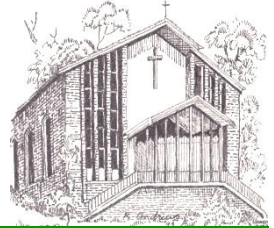




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



18 / 19 JULY 2020
16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Vinnies Winter Appeal 25 July to 23 August

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Wheat and the Weeds

In the Lord's field, there is the wheat and the weeds. Some people are good wheat and are gathered to the Lord. And then there are people who are weeds. It isn't good to be the weeds. The weeds get gathered into bundles for burning.

So how do we know which people are those bad, destined-for-burning weeds?

"We don't," the Lord says. At least, we don't, not now. For all we know, the rudest, proudest, worldliest person sitting so smug in the next pew might be among the wheat when the angels come at the end to gather the wheat to heaven. The most despicable sinner might be wheat too. You can't tell the weeds until the end when the angels come, the Lord says.

By the same token, of course, the humblest, most hard-working person, sitting there so meekly in the next pew, might be among the weeds. The most admirable and saintly person might turn out to be weeds too. We don't know the wheat any more than we know the weeds.

The Lord knows his own. But we don't. We can judge thoughts, choices, acts, and habits; but we don't know enough to judge a person's final resting place when the angels come at Judgment Day.

And so the Lord's parable about the wheat and the weeds can raise a terrible question: what am I? Am I weeds, too? If I can't tell the wheat from the weeds, how can I tell whether I am wheat or weeds?



The Kingdom

Matthew 13:24-43

The problem with finding an answer to that question is that the question is confused. You are not the judge, not for the other guy and not for yourself either. Nietzsche said derisively of Christians, "They don't even look like the redeemed!" But how would we know what the redeemed look like? (For that matter, how would Nietzsche know?) Our job is not the job of judge, because we are not up for that job.

Our job is to come to Christ and cleave to him. His job is first to save us, weeds that we are, and then to judge us the wheat his salvation has made us be.

Once again, our reading from Matthew's gospel brings us the teaching of Jesus about 'the Kingdom', in parable form. As before, the parables are invitations to learn what the coming of God's liberating and life-giving reign should mean for us. Though our situation

✚✚ is very different from that of those who first heard these parables, they have a clear message for the Church of today. The gospel truth speaks to all ages. Wheat and weeds growing together – a perfect image, surely, of the world in which we live. How should Christians react in this situation?

While we must speak out for the truth, we may well be tempted to emphasise our faithfulness by our impatience and intolerance towards those who do not journey with us. The parable of Jesus warns us that this is not God's way. The reading from the book of Wisdom shows us that, as the Old Testament was drawing to a close, devout thinkers in old Israel were recognising that 'the virtuous person must be kindly to others', learning from the mysterious patience of God. Only the Lord of the harvest – whose grace is at work in a hidden way in every human heart – can sort out the good from the bad when all is gathered in at the end. We who are blessed with the gift of faith must prepare for the final harvest by becoming an exemplary crop ourselves. There is a lesson here, also, for those who belong to the new movements emerging in the today's Church. They must avoid a sectarian spirit that would see their way as the only way. There is room in God's Church for many spiritualities and traditions. True 'catholicity' shows an openness to this.

The other parables carry us further. 'The Kingdom is upon you', Jesus has announced. In the parable of the tiny mustard seed, he refers to the modest inauguration of the Kingdom. His hearers must have been puzzled, as they saw the teacher who spoke with spellbinding power gathering twelve of his followers to symbolise the New Israel. Few of these followers had much to commend them, and some would have been considered positively disreputable. Jesus, however, is carrying forward the mission he has been given by the Father. He looks confidently beyond these humble beginnings, and he urges those 'who have ears to hear' to share his confidence: 'No need to be afraid, little flock', he tells this unpromising group, 'for it has pleased your Father to give you the Kingdom' (Luke 12:32). And those for whom Matthew wrote could already see faith in the Kingdom announced by Jesus spreading beyond the boundaries of Palestine. As they heard the parable of the seed that became a tree sheltering the birds of the air, they could recall that more than one of the prophets used the same image, speaking of the worldwide reign of God that was to come (cf. Daniel 4, Ezekiel 17 and 31). As the Church's new era of evangelisation makes a faltering start, we too must take heart from the message of the parable. 'God chooses the weak to shame the strong' (1 Corinthians 2:27).

The parable of the yeast tells of the hidden designs of God being worked out in the chaos of history. Though we are all tempted to judge by appearances, we recognise that the good things that happen in our own faith communities are usually the fruit of long years of fidelity and generosity. 'Three measures of flour' would have made something like three dozen gallons of dough ready for baking! Though God's designs are hidden, they are boundless in their promise. The explanation of the mixed harvest parable – an addition of early Christian teachers – warns those within the Church who are unfaithful to their calling that they must be converted.



