray for them. We need to pray for children who cannot go to school, for children who suffer because of wars, for children who have no food, and for children who are sick but have no one to take care of them.

I have another question. Listen well. Do you know the motto of this World Children's Day? Does anyone know what the motto is? The motto is a phrase taken from the Bible, "Behold I make all things new". Have you heard of it? [*Children respond*] "Yes!" Behold I make all things new. Let's say it together. [*All together*] "Behold I make all things new". One more time, "Behold I make all things new". This is the motto, and it is beautiful. Imagine that God wants this, everything that is not new passes away, but God is eternally new. The Lord always gives us newness.

Dear children, let us go ahead with joy. Joy is good for the soul. Dear children, Jesus said in the Gospel that He loves you; do you know how much Jesus loves you? I can't you hear! [*Children respond*] "Yes!" And the devil, does he love you? [*Children respond*] "No!" Well done! Courage and keep going forward. Now, all together, let's say a prayer to Mother, to the Mother of Heaven. *Recitation of Hail Mary*

May God bless all of you!

Pope Francis also met with a group of Palestinian and Ukrainian children at the Vatican on 25 May 2024.

50 YEARS OF MARRIAGE – CONGRATULATIONS TO JOAN AND VINCENT HAMBLY

Joan and Vincent Hambly were married on 1 June 1974 at St Margaret Mary's Parish Church, Merrylands, in the Diocese of Parramatta. Last weekend they were away celebrating, staying in the same hotel as the NSW Blues who were preparing for the State of Origin on 5 June – *did Joan's and Vincent's presence influence the result?* Congratulations to Joan and Vincent who this weekend receive a special blessing from Pope Francis.



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY – PATRON OF OUR DIOCESE

On this weekend, the diocese celebrates the patronal feast of the solemnity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. As we celebrate the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the whole Diocese of Wollongong looks to Mary, the Mother of the Church. Thanks to the Marian shrines and churches around the diocese dedicated to the Mother of God, devotion to Mary should be very strong and widespread among the people in our local Church.

May we continue to contemplate the Virgin Mary, who pondered in her heart the mystery of Christ. We know that Mary is present as a mother to us and so shares in the many complicated problems which today beset the lives of individuals, families, parishes, schools and communities. We know that Mary has a heart for the Christian people in our constant struggle between good and evil, to ensure that we do not fall, or, if we have fallen, that we rise again.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is an image of the Church which, nourished by hope, acknowledges the saving and merciful action of God, in whose light our diocese reads our own journey and all of history. Mary helps us to interpret all that happens to us in the light of Jesus her Son. As a new creation moulded by the Holy Spirit, Mary causes the virtue of hope to grow within us.

To the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of hope and of consolation, we confidently lift up our prayer: to Mary we entrust the future of the Diocese of Wollongong.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	10 Jun	Monday, Ordinary Time Week 10	1 Kings 17:1-6	Matthew 5:1-12
Tuesday ✕	11 Jun	St Barnabas, apostle	Acts 11:21-26, 13:1-3	Matthew 10:7-13
Wednesday	12 Jun	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 10	1 Kings 18:20-39	Matthew 5:17-19
Thursday	13 Jun	St Anthony of Padua, friar priest, doctor	1 Kings 18:41-46	Matthew 5:20-26
Friday	14 Jun	Friday, Ordinary Time Week 10	1 Kings 19:9,11-16	Matthew 5:27-32
Saturday	15 Jun	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 10	1 Kings 19:19-21	Matthew 5:33-37
Sunday	16 Jun	11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – Scripture Readings are listed below.		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Weekend, 8/9 June** Blessing of June Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays during Masses
- ✦ **Saturday, 8 June** 18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
- ✦ **Sunday, 9 June** until Friday, 21 June, Ken teaching at Baulkham Hills [back 15/16 June]
- ✦ **Monday, 10 June** Public Holiday
- ✦ **Saturday, 16 June** One baptism during 17:30 Mass
- ✦ **Thursday, 27 June** 19:00 Sacrament of Confirmation, 17 Candidates
- ✦ **Monday, 1 July** until Friday, 12 July, Ken teaching at the Seminary in Suva, Fiji

RECIPES: GINGER BEER AND PAM'S MULLED WINE

Ginger Beer: 15-20cm of fresh ginger root; 2 cups filtered water; ½ cup fresh lemon juice; 1 tbsp pure maple syrup; 2 cups sparkling water.

Finely chop the ginger and put in a pot with two cups of water, then bring to a rolling boil for about 10 minutes. Strain the ginger pieces off. Add the fresh lemon juice and the maple syrup, and finish it off by adding the sparkling water.

Mulled Wine: 2 small oranges or 1 large; 1 bottle of affordable red wine – Shiraz or Merlot; ¼ cup brandy (optional to add an extra kick but not needed); sugar to taste or maple syrup/honey for healthier alternative; 2 whole cinnamon sticks (or ground cinnamon will suffice but not ideal); 3 star anise; 4 whole cloves.

To prepare the oranges, if using two small, slice one orange into rounds and slice the other in half. If using 1 large orange, slice it in half through the round middle, then slice one of the halves into rounds. Place the rounds into a medium heavy-bottomed pot. Squeeze the juice from the remaining oranges into the pot. Pour the wine into the pot, followed by the brandy (if using). Add 1 tablespoon of the sugar or sweetener for now. Add the cinnamon sticks, star anise and cloves. Warm the mixture over medium heat until steaming (about 5 minutes), and keep an eye on it. When you start seeing the tiniest of bubbles at the surface, reduce the heat to the lowest of low. Carefully taste, and add another tablespoon of sweetener if it's not sweet enough for your liking. If it's not spicy enough to suit your preferences, continue cooking over very low heat for 5 to 10 more minutes. Serve in mugs!

If you expect to polish off the mulled wine within 20 minutes or so, you can keep it on the stove over extra-low heat (it will become more spicy with time). Otherwise, remove it from the heat, cover, and rewarm over low heat if necessary.

SLOW COOKER OPTION: Combine the mixture in your slow cooker, cover, and cook over low heat until steaming, about 30 minutes to 1 hour. It will be ready for you after a hard day's work! **Leftovers will keep in the refrigerator for a couple of days, covered (*pour it through a strainer if you don't want it to become any more spicy than it already is*).



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B
1st Reading Genesis 3:9-15
2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1
Gospel Mark 3:20-35

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B
1st Reading Ezekiel 17:22-24
2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 5:6-10
Gospel Mark 4:26-34

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 📺 17:30
Sunday 08:00
 📺 Saturday Mass is 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 09:00–15:00; Fri 08:30–15:00

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THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday _____
Tuesday 📺 17:30
Wednesday 09:00
Thursday 09:00
Friday 09:30
Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday