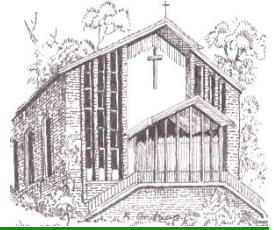




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



22 / 23 AUGUST 2020

**21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Vinnies Winter Appeal finishes THIS WEEKEND**

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Rock of the Church

In the Gospel reading, Christ tells Peter that the rock on which he will found his church is exactly, Peter. The gates of hell will not prevail against him or against the church which is built on this rock. This seems a deeply comforting thought.

The problem is that it so often looks as if the gates of hell have prevailed against Christ's church. The problem actually begins with Peter. The apostle who is the rock of the Church betrayed the Lord he loved in Jesus' worst need. A betrayal like that seems to have something hellish about it, doesn't it?


In fact, wasn't Peter's betrayal of Christ just like the betrayal of Judas? But the Gospels say that Satan entered into Judas before Judas betrayed Christ (John 13:27). There is something hellish about the betrayal of Judas, then. Why not think that the gates of hell prevailed against Peter too?

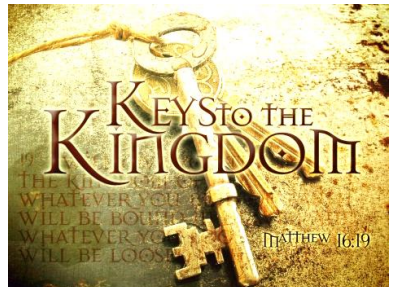
What is left of that deeply comforting thought about Christ's Church and the rock that it is founded on being safe from hell?

But there is a difference between Judas and Peter. It is not that Peter repented and Judas didn't. The Gospels say that Judas repented, too (Matthew 27:3). Rather, the difference is this. When Judas saw the sin of his betrayal for what it was, he killed himself. He threw himself away as irredeemable. Peter came back to Christ. He cleaved to the Lord he loved even in the face of his own brokenness.

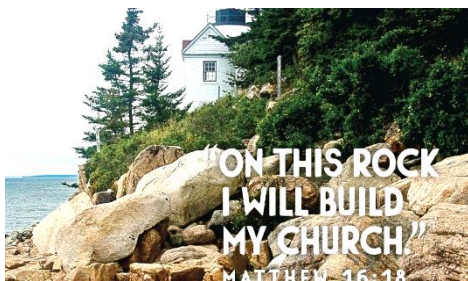
And that is why Peter is the rock on which the Church is founded. The Church is not a collection of the sinless, and it was not meant to be. The Church was founded on Peter, who loved, and sinned, and held on to the Lord anyway.

The gates of hell cannot prevail against this kind of love. This *is* a deeply comforting thought.

We are all familiar with today's gospel. It tells us something fundamental about our life as Catholics. This text portrays Peter as the one authorised by the Saviour to lead his disciples in professing their faith in him. In this age, when God calls believers to work for Christian unity, it is important that we understand it well. When we compare Matthew's account of Peter's confession with that of Mark (Mark 8: 27-33), we see that the two evangelists present Peter in very different ways. In Mark's account, to the questions of Jesus, Peter responds, 'You are the messiah'. Then, when Jesus begins to explain that his role will be very different from that of the messiah of popular expectations – 'The Son of Man is destined to 



☞☞ suffer and be put to death’ – Peter cannot accept what Jesus is saying; and he is sharply rebuked by Jesus, ‘Get behind me Satan! You are not thinking as God thinks’. When Matthew is writing his gospel, long after this incident, Peter has long been recognised and venerated as the one who was appointed by Jesus, as the leader of the chosen disciples who were to carry on his mission. In order to celebrate the role given to Peter by the Saviour – a role that he has carried out with great faith and courage – Matthew combines two incidents that took place at different times. He uses Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi as an introduction to what is his main point – the commission that was given to Peter by the Lord, so fundamental for the life of the first Christian community. The gospels make it clear that Peter received such a commission. This commission may well have been referred to by Jesus in different contexts, in view of its basic importance in the carrying on of the mission of Jesus. The change of name recalled by Matthew in this text is so remarkable (Jesus used the Aramaic word for ‘rock’, *kephas*, never before used as a name, translated as *Petros* in Greek) that it obviously had far-reaching significance. Luke refers to the commission of Peter as being made in the highly charged atmosphere of the Last Supper: ‘I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail, and once you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brethren’ (Luke 22:31). In John’s gospel, the risen Lord’s three questions to Peter on the shore of the lake – reminding us of Peter’s three denials – lead on to his great commission, ‘Feed my lambs, feed my sheep’. This whole tradition is filled with reminders of Peter’s frailty – a great lesson for the whole Church, faithful and pastors.



In its totality, Matthew’s text is a magnificent summary of the self-understanding of the Church of the first generation, and of Peter’s leadership role in that Church. Matthew alone of the evangelists used the term ‘church’ (in this and a later text). This term, that Paul used so frequently – echoing the Old Testament term for the community of faith of old Israel – refers to the New Israel inaugurated by Jesus. The ‘gates’ of the cities of antiquity were the embodiment of their strength. The Church founded on the ministry of Peter, the ‘rock’, will triumph over the dark forces of the kingdom of death; and, under Peter’s leadership, open the way to the final Kingdom announced and inaugurated by the Saviour. The words of Jesus make clear the practical implications of the authority given to Peter. ‘Binding and loosing’ referred to the authority of the teachers of old Israel, to legislate and determine policy, and the exclude from the community. If this pastoral authority is shared with the other apostles (cf. Matthew 18:18), it is only under the leadership of Peter that they can effectively carry out this pastoral responsibility.

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FIRST PENANCE AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Parents of students in **Year 2 or older** are encouraged to enrol their daughter or son **as soon as possible** for these Sacraments. Download the Enrolment Form from our Parish website, and return the form to the Parish [*not the School*] Office, please.

OUR BISHOPS’ SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2020

To live life to the full – mental health in Australia today – All information, including the statement, podcast, liturgy notes, prayer and social media graphics may be found on <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2020/07/03/social-justice-statement-2020-21/> Social Justice Sunday is the last Sunday in August. Copies of the Social Justice Statement 2020 will be available in printed form and will be emailed with a future Parish Bulletin.

LAUDATO SI' [ctd.] *Commentary by Peter H. Raven, Member, Pontifical Academy of Sciences*
Pope Benedict XVI, who served from 2005 until his resignation in 2013, has been widely regarded as the “Green Pope” because of his consistent attention to the problems of the environment and the relationship of those problems to the divide between rich and poor. He took a number of steps to ensure energy efficiency within the Vatican City, at the same time greatly emphasized both our common responsibility for climate change and its seriously deleterious effect on human beings everywhere. Having experienced the awakening of the German environmental conscience in the 1970s, he took the movement to heart with words such as (in his address to the Reichstag in 2011) “The importance of ecology is no longer disputed. We must listen to the language of nature and we must answer accordingly.” In many effective speeches, he emphasized the need for action and for equitability among the nations of the world, stressing repeatedly that the poor should not have to pay the price for the environmental excesses of the rich.

As we have therefore seen, successive popes over the past half century have paid a great deal more attention to the environment than the leadership of all but a few nations during the same period. When Pope Francis was elected in 2013, he immediately took up the theme of the central importance of the environment for the welfare of all human beings. He seemed to many to be continuing a progression from Pope Paul V’s time, when human beings were clearly seen as masters of Creation with every item in the world at their disposal, to something different. The new view was more akin to Aldo Leopold’s land ethic: people as very special creatures of God, but also passengers on a spaceship Earth that will continue to sustain us and all other living things only if we respect it and care for it properly (Leopold 1949).

In selecting the name “Francis,” the pope not only honoured the patron saint of the environment, he continued the special devotion that his predecessors from Pope St John XXIII onward had shown to that great teacher. In doing so, Pope Francis stated, “for me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation. These days we do not have a very good relationship with creation, do we?” The Church had evolved greatly over the years and was ready to accelerate its efforts in the environmental arena.

Presumably the extremely popular Pope Francis intended his Encyclical in part to provide support to the delegates to the Conference of Parties (COP21) in reaching a strong positive conclusion. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was established in 1994, had organized 20 previous conferences of the parties, but none had been able to agree on particularly strong or binding recommendations, and the world’s climate was continuing to change rapidly. Earlier discussions sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and particularly its joint conference with the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Sustainable Humanity, Sustainable Nature: Our Responsibility, held in May 2014, helped to lay the groundwork for the Encyclical. With the participation of various knowledgeable consultants, the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice, under the leadership of Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana, prepared the drafts that the pope used as the primary basis for his Encyclical. Encyclicals are considered the most influential documents of the Catholic Church, and for Pope Francis to issue an Encyclical, with its implications for theologians and others, on the subject of the global environment, was a very significant event indeed. There had been no earlier Encyclical on the environment, but as we have seen, a great deal of discussion of the matter over the past half century.

... continued next week.

BOOKS AND BOOKS ARE NEEDED BY VINNIES

Vinnies has a **huge demand** for books in this present pandemic environment. If you have any **good reading books**, please drop them into the Vinnies bin in the church grounds, or drop them in to the sacristy or Parish Office. Thanks for your generosity.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday 24 Aug **Saint Bartholomew**, apostle
Thursday 27 Aug **Saint Monica**, mother of Saint Augustine
Friday 21 Aug **Saint Augustine**, bishop, doctor
Saturday 22 Aug **The Passion of John the Baptist**, martyr



**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

The **Vinnies Covid-19 Winter Appeal ends this weekend**. Vinnies is urgently calling for donations to support its work with people experiencing poverty, homelessness and disadvantage. Donation envelopes are available in the church ... or you may support us through secure payments made **online** or by calling in to the Parish Office with your donations. Reduction of government income support or major unemployment – often people who have never been unemployed ever before – 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. So far, **\$5,918** has been collected!!!!!!



Vinnies
good works

BAPTISMS AT THIRROUL

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

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading Isaiah 22:19-23
2nd Reading Romans 11:33-36
Gospel Matthew 16:13-20

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading Jeremiah 20:7-9
2nd Reading Romans 12:1-2
Gospel Matthew 16:21-27

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

The Tuesday Mass will 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