TWO TVs IN WORKING ORDER – YOURS FOR FREE!

As we upgraded the TVs in the church, there are two 42" TVs in working order that are yours for the taking. If you would like one or both, please call the Parish Office ASAP.

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

Since the time of Saint Francis of Assisi, the environmental pressures have increased, and the leaders of the Catholic Church have taken them seriously as they have become increasingly evident. The connection between environmental degradation, poverty and our moral obligation to one another should cause any thoughtful person to worry about the serious situation of our environment.

As a few exceptional thinkers like Malthus caused us to become concerned about the adequacy of our common food supply, environmental concerns began to grow along with population pressures and famines. After the horrible experience of world wars, however, most of our public attention has been focused on the need to avoid war between nations. This was the aim of the United Nations when it was established in 1945, just at the end of World War II. Subsequently, the UN founders worked hard to win the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, a document that would have saved so much bloodshed had its precepts been followed fully in the subsequent decades. In the 1940s, however, there was, as yet, little recognition of our care for the global environment as playing a telling role in determining the welfare of individuals. Two influential books, both published in 1948—William Vogt's *Road to Survival* and Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet*—started many people thinking and wondering about the global situation and influenced the thinking of many who became leaders subsequently.

In the United States, an industrialized country that had drawn full support from the advances of the Industrial Revolution, citizens came out of the enormous disaster of World War II to find a peace that for them was filled with optimism for the future. A common concern for the Earth, however, grew as signs of strain became increasingly evident. Two very original books in particular became landmarks in that growing awareness: Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall's *This is the American Earth* (1960) and, of course, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962). They, with others, had a huge impact on the American public, which became increasingly environmentally aware and active through the 1960s. Particularly important was Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968), which stressed the overall impact of uncontrolled population growth on every other aspect of the global environment. During the same decade, the human population growth rate in 1962–1963 reached its highest level ever, 2.2%; the global population, then 3.1 billion people, had nearly quadrupled since the time of Malthus. Since then, the world population has more than doubled again, to 7.4 billion, with a current growth rate of 1.3%, and the signs of our impact on the population are evident throughout the world. Despite the fact that we are surrounded by evidence to the contrary, utopian thinkers subsequently have continued to argue that the environmental warnings perceived in the 1960s were overdrawn, and that there really has been no problem subsequently—simply unbelievable. No wonder E. O. Wilson (1993) was moved to ask, “Is humanity suicidal?”

... continued next week.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY MASS IN AUGUST/SEPTEMBER?

It would seem that NSW Health will keep the current “distancing” requirements, namely 4m² – which means a maximum of 50 worshippers at Thirroul for any Mass or liturgy. **Now is the time to register for all of August and September.** If you wish to attend Mass at Thirroul on Saturdays [5:30pm] or Sundays [8:00am], you **MUST REGISTER BEFOREHAND with the Parish Office.** Either phone or email the Parish Office stating what dates you wish to attend – and the names of your family who 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. **Please register at the latest by 12noon of the prior Wednesday – but you can register for any weekend until the end of September. Remember, if you are elderly or not feeling well, then, for your safety, please do not attend.**

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 21 Jul 5:30pm Memorial Mass for Fr Doug Rheinberger
Wednesday 22 Jul Saint Mary Magdalene
Saturday 25 Jul Saint James, apostle

**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**

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL 2020

Because of the pandemic restrictions this year, the **Vinnies Covid-19 Winter Appeal** will take on a slightly different form. The Appeal will run from **25 July to 23 August 2020**.

Vinnies is urgently calling for donations to support its work with people experiencing poverty, homelessness and disadvantage. Our Appeal will take a different form this year due to the lockdown restrictions. **Donation envelopes** will be available for parishioners able to attend Mass. However, other parishioners will have the opportunity to support us through secure payments made **online** [*see attached brochure*], or by calling in to the Parish Office with your donations. Please support the work that Vinnies carries out in supporting the needy members of our community. Due to Covid-19 and resultant lockdown restrictions, Vinnies income sources have been severely compromised. For instance, Vinnies shops are just reopening after being closed for at least 3 months. Also, as government income support (JobSeeker, JobKeeper) is phased out it is expected that charities will experience a surge in calls for assistance. This may include significant numbers of people who have never needed to depend on charities previously. Thus, once again we call on your support and thank you for your anticipated generosity.



Vinnies
good works

THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading 1 Kings 3:5,7-12
2nd Reading Romans 8:28-30
Gospel Matthew 13:44-52

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