



# Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**2 / 3 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**31<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B**  
**SYNOD ON SYNODALITY ENDS**

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

*With All Your Heart*

Most of us are accustomed to a world that adheres to something called “the bottom line.”

It envisions lots of money and success, and sees everyone else as wanting the same thing. Usually this means ignoring values such as God, religion, Jesus, spirituality, fidelity, and truth, among others.

Jesus’ question from last Sunday, “what do you want me to do for you?” might not get much notice.

For instance, television shows use values such as this: (1) get viewers; (2) sell advertising; (3) make money.

Ok. But some other cultures have had a far different answer to the question, “What do you want me to do?”

First, look at the first reading for Sunday. There, people do not seem to be voraciously seeking money and power and riches. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”

Could this be a basis for contemporary life? It is a centrepiece of all morning and evening Jewish prayer services. It indicates vividly the way in which ancient Judaism believed in a single, unified God. This passage is considered the most important in all Jewish prayer.

Here are the moving words that Moses says just after the above: “Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

How strong this is. How affectionate. A basis for life.

You do not have to be a fundamentalist to respond to it. Could you utter these words and make them a basis for your own life? Much depends on your answer.

Second, what does Jesus add to this foundation of Jewish belief?

Take a look at this week’s Gospel. Jesus quotes the saying of Moses, in slightly different words: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Then he adds, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

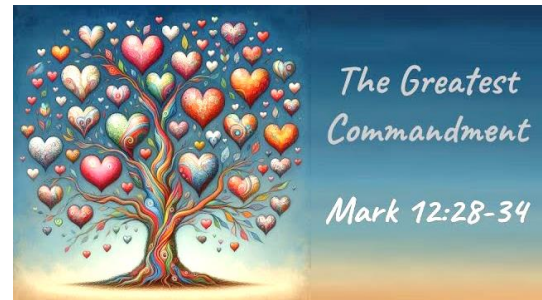
God has always loved all people in the world, as shown throughout the entire bible. So, if you are close to God, your love must spill over to other people.

The question becomes, what is your life made of, and to whom does it spill over? And does it involve your whole heart?

Jesus approaches the end of his journey. He has already entered Jerusalem when a ‘scribe’, who is evidently well disposed, asks which is the greatest of the commandments of the Law. As interpreters of the Law, the scribes had listed 613 ordinances calling for observance; it is not surprising that they often discussed their relative importance. This man seeks Jesus’ view on the matter. This last exchange Jesus has with the leaders of Israel, in Mark’s account, raises an issue important for his disciples. The incident illustrates how Jesus taught with an ‘authority’ that was different from the approach of the scribes (Matthew 7:29). The scribes backed their interpretation by appealing to the authority of recognised interpreters; the response that Jesus gives is backed by his own authority. He underlines the commandment given in today’s reading from Deuteronomy, familiar to all faithful Jews as part of their daily prayer: ‘You must love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength’ – in other words, with your whole being; to love anything in preference to the Lord is idolatry. Jesus is calling his hearers back to the radical faith and trust that so often finds expression in the Old Testament – especially in the prophets and the psalms – a faith and trust that was a true response to the God who had entered into covenant with the chosen people. Jesus goes on, however, to show great originality and wisdom, by linking the ‘first’ commandment with a ‘second’: ‘You must love your neighbour as yourself’ (Leviticus 19:18).

The Covenant was intended to make old Israel ‘a light to the nations’ – their life, shaped by the ways of God, learned through the covenant relationship, was to be an invitation to all peoples of the earth to find the one, true God – ‘The Lord our God is the one Lord’ – and the blessings life with God can bring. The Saviour links the two commandments under the rubric of ‘love’. The love true believers have for fellow human beings is a love that has been learned from God.

The theme of ‘love’, so important to every human heart, was soon to emerge, we know, as the very heart of the Gospel, the good news that ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son’. (For Paul, ‘Love is the fulfilment of the Law’, Romans 13:10; as we live ‘in Christ’, God’s own love ‘has been poured into our hearts by the Holy



✠ Spirit', Romans 5:5. Similarly, according to John, a 'new commandment' rules our Christian life, 'Love one another just as I have loved you', John 13:34; indeed, John declares, 'God is love', 1 John 4:8). The response of the scribe and the praise it won from Jesus, 'You are not far from the kingdom', point towards this fulfilment. Mark is reminding us that not all the leaders of the people were closed to the message of Jesus. Is it not likely that this scribe was soon to share in the faith inaugurated by the Lord's Paschal Mystery? This faith is interpreted in the reading from Hebrews, where Christ's saving work is compared with the role of priests of the Old Testament. But there is also a great contrast. The old role ended with death, and was compromised by sinfulness. The Old Testament ideal of clinging to God with one's whole being must have seemed a daunting, almost impossible one; now however faith in the Paschal Mystery assures us that the risen Saviour – 'holy, innocent and uncontaminated', and 'made perfect for ever' – gives us a share in his life with the Father.

