



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



21 / 22 NOVEMBER 2020
34TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Feast of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Embodied Love

The Gospel reading for this feast is very rich. It invites us to reflect on the difference between true love and its false imitation, between real Christianity and its fake lookalike. It encourages us to exercise ourselves in the care of all God's children. It prompts us to reflect on all the different kinds of hunger there are in the world, and the very different kinds of feeding those various hungers require.

These are all good things to ponder, but there is still more to see. Here is one more thing.

Think about what it is for God's very self to be incarnate. A human woman took the Lord to her breast and suckled him there. The apostle John reclined by the Lord and laid his head on the bosom of the Lord. A woman washed the Lord's feet with her tears, and a woman rubbed his feet with lotion. How did those people get so lucky? Of all the millions and millions of God's people, how can it be that so few touched God in the flesh, that only one woman anointed his feet? Wouldn't you have liked to be among these very lucky people? In desperately sad and stricken moments, what wouldn't you yourself have given to lay your weary head on the breast of your Lord?



It is good to have a God who enters human history, but anything in history is local, constrained in time and space, cut off from so many things that aren't right here, right now. How can it be that only those few people, who were there with Jesus, in that place and at that time, had contact with the Lord flesh to flesh?

The answer to this question and the consolation the question seeks is in the Gospel reading: whatever you did to one of the least of my own, the Lord says, you did it to me.

The tableau in today's gospel concludes Matthew's collection of the teachings of Jesus concerning the End. Unique to Matthew's gospel, it is a masterpiece. Strictly speaking, it is not a parable, but an allegory – a narrative in which details have symbolic significance. It may be the development of a simple parable, in which Jesus likened the expected coming of the 'Son of Man' with divine authority (Daniel 7) to a shepherd 'separating sheep from goats'. It provides, in a simple form, a splendid summary of the teaching of Jesus in Matthew's gospel, concerning the living of our Christian faith.

For the first Christians, Jesus was the 'Son of Man', invested in his risen glory with divine authority (Matthew 26:64). In today's second reading, Paul celebrates the divine 

authority with which the Saviour brings his saving work to completion. In the triumph of the resurrection he has authority over the whole of creation; when ‘the end’ comes, having overcome all the forces of evil, he will deliver the New Creation into the hands of his Father, and those who share in his triumph will rejoice in a divine generosity that has no limits. Paul’s account of ‘the end’ is somewhat overwhelming. Matthew’s tableau, on the other hand, presents the final Judgment in terms that are easy to understand – terms that can be related to the ways of God that found expression in the Sermon on the Mount. Despite its simplicity, however, the more we ponder this tableau the more we come to appreciate how rich it is in inspiration for those who want to live as followers of Jesus.



The Parable Of The Judgment Scene

**Matthew
25:31-46**

The criterion by which we will be judged when we come into the presence of God is practical, simple and clear. It is not so much what we do for the God ‘we cannot see’ that matters, in the end, but what we do for one another – expressing the fact that we are true children of the same Father (cf. 1 John 4:20). And among God’s children it is the poor and needy who should have our special care – our ‘preferential option’. The things that will establish our worth in the sight of God, and our readiness to share in God’s friendship, are simple things, possible to all, learned and simple, rich and poor. What overturns our expectations and is immensely reassuring is the fact that those who have proved themselves worthy of hearing the Lord’s invitation – ‘Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world’ – may well be taken unawares. Responding to the grace of God, working in them ‘in a hidden way’ (*Gaudium et spes*, n.22), they have shown themselves true children of the Father – helping for the sake of those in need, without any thought of a reward. Matthew’s tableau finds a place among the elect for all who fight unselfishly humanity’s ancient enemies: ‘ignorance, poverty, disease, injustice, bigotry, death of body or soul’ (B. Vawter). The greatest inspiration of all, however, is found in the Lord’s affirmation, ‘You did it to me’. Sharing our humanity and experience in a struggling world, the ‘Son of Man’ has made himself one in a privileged way with those in greatest need.

Placing us on the threshold of the final Kingdom, this tableau gives us a glimpse of what it will be like – one family of the Father, united in God’s generous and merciful ways. Today, we venerate Christ the King; today’s gospel reminds us that it is only in his final ‘glory’ that he exercised his kingship. Among us, he makes himself the ‘Servant’ of all.

REGISTERING FOR SATURDAY AND SUNDAY MASSES

**If you wish to attend 5:30pm Saturday Mass or 8:00am Sunday Mass,
you need to register with the Parish Office by phone or email.
Register now for Masses up to the end of the year, 26/27 December.**

EVER THOUGHT OF BECOMING A FOSTER CARER?

