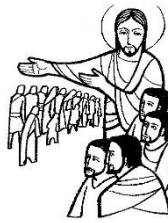




Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
20/21 JULY 2024
16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B
POPE FRANCIS AT G7 SUMMITS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Thanks

The sheep and shepherds in today's Gospel were symbols representing God's people and their rulers.

For some people, being a shepherd is a hated job and they would never go near it again. There were so many sheep in a herd that you could never know which was which, much less give names to them, and that sheepdogs were the only way you could keep them more or less together in a herd.

A person who hates being a shepherd – are they a “bad shepherd” like the ones we find in the first reading? Not at all. In our day, the tending of sheep is an industry, not a personal act.

In Jesus' day, the flocks were small. A shepherd could indeed name each one and the herd knew his voice by heart, just as the family dog knows yours.

So, in Jesus' day, good shepherds would search and search for a lost sheep. Or find one turned absurdly on its back, unable to roll over again because of its full fleece. The shepherd took his “crook,” which had a big curve on one end, and easily manoeuvre the sheep to its feet. If there was real danger, as for instance if wolves were ready to pounce, the shepherd would take out his “staff,” a pole-like instrument, and deal with the predators.

Bad shepherds, on the other hand, would actually scatter the sheep; drive them away without care. The sheep feared and trembled, and many went missing. Sometimes workers were hired who were not shepherds at all and who simply ran away when a wolf approached (John 10:12). God's anger flamed out against such bad shepherds.

Of course, these sheep and shepherds were symbols representing God's people and their rulers.

In today's Psalm, Jesus was the Good Shepherd. What about the Gospel? So many people were coming and going that Jesus and his apostles “had no opportunity even to eat.” He advised his friends to come away with him to a quiet place to rest. Even shepherds must take a break. They used a boat to go to a deserted area.

But the needy people saw where the boat was headed and they went there and formed a “vast crowd”! What should Jesus do? Start ministering again instead of resting? The Gospel says, “he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd,” so “he began to teach them many things.”

God's words in the first reading had come true: “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock and I will bring them back to their fold.”

The question is not whether we should go without our rest and food and become workaholics for the sake of others.

It is whether our own hearts are ever moved with pity for the scattered and fear-filled sheep of our own time. Can we love them as Jesus does? As he loves each of us?

Can we imitate God's good shepherd?

Last Sunday we heard Mark's account of the Twelve sent out to share in the Saviour's mission. Today we have the aftermath described in vivid detail. As they rejoin Jesus, they are full of stories as they share the experience of their missionary journeys. We glimpse the openness and hospitality of the band Jesus gathered around him – ‘there were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no leisure even to eat’. Jesus suggests they cross the water to a ‘lonely place’ where they can ‘rest for a while’. Now he will teach them how to find the interior strength that comes from reflection and contemplation. The scene Mark describes, as Jesus and his disciples arrive at their destination, is a memorable one. The crowd has heard of their coming and awaits them. Hungry for what Jesus has to give them, they ‘were like sheep without a shepherd’. So, he changed his plans and ‘set himself to teach them at some length’.

During the Easter season we were reminded that the Risen One is ‘the good shepherd’. On Good Shepherd Sunday, however, our image was the familiar iconic figure, bringing back the lost sheep on his shoulders. Today we have a down-to-earth image. People weighed down by life's daily problems are looking to Jesus to renew the vision of hope he has given them in the past. He changes his plans and responds to their need. He has another important lesson for the Twelve – the love for struggling humanity that he shares with his Father. He knows no limit or holding back. He wants his disciples to be one with him in this love if they are to be companions in his mission.

The prophet Jeremiah gives expression to old Israel's faith and hope, as it looks forward to the ‘virtuous Branch’ of the house of David – the messiah who would bring fulfilment to all Israel's immense hopes. Jeremiah saw the Babylonians bring ruin to Jerusalem, because



✚✚ the ‘shepherds’ who should have cared for the people were deaf to his message. Now, he declares, God’s people must look forward to the promised messiah, the ‘true and wise king’ who – as his name indicates – will express the Lord’s own ‘integrity’ as he cares for them.

