



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul



25 / 26 SEPTEMBER 2021
26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
SEASON OF CREATION – 1 SEP TO 4 OCT

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Tribalism

It is part of Christian doctrine that only Christians can be saved. No one comes to the Father except by Christ (John 14:6). This is a view that can encourage tribalism.

In the gospel reading, the apostles see someone who is not among the group of Christ's disciples but who is casting out demons in the name of Christ anyway. When the apostles perceive the man doing a miracle in Christ's name, they tell him to stop it. As the apostles see it, unless a person is a member of their group, their tribe, he is an outsider; and, as an outsider, he is not among the saved. In the view of the apostles, that is why there is something wrong about that outsider's using God's power to do miracles.

In response, Christ defends the outsider and rebukes the tribalism of his apostles. "Whoever is not against us is for us," Christ tells the disciples. The outsider has not joined the disciples, and he doesn't know the doctrines or customs that the disciples are learning from Christ. But, in Christ's view, he is still one of Christ's own.

So it is true that no one comes to the Father except by Christ.

But this requirement makes Christ the one necessary and sufficient condition for salvation. It doesn't say anything about any of the other ways by which members of a group usually identify themselves. As Christ sees that outsider, the man meets the one requisite condition for salvation: he is for Christ. And so, in Christ's view, that outsider counts as one of those who come to the Father by Christ, even if he is not an official member of Christ's disciples.

But then, you might say, who doesn't count as one of Christ's own? Who actually is against Christ?

In effect, Christ answers these questions by giving an example of a group destined for perdition. It is the group of those who draw children away from the Lord or who make the vulnerable and helpless worse than they otherwise would be. Those in that group would be better off being dropped into the sea with millstones around their necks, Christ says.

So here is what we need to remember. Even Judas was a member of the official tribe of Christ's disciples; but in the end Judas was not one of Christ's own.





Real membership in the group of those who are Christ's own depends on being for Christ, and for those he loves.

Today's gospel reading from Mark has a lesson as telling today as it was when Jesus was instructing his disciples. The seriousness that characterises groups upholding a religious tradition often becomes exclusive and intolerant. The apostle John reports disapprovingly that they had seen a man 'casting out devils' in the name of Jesus. How precious in the memory of Christian faith is the Lord's response. Authentic faith and discipleship must reflect the inclusive ways of God, proclaimed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Love your enemies ... you must set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father set none to his' (Matthew 5:48). 'Anyone who is not against us if for us' – words filled with wisdom and generosity. The Lord is at work in every human heart, and who are we to make judgments that may obstruct the mysterious purposes of God?



The rest of the reading provides an important complement to the great lesson concerning outsiders that has just been given. Those who are within the community of faith have a great responsibility to uphold and protect the truth and values of the Gospel – 'these little one who have faith' are not the children in the community, but members of the community who may be led astray. What are we to make of Jesus' drastic advice to 'cut off' bodily members that may 'cause sin'? If they refer to person morality – the more frequently heard interpretation – they are a reminder that faithful discipleship may call for heroically painful decisions. (As we know, the Semitic forms of expression used by Jesus are surprisingly strong to our ears.) There is a strong case, however, for an interpretation of these words as following on from reference to the 'little ones'. In this interpretation they would refer to exclusion from the community, of persons who would corrupt the faith of insecure believers.

The first reading from Numbers provides a remarkable parallel to the gospel text. Now it is Joshua – the leader who was to succeed Moses and lead the Israelites into their Promised Land – who reacts in too exclusive a fashion. The response of Moses has a timelessness that is breathtaking; it sums up the ideal that should animate any leader of God's people: 'Are you jealous on my account? If only the whole people of the Lord were prophets, and the Lord gave his Spirit to them all!' Prophets are those who speak out in God's name, pointing the way forward to God's people. Vatican II stressed the need to foster such gifts of the Spirit in the Church.

The reading from James reminds us of another exclusiveness, the sense of power and difference that can close off wealthy people from their fellow human beings. Our passage follows an ironic description of the plans of the wealthy. In the spirit of old Israel's Wisdom tradition, it goes on to declare that these grand plans will have no lasting outcome. It is not rich people in the Christian community who are being referred to, but the wealthy and unscrupulous of the surrounding society. Even so, they carry an implicit reminder for believers of the Saviour's words: 'It is harder for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 19:23; see also Paul's rebuke to an early Christian community in which the behaviour of the wealthy was forming 'factions' 1 Corinthians 11:18-21).

**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

BLESSING OF ANIMALS: MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER, 9:30AM ONWARDS

The annual Blessing of Animals will be held on the long weekend in October, from 9:30am onwards to 11:00am on Monday, 4 October. All animals are welcome. This year, because of social distancing regulations, all animals must keep two paws or two wings apart. Goldfish must wear face masks. You may “walk by” with your pets anytime between 9:30am and 11:00am so as to maintain social distancing.

On 4 October, people all over the world will be celebrating the feast day of the Patron Saint of Animals, Saint Francis of Assisi. It is customary that in remembrance of St Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures, animals are led to churches for a special ceremony called the “Blessing of the Animals.” Every year, millions of animals are blessed by priests/friars in a ceremony that touches the hearts of most of those in attendance.

The Blessing of Animals will take place at the Parish of Saint Michael – outside the church – on the Feast of Saint Francis, **Monday, 4 October, from 9:30am onwards.**



SURFING SEASON STARTED LAST WEEKEND

Last year, 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, **294** people drowned in Australian waterways [last year, 248], and a **further 674** people experienced a non-fatal drowning incident [last year, 504]. **22%** of the 294 drowning deaths occurred at beaches. **MALES** accounted for **80%** of all deaths, with the largest number of deaths recorded among people aged **25 to 34** years of age. **Stay safe and swim between the flags.**



SPIRITUALITY ON THE SOFA, WEDNESDAY, 6 OCTOBER, 7:30PM

Topic: “**Re-imagining Faith Communities**”. We have three fine speakers to lead us in our conversation: **Melinda Seed** [Youth Ministry Leader at Christ Church St Laurence, Sydney], **Anne Benjamin** and **Charles Burford** [both Honorary Professors at the Australian Catholic University]. All are invited to think our faith communities might be like in the future. Or to put this another way, from your experience and perspective, what would we be like as a Church when we are at our best? With the Plenary Council scheduled for October 2021, Church reform is once again at the forefront of discussion. A flyer with the Zoom link is being emailed to all on our parish distribution list.

FAITH FORMATION – SUBSCRIBE FOR FREE

Join hundreds of other families in nurturing your faith at home, in your own time and at your own pace? Faith Formation Resource library website contains thousands of faith formation documentaries, courses, movies, audio and books covering all aspects of our Catholic faith – materials for both adults and children: darren.mcdowell@dow.org.au

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday	27 Sep	Saint Vincent de Paul, priest
Wednesday	29 Sep	Saints Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, archangels
Thursday	30 Sep	Saint Jerome, priest, doctor
Friday	1 Oct	Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin, doctor
Saturday	2 Oct	The Holy Guardian Angels



Our church is currently closed – until further notice. Please KEEP IN TOUCH.

PLENARY COUNCIL 2021 – 3 TO 10 OCTOBER

From 3 to 10 October, the Church in Australia will commence its fifth Plenary Council – the first in 84 years. 279 members will begin a process of dialogue focusing on six themes that were developed from the responses of over 220,000 people. The **Agenda ...** As children of God, disciples of Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Members of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia are called to develop concrete proposals to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia at this time. Questions have been posed in six themes: **Conversion** (how might we better accompany one another, heal the wounds of abuse, meet the needs of the vulnerable, respond to the call of ‘ecological conversion?’); **Prayer** (how might we become more contemplative, embrace the diverse liturgical traditions?); **Formation** (how might we form better leaders, better equip and form ordained ministers?); **Structures** (how might we better become local centres for formation, be better structured for mission?); **Governance** (how might we approach governance in the spirit of synodality?); and **Institutions** (how might we see the future of Catholic education, of Catholic social services as key missionary and evangelising ministries? The full text of the Agenda is found on the Plenary Council website: www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au There are seven people for our Diocese who will be members of the Plenary Council, including two from our parish, Jodi Steel and Ken Cafe ofm. The agenda calls those attending to “develop concrete proposals to create a more missionary, Christ-centred Church in Australia”.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1 st Reading	Numbers 11:25-29
2 nd Reading	James 5:1-6
Gospel	Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1 st Reading	Genesis 2:18-24
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 2:9-11
Gospel	Mark 10:2-16

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