



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN

6/7 JULY 2024

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Expectations

As you know, we are back to “Ordinary Time” for our liturgies. We have run through all the special times: Lent, Easter, Easter season, the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Peter and Paul and so on. Time to settle down and have some ordinary weeks, to know Jesus in his ordinary life.

But what do we find as we return to the ordinary? We find Jesus preaching and nobody listening. He has come back “to his native place,” Nazareth, and even though the people were astonished at his wisdom, their immediate reaction is to “take offense at him.”

Why? Why did they not welcome him and listen?

For one thing, it was his home town, so people already had him in a category—carpenter, the guy who lives down the street, son of that working couple Joseph and Mary. Who does he think he is preaching all this new stuff?

We do not have a record of what he said, although in chapter four of Mark he had told the story of the seeds that fell on different kinds of ground and how some grew, but the rest had only shallow or no soil from which to develop. The Gospel for this coming Sunday is an illustration of the parable. Nothing can grow from barren soil.

You and I should ask what kind of “soil” we ourselves are. When the Word of God has taken seed in us does it get any nourishment, or do we just go along like pre-programmed computers?

This is a searching question, something to pray about, tough, likely to make us uncomfortable. If he preached that way in Nazareth, perhaps he was too rough on them and that is why they turned away. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that “he was not able to perform any mighty deed there.”

This always has been a rather puzzling situation. After all, if Jesus is the Messiah, he should be able to work whatever deeds he wants to, wherever he wants, no matter what the reaction. Why was he not able?

But this is the underlying point of Sunday's Gospel. Jesus' healing and preaching are not something one person does in order to process another, sort of like a surgical doctor operating on a patient (or like a mechanic fixing a car). We sometimes picture it that way when we pray for things. Fix it, O God, fix it.

But instead, Jesus was always pointing to the relational nature of everything he did. When he did a miracle he would say “your faith has saved you.” What? I thought you saved me, Lord.

Yes, but something else is necessary first. Faith is the rich soil that lets God be planted in and flourish within our lives. He will never force teachings or miracles on us until we are ready to relate to him in love. This is why Sunday's Gospel ends with the words, “he was amazed at their lack of faith.” There has to be a fertile seed-bed in order for healing to take place.

We have to release Jesus and God from the categories we have them in. We may have to allow our own ground to be ploughed up a bit to let the rich fertility inside us be opened to the seeds of love, wisdom, hope and faith that God wants to plant there.

To put it simply, we need to start putting love first.

Long neglected because of its brevity, the Gospel of Mark is now recognised to be a work of genius. Mark's was the first gospel to be written. Combining something of the freshness of the earliest memories of Jesus' life with an ordered presentation of his material, Mark intends to provide a guide to authentic discipleship – as a following of the crucified Saviour. Today's incident – which tells of the rejection of Jesus by the people of his own town, at the end of his ministry in Galilee – illustrates this. Mark's telling of the story of Jesus comes to its climax with the Saviour's passion – the rejection of the Messiah by God's own people. It seems that Mark was writing for the Christians of Rome in the decade of the first persecutions, calling them to be true disciples of the crucified Christ.

Today's gospel also conveys the sense of immediacy often present in Mark. We have an echo of the reaction of those who witnessed the event (the ‘disciples’ who accompanied Jesus to his “home town”) – they are surprised and disconcerted by the very human reaction of Jesus. Rejected by the people of ‘his own country’ and ‘his own relations’, Jesus seems to be disarmed, so that ‘he could work no miracle there’. A very human situation and a typical human reaction – Jesus truly became one of us, our brother. What the gospel describes is so true to life that Jesus' summing up has become a proverb: ‘No honour for prophets among their own’.

For Mark, of course, as we have seen, this rejection is a foreshadowing of the great rejection described in the final chapters of the gospel – something for which Jesus will repeatedly prepare his disciples as they make their way to Jerusalem: he is to be ‘rejected’, ‘put to death’, but he will ‘rise again’ (Mark 8: 31). The reading from Ezekiel reminds us that a pattern of rejection and rebellion runs through the whole story of the Scriptures. The patient but firm ↪ ↪



✠✠ spirit of the Saviour, so well captured in Mark's gospel, is an expression of the patient firmness of God as the divine plan unfolds in the life of an uncooperative and self-centred people.

Jesus made his own a life that shares in our common human experience. In the reading from Paul, the great apostle takes us into his confidence, explaining how he has faced his immense difficulties. It is uncertain what his 'thorn in the flesh' was: a physical ailment perhaps, or more probably the betrayal and persecution he had to suffer from those who should have been his friends. But he has learned the lesson of Mark's gospel, and he gives expression so well to what he has learned in this passage that it is very familiar. Having, at first, 'pleaded with the Lord' to be freed of his trial, he has come to recognise it as discipleship's taking up of the Cross, giving him a share in the divine power unleashed in the world through the Paschal Mystery. He will even 'boast' of his weakness, as bringing an assurance that 'the power of Christ' will 'stay over' him: 'For it is when I am weak that I am strong'.

