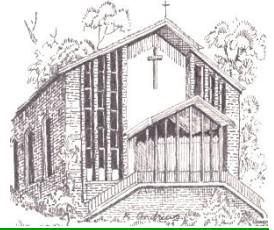




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



29 / 30 AUGUST 2020
22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Social Justice Sunday

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Does God want us to be happy?

Does God want us to be happy? How could anyone answer “no”? How could anyone suppose God is good or loving if it is not true that God wants us to be happy?

And yet look at Christ's line in the Gospel reading. Deny yourself, Jesus tells his faithful followers; take up your cross and follow me.


Denying yourself seems the very opposite of going for happiness, and the cross is an instrument of torture. Why would God want these things for God's people? Does God want us to be unhappy?

A man divorcing his unaccomplished, middle-aged, dowdy wife to marry a much younger, prettier, successful woman explained his decision to his devastated wife this way. “God wants me to be happy,” he told her, “and I can't be happy with you. I will be happy with her.”

It seems never to have crossed the mind of this husband that God might have any care for his wife's happiness. The husband's full view of the matter could be put this way: “God wants me to be happy, but God doesn't care at all about you.”

This little story, common in its selfishness, shows the sickness of the post-fall human condition, so apt to privilege its own power or pleasure over any greater goods. We can't be happy in this condition, when we are glad enough to crush others to get what we want. What is to be done with us? What will make us happy? What will save us from the evil that infects us and leaves us so willing to afflict others?

This is where Christ's line comes in. The route to the happiness God does want for us has to go through the cross of Christ. Christ is The Way for us, and the cross is where we meet him for the road to our true happiness in love and holiness in him.

In last week's gospel reading, Matthew celebrated Peter's commission as the guardian of unity in the Church. The continuation of that passage, in today's reading, recalls the rebuke Peter received from Jesus after his confession. It was the mission of Jesus, to fulfil all the expectations of the Old Testament. In the questions put to the disciples that led to Peter's confession, Jesus speaks of himself as the ‘Son of Man’, and he repeats this reference in the concluding words of today's reading. The ‘Son of Man’ was the triumphant figure of the book of Daniel who was to come on the clouds to establish God's universal reign. Now, in the first of three predictions of his passion, he identifies himself with the ‘Servant’ of the Isaian writings who, by his sufferings, would lead God's people to the fulfilment of 



✠✠ their God-given destiny. These references would have been treasured by Matthew's community, as they recalled their great theme that the life and death of the Saviour took place 'to fulfil the scriptures'. In Peter's condescending response to Jesus' prediction of the outcome of his rejection by the leaders in Jerusalem – 'This must not happen to you' – we glimpse something of the trusting relationship Jesus maintained with his disciples. But the sharp reaction of Jesus makes clear the seriousness of Peter's mistake. There is a great irony in the rebuke of Jesus: the 'rock' is told that he is a 'stumbling block'.



Jesus is forming his disciples, we remember. And now he challenges them to begin to come to terms with the mystery of the Cross – his reconciling and healing of a shattered world. Though Jesus was aware that his conflict with the Jerusalem authorities was a matter of life and death – 'the elders, chief priests and scribes' were the three groups of leaders who made up the Sanhedrin that was to condemn him – his words do not necessarily involve a miraculous foreknowledge of his fate. 'Taking up the cross' was a proverbial way of referring to the bearing of adversity and suffering. Under Roman rule, crucifixion – with its prelude of the criminal's bearing of the heavy crossbeam to the place of execution – was a familiar reality. Those who wish to be his followers, Jesus declares, must be warned that this means a readiness to bear the burden of suffering. The community, from a Jewish background, that Matthew is writing for have been filled with wonder and gratitude, as they recalled the Isaian description of the Suffering Servant: 'He was being wounded for our rebellions ... the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises' (Isaiah 53). Now they recall the words of Jesus inviting them to enter into this mystery of reconciliation: 'Anyone who wants to save their life will lose it' – a reference to the martyrdom that has already been the fate of some of their fellow Christians; 'Anyone who loses their life for my sake will find it'. These words of Jesus imply an astounding claim. 'For my sake', Jesus says. For Old Testament faith, it is only God who deserves to be loved with all one's 'heart, soul and mind' (Deuteronomy 16); now Jesus is claiming the same absolute allegiance for himself. For Jesus, this taking up of the cross is a daily, life-long calling. The other readings of today's liturgy help us to reflect upon what this call involves in practical everyday terms. Jeremiah's heroic faithfulness was to become a source of blessings and encouragement for God's people of every age. Today's passage from Paul to the Romans can serve as a commentary on the call of Jesus. We can offer our faithfulness as a 'living sacrifice', uniting our offering to the Saviour's gift of himself for the sake of the world. It is the mystery of the Eucharist that makes this possible.

BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS ARE NEEDED BY VINNIES

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

OUR BISHOPS' SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic is impacting the mental health of many members of our parishes, schools and communities. In fact, most of us will experience a mental health problem at some point over the course of our lives. Understanding mental health will help us to be aware of those who need our support. Our parishes, organisations and communities can be places of acceptance care and healing, not places of rejection, judgment or stigma.



In the Social Justice Statement *To Live Life to the Full: Mental health in Australia today*, the Bishops welcome the deinstitutionalisation of mental health care in Australia. However, without adequately funded community mental health services, there is a gap in the system through which people continue to fall. Social determinants including poverty, living conditions, and personal security are significant contributors to mental ill-health. The Statement highlights the experience of First Nations people and communities, asylum seekers and refugees, people who are homeless and those who are in prison.

The Bishops observe that “our society tends to draw away from, or to push away, those who confront us with our frailties and limitations” which is “completely at odds with the story of Jesus” who “takes on the frailty of the human condition” and “draws near to those who are sick or who have disabilities, those who are marginalized or despised”. People living with mental ill-health are part of the Body of Christ – ‘us’ and not ‘them’ – and share equally in Jesus’ promise of the fullness of life (John 10:10).

The Bishops invite us all to reject stigmatisation, to work for the transformation of social determinants of mental ill-health, and to call for policies and service provision that meets the needs of the poorest and most marginalised members of our community.

Electronic copies of the Social Justice Statement and the Prayer Card have been emailed with this Bulletin. Printed copies are available in the sacristy.

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

Although the scientific consensus on the reality of global climate change is overwhelming, people with various agendas in the energy industry, or for what they consider “free enterprise,” have continued to spread a great deal of misinformation about the matter. In doing so, they make it clear that they fail to appreciate the scientific method, which given any hypothesis works with it, attempts to falsify it, and eventually accepts it when there has been sufficient discussion. Perhaps no subject in science has been as carefully examined and reviewed as that of global climate change, with the framework of the IPCC insuring the most reliable conclusions that could possibly be obtained in the area. However, a strong desire to ignore these particular conclusions has occasioned in some circles unfounded denials in order to block effective action being taken. In science, not all opinions have equal standing, but any statement that pretends to be authoritative certainly has the potential for confusing a relatively uninformed public. Science does not dictate the steps to be taken once a hypothesis has been accepted, but arguments against the hypothesis itself are necessarily formal and fact-based.

Considering the failure of world leaders to come to any serious climate change agreement, the pope's Encyclical was extremely well timed and no doubt influential during the ✨ ✨

☞☞ Paris discussion, which produced more meaningful results than that of any of its 20 predecessors. Pope Francis' preparation of his Encyclical was based on the sort of logic that had been expressed by his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, who in the course of a 2011 address to a group of Italian students said, "Respect for the human being and respect for nature are one and the same." In fact, it would not be possible for the Church to maintain the credibility of its record of concern for the poor without at the same time addressing the environmental problems that we are causing and that at the same time unfairly and unequally damage the health and lives of the poor on such a mammoth scale. ... continued next week.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 1 Sep **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation**
Thursday 3 Sep **Saint Gregory the Great, pope, doctor**
Friday 4 Sep **Anointing of the Sick after 09:30 Mass**

**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

A huge 'thank you' for your generosity. So far, **\$6,633** (incl. \$2,000 donated online) has been collected!!!! Our parish community has once again displayed their outstanding generosity and empathy for the less fortunate members of our community. This amount exceeds our previously best total by more than \$600! The St Vincent De Paul Society thanks you, the parishioners – and others – for your continual support. – John Dening (Thirroul Conference President)



Vinnies
good works

THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A
1st Reading Ezekiel 33:7-9
2nd Reading Romans 13:8-10
Gospel Matthew 18:15-20

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
 Saturday – **5:30pm** • Sunday – **8:00am**
Bulli • Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm
Corrimal • Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am

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

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📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

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

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