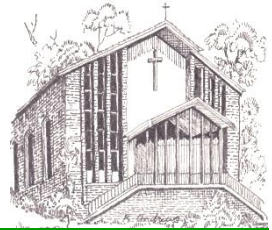




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



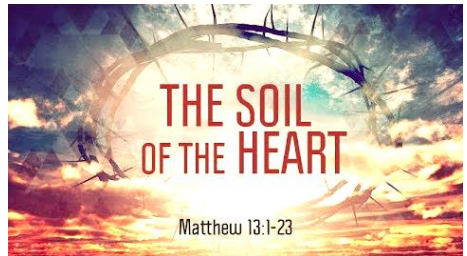
11 / 12 JULY 2020
15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Laudato Si' Commentary continues

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Speaking in Parables

In the Gospel Reading, Christ explains why he speaks to the crowds in parables. The knowledge of these things has been granted to you, Christ tells his disciples, but it hasn't been granted to the people in the crowds.

But if God can give the gift of knowledge, why wouldn't he give it to everyone? Why would a loving God hide knowledge from some people? To see the answer, think about gifts. If you give a gift to someone you love, then what you give is intended to do that person good. It isn't a gift if what you are giving will harm them or hurt them, and you know that it will.



But knowledge can hurt rather than help if the recipient isn't ready to receive it. Good counsellors are skilled in knowing the times when their clients are able to bear some knowledge, some insight into their situation and themselves. Till their clients are ready, good counsellors hesitate to impart such insight for fear of making their clients more stressed or more troubled, rather than more healed and grounded. To force knowledge on a person not ready for it is stupid or cruel or both. It isn't loving.

And that is why Christ speaks in parables. Among those who come to him, there are some people who want to hear him but are not willing to be counted among his disciples, at least not yet. Christ's parables offer those people what they can receive, given that they are not yet ready to receive him. They can learn something from the parables even so.

But to those who come to Christ ready to receive him and willing to be counted as his disciples, he can give the gift of knowledge straightforwardly. In receiving him, those people are also ready to receive the knowledge Christ can give.

And here it is worth noticing that Christ speaks in parables to everybody who comes to him. But some people care enough about him and his words to want more than they can get from those parables alone. They take him as their teacher and want to learn from him. That is why they come to him to ask him to explain the parables he was telling them as well as all the others. The people who want more understanding are the people who count as his disciples.

As Christ says, to them who have more, more will be given because they want more.

As we have already seen, Matthew's gospel alternates narrative passages with passages presenting the teaching of Jesus. Last week's reading was from a narrative sequence describing the difficulties Jesus encountered in his Galilean ministry. Today's reading is from



the section that follows; it contains seven parables of ‘the Kingdom’ – a central theme of this gospel. It begins dramatically with the parable of the sower. People have come to hear Jesus crowd the shore of the lake, and he speaks to them from a boat. His parable – to an audience of rural Galileans – is about farming. But this farming is very different from the farming we are familiar with. The single spike ploughs used were not very effective; they would hardly make an impression on the hard ground of paths through the field; they left patches of brambles behind them; the Palestinian soil they ploughed was in many places a shallow covering of the underlying rock; much of the seed, broadcast by hand, would therefore come to nothing, while some that fell in soil made ready by the ploughing would produce the miracle of a fresh harvest. Parables are common in the Scriptures, and their appeal to the imagination, to convey a challenging message, was often used by the Jewish rabbis. The parables of Jesus were distinctive, however. He had already announced the essential message of his preaching in clear words – ‘Make yourselves ready, the reign of God you have looked forward to is upon you!’ His parables describing the coming of this reign were intended to puzzle his hearers – ‘Listen anyone who has ears’. He wanted them to discover a meaning that brought home to them how different the Kingdom he proclaimed was from popular expectations – expectations that looked forward to a political vindication of the nation. (The reply Jesus gave, when asked why he taught through parables, does not mean – as we might expect – that he wanted to withhold the truth from his hearers; it means that he recognised – as the prophet Isaiah recognised before him, in the text he quoted – that many of his hearers would not have the dispositions necessary to find the meaning he wishes to convey.)



If we disregard the detailed explanation of the parable at the end of today’s reading – probably an addition made by preachers in the early Church tradition, as they adapted this parable of Jesus to a very different audience – the meaning of Jesus’ parable on the shore of the lake is not difficult to grasp. His preaching – and that of the evangelisers who will carry on his mission – will encounter difficulties of many kinds (like the seed of the sower). He has already encountered reversals in Galilee; and as he looked at the crowds curious to hear him he must have realised that his teaching would have little effect on many of them. Nevertheless, the meaning to be found in his parable is forthright: the harvest is certain, and it will be abundant; and there is a note of urgency: God’s time has come; there is no second chance – there is only one sowing for each harvest.

Early Christian preachers, as we have said, developed an explanation of the parable for an audience in a very different situation from the crowd on the shore of the lake. That this addition is included in the gospel has an important lesson for later times. The message of Jesus must be applied to the changing circumstances of the Church’s life. If the original parable urged the disciples of Jesus to sow the word with confidence, now those who have heard the word must show its fruits in their lives. In today’s Church, the biblical revival opens the way for us.

DO YOU WISH TO ATTEND MASS SATURDAY/SUNDAY?

