



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul



18 / 19 SEPTEMBER 2021
25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
SEASON OF CREATION – 1 SEP TO 4 OCT

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Trying To Be First

In the gospel reading, Jesus rebukes his disciples for arguing about who among them was first and greatest. But how do we suppose their argument went?

There are two possibilities.

First Possibility: Each disciple was saying, "I am the greatest!" while the others were saying, "Oh no, you're not! I am!"

Second Possibility: Each disciple was saying to one of the others, "You are the greatest among us!" and that person was saying, "Oh no, I'm not. You are."

On the first possibility, each disciple is trying to put himself ahead of all the others. On the second possibility, each disciple is trying to be small by putting some other disciple ahead of himself.

We are naturally inclined to think that the right possibility must be the first one. That is because Jesus rebukes the disciples, and we unreflectively suppose that Jesus wouldn't want to rebuke them if each one was trying to be small.

But notice that if we adopt the first possibility, then Jesus' rebuke doesn't make sense. On the first possibility, what is wrong with the disciples is that each one is trying to be first. And so Jesus should rebuke them for trying to be first.

But that is not what Jesus rebukes the disciples for. On the contrary, Jesus gives the disciples a short instruction manual for how to get to be first. If you want to be first, he tells them, you have to be the servant of all. Would Jesus have explained to them how to get to be first if he thought that trying to be first was wrong?

So, the second possibility is the right one. Each disciple was trying to be small in order to seem humble. But there is no true humility in trying to be small.

As the parable about the talents (cf. Matthew 25:24-28) shows, each person is called to strive for greatness by accepting the gifts God gives her/him and using them to the full. True humility lies in understanding that everything is gift; and everything is meant to be given back, in service of others. When each person strives for greatness in this way, there is no competition. No one is ahead of the others, no matter how much



greatness she/he achieves. Rather, all together are one in the Lord, and he is Lord over all (Romans 9:5). This is the way in which being the servant of all makes you first. The Galilean ministry of Jesus has ended in rejection. In today's gospel reading, Jesus begins to give his whole attention to preparing his disciples for the final rejection that awaits him in Jerusalem – a rejection God will transform into a victory over all evil in the Saviour's Paschal Mystery. The first reading, from the Book of Wisdom vividly anticipates what lies ahead for Jesus. In fact, it is describing the selfishness and foolishness good people have to contend with in every age. The existence of real and pervasive evil presents a challenge to Christian faith. The freedom and responsibility that are the hallmarks of our human dignity will often be abused and obstruct the purposes of God. How is God to make creation a final masterpiece, by turning all things to good in the end?

There is something truly prophetic in the reading from Wisdom, because it echoes the Songs in the Book of Isaiah concerning God's Servant: 'the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises' (Isaiah 53:5). These Songs were quoted by Jesus in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19). No doubt they were of great importance to him as his mission unfolded. God's designs have been patiently prepared. Evil is a problem for all of us: we have to contend with disruptive forces – within ourselves, in our dealings with others, in the wide world in which we live. Like the disciples Jesus is instructing, we are still learning how to cope. Those whom Jesus wants to be the bearers of the Good News of God's ways are still lost in their self-centred ambitions. It is a situation that is so typical of our human experience. It leads Jesus to give the disciples a lesson that is at once radical and simple: 'Anyone who wants to be first must become last of all and servant of all'. Perhaps we have here another echo of the Servant Songs that have been mentioned – Jesus himself will be our example in the living out of this truth. Great teacher that he is, Jesus goes on to give the disciples an object lesson – receive those who have nothing to give you in return, like this child I am embracing, he tells them, and you will be true disciples of mine and dear to my Father.



James' letter, as we have said, reflects the ideals of a Jewish community of Christian faith. Their spirituality has its roots in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament and its call to live in harmony with God's ways. Today's reading shows how well these first Christians have learned the lesson Jesus was teaching the apostles on their way to Jerusalem. We are all challenged to look into our own lives as James names those things that belong to a world shaped by selfishness: 'jealousy and ambition', 'disharmony', 'battles between yourselves', unrealistic desires 'so that you fight to get your way by force'. It is all too familiar. How much more authentic and attractive is the alternative, shaped by God's ways – 'the wisdom that comes from above' – bringing 'peace', 'compassion' and generosity, fairness and straightforwardness. And James' characteristic practicality helps us to relate to this ideal as something within our reach: we must 'pray properly', not seeking through our prayer 'to indulge our own desires', but finding the joy that comes from identifying with the ways of God, after the example of Jesus.

