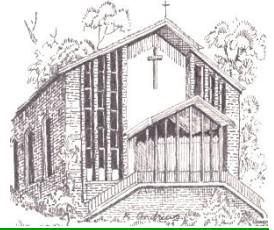




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



5 / 6 SEPTEMBER 2020
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Happy Fathers / Fathers' / Father's Day

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Witnessing for the Lord

In the first Reading, God appoints Ezekiel as a watchman for his people and he adds a threat. If Ezekiel does not warn sinners to mend their ways, God will hold him responsible for their fate.

Does God say this to Ezekiel only? Or does God say it also to all of us? Many of the great people in the Christian tradition—Augustine, Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, to name just a few—thought that God's command to Ezekiel is meant to apply now to every one of the faithful too. It is a duty for every Christian to watch out for each one of God's people in the way God spelled out to Ezekiel.



But this can look like a dreadful idea.


Could it really be the case that a Christian is supposed to be a kind of busybody, continually nagging other people about their sins?

And what about the Gospel instruction to pay more attention to the log in your own eye than to the speck of dust in somebody else's?

Here we need to remember that there is more than one way to communicate with others. If you are concentrated in love and service to the Lord, your life will tell a story to everyone who crosses your path. When Francis of Assisi was asked about this passage in the first reading, he said, "if that passage is supposed to be understood in a universal sense, then I understand it to mean that a servant of God should be burning with life and holiness so brightly that by the light of example and the tongue of his conduct, he will rebuke all the wicked." (St Francis of Assisi)

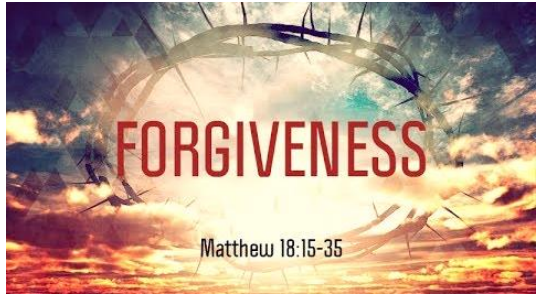
Your life can bear witness to the goodness of the Lord and the holiness of his commandments. You don't have to use words to do so.

So, a Christian can and should concentrate on the beam in his own eye, just as the Gospel injunction says. But if he really does so, then the duty to witness to others, God's command to Ezekiel, will be beautifully fulfilled.

Today's gospel reading from Matthew comes from a collection of Jesus' teachings applicable to life within the community of the Church, as it awaits the coming of the final Kingdom. In the passages that precede this one, Jesus has warned against arrogance on the part of those called to be leaders: 'the one who makes himself as little as this child is the 

✚✚ greatest'; he has pronounced a terrible judgment on those who lead astray 'these little ones who have faith'. Matthew also includes here the parable of the lost sheep, as indicating the generous zeal that should be shown by leaders in the community. This reference to those who have gone astray leads into today's reading. It describes the manner in which these people are to be dealt with within the Church community. Clearly, the community Matthew is writing for has developed procedures to be followed in such cases, and they see themselves as acting in accordance with the Lord's own mind. When we recall the authoritative spirit that was taken for granted by those with leadership roles in the ancient world, we recognise how the listening and dialogue of these procedures reflect the fraternal love that was taught by Jesus – and recalled by Paul in our second reading.

In these procedures, we see the origins of the sacrament of reconciliation that is an essential part of the life of the Church during its time of pilgrimage. It was not a question of some private offence committed against the one who admonishes the wrongdoer. In referring to the need for 'two or three witnesses to sustain the charge', this procedure echoes the community's Jewish background, citing a prescription of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 19:15), thus making it clear that it is a question of serious and public faults. When these procedures, calling the wrongdoer to conversion, have failed, this person is to be 'excommunicated' – excluded from the community. We know from comments of St Paul concerning such cases, that this exclusion aimed to help the wrongdoer find forgiveness: 'Do not treat them as enemies, but warn them as believers', Paul writes (2 Thessalonians 3; cf. 1 Corinthians 5). Being welcomed back to share in the life of the community – especially the Eucharist – was the sacramental sign of reconciliation with God. Note that Matthew follows these procedural instructions with a second reference, in his gospel, to the power to 'bind and loose' in God's name. This time it is given to the Church community, acting through the ministry of those who carry on the leadership role of the apostles. As we said, the sacramental sign of reconciliation with the Lord is being received back into the Church community.



'The Son of Man has power to forgive sins', Jesus declared (Mark 2:10). The reconciliation available in the life of the Church is the reconciliation he brings to the world. The words with which our reading ends, though brief, have immense importance for us, as we seek to understand and enter more fully into the mystery of the Church's common life. You come together 'in my name', Jesus tells us. In the biblical tradition, these words have a great depth of meaning: they imply our identification with the Lord through our baptism, and to the fact that he continues to be present in the world of our time through our coming together as his Church and celebrating the Church's common life. They also remind us of the Saviour's presence in the public prayer of the Church, uniting our prayers with his, as he intercedes for the world before the Father.