In the light of the gospel, we might ask ourselves two questions. Firstly, why do we fail to see the goodness of God in others? Why do we reject people? Why do we speak ill of others, and put them down? And secondly, how should we react when others fail to recognise us, humiliate us, judge us harshly, and refuse to accept the love we want to offer them?

The people of Nazareth rejected Jesus because they saw him as being so 'ordinary'. Are there very ordinary people among our acquaintances whom we ignore? Do we look down on some people? Do we find ourselves spreading stories about them to make ourselves seem smart and get a laugh? Do we see their faults so clearly that we don't even bother to think that they might have something to say? Do we write some people off because of their manner, or their race, or their lack of intelligence, or their work, or their obvious limitations? If I find myself putting other people down, I need to reflect on a number of matters.



Firstly, do I realise how much I owe others for any good that there is in me? There is no place for pride, only gratitude to our parents, teachers and friends, and all those who have encouraged and helped us. As Paul says: 'It is by God's grace that I am what I am' (1 Corinthians 15:10). Secondly, if I took the trouble to notice my own limitations, weaknesses, and straight-out sinfulness, then surely that should teach me a bit of humility, and help me feel some compassion towards others in their weakness. How do I know what opportunities others have had? How do I know what feelings they are trying to cope with? Judgment should be left to God. If I really love someone, then perhaps I can assist them with appropriate advice and even correction. But if I don't really admire and love them, then I had better stay right out and leave the intended help to someone who will do it properly, and with love.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Ezekiel 2:2-5

- ✠ Does the world need prophets now? If so, for what? And what are the today's prophets saying? Are Greta Thunberg [*Swedish environmental activist*] and Pope Francis prophets for the climate crisis?
- ✠ Do you think the ordinary prophet has great success or runs into opposition most of the time? Have you and/or your ideas ever been rejected when you tried to change something for the better? How do you handle rejection?

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

- ✠ If you went out shopping for weaknesses or crosses to bear would you pick the ones you already have or would you pick different ones? Why? Do you find God in your weakness? Can it be a constant source of grace?
- ✠ "My grace is sufficient for you." Do you rely on these words? How often do you bring them out and use them?

Gospel Mark 6:1-6

- ✠ Can you think of theologians, saints, or scientists who were rejected for their ideas? For what cause could you be a prophet? Racial justice? Immigration? Care for the environment?
- ✠ "Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary? ... And they took offence at him." What was it about Jesus that Pope Francis says the people in his native place couldn't accept?

They did not accept the mystery (of the Incarnation). ... They thought it was scandalous that the immensity of God should be revealed in the smallness of our flesh, that the Son of God should be the son of a carpenter, that the divine should be hidden in the human, that God should inhabit the face, the words, the gestures of a simple man. This is the scandal: the incarnation of God, his concreteness, his "daily life". And God became concrete in a man, Jesus of Nazareth, he became a companion on the way, he made himself one of us. "You are one of us," we can say to Jesus.

What a beautiful prayer! It is because one of us understands us, accompanies us, forgives us, loves us so much. In reality, an abstract, distant god is more comfortable, one that doesn't get himself involved in situations and who accepts a faith that is far from life, from problems, from society. Or we would even like to believe in a 'special effects' god who does only exceptional things and always provokes strong emotions. Instead, brothers and sisters, God incarnated himself: God is humble, God is tender, God is hidden, he draws near to us, living the normality of our daily life. ...

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 4 July 2021

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL – 6/7 JULY

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has launched its annual Vinnies Winter Appeal with a focus on the increasing number of **homelessness**.

Right now, a staggering **1,600 people** are being forced into homelessness every single month in Australia. The most vulnerable people in our communities have been hit extremely hard by the spiralling cost of living in the last few years. Many families are only just holding on. They've had to cope with sharp rises in the price of food and fuel. And it's pushed them to the very edge. They have so little left; they just don't have the resources to deal with any more financial stress. Australia's ongoing housing crisis means they could lose their homes and everything they've worked so hard to build. The number of rental properties that a person earning minimum wage can afford has dropped below 1%.



It means that more and more people like Luke and many others simply can't find anywhere to live. They need your help.

Last week, a total of **\$4,384** was donated, online, via credit card and in cash. **THANK YOU!** The appeal concludes this weekend. *Help end homelessness.*

There will be a special collection at both Masses this weekend after the homily. You can donate cash or use your credit/debit card. **You can also donate online to Thirroul Vinnies Conference:** go to this link to donate: <https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way-conference/st-michael-thirroul-vinnies-winter-appeal>

NATIONAL NAIDOC WEEK 7 TO 14 JULY 2024

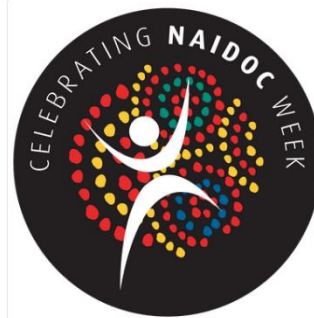
National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth. You can support and get to know your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities through activities and events held across the country.



This year's theme chosen by the National NAIDOC Committee, is **Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud & Proud.**

The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The National NAIDOC Committee selected this theme to celebrate not only the survival but also the relentless spirit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The theme also celebrates the enduring strength of First Nations culture and offers everyone a chance to explore various topics, perspectives and experiences with each other.



