



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
12 / 13 OCTOBER 2024
28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B
THE BLESSING OF ANIMALS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

For The Love Of God

Besides being a very interesting story, this Sunday's Gospel gives rich spiritual advice for us. To put it simply, God is worth more than anything else in our lives. Look at it.

Our story is about a rich young man in the Gospel. Whoever he was, "he had many possessions." He does seem to have had a good heart, some humility, and a positive opinion about Jesus.

Without warning he runs up to Jesus, actually runs, kneels down before him, and asks this question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

He must have impressed Jesus. Yet Jesus gives the man a seemingly incongruous reply. "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."

How in the world does this answer fit the question? Of course, one interpretation would be that it does not, that it is the result of an odd editing of the story at a later time. But I want to suggest a much simpler explanation.

Since Jesus already saw the seeds of faith in this man, he was trying to grow that faith. Following would be the logic of Jesus' response: (1) only God is (fully) good; (2) yet you have called me good; (3) Maybe you are sensing the Godliness in me.



We are not told of a response from the man, but we see Jesus going on to take him through the essentials.

Look, he says, you know about the commandments, don't you, and he names six of them. He expects that the man will say yes, at which point he can lead him further in the love of God.

The man gives a wonderful answer: "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." We know that Jesus' heart was warmed by this answer because of the next remarkable line of the Gospel:

Jesus, looking at him, loved him.

Keep in mind that Mark's is the most terse of the four Gospels, so this startling sentence reveals much about the scene. Jesus is not just announcing truths to someone or other, he is carefully building faith in someone he has come to love.

So, he tells the rich young man, with care, what the next step is.

You are lacking in one thing: "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

But, perhaps like you and me, the rich young man was not ready to go so far. "When the man heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions."

So much for this Gospel incident. We presume that Jesus watched the poor rich man's exit, and hoped for another chance at mending him.

What you and me?!

'Lord, what should I do?' – a question essential to a Christian life well lived. The alternative – drifting along without responsible reflection – is a wasted life. The reply of Jesus to the young man who puts this question to him is surprising. The community that gave us Mark's gospel certainly believed that Jesus was God's unique Son. The response given by Jesus reflects a constant pattern in his teaching: he wanted to lead his hearers to the Father. Like the young man, we will only find the answer to the question of what direction our life should take in the presence of the One Jesus called his 'God' and 'Father'. The life of all who live 'in Christ' is one and the same; there are, however, different forms of discipleship. This paradox has given rise to some confusion in the Church's life when 'states of life' have been compared. The first response of Jesus in this incident is to urge fidelity to 'the commandments' – the pattern of life to which most of the Lord's disciples are called. However, this man was seeking a way that went beyond what had been recommended. Jesus 'looked steadily at him and loved him', and he urged him to 'sell everything he owned and give the money to the poor', and to join Jesus in the radical detachment that was Jesus' own way of life – for the sake of the Kingdom.

For many centuries, the comparison of the two ways of life indicated by Jesus has been expressed in misleading terms. The radical following has been spoken of as a 'higher' form of Christian life. But life in Christ, as has been said, is one. The life that is better for each person is the life that they are called to by God – there they will find the way to the greatness that is to be theirs in the designs of God. Since Vatican II this confusion has been left behind. Today, however, it is being suggested that as we have recovered an appreciation of the fact that no baptised Christian ↪ ↪

✠✠ is in an ‘inferior’ state of life, we have obscured the fact that the Lord’s call to individual disciples involved different means of living discipleship. As far as means are concerned, a life lived according ‘the evangelical counsels’ – the radical renunciations of Christ himself – has a heroic excellence that needs to be more clearly affirmed, if we are to foster the ‘vocations’ the Church so sorely needs.

The reaction of the young man leads Jesus to develop a theme important for all forms of discipleship: earthly possessions can prove a great obstacle to growth of life in Christ. The disciples were amazed, because many texts of the Old Testament seemed to imply that material wellbeing is a sign of God’s blessing on a good life. Our reading from Wisdom shows that old Israel was already looking beyond this point of view. The whole life of Jesus is a corrective of this superficial interpretation of God’s ways. His final words have a lesson for disciples, whatever the form of following to which they have been called – authentic fidelity is a gift of God, ‘Everything is possible to God’. Our reading from Hebrews can serve as a commentary on the call of Jesus to make our life decisions in the presence of the Father. The ‘Word of God’ is a theme of great importance in the Old Testament. It is a Word that confronts believers with the ways of God. In Jesus we know the Word of God in person, a Word giving expression to the boundless love and generosity of the Father who calls each one of us.

The man in today’s gospel comes up to Jesus full of a beautiful desire. He wants what Mark calls ‘eternal life’ – that is a life that knows no bounds, a life that is not limited by space and time and circumstance, but that keeps on filling his heart from the fount of all life who is God. This same desire is expressed frequently in the psalms: ‘As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?’ (Psalm 42:1-2). ‘O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, like a dry and weary land without water’ (Psalm 63:1).