BOOKS NEEDED BY VINNIES ... WINTER APPEAL \$\$

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. And the **Vinnies Covid-19 Winter Appeal total continues to grow: now it is \$6,972**. Thanks for your generosity.

HAPPY FATHERS/FATHER'S/FATHERS' DAY

Father's Day is a day to celebrate the gift and importance of Dads throughout the world. It is also a day for each one of us to reflect on what it means to be a father, how we are called to live it, and to ask ourselves if we are living in the way that we should. As with any list or series of points, there can't be any pretension to exhaust the subject.

8 Things Every Catholic Dad Should Know About Fatherhood

1. **Encounter with God the Father:** One can't give what he doesn't have. Many of us have been blessed with great fathers growing up but other's haven't. In both cases, however, the source of Fatherhood must always come from above. Any man who seeks to be a good father, ignoring God the Father, will inevitably fall short. One must be aware that you aren't in control of your family, God is. Your leadership and service must be fruit of the obedience and humility that you live towards God.

2. **Conversion:** A good father must be a converted man, or better yet, a man growing daily in conversion. Any man that abandons his efforts to live a Christian life, who doesn't allow the encounter with God the Father to transform him, abandons simultaneously the most fundamental testimony that he can give to his children. The encounter mentioned in the first point must be an effective one, you must grow, change, mature daily.

3. **Man of Prayer:** Conversion breaths prayer. Without it, it suffocates. If your schedule is too busy to allow time for prayer, change it.

4. **Understanding your True Vocation:** For those that are blessed to be married and have children, you must recognize that helping your families get to heaven and being good husbands and fathers – not your business career – is your real vocation. Ask yourself: "Is my work serving my family? Or is my family serving my work?"

5. **Presence not presents:** Fatherhood means presence. Presence is "being with", "being for". This implies that you invest serious time with your family, both quantity and quality. Have the courage to set the smartphone down and look your children in the eyes. Take a moment to marvel at who they are and who they are becoming. Look them in the eye, listen to them, speak to them about the things that matter. Share with them how you are doing, what's going on in your mind, in your heart, in your life. Share your "being" with them, not only what you have. Showering them with presents and fancy gifts is a poor substitute for face-to-face time; in fact, it isn't a substitute at all.

6. **Courage:** Have the courage to love according to the truth. The truth is that life isn't easy and neither is being a good Catholic. This means that you can't be a blend-in kind of father. Have the courage to correct, to teach, to demand, to challenge. And then have the courage to allow them to do the same to you.

7. **Love your wife:** Men must love and cherish their wives, plain and simple. Your children will learn to love others by how they see you and your wife love each other. The husband-wife relationship is their first school in love. It is the first lesson in community, in communication, in sacrifice, and in service. To love your wife means to offer your life for her, every day. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and delivered himself up for it."

8. **Be humble:** In any relationship of service and authority, one quickly becomes aware of his or her own weaknesses. Don't be afraid, accept it with humility; it is perhaps one of the greatest displays of authority that exists.

Look with love upon all fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers, and bless them with your love. Deepen their love for their wives and families, and make us all one in love with all your holy people. We proclaim your mighty deeds and sing your praises. We offer you praise and glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 8 Sep The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**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**

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

In preparation for the appearance of the Encyclical, the PAS and PASS held a joint event at the Vatican in April 2015, titled Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity: The Moral Dimensions of Climate Change and Sustainable Development. This broadly based, multifaith conference attempted to focus attention on the forthcoming Encyclical and to set the parameters for the debate that followed it. Some had argued that the pope had no business giving an opinion about climate change because it was a “scientific” topic. Given the scientific consensus on the matter, and the clear damage that climate change was doing and would do to the poor, it would scarcely have been plausible for a relevant moral authority of any stripe not to provide guidance in this matter.

The Encyclical itself includes many aspects of great interest and importance, and it has already had a significant impact. In many of these respects it brings together trends and insights that had been gathering in the Catholic Church, highlighting the 40-year progression of thought by virtue of which human beings, which the Church regards as having a very special relationship to their Creator, had come to be regarded as members of the Earth community and not its absolute rulers. In its very first paragraph, the Encyclical quotes the words of St. Francis of Assisi’s *Canticle of the Creatures*, “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”.

... continued next week.

THIS 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

NEXT Sunday’s Readings *on our website*

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

1st Reading Sirach 27:30–28:7

2nd Reading Romans 14:7-9

Gospel Matthew 18:21-35

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

 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

 4268 1910  4268 1976

 **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

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