In our reading from the letter to the Ephesians, the teaching of Paul again makes a dramatic shift to the time of fulfilment. What the prophet looked forward to, what Jesus promised as he gave hope to the people and instructed his disciples, has been realised in the Paschal Mystery. God’s final achievement, through the power of the Saviour’s resurrection, has many aspects. This passage celebrates the Paschal Mystery as bringing the peace and reconciliation in which the apparently insurmountable barriers that divide the human family are overcome: ‘by the blood of Christ’ those who were estranged and hostile to one another have been brought together. Paul’s teaching is profound. The Saviour ‘in his own person has destroyed the hostility’. In his Paschal Mystery he has identified with struggling humanity that we may be taken into a sharing in his resurrection triumph. God’s project, so long frustrated, has now been gloriously successful, in the ‘New Man’, the ‘Last Adam’ (1 Corinthians 15:45). Through the Risen Lord, our disrupted human family has ‘in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father’.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Jeremiah 23:1-6

- ✚ In this reading the Lord speaks to the bad shepherds, i.e., leaders of his people. What are some of the “just and right” values today to which the “Lord our Justice” needs to attend so that the sheep can stop trembling in fear? Care for creation? Racial justice? Homelessness?
- ✚ Imagine being a caretaker of people in a way that a shepherd is for sheep. What can you do about the fear people experience all over the world due to injustice? Can you do anything to remedy any of the injustice? Is there anything you can do about unfair situations in your own living area?

Second Reading Ephesians 2:13-18

- ✚ “In Christ Jesus you who were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” If we are one in the body of Christ, is the Eucharist an important means for breaking down dividing walls among us?
- ✚ Are there dividing walls today that seem impenetrable to you? Using this reading from Ephesians as a guide, how might people resolve their differences? Or in other words break down walls that divide them? On 17 June 2015, in the USA, a white man killed 9 black people in a Bible study group in a church in Charleston, SC. The families of the victims forgave the killer. Does this kind of action help break down a dividing wall?

Gospel Mark 6:30-34

- ✚ What does Jesus do in this Gospel story that is an example of good shepherding? Doesn’t he have pity and teach? Discuss compassion versus power as attributes of leadership.
- ✚ Why does Pope Francis say we need an “ecology of the heart,” that is made up of rest, contemplation and compassion?

Jesus’s attitude that we observe in the Gospel of today’s liturgy helps us to grasp two important aspects of life. The first is rest. ...

How many times this happens in the Church: we are busy, we run around, we think that everything depends on us and, in the end, we risk neglecting Jesus. ... This is why he invites his disciples to rest a bit with him on their own. It is not only physical rest, but also rest for the heart. ...

The people find them and flock to them from all sides. At which point, he is moved with compassion. This is the second aspect: compassion, which is God’s style. ... How many times we find this phrase in the Gospel ... : “He had compassion on them.” ... This seems to be a contradiction, but in reality, it is not. In fact, only a heart that does not allow itself to be taken over by hastiness is capable of being moved; that is, of not allowing itself to be caught up in itself and by things to do, and is aware of others, of their wounds, their needs. ... If we stay in touch with the Lord and do not anesthetize the deepest part of ourselves, the things to do will not have the power to cause us to get winded or devour us.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 18 July 2021

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL – THANK YOU!!

Over the last two weeks, a total of **\$5,632** has been donated, online, via credit card and in cash. **THANK YOU!** Yet to be added to that: the donations from families and students of our Parish School, which will bring the total to **over \$6,000** – thank you to one and all.

There is still time for you to 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>

GROWING GOOD MEN – FATHER AND TEENAGE SON WEEKEND

Experience a weekend of growth for fathers and their teenage sons (12 to 17 years). 25 to 27 October 2024, from 18:30 Friday (25 Oct) to 13:30 Sunday (27 Oct). The weekend is experientially-based which encourages and enables fathers and sons to strengthen their relationship and explore important issues of growing into manhood. Cost is \$390 per father and son. Register at www.menalive.dow.org.au or contact Helen Bennett ☎ 4222 2403

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO G7 SUMMIT ON 16 JUNE 2024 – PART 1

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen, I address you today, the leaders of the Intergovernmental Forum of the G7, concerning the effects of artificial intelligence on the future of humanity.