Life is a gift. How can we accept a gift if our hands are full, and we don’t want to let anything go? For the young man in today’s gospel the problem was not wealth. Rather it was the fact that he possessed his riches – *or did his riches “possess” him!?* He controlled his life, and he thought he could stay in control and possess eternal life as well. But we can’t. As Jesus says, salvation – finding the life we seek and need – is impossible for us; we can’t get it on our own. It comes from God.

This was the young man’s problem. This is why he went away grieving. Being rich he was used to control. He thought he could save himself if only he knew what more he could do. In the ensuing dialogue Jesus makes it quite clear that if we truly want to live to the full, we have to learn to have empty hands. If there is anything to which we are clinging we have to let it go in order to free our hands to be open to receive life from God who is love. The problem for the scribes and Pharisees was knowledge and power. We are being invited to ask ourselves what is it that is stopping me from receiving what my heart most longs for. Is there something that is cluttering up my life? Am I, like the young man, too proud to go to God with empty hands and receive love like a little child, knowing that it is a gift of love over which I cannot claim control?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Wisdom 7:7-11

↳ Does wisdom reside in the mind or the heart? Or both?

↳ Could the geopolitical, economic, ecological, and health crises today be a call to Wisdom? What can you help remedy with your courage and intelligence?

Second Reading Hebrews 4:12-13

↳ This reading says that “the word of God ... is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” How do you feel about the Word knowing you better than you know yourself? Do you trust God with such personal things? And would you like to know yourself better?

↳ Do motives and attitude colour your decision-making? Are your motives and attitudes in good order, or could they use a realignment?

Gospel Mark 10:17-30

↳ Are possessions themselves the difficulty, or is it clinging to them? Or is the problem the inner drive to own and accumulate? Can the unbridled desire to possess be a stumbling block to world peace or ecological sustainability?

↳ According to Pope Francis, what was this rich man lacking?

Dear brothers and sisters, a faith without giving, a faith without gratuitousness is an incomplete faith. It is a weak faith, a faith that is ill. We could compare it to rich and nourishing food that nonetheless lacks flavour, or a more or less well-played game, but without a goal: no, it isn’t good, it lacks “salt.” A faith without giving, without gratuitousness, without works of charity, makes us sad in the end: just like that man who returned home “sorrowful” with a fallen countenance, even though he had been looked upon with love by Jesus in person.

Today we can ask ourselves: “at what point is my faith? Do I experience it as something mechanical, like a relationship of duty or interest with God? Do I remember to nourish it by letting myself be looked at and loved by Jesus?” Letting oneself be gazed at and loved by Jesus; letting Jesus look at us, love us. “And, attracted by him, do I respond freely, with generosity, with all my heart.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 28th Sunday, Year B, 10 October 2021

THE SONG OF THE POOR

– from *The Tablet*, 26 September 2024 ... *(continued)*

17 November 1987

I could sense the tension in the atmosphere as I walked into the village. A group of men were standing next to the fence; their faces were solemn and unresponsive. A pall of sadness, perhaps fear, was covering the place.

On enquiry, it was revealed that the previous evening a youngster of the guerrilla had been trapped as he ran from the pursuing soldiers. They were waiting as he ran into their trap like a frightened fox. The hounds tore him apart without mercy. Bullets ripped through his body, disfiguring his face beyond recognition. The people were shocked on seeing this young rebel killed in their village square, lying motionless in blood. A child of sorrows; his face disfigured; bearing the sins of his people.

When the army retreated, the men of Yerba Buena quickly buried him in a shallow grave and placed splined logs on top to prevent the dogs and pigs from digging and devouring his remains.

I asked if they had prayed at the graveside and the men told me there was no time for that, owing to the threat of further conflict. So, we walked 30 yards and together at the graveside made the sign of the cross, the sign of death and victory over death. Then we prayed the Our Father and the words made me feel as if an electric shock were running down my spine.

“Thy Kingdom come.” May God’s reign of justice and human dignity for those who live in dire poverty and hardship come about in our world of today.

“Give us this day our daily bread.” May those who are deprived of food in our world have food and have it today. Can you?

“We forgive those who offend us.” The prayer of the gentle who will not surrender themselves to hatred of their enemy. Combativeness in war is not hatred.

The Kingdom of God can never be completely identified with any human group (including the Church), but at times essential elements of God’s will can be glimpsed in the objectives of certain fallible, human groups.

The young rebel buried in the earth of Viento Bueno was struggling for justice to come about in the lives of his downtrodden people. The restoration of human dignity and the burning desire that the poor might go hungry no more were what he fought and died for.

I have prayed the Lord’s Prayer many times in my life, but never before has the prayer moved me so deeply as on that November morning in the hills of El Salvador.

21 November 1987

“José Medardo Avelar, Ana Olimpia Avelar, Elisandro Avelar, Sonia Isabet Amaya, Sau Avelar.” It was just a list of names to me, a list spoken by a campesino who asked that they be prayed for in the Eucharist.

“They’re all deceased relatives?” I asked, rather clinically. His eyes moistened with tears and he answered, “They’re my children. They killed them.” Taken aback by what he was telling me, I asked another question: “Who killed them?” He almost whispered his reply: “The Imperialism.”

