



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



25 / 26 JULY 2020
17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Vinnies Winter Appeal 25 July to 23 August

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

God's Gifts

Solomon was distinguished from all other kings in the Old Testament by God's gifts to him. First, God appeared to him and told him to ask for a gift. Not many kings in Israel were honoured by God in this way!

Solomon responded to God so beautifully! He asked for something alright, but it was not something worldly. He did not ask God for riches or long life. Instead, he asked God for wisdom to govern God's people well.

And so he received God's first gift, which was the opportunity to ask God for something, in such a way that his asking made him worthy of what God gave him when God answered his prayer.

Because he pleased God by what he asked of God, God gave him the wisdom he asked for. And with that wisdom God gave him even more, namely, the gifts he had not asked for, things worthy of kings. In the text that continues the First Reading, God promised him the very worldly things he hadn't asked for—namely, riches and long life—in addition to the wisdom he wanted.

So, Solomon was very great among the kings of the ancient Israel.

And yet, what Christ gives to each one of his own people is greater than the gifts God gave Solomon. To each person who opens to Christ, Christ gives the indwelling Holy Spirit.

And with the Holy Spirit, God gives the seven gifts of the Spirit, too. The wisdom Solomon asked for is only the first of these. There are six more: understanding; counsel; knowledge; piety; fortitude; and fear of the Lord. There is an inestimable spiritual richness in these gifts, more than Solomon knew to ask for.

Furthermore, anyone who has these has not just long life, like Solomon, but everlasting life with the Lord. And even among the sorrows of this life, the consolations of the indwelling Spirit are present too, in the love, joy, and peace that are among the fruits of the Spirit.

And so Christ offers now to each one who will accept it from him something greater than the greatness of Solomon, not just wisdom but all the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and with them unending life in the kingdom of heaven.

As Christ says in the Gospel reading, this is treasure indeed.

The collection of parables of 'the Kingdom' that we conclude today is the centrepiece of Matthew's gospel. He closes this section with an autobiographical note. As he tells the story of Jesus for a community from a Jewish background, he sees himself as



✠✠ ‘a scribe of the Kingdom’. The scribes who are often mentioned in the gospels were the rabbis who interpreted and taught the Law of old Israel. Matthew sees himself as an interpreter of the fulfilment of all the hopes of Israel brought by the Saviour. From the first, the apostles and their companions taught that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus were ‘according to the scriptures’. If the essential message of the scriptures was making known the ways of God, these ways were given a dramatic and final expression, they announced, in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is the new Moses, bringing the New Law of the Sermon on the Mount; he inaugurates a new Covenant in his blood; he establishes the new Temple that is his own body; he is the new David, the messiah exercising divine rule over God’s final Kingdom. As one great writer put it, in the light brought by Christ, the Scriptures ‘opened their heart for the rejoicing and astonished apostles’. The old figures and shadows have given way to realities beyond all the imagining of old Israel. Matthew shares in this enthusiasm, and sees himself as a ‘scribe of the Kingdom’, as he relates the old to the new.



But this fulfilment is mysterious, as the parables we have seen already make clear. A conversion is necessary if one is to recognise and appreciate the coming of the Kingdom announced by Jesus. Each parable presents a challenge – we must leave behind our too human way of seeing things and identify with the ways of God that have constituted the essential message of the scriptures from the beginning.

The parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price emphasise this need for conversion. Identification with the ways of God that shape the Kingdom must be unconditional. In our Australian land, buried treasure is the stuff of fairy tales; but in Palestine, with its long history of kingdoms and empires, the possibility of finding a treasure trove was real. And if this happened, the treasure belonged to the owner of the site. One who had such a stroke of good fortune, Jesus says, would do all that he could to buy the field – and in a similar way, no other allegiance will rule the life of one who has found the joy of letting God’s word and God’s ways to be the measure of his or her life. The pearl for which the merchant sells everything has the same lesson. For ancient peoples, a pearl was the loveliest of possessions. The merchant of the parable will do whatever is necessary to acquire the pearl he has found that is without compare. This does not mean that he saw no beauty and value in the other pearls that he came across. Our choice of the values of the Kingdom does not mean that we should despise other worthy causes. The parable teaches us, however, that identifying with the Kingdom announced by Jesus means getting our priorities right. The parable of the dragnet has a message similar to that of the wheat and the weeds. It is not for us to make final judgment of the good and the bad – that belongs to the Lord. Meanwhile, the Church – through which the Kingdom is ‘present in mystery’ – is made up of a ‘haul of all kinds’. Following the example of Jesus, who reached out to prostitutes and sinners, the Church will never turn its back on those who are still struggling with the issues of life.

BAPTISMS ON SATURDAY, 25 JULY

Welcome to **IYLAH GARSIA** and **DUSTY DUGGAN** baptized in our Parish on Saturday, 25 July. Thank you to their parents and godparents.

If you want your child baptized in our Parish, please contract the Parish Office so that a suitable time can be organized for the celebration – currently baptisms will not be held during the weekend Masses.



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

The environmental activism of the 1960s culminated in the US on Earth Day, 22 April 1970, when 20 million people, one-tenth of the US population at that time, turned out to demonstrate in favour of a cleaner environment. Similar movements formed in other countries, and a number of excellent environmental books were written during the course of the 1970s, inspiring further action. The Stockholm Conference on the Environment, held in June 1972, could justifiably be called the first truly international discussion on the global environment. It was a UN conference, and the Secretary General of the conference, Canadian Maurice Strong, grasped the fundamental issues and served the cause of world environment and peace well from that point until his death in 2015. Also in 1972, the Club of Rome organized a conference that resulted in the book *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1972). The pushback to the growing environmental movement was powerful, however, with only a few nations or corporations changing their behaviours in a meaningful way at that time.

Against this background it should not be surprising that the three most recent popes, experiencing these global trends, have preached in one way or another that it is immoral for a family to have more children than they can support adequately. Most striking was Pope Francis' statement last year, "God gives you methods to be responsible. Some think that—excuse the word—that in order to be good Catholics we have to be like rabbits. No." The populations in predominately Catholic regions are growing relatively slowly, those in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia the most rapidly.

One of the remarkable features of the Encyclical we are considering is the particular attention that it pays to the loss of biodiversity. The local loss of individual species has been noted since Classical times, and people have remained concerned with what they experienced in their own areas. It was not until the late 1960s that scientists began to realize collectively that we were likely to be driving huge numbers of species of animals, plants, and other kinds of organisms to extinction in a short period of time.

In 1968, Norman Myers, who had originally gone to Kenya as a consultant for the British government, wrote many of us inquiring about what we thought about the problem, and thus called our attention to the fact that it might be more than a local phenomenon. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) started producing "Red Lists" of species that were in different degrees vulnerable to extinction, the first one on plants in 1970. The scientist Thomas Lovejoy invented the word "biological diversity" in 1980 and in the same year became the first person to chart projections of massive extinction. In 1986, a group organized an important meeting sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences and the Smithsonian Institution, and in the book resulting from that meeting, the now very popular term "biodiversity" was proposed (Wilson 1988).?"

... continued next week.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY MASSES IN AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

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. **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.*

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2020

If you want your son/daughter in Year 6 to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, Sacrament of Confirmation, you need to enrol them ASAP – check the Parish website.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Wednesday 29 Jul Saint Martha
Friday 31 Jul Saint Ignatius of Loyola, priest [founder of the Jesuits]
Saturday 1 Aug Saint Alphonsus Liguori, 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**

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*

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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year **A**

1st Reading Isaiah 55:1-3

2nd Reading Romans 8:35,37-39

Gospel Matthew 14:13-21

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

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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