**KEEP THE FIRE
BURNING!
BLAK, LOUD
AND PROUD**

7-14 JULY 2024

On 26 January 1938, while many Australians celebrated the 150th anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet, a group of over 1000 Aboriginal people gathered at Australia Hall in Sydney to call for full citizenship status' and laws to improve the lives of First Nations people. As one of the first major civil rights gatherings in the world, this day became known as the Day of Mourning. Since then, National NAIDOC Week has grown to become both a commemoration of the first Day of Mourning as well as a celebration of the history, culture and excellence of First Nations people. NAIDOC Week is observed annually from the first Sunday in July until the following Sunday.

From 1940 until 1955, the Day of Mourning was held annually on the Sunday before Australia Day and was known as 'Aborigines Day'. In 1955 'Aborigines Day' was shifted to the first Sunday in July when it was decided that the day should also become a celebration of Aboriginal culture as well as a day of protest. Major Aboriginal organisations, as well as state and federal governments, all supported the formation of the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee (NADOC). In 1974, for the first time, the NADOC committee was composed entirely of Aboriginal representatives. The following year, it was decided that NADOC be expanded to become a week of celebrations, from the first to the second Sunday in July. In 1984, NADOC asked that National Aborigines Day be made a national public holiday to help celebrate and recognise the rich cultural history that makes Australia unique. While this has not happened (yet!), other groups have echoed the Committee's call. As awareness of the distinct cultural histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples grew, NADOC was expanded to recognise Torres Strait Islander people and culture. The committee then became known as the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC). The National NAIDOC Committee makes key decisions regarding national celebrations each year as stewards of National NAIDOC.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	8 Jul	Monday, Ordinary Time Week 14	Hosea 2:16-18,21-22	Matthew 9:18-26
Tuesday X	9 Jul	Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 14	Hosea 8:4-7,11-13	Matthew 9:32-38
Wednesday	10 Jul	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 14	Hosea 10:1-3,7-8,12	Matthew 10:1-7
Thursday	11 Jul	St Benedict, abbot	Hosea 11:1-4,8-9	Matthew 10:7-15
Friday	12 Jul	Friday, Ordinary Time Week 14	Hosea 14:2-10	Matthew 10:16-23
Saturday	13 Jul	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 14	Isaiah 6:1-8	Matthew 10:24-33
Sunday	14 Jul	15 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Friday, 5 July 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
Last day of School for Term
- ✦ Weekend, 6/7 July **VINNIES WINTER APPEAL WEEK 2 – SPECIAL COLLECTION**
- ✦ Friday, 12 July Ken returns from Suva
- ✦ Weekend, 13/14 July Blessing of those celebrating July Wedding Anniversaries, Birthdays
- ✦ Saturday, 13 July 18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
- ✦ Tuesday, 16 July ... to Thursday, 18 July – Wollongong Clergy Conference, Campbelltown
Andrew and Ken at Clergy Conference; Liturgy of the Word Tue to Thu
- ✦ Monday, 22 July School Term 3 begins

PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL – PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council comprises six members of the Parish who are elected for three-years. They can be re-elected once, and then must have a break before they can be re-elected. The **chairperson** of the Pastoral Council has been **Anne Clark** – her term expired on 30 June, and **Jo Pye** has been elected as the new **chairperson**. Other members of the Pastoral Council are **Greg Constable**, **Pat Hazell**, **Kerrie Hennessy**, **Natalie Shelly**, and **John Tuckerman**. If you have any suggestions for the parish or any concerns, please contact a Pastoral Councillor.

RECIPE: PASSIONFRUIT DIP

1 tub Philadelphia cream cheese; ½ carton sour lite cream; ¼ cup caster sugar; some passionfruit; 1 tablespoon orange juice.

Mix all the ingredients together and refrigerate.



2024 SIGNIFICANT MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES MASS

If you are celebrating 25, 30, 40, 50, 60 or over 60 years of marriage this year, you are invited to the celebration of Significant Marriage Anniversaries, to be celebrated with Bishop Brian Mascord on **Sunday, 25 August 2024** at 2pm at the St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong. Mass will be followed by light refreshments in the Xavier Centre Conference Room. Please register online at <https://dow.sh/MA2024> or contact Helen Bennett, at the Office of the Bishop ☎ 4222 2403, or via email helen.bennett@dow.org.au by no later than **Monday, 29 July 2024**.

PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B
 1st Reading Ezekiel 2:2-5
 2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 Gospel Mark 6:1-6

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B
 1st Reading Amos 7:12-15
 2nd Reading Ephesians 1:3-14
 Gospel Mark 6:7-13

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday ~~X~~ 17:30
 Sunday 08:00
 📺 Saturday Mass is recorded.

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

*One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes
 Moving forward as a Parish Family*

Patrick Vaughan • *Parish Priest*

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

Kerry Fabon • **Parish Secretary**

Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00

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Parish School of St Michael

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THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday _____
 Tuesday ~~X~~ 17:30
 Wednesday 09:00
 Thursday 09:00
 Friday 09:30
Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday