



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul



4 / 5 SEPTEMBER 2021
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
HAPPY FATHERS DAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Being Able to Hear

In the gospel reading, Jesus does a miracle: a man who was deaf and impaired in speech becomes able to hear and to speak plainly. But the way in which Jesus performs the miracle seems undignified or even silly. Jesus puts his fingers in the man's ears and his spit on the man's tongue. Before the man's ears are opened to hear, Jesus looks up to heaven, he groans, and he says, "Be opened!"

What happened to the elegant kind of miracle where Jesus just says a word and a person is healed? Why this show, which looks embarrassing for Jesus?

The answer lies in the question. What Jesus does is literally a silent show. It has to be. Jesus is trying to communicate with someone who can't hear. In other cases, before Jesus does a miracle, Jesus talks to the person for whom the miracle will be done. In this case, he does charades.



His charade begins by letting the deaf man know that Jesus is putting a part of himself into the deaf man—his fingers into the deaf man's ears, his spit into the deaf man's mouth. By this means, Jesus invites the deaf man to accept Jesus into himself—literally. And then Jesus looks up to heaven to show the deaf man the source of Jesus' power. It doesn't come from some magic in Jesus' fingers or spittle. It comes from God, whose power is in Jesus, who is in the deaf man, by means of this charade

Even the groaning and the speech of Jesus to the deaf man make sense if we think of them in this way. First, the deaf man sees Jesus open his mouth to make the inarticulate sound of groaning. This deaf man doesn't speak, but even those made mute by deafness can groan. In groaning, Jesus joins the deaf man, who can see Jesus groaning even if he can't hear him.

And then the deaf man sees Jesus speaking an articulate word to him, to the man who cannot hear. In doing this, Jesus is inviting the deaf man to trust in Jesus, to choose to accept the miracle—to choose to hear the word that Jesus speaks to him. And so, Jesus humbles himself to share the limitations of this one deaf man. By undignified dumb show, the love of the Lord heals the deaf man's soul as well as his ears. Let us be humble enough to hear the love of the Lord in this story.

Our readings from the Gospel of Mark make us aware of the way in which this gospel makes use of material concerning the life of Jesus – perhaps supplied in part by the apostle ↗ ↘

Peter. While he allows the events speak for themselves, Mark's presentation points to implications he wishes to emphasise. Today's reading concerns the healing of a deaf man with a speech impediment. While the healing and the wonder it provoked are described in detail, the fact that Jesus 'ordered them to tell no one' is again emphasised. Mark is maintaining a delicate balance: Jesus was truly a miraculous healer, but Mark wants those who hear the gospel to look beyond this fact to the nature of the mysterious mission Jesus has received from his Father, as the Messiah who 'must suffer'.



'Be opened!' These dramatic words of Jesus are the climax of the story. In Mark's text, the Galilean mission of Jesus has ended with rejection by those of his 'hometown'. Mark begins his account of the cure by describing the strange route taken by Jesus – through pagan territories – probably pointing to the infant Church's mission to the gentiles and the openness with which that mission to preach the gospel truth was received. We too are invited to reflect upon the importance of openness, and to acknowledge the many ways in which we can be more open to God's call to the fullness of life. For Mark, life and joy will be found by those who become true disciples of the Crucified One, and so enter with him into his glory.

The second reading, from the Letter of James, brings this whole program down to earth. Let us be open and generous to those around us, and not imprisoned in our selfish outlooks, 'making distinctions between classes of people'. The teaching of James does not remain an abstraction. Who is not moved to reflect upon assumptions taken for granted, when confronted by the simple example of the 'beautifully dressed' person and the poor person 'in shabby clothes'? But for James this is more than a moral story; it is a story about discipleship – learning, in the company of Jesus, to identify with the ways of God: 'those who are poor according to the world God chose to be rich in faith and to be heirs to the kingdom'. The first reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah – describing the liberating ways of God – comes from the final pages of the first part of the Isaian tradition. It is taken from a passage that proclaims the magnificent future God has in store for Israel. The confidence of the Prophets expectations is amazing – in the continuation of the passage, he foresees God's people 'shouting for joy, their heads crowned with joy unending. We can rejoice, with James, that we know already the mysterious intimations of that future. We are challenged by the prophet's confidence, to become a Church giving the vital witness our troubled world needs, if that world to find hope by being 'open' to God's future.

HAPPY FATHERS DAY – BLESSING OF FATHERS

May the God of strength be with you holding you in strong-fingered hands. May you be a strength to those whose hands you hold. May the God of gentleness be with you, caressing you with sunlight, rain and wind. May God's tenderness shine through you, to warm all who are hurt and lonely. May the God of mercy be with you, forgiving you, beckoning you, encouraging you. May your readiness to forgive calm the fears, and deepen the trust of those who hurt you. May the God of wonder be with you, delighting you, enchanting your senses, filling your heart, giving you wide-open eyes for seeing the splendour in the humble and the majestic. May you open the eyes and hands and hearts of the blind and the deaf and the insensitive. May the God of wisdom and love be with you, lighting within you the fires of faith and hope. May your children honour you always with a spirit of profound respect and friendship. *Happy Fathers/Fathers'/Father's Day to all fathers and grandfathers.*

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
STILL NEEDED DURING LOCKDOWN**

DROP ITEMS ON THE FRONT VERANDAH OF THE PRESBYTERY

**1 SEPTEMBER – World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
SEASON OF CREATION – 1 SEPTEMBER TO 4 OCTOBER**

Pope Francis and the Vatican are again calling on all Catholics to join the ecumenical Season of Creation, which starts 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends 4 October, the Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi.

In a letter, Monsignor Bruno-Marie Duffé, Secretary of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, warmly invited the global Catholic family to "join the ecumenical family in celebrating the Season of Creation," the annual celebration of prayer and action for our common home.

"I humbly request your assistance in promoting this important moment in your local parishes and communities," Mons. Duffé wrote: "We also encourage bishops and ecclesial bodies to make statements to raise awareness about the Season of Creation, helping the faithful to realize that living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience" (LS 217).



Join the Season of Creation by registering and receive the free Season of Creation Celebration Guide, which is packed with ideas about how you can lead your community in caring for creation. <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

Duffé continued, pointing out how next month's ecumenical season will be a "critical moment for Catholics to lift up the voices of the most vulnerable and advocate on their behalf ahead of two important summits."

After the Season of Creation, the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the UN Biodiversity Convention (COP15) will take place.

Duffé wrote: "I invite you to join advocacy initiatives such as the Healthy Planet, Healthy People Petition urging for bold action to protect creation in addition to other initiatives calling for new paths forward together."

Pope Francis and the Vatican have shown prophetic leadership around the ecumenical celebration of prayer, action, and advocacy for our common home.

The past two years, Pope Francis has started the season with a powerful papal message, encouraging Catholics to host events and protect God's creation. He also has concluded the season the past two years by thanking Christians around the world for their efforts.

SOCIAL JUSTICE 2021

The Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2021-22: *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, affirms that "we human beings need a change of heart, mind, and behaviour". It draws from Scripture, from the theological tradition, from Catholic Social Teaching, and from the wisdom of the world, including the insights of the First Nations. Google: **acbc social justice**

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Wednesday 8 Sep The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Our church is currently closed – until at least 30 September. Please KEEP IN TOUCH.

PLENARY COUNCIL 2021 STARTS ON 3 OCTOBER

Plenary Council Prayer Campaign: People across the country are invited to participate in the “Fan the Flame” prayer campaign leading up to the first assembly of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. Find resources at: www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/fanthefflame/

PARALYMPIC GAMES

The Paralympic Games offer an extraordinary opportunity for us to watch athletes with disabilities use their bodies and athletic equipment in incredible ways to overcome amazing challenges. As spectators, there are the carbon-fibre prosthetics to marvel over, and the rugby players who use their wheelchairs like hotshot speed cars.

What is it about the Paralympics? The physical details of these athletes that might put you off if you encountered someone with a missing arm in the bar, someone in a wheelchair on the subway, a blind person on the sidewalk. Those exact same elements that might feel awkward everywhere else are transformed in the Paralympics. Why? Why does a weird little stump you see in a restaurant haunt you but when you see it in an Olympic pool chasing a world record it makes you cheer? When you suddenly see the body's collaboration with its environment, the wheelchair as a hotshot speed car, a prosthesis as a robot cyborg arm, a stump as an aerodynamic advantage in the water, suddenly it trumps all of the other more pitiable images. How did that happen, poor guy, I wonder what that girl would have been like with both her legs. The tragedy gets trumped by this athletic Paralympic sense of intent.



TOKYO 2020
PARALYMPIC GAMES



THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Isaiah 35:4-7

2nd Reading James 2:1-5

Gospel Mark 7:31-37

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Isaiah 50:5-9

2nd Reading James 2:14-18

Gospel Mark 8:27-35

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul

Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

**Church closed because of lock down
now closed until further notice**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

09:30

09:30

09:00

09:30

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Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

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thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish Office

Hours

Lauren Faulks – Parish Secretary

Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00am–3:30pm Friday 9:30am–2:30pm



www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

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