There is a need for foster carers who provide love, care and support to help children thrive and reach their full potential. Carers receive comprehensive support from the Fostering Futures team to ensure they have a full range of resources and networks to nurture their forever home. The team has over 30 years’ experience helping carers give vulnerable children a loving home and a brighter future. ☎ **Catholic Care** 📞 **0418 783 956**

FRATELLI TUTTI

ctd. Commentary by Daniel P Horan

Today Pope Francis calls on all his brothers and sisters, regardless of their religious tradition or nation of origin, to “see things in a new light and to develop new responses” to the challenges before us (128). Among these challenges is the increasing tendency that individuals and nations have to erect borders and walls, literal and figurative ones, which separate, isolate and exclude the most vulnerable in our world. Francis’ consistent critiques throughout the encyclical of consumerism, capitalism, nationalism, xenophobia and other ascendant ideologies of our time also gesture to the importance of bridge building between peoples.

The pope points to love as the necessary ground for our building a “culture of encounter,” which “means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone” (216). He speaks throughout *Fratelli Tutti* of the evils of apathy and indifference, a recurring theme in his preaching and magisterial teaching. These attitudes not only prevent us from the capacity for compassion — the ability to suffer with others in solidarity — but they also promote an individualism that creates separation and prohibits authentic relationship. What results is not only social division, but also tremendous suffering, which is felt most acutely by the poor and vulnerable.

The imposition of physical and ideological borders does great harm to human dignity, particularly for migrants and immigrants, which is why Francis strongly emphasizes the need for “fraternal gratuitousness” or the building of bridges to a better life for those who suffer the most without asking the costs (140). This is only possible, the pope notes, if we measure ourselves not merely as one country competing against others but “as part of the larger human family.” He adds: “Only a social and political culture that readily and ‘gratuitously’ welcomes others will have a future” (141). It is only in the spirit of St Francis’ *fraternitas* that such reforms can take place.

Peacemaking and reconciliation

Toward the end of *Fratelli Tutti*, Francis writes: “In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds. There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter” (225). Here he again embodies the wisdom of St Francis as a promoter of peacemaking and reconciliation.

Remembered as a faithful reformer of the church and society, St Francis’ commitment to peacemaking and reconciliation as the means for reforming dysfunctional relations between people was grounded in his understanding of universal *fraternitas* — that we are all brothers and sisters to one another and ought to act like it. In his famous “Canticum of the Creatures,” St Francis barely mentions human beings. When he does toward the end of the text, after invoking many other aspects of creation, he says that we humans are most authentically in keeping with God’s intention for us when we “give pardon,” “bear infirmity and tribulation” and “endure in peace.”

Similarly, Pope Francis stresses the need for another kind of being in the world, one that is more human, one that returns to this foundational vocation wherein God calls all people to be peacemakers and reconcilers. Returning to the Franciscan principle of *fraternitas*, the pope invokes the family as a metaphor for reimagining social structures and political engagement. He notes that families regularly have disputes, but the way that healthy families resolve them can be a model for thinking about the bigger picture of human dynamics in society. *They may quarrel, but there is something that does not change: the family bond. Family disputes are always resolved afterwards. The joys and sorrows of each of its members are felt by all. That is what it means to be a family! If only we could view our political opponents or neighbours in the same way that we view our children or spouse, mother or father! How good would this be!* (230) *(continued next week)*

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 24 Nov Saints Andrew Dung-Lac, priest, and companions, martyrs
Weekend 28/29 Nov First Sunday of Advent, Blessing of the Christmas Tree

ONE CHRISTMAS ITEM [see below] 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

SURFING SEASON ... BE SAFE

So far this season, there have been **545** rescues [*last week 466*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **1,902** first aid treatments [*last week 1,681*] have been performed.



ADVENT DAILY REFLECTION BOOKS

As usual our Diocese has produced another excellent daily reflections book for Advent, this year called, *Adore*. These are **FREE** and available in the church or from the Parish Office.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL BEGINS THIS WEEKEND

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal runs from 21 November to 6 December. You can support the Appeal in any of the following ways:

- ✓ **Hampers** – 3 categories (families, single female, single male) *notices in the church*
↳ if you cannot attend church, but want to make a hamper up, contact the Parish Office
- ✓ **Giving Tree** – tags on the tree have name and gender of children (up to 12 years)
- ✓ **Donation Envelopes** – available in the church as well as **online** donations
- ✓ **Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, lollies, tinned vegetables, chips, jelly** – no cigarette or alcohol products please.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Christ the King • Year **A**

1st Reading Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28

Gospel Matthew 25:31-46

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

First Sunday of Advent • Year **B**

1st Reading Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1,3-8

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Gospel Matthew 13:33-37

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

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

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