“Sacred Scripture attests that God bestowed his Spirit upon human beings so that they might have ‘skill and understanding and knowledge in every craft’ (Exodus 35:31)”. Science and technology are therefore brilliant products of the creative potential of human beings. Indeed, artificial intelligence arises precisely from the use of this God-given creative potential. As we know, artificial intelligence is an extremely powerful tool, employed in many kinds of human activity: from medicine to the world of work; from culture to the field of communications; from education to politics. It is now safe to assume that its use will increasingly influence the way we live, our social relationships and even the way we conceive of our identity as human beings. The question of artificial intelligence, however, is often perceived as ambiguous: on the one hand, it generates excitement for the possibilities it offers, while on the other it gives rise to fear for the consequences it foreshadows. In this regard, we could say that all of us, albeit to varying degrees, experience two emotions: we are enthusiastic when we imagine the advances that can result from artificial intelligence but, at the same time, we are fearful when we acknowledge the dangers inherent in its use.

After all, we cannot doubt that the advent of artificial intelligence represents a true cognitive-industrial revolution, which will contribute to the creation of a new social system characterised by complex epochal transformations. For example, artificial intelligence could enable a democratization of access to knowledge, the exponential advancement of scientific research and the possibility of giving demanding and arduous work to machines. Yet at the same time, it could bring with it a greater injustice between advanced and developing nations or between dominant and oppressed social classes, raising the dangerous possibility that a “throwaway culture” be preferred to a “culture of encounter”.

The significance of these complex transformations is clearly linked to the rapid technological development of artificial intelligence itself. It is precisely this powerful technological progress that makes artificial intelligence at the same time an exciting and fearsome tool, and demands a reflection that is up to the challenge it presents. In this regard, perhaps we could start from the observation that artificial intelligence is above all else a tool. And it goes without saying that the benefits or harm it will bring will depend on its use.

This is surely the case, for it has been this way with every tool fashioned by human beings since the dawn of time.

Our ability to fashion tools, in a quantity and complexity that is unparalleled among living things, speaks of a techno-human condition: human beings have always maintained a relationship with the environment mediated by the tools they gradually produced. It is not possible to separate the history of men and women and of civilization from the history of these tools. Some have wanted to read into this a kind of shortcoming, a deficit, within human beings, as if, because of this deficiency, they were forced to create technology. A careful and objective view actually shows us the opposite. We experience a state of “outwardness” with respect to our biological being: we are beings inclined toward what lies outside-of-us, indeed we are radically open to the beyond. Our openness to others and to God originates from this reality, as does the creative potential of our intelligence with regard to culture and beauty. Ultimately, our technical capacity also stems from this fact. Technology, then, is a sign of our orientation towards the future. The use of our tools, however, is not always directed solely to the good. Even if human beings feel within themselves a call to the beyond, and to knowledge as an instrument of good for the service of our brothers and sisters and our common home (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 16), this does not always happen. Due to its radical freedom, humanity has not infrequently corrupted the purposes of its being, turning into an enemy of itself and of the planet. The same fate may befall technological tools. Only if their true purpose of serving humanity is ensured, will such tools reveal not only the unique grandeur and dignity of men and women, but also the command they have received to “till and keep” the planet and all its inhabitants. To speak of technology is to speak of what it means to be human and thus of our singular status as beings who possess both freedom and responsibility. This means speaking about ethics.