If you wish to attend Mass at Thirroul on Saturdays [5:30pm] or Sundays [8:00am], you **MUST REGISTER BEFOREHAND with the Parish Office – please register by 10:00am on the Wednesday prior to the weekend you wish to attend.** Either phone or email the Parish Office stating what dates you wish to attend – and how many from your family wish to attend with you. Health regulations allow a maximum of **50 worshippers at Thirroul**, excluding those essential for and those assisting at the liturgy. **Currently, bookings are open until the end of July – bookings from August onwards will be open soon. Remember, if you are elderly or not feeling well, then, for your safety, please do not attend.**

LAUDATO SI' [ctd.] *Commentary by Peter H. Raven, Member, Pontifical Academy of Sciences*



Depending on the actions we take, the global surface temperature is projected to reach 1.5–2°C more than the 1850–1900 level by the end of the century, the global water cycle will be seriously altered, the oceans will continue to warm, sea level will continue to rise at a rate very likely higher than that of the past few decades, and the oceans will become increasingly acidified. The effects of such changes on biological extinction are estimated at 20–30% by the end of the century.

In evaluating these results, it is necessary to understand the thorough and comprehensive process by which they were reached. Contrary scientific views on any of the matters considered in the report are being considered carefully in anticipation of the preparation of the sixth report, but meanwhile it is clear that the current IPCC report presents the best and most accurate estimates possible of global climate change and its probable effects. Non-scientific reports or scepticism from the general public or uninformed politicians should not be taken seriously and certainly not be allowed to slow down our reactions to these serious problems. The immorality of investing millions of dollars in “disproving” the role of human beings should be obvious, and the degree of human suffering that any delay in addressing these problems comprehensively will generate is beyond comprehension.

Humanity’s effects on our planet have been unprecedented, and most scientists now consider that we are living in a new geological era, the Anthropocene (Waters et al. 2016). Add to the generally recognized environmental trends discussed to this point a few additional alarming facts, for example, since the birth of the universal nation state about two centuries ago, about 200 million people have been killed in wars; that the richest 62 people in the world are estimated to possess as much wealth as everyone else in the world combined; and that Russia has approximately 7700 nuclear-armed missiles, the US roughly 7000, and the future begins to look truly threatening. At a recent meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the nondenominational body that advises the pope about matters of science and technology, Academy President and Nobel Prize winner Werner Arber observed that it was not so much the conditions that would confront our children and grandchildren that should concern us, but rather the fate of civilization during our own lives if we continued down our current path of environmental destruction.

Given the political impossibility of addressing most of the world’s issues or drawing close enough together to make global sustainability feasible, one can readily see why many of us have come to believe that a moral or spiritual revolution will be necessary if we are to keep our civilization intact. A number of workshops were organized and all of the available information was carefully considered.

Religions assumed ever-greater importance as civilization developed over the past 10,000 years. Concomitantly, the growth of the human population and that of the intensive agriculture that made it possible began to cause obvious damage to the environment—something that had not really been evident before. Many consider that the severity of the flooding associated with the story of Noah’s Ark may have had to do with environmental damage and in the Bible (Genesis 2:15) humans are instructed not only to cultivate the Earth but also to care for it. Most religions have called for a reverence for life and for adequately caring for the Earth through the millennia, and there is general agreement now that such attention is both fully justified and necessary.

St Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226) displayed a special love for Creation that has caused him over the years to be considered the Patron Saint of the Environment. In his famous *Canticle of the Sun*, St. Francis writes: “Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day and through whom you give us light... Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind and through the air cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather, through whom you give sustenance to your creatures. Praised be you,  

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Wednesday 15 Jul Saint Bonaventure, friar bishop, doctor

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass**

☞☞ my Lord, through Sister Water, who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste... Praised be you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.

This beautiful and explicit recognition of our complete dependence on the Earth is, as mentioned above, the basis for the name of the Encyclical we are considering here: *Laudato Si'*, “Be praised” (in medieval Italian), nine centuries after the time of St Francis of Assisi.

... continued next week.



FR DOUGLAS BEDE RHEINBERGER

Fr Doug Rheinberger was parish priest of our Parish 1984 to 1988. Fr Doug died in Villa Maria Aged Care Centre, Unanderra, on Thursday, 2 July. His funeral is at St John’s Church, Dapto on Thursday, 9 July. When Doug was in Thirroul, he organized for one of the stained-glass windows to be installed, Saint Dorothy – in honour of his mother. May Doug rest in peace. **A special Memorial Mass for Fr Doug will be celebrated at our Parish Church, Thirroul, at 5:30pm on Tuesday, 21 July.** All are welcome to attend (50 worshippers maximum).



THIS Sunday’s Readings *on our website*

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading Isaiah 55:10-11
2nd Reading Romans 8:18-23
Gospel Matthew 13:1-23

NEXT Sunday’s Readings *on our website*

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading Wisdom 12:13,16-19
2nd Reading Romans 8:26-27
Gospel Matthew 13:24-43

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
 Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

**Restricted numbers apply ... to attend ...
you must register beforehand with the Parish Office**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul	Monday	—
	Tuesday	17:30
	Wednesday	09:00
	Thursday	09:00
	Friday	09:30

For the present, Masses on weekdays will not usually be televised.

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • *Parish Priest* ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive
 ☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515
 📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires
10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael 📞 4267 2560