I questioned no further so as not to cut into unhealed scars. A father’s children had been killed by the army, and he knows that the guns and the bombs and the planes and the helicopters are all sent to El Salvador by the “Empire” of the United States government. The Empire killed his children. Words on paper don’t describe the tears in the eyes of a bereaved father, nor do words convey his soft, sad whisper of “El Imperialismo”.

24 March 1990

Over the past few days, the parish’s main village has been heavily militarised by government troops. Day and night, pockets of soldiers laze in doorways and pepper with their presence the forecourt and steps of the church. Earlier they had dealt out food parcels to the people in an effort to win popular support.

As the people of San Fernando Morazán in general tend to separate faith and social justice, I thought it would be appropriate to mark the tenth anniversary of Archbishop Romero’s assassination with a morning celebration of the Eucharist. Christ’s body broken on a cross, and his lifeblood poured out, a being sacrificed for the practice of truth, seemed a fitting expression of the life and death of Óscar Arnulfo Romero. This day should not pass unrecognised. The three northern repopulations of El Higueral, Teosinte and Tremedal had been invited to participate with us.

Imaginary butterflies tickled inside my tummy, because I knew that on this day there would be military surveillance of my preaching. Many in the military regard Archbishop Romero as having been a commander of the guerrilla who deserved summary execution. No words can dissuade them from this rigid way of thinking. I suppose, there are none so blind as those who will not see.

I rang the three customary peals calling the people to worship, but only about 15 people of San Francisco Morazán came, and these were mostly young girls and old women. I felt disappointed that so few parishioners wished to remember the words and sacrifice of Archbishop Romero, their pastor, their prophet, their martyr, who lives on in the hearts of the poor with spirit.

Then from the sacristy I heard a stampede of feet and, peeping out, saw 75 people filing into the empty benches. There they were, a thrilling sight; men, women and children, perspiring, carrying infants, the poor with spirit, some of them having walked nearly three hours to be present. Ignoring the military’s psychological pressure against commemorating Romero’s memory, they took their places at the table of the Lord. *(concludes next weekend)*

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Monday	14 Oct	Monday, Ordinary Time Week 28
Tuesday	15 Oct	St Teresa of Jesus, virgin, doctor
Wednesday	16 Oct	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 28
Thursday	17 Oct	St Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, martyr
Friday	18 Oct	St Luke, evangelist
Saturday	19 Oct	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 28
Sunday	20 Oct	29 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Galatians 4:22-24,26-27	Luke 11:29-32
Galatians 5:1-6	Luke 11:37-41
Galatians 5:18-25	Luke 11:42-46
Ephesians 1:1-10	Luke 11:47-54
2 Timothy 4:10-17	Luke 10:1-9
Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 12:8-12

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Saturday, 12 October 18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul
- ✦ Weekend, 12-13 October Blessing of those celebrating October Wedding Anniversaries/Birthdays
Catholic Women's League Cake, Craft Stall and Raffle
- ✦ Tuesday, 15 October 19:30 Parent Meeting for First Penance and First Communion
- ✦ Weekend, 19-20 October Baptisms at Masses
- ✦ Tuesday, 22 October 15:45 Class #1 for First Penance

RECIPE: WAGON WHEEL SLICE – FROM CHEF RAYMOND

235g butter, softened; ½ cup caster sugar; 1½ cups plain flour; ½ cup self-raising flour; ½ cup raspberry jam; 145g white marshmallows, halved; 185g dark chocolate, broken into pieces.

Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Grease a 3cm-deep, 16cm x 26cm slice pan. Line base and sides with baking paper, extending paper 2cm from edge on all sides. Using an electric mixer, beat 185g butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Sift flours over butter mixture. Stir until dough comes together. Press mixture into prepared pan. Bake for 20 minutes until golden. Spread warm base with jam. Cover with marshmallows, cut-side down. Bake for 2 minutes. Remove from oven. Press down on marshmallows to level surface. Cool in tin. Combine chocolate and remaining butter in small saucepan over low heat. Cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until melted. Pour over marshmallows. Tap pan to level surface. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until set. Stand at room temperature for 5 minutes before cutting into pieces and serving.

**PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

CWL NEWS

Thank you for supporting this weekend's **CWL Cake and Craft Stall**, as well as the **Annual Raffle** – prizes are a fruit basket and a family pass to the Maritime Museum and a box of chocolates. At the AGM held on Wednesday last, members thanked **Betty Grey**, who for the last **eleven** years has been the **CWL Secretary**. Thank you Betty for your service. Cesia Halowinski was elected as the new Secretary and Maureen Heydon was re-elected President. Thank you to members of the Thirroul CWL, and thank you to all parishioners for your support.

Thanks to all who contributed to the recent **Bishop's Annual Appeal**. A total of **\$1,690** was donated, which has been forwarded to the Bishop's Office. Thank you!



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

28 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Wisdom 7:7-11
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 4:12-13
Gospel	Mark 10:17-27

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

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

29 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 53:10-11
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 4:14-16
Gospel	Mark 10:35-45

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SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 📺 17:30

Sunday 08:00

📺 Saturday Mass is recorded.

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday _____

Tuesday 📺 17:30

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday