



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul



2 / 3 OCTOBER 2021
27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI — 4 OCTOBER

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Marriage

In the gospel reading Christ has a stern thing to say about all marriages: if a husband divorces his wife and marries again, he commits adultery, and so does his wife if she remarries.

Given that stern saying, why would anyone want to marry? Why would God want anyone to marry?

The first reading describes the way God arranged the first marriage. When Adam is without Eve, God says that it isn't good for Adam to be alone—and that's the reason for God's creating Eve and arranging Adam's marriage to her.

But who made the man in such a way that it isn't good for him to be alone? God did, no? God didn't make the angels this way. Angels don't get married. They don't have children either. Angels in themselves are not the union of two other angels, who merged something of themselves to form an angel.

As far as that goes, angels have no gender either. An angel isn't male or female. No angel can say to another angel, "You complete me." It is perfectly fine for an angel to be alone.

Human beings have what angels lack: the glorious richness of embodied, gendered human life. But there is a fragility about this rich embodied life too. Those who do get married are open to each other and dependent on each other, and so they become terribly vulnerable to each other, too.

And here it is worth noticing that both the readings focus on men. In the first reading, God's arrangements for Adam have the result Adam sketches: a man will leave his parents and cling to his wife. In the gospel reading, Christ is responding to the Pharisees' question whether it is lawful for a husband to divorce his wife. Most of the time, in the post-fall world, the risks of marriage are unequally distributed between the genders. They tend to fall more on women than on men.

When God made human beings embodied and gendered, God gave them the great gift, lacking for the angels, that they could be joined together for life in marriage, with children. For us, who live in the post-fall world that Adam bequeathed us, this gift comes beset with risks for heart-breaking suffering. The challenge for us is to preserve the promise and beauty of God's gift. The perils of marriage for women—and also for men—is hedged in by Christ's stern prohibition against divorce.





The Church's liturgy is our great teacher. As the weeks pass it reviews the great issues of our existence, and the Word of God points the way forward. In today's world, marriage is in crisis, and the break-up of families leaves many young people seriously deprived in their formative years. Without the guidance of Christ we would be at a loss to find the truth that should guide us. In today's reading from Mark, Jesus is asked whether divorce was permissible. In the time of Jesus, although divorce was permitted (see Deuteronomy 24: 1-4) the proper grounds for divorce were debated. Jesus bypasses this debate, and speaks of what marriage is in the plan of the Creator – 'in the beginning'. Citing today's first reading from Genesis, he makes the startling assertion that true marriage is more than an arrangement entered into by two human persons; it involves God – 'What God has united, no one must divide'.

One of Pope John Paul II's contributions to the Church's life was his series of addresses on human love and sexuality, given at his weekly audiences (1979-1984). Explaining how it is that Jesus can make such an assertion, he interprets today's reading from Genesis. This seemingly simple text speaks with great depth and subtlety of what it means to be human. The solitude of Adam, finds no companion in the animal kingdom – because, made in the image of God, Adam has in him a depth that they will never fill. It is only in the sharing of human companionship that this mysterious depth in the human person can be filled. The Creator provides for Adam the perfect companion: 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh'. Paradoxically, this companionship becomes life-giving in self-donation, and destructive in selfish exploitation. The true beauty of human sexuality shines out as this self-donation finds expression in the body language which is part of God's creation; Jesus quotes the Genesis text, 'the two become one'. The body language of sexuality is not only the expression of authentic self-donation, but also the source of new human lives – marriage is a sharing in the work of the Creator. Though the account of Jesus welcoming the 'little children' is a separate incident, it follows on well from the discussion of marriage, reminding us of the children who are so often forgotten in the discussion of marriage relationships today. Marriage breakdown is a very complex pastoral problem. But the great ideal Jesus puts before us must never be forgotten.

We begin reading from the Letter to the Hebrews, a treatise written to give heart to Jewish converts, who were tempted to lapse into a mood of anticlimax and nostalgia, in a world that seemed little changed after the Resurrection. Its message is straightforward: the things of old Israel were only shadows; now – by faith – we possess all that these shadows promised. Today's passage is a fine description of the Paschal Mystery that should be central to Christian faith. Jesus is 'crowned with glory and splendour' after he has shared life with us. His death has been a source of life for all humankind – after sharing our 'imperfect' world and its 'suffering' he has given us a share in his 'glory' and 'holiness'. He is forever our 'leader' and our 'brother'.

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.

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." Mass on Monday, 4 October will be recorded and emailed out prior to the Blessing of Animals. **Happy Saint Francis Day. Franciscan Calendars will be available from Friday.**



FOR SALE - Dead Budgie - Not going cheap

SURFING SEASON 2021-2022

Since 1 July 2021, there have been **222** rescues performed by Surf Lifesavers in Australia, and **630** first aids. Every day our lifesavers rescue 30 people. **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

**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

PRAYER IN TIME OF PANDEMIC

In this age of anxiety & stress, we ask for your Presence to be made clearly amongst us. Be with us as we confront illnesses that leave many of us in a state of worry for our families, our friends, our colleagues, our communities, our nation and our world. As hospitals and health care providers seek to continue the healing ministry of You, may they have fortitude for the road ahead, knowing that you are walking this journey with them with your mighty Hand. Remind them of both their strength and Your strength. We ask for Your comfort upon those who have already lost loved ones during this time of viruses. And, may healing be upon those who are physically suffering and spiritually suffering through this season. May the wilderness of this time and the uncertainty we may feel, strengthen our resolve to lean on your word, abide in your presence, and be guided by your enduring and powerful Spirit. You have been with us in every age and will remain a refuge – to take solace, to recollect our thoughts, to remember that all things of this world are fleeting, and this too shall pass. Let us recall the calming of the storm by your Hand. Let us today and tomorrow and the days ahead lean on Your fortitude, and resolve to care for each other and support each other through this difficult journey before us in our lives both collectively and individually. Amidst the darkness, the confusion and the storm of worry, may your Presence be made abundantly revealed so that Your light, Your hand and Your strength, gives us steadiness, refuge, clarity of purpose, and hope. Amen.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday 4 Oct Saint Francis of Assisi
9:30am to 11am Blessing of Animals



Thursday 7 Oct Our Lady of the Rosary

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. There are seven members from our Diocese, including two from our Parish, Jodi Steele and Ken. To watch **live streams** of the Plenary Council: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/assembly-1/> Join **in prayer** with the members of the Plenary Council – each day with Mass and other prayers: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/prayer/>

FRANCISCAN CALENDARS

2022 Franciscan Calendars are now available: from the **Parish Office**, at the **Blessing of Animals** on 4 October – and soon, on-line [email]!



GET VACCINATED

Bishop Brian is supporting the #VaxTheIllawarra campaign because promoting the common good and ensuring the safety of every unique, valuable person, especially the most vulnerable, is our duty.

Franciscan
CALENDAR 2022

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Genesis 2:18-24

2nd Reading Hebrews 2:9-11

Gospel Mark 10:2-16

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Wisdom 7:7-11

2nd Reading Hebrews 4:12-13

Gospel Mark 10:17-30

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 17:30
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 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

Parish School of St Michael 4267 2560