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL — GREAT RESULT — THANK YOU!

Electronic donations: **\$2,910** plus Cash/Cheque donations: **\$2,260** giving a total of **\$5,170**, an absolutely **AMAZING** result in these trying times. **THANK YOU!!**

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

SEASON OF CREATION – 1 SEPTEMBER TO 4 OCTOBER

“Code Red for humanity” is how the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres describes the latest IPCC Sixth Assessment Report which shows the world is dangerously close to irreversible global warming unequivocally caused by human activities. This is the context where we are called to celebrate the Season of Creation, renewing our home which is on the verge of the abyss.

From 1 September to 4 October, the Christian family celebrates the beauty and goodness of creation. This global celebration began in 1989 with the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s recognition of Creation Day, which is 1 September, and is now embraced by the wide ecumenical community.

In 2003, through the Pastoral Statement of the Permanent Council “Celebrating Creation Day and Creation Time”, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines called for the observance of Creation time. In 2015, Pope Francis formally added the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation to the Catholic calendar as an annual day of prayer. And in 2016, the Holy Father officially invited all Catholics to celebrate the full season. This year, our theme for the Season of Creation is “A Home for all! Renewing the Oikos of God”. In the Philippines, we extend our celebration of this special season to the second Sunday of October, the Indigenous People’s Sunday.

This “*time for creation*” offers, in the words of Pope Francis, “*individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.*”

Let us pray for the two important meetings that are happening this year. The UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) gathers nations around the world to face the problem of biodiversity loss and the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) to address the urgency of the climate crisis. These two issues, climate and biodiversity, are intricately connected, with climate change projected to become an increasingly important driver of biodiversity loss.

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, drawing inspiration from our previous pastoral letters and from the vision of *Laudato Si’*, I would like to join all to: Celebrate the Season of Creation with your families, communities and parishes. To help you with the celebration visit www.facebook.com/CBCPLaudatoSi for more resources.

Our common home is on the brink of catastrophe. Urgent actions are needed. We hope that this Season of Creation would lead us to renew our commitment to action to ensure that all creation will have a safe and healthy home to flourish and participate in renewing the Oikos of God. – Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines

Oikos is the Greek word for “home,” or “household.” By rooting the theme of the Season of Creation in the concept of *oikos*, we celebrate the integral web of relationships that sustain the well-being of the Earth.



During the Season of Creation, Christians will transform our home into a tent for all of creation.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday 20 Sep **Saints Andrew Kim Tae-gon**, priest, martyr, **Paul Chong Ha-sang & companions**, martyrs

Tuesday 21 Sep **Saint Matthew**, apostle

Thursday 23 Sep **Saint Pius of Pietrelcina**, priest
SPRING EQUINOX AT 05:20

Friday 24 Sep **11am Memorial Mass for Eugenie Simpson**, placing of ashes



Our church is currently closed – until further notice. 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/

SPRING (VERNAL) EQUINOX: 23 SEPTEMBER AT 05:20

What Is the Spring Equinox? In the Southern Hemisphere, the September equinox is called the vernal equinox, because it signals the beginning of spring (vernal means fresh or new like the spring). When the Southern Hemisphere starts to tilt toward the sun in spring, the Northern Hemisphere starts to tilt away from the sun, signalling the start of fall. With the Spring Equinox comes increasing daylight hours and warming temperatures.

MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES MASS: 12:30pm, Sunday, 19 Sep

This celebration for those marking 25, 40, 50, 60, or over 60 years of marriage in 2020-21, will now be livestreamed, with no attendance possible due to COVID restrictions. The **live stream link** is <https://www.youtube.com/c/LumenChristiCatholicParishes/videos>
Over 40 couples from our diocese, including a number from our parish will be celebrating. **Congratulations to those celebrating anniversaries.**

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Wisdom 2:12,17-20

2nd Reading James 3:16–4:3

Gospel Mark 9:30-37

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Numbers 11:25-29

2nd Reading James 5:1-6

Gospel Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul

Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

**Church closed because of lockdown
now closed until further notice**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul

**Church currently closed
because of lockdown
until further notice**

Monday	—
Tuesday	17:30
Wednesday	17:30
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30

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

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

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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 Parish School of St Michael 4267 2560