In fact, when our ancestors sharpened flint stones to make knives, they used them both to cut hides for clothing and to kill each other. The same could be said of other more advanced technologies, such as the energy produced by the fusion of atoms, as occurs within the Sun, which could be used to produce clean, renewable energy or to reduce our planet to a pile of ashes. Artificial intelligence, however, is a still more complex tool. I would almost say that we are dealing with a tool *sui generis*. While the use of a simple tool (like a knife) is under the control of the person who uses it and its use for the good depends only on that person, artificial intelligence, on the other hand, can autonomously adapt to the task assigned to it and, if designed this way, can make choices independent of the person in order to achieve the intended goal. It should always be remembered that a machine can, in some ways and by these new methods, produce algorithmic choices. The machine makes a technical choice among several possibilities based either on well-defined criteria or on statistical inferences. Human beings, however, not only choose, but in their hearts are capable of deciding. A decision is what we might call a more strategic element of a choice and demands a practical evaluation. At times, frequently amid the difficult task of governing, we are called upon to make decisions that have consequences for many people. In this regard, human reflection has always spoken of wisdom, the *phronesis* of Greek philosophy and, at least in part, the wisdom of Sacred Scripture. Faced with the marvels of machines, which seem to know how to choose independently, we should be very clear that decision-making, even when we are confronted with its sometimes dramatic and urgent aspects, must always be left to the human person. We would condemn humanity to a future without hope if we took away people’s ability to make decisions about themselves and their lives, by dooming them to depend on the choices of machines. We need to ensure and safeguard a space for proper human control over the choices made by artificial intelligence programs: human dignity itself depends on it.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	22 Jul	St Mary Magdalene	2 Corinthians 5:14-17	John 20:1-2,11-18
Tuesday 	23 Jul	Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 16	Micah 7:14-15,18-20	Matthew 12:46-50
Wednesday	24 Jul	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 16	Jeremiah 1:1,4-10	Matthew 13:1-9
Thursday	25 Jul	St James, apostle	2 Corinthians 4:7-15	Matthew 20:20-28
Friday	26 Jul	Sts Joachim and Anne, parents of Mary	Jeremiah 3:14-17	Matthew 13:18-23
Saturday	27 Jul	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 16	Jeremiah 7:1-11	Matthew 13:24-30
Sunday	28 Jul	17 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 20 July	17:30	One parishioner for Confirmation and two for First Communion
	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Monday, 22 July	09:00	School Term 3 begins
✦ Thursday, 25 July	19:15	Baptism Preparation Meeting for August baptisms
✦ Friday, 26 July	09:30	Mass for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

Grandparents Sunday will be celebrated in the Church throughout the world on 28 July 2024. Recalling the words of Psalm 71:9, “Do not cast me off in my old age”, Pope Francis has provided the Church with a moving and heartfelt message urging the Church to remember the “infinite dignity of each person” regardless of their “circumstance, state or situation”. The **09:30 Mass on Friday, 26 July** is the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, parents of Mary.

RECIPE: RAYMOND’S BEER, CHILLI AND PEANUT BRITTLE

½ cup raw sugar; ½ can of beer; 1 cup raw unsalted peanuts; ¼ cup smooth peanut butter; 1 tsp dried chilli flakes; 1 tsp sea salt.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a large baking tray with baking paper and set aside. In a saucepan, add the beer and sugar and cook over medium heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Simmer for 5 minutes until reduced by half and a syrup consistency has been reached. Add peanuts, peanut butter and chilli flakes. Cook, stirring for 3 minutes until the mix has thickened. Pour onto a baking tray and spread out evenly. Cook in the oven for 10-12 minutes. Remove from the oven and sprinkle salt flakes while still hot. Allow it to cool before breaking into shards.

**PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

STELLA MARIS – APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA

Known to seafarers around the world as *Stella Maris*, the Apostleship of the Sea ministry is now called Stella Maris globally. The organisation cares for the spiritual, social and material welfare of all seafarers regardless of colour, race or creed. Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We care for seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres with expert information, advocacy, practical help and spiritual support. Sea Sunday is the day set by many Christian Churches to remember, celebrate, pray for seafarers and their families and give thanks for their lives and work. Sea Sunday is officially held on 21 July this year.

THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website

16 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	Jeremiah 23:1-6
2 nd Reading	Ephesians 2:13-18
Gospel	Mark 6:30-34

NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website

17 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B	
1 st Reading	2 Kings 4:42-44
2 nd Reading	Ephesians 4:1-6
Gospel	John 6:1-15

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 	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 	17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	