Sometimes, the circumstances of our lives discourage us from believing that it is possible to live, not in superficial ways, but with all the energy for life that wells up within us, especially our own sins and the unjust ways in which others treat us. If we sin let us cast ourselves on God's abundant mercy. If others are treating us badly, let us heed the advice of St John of the Cross: 'God knows what is suitable for us and arranges things for our good. Think nothing else but that God ordains all, and where there is no love put love, and you will draw out love' (Letter of 6 July 1591). Let us learn to love as God desires to be loved. God loves each of us now, as we are. Truly, there are many things perhaps that need to change, but God knows that only God's love can bring about this change.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading Deuteronomy 6:2-6

- ✠ Is there any contradiction between the Ten Commandments and the commandment to love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and your neighbour as yourself?
- ✠ On a global scale what are some issues we need to think about when we consider the commandment, "Love your Neighbour"? Climate? Racism? Immigration? Incarceration? Starvation?

### Second Reading Hebrews 7:23-28

- ✠ Explain why Jesus' sacrifice takes place now and always, for instance in the Eucharist, as well as throughout history. Compare the love Jesus has for you with the love he had for his disciples.
- ✠ How do you feel about someone who "lives forever to make intercession for" you?

### Gospel Mark 12:28-34

- ✠ Does "loving our neighbour as ourselves" mean just using our ministries to take care of their physical needs? Do our neighbours have needs for friendship and tenderness? How might we avoid letting our ministries become service stations?
- ✠ Pope Francis said at the conclusion of the Synod, "This is the Church we are called to 'dream'". What is that Church like?

This, brothers and sisters, is the Church we are called to "dream": a Church that is the servant of all, the servant of the least of our brothers and sisters. A Church that never demands an attestation of "good behaviour," but welcomes, serves, loves and forgives. A Church with open doors that is a haven of mercy. "The merciful man", said John Chrysostom, "is as a harbour to those who are in need; and the harbour receives all who are escaping shipwreck, and frees them from danger, whether they be evil or good; whatsoever kind of men they be that are in peril, it receives them into its shelter. You also, when you see a man suffering shipwreck on land through poverty, do not sit in judgment on him, nor require explanations, but relieve his distress." (*In pauperem Lazarum*, II, 5)

– Pope Francis, *Homily at the Conclusion of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 29 October 2023



We would like to thank you for your generosity supporting the Church in Mongolia and House of Mercy.

**Thanks to your kindness, people like Chuluunbaatar will have access to the support they need to help them get back on their feet. Your gift will also support a variety of Church programs around the world.**

To learn more about the impact your support is making, please visit [catholicmission.org.au/our-work](http://catholicmission.org.au/our-work). Here, you can also sign up to our regular newsletter to keep up to date with the latest news.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to give, please do so at [catholicmission.org.au/mongolia](http://catholicmission.org.au/mongolia). Your action will make a profound change on people's lives.



Freecall: 1800 257 296  
[catholicmission.org.au/mongolia](http://catholicmission.org.au/mongolia)

SCAN ME



**Last weekend you donated a total of \$2,197.10. Thank you!**

## HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS AT THE END OF THE SYNOD, 27 OCTOBER 24

Today's Gospel presents us with Bartimaeus, a blind man forced to beg at the side of the road, an outcast lacking hope. Yet, when he heard Jesus passing by, he began to shout after him. All Bartimaeus could do was to cry out in pain to Jesus and express his desire that he might regain his sight. While others were troubled by his cries and rebuked him, Jesus paused. For God always hears the cry of the poor, and no cry of pain goes unheard by him.

Today, at the conclusion of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, with our hearts filled with gratitude for the moments we have shared, let us reflect on what happened to Bartimaeus. Initially he was "sitting by the roadside" (Mk 10:46), but by the end he was called by Jesus, recovered his sight and "followed him on the way" (v. 52).

The first thing that the Gospel tells us about Bartimaeus is that he was begging by the roadside. His position is typical of someone who sits by the side of a road, caught up in his own grief, as if there were nothing else to do but receive something from the many pilgrims passing through the city of Jericho as Passover drew near. Yet, as we know, if we are truly to live, we cannot remain seated. Life entails being on the move, setting out, dreaming, planning, opening up to the future. Blind Bartimaeus, then, represents that inner blindness which restrains us, keeps us stuck in one place, holds us back from the dynamism of life and destroys our hope.

This can help us reflect not only on our own lives, but also on what it means to be the Lord's Church. So many things along the way can make us blind, incapable of perceiving the presence of the Lord, unprepared to face the challenges of reality, sometimes unable to offer adequate responses to the questions of so many who cry out to us, as Bartimaeus did to Jesus. We cannot remain inert before the questions raised by the women and men of today, before the challenges of our time, the urgency of evangelization and the many wounds that afflict humanity. Sisters and brothers, we cannot afford to sit back. A sedentary Church, that inadvertently withdraws from life and confines itself to the margins of reality, is a Church that risks remaining blind and becoming comfortable with its own unease. If we remain stuck in our blindness, we will continuously fail to grasp the urgency of giving a pastoral response to the many problems of our world. Let us ask the Lord to send us the Holy Spirit, so that we do not sit in our blindness, which in other words can be a worldliness, complacency, or closed heart. We cannot stay sitting in our blindness.

Yet, we should remember that the Lord passes by every day. The Lord always passes by and pauses in order to attend to our blindness. We should ask ourselves, "Do I hear him passing by? Do I have the capacity to hear the Lord's footsteps? Do I have the capacity to discern when the Lord is passing by?" It is good if the Synod is urging us as a Church to be like Bartimaeus: a community of disciples who, hearing that the Lord is passing by, feel the joy of salvation, allow ourselves to be awakened by the power of the Gospel, and to cry out to him. The Church does this when it takes up the cry of all the women and men of the world, of those who wish to discover the joy of the Gospel, and of those who have turned away; the silent cry of those who are indifferent; the cry of those who suffer, of the poor and marginalized, of children who are enslaved in so many parts of the world for work; the broken voice of those who no longer have the strength to cry out to God, either because they have no voice or because they are in despair. We do not need a sedentary and defeatist Church, but a Church that hears the cry of the world – I wish to say this even if some might be scandalised – a Church that gets its hands dirty in serving.

Thus, we come to the second aspect. The Gospel tells us that if initially Bartimaeus was seated, at the end we see him following Jesus along the road. This is a typical expression in the Gospel, meaning that he has become the Lord's disciple and has followed in his footsteps. When the beggar cried out to him, Jesus stopped and called for him. Bartimaeus, from where he was sitting, jumped up on his feet and immediately afterwards regained his sight. Now he can see the Lord; he can recognize God's action in his life and finally set out to follow him. Let us do likewise. Whenever we are seated and settled, when as a Church we cannot find the strength, the courage or the boldness to arise and continue along the way, let us always remember to return to the Lord and his Gospel. We always need to return to the Lord and the Gospel. As he passes by again and again, we need to listen to his call so that we can get back on our feet and he can heal our blindness; and then we can follow him once more, and walk with him along the way.

I would like to reiterate that the Gospel says of Bartimaeus that he "followed him on the way". This is an image of the synodal Church. The Lord is calling us, lifting us up when we are seated or fallen down, restoring our sight so that we can perceive the anxieties and sufferings of the world in the light of the Gospel. And when the Lord puts us back on our feet, we experience the joy of following him on the way. We follow the Lord along the way, we do not follow him enclosed in our comforts or we do not follow him in the mazes of our minds. We follow him only along the way. Let us remember never to walk alone or according to worldly criteria, but to walk on the way alongside him.

Brothers and sisters, not a seated Church, but a Church on her feet. Not a silent Church, but a Church that embraces the cry of humanity. Not a blind Church, but a Church, enlightened by Christ, that brings the light of the Gospel to others. Not a static Church, but a missionary Church that walks with her Lord through the streets of the world.

Today, as we give thanks to the Lord for the journey we have made together, we will be able to see and venerate the relic of the carefully restored ancient Chair of Saint Peter. As we contemplate it with the wonder of faith, let us remember that this is the Chair of love, unity and mercy, according to Jesus' command to the Apostle Peter not to lord it over others, but to serve them in charity. And, as we admire the majestic Bernini Baldachin, more sublime than ever, we can rediscover that it frames the true focal point of the entire basilica, namely the glory of the Holy Spirit. This is the synodal Church: a community whose primacy lies in the gift of the Spirit, who makes us all brothers and sisters in Christ and raises us up to him.

Sisters and brothers, let us therefore continue our journey together with confidence. Today, the word of God speaks to us, as to Bartimaeus: "Take heart; get up, he is calling you". Do I feel called? Do I feel weak and cannot get up? Do I call for help? Let us throw off the cloak of resignation; let us entrust our blindness to the Lord; let us stand once more and carry the joy of the Gospel through the streets of the world.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	4 Nov	St Charles Borromeo, bishop	Philippians 2:1-4	Luke 14:12-14
Tuesday	5 Nov	Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 31	Philippians 2:5-11	Luke 14:15-24
Wednesday	6 Nov	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 31	Philippians 2:12-18	Luke 14:25-33
Thursday	7 Nov	Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 31	Philippians 3:3-8	Luke 15:1-10
Friday	8 Nov	Friday, Ordinary Time Week 31	Philippians 3:17-4:1	Luke 16:1-8
Saturday	9 Nov	The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica	Ezekiel 47:1-2,8-9,12	John 2:13-22
Sunday	10 Nov	32 <sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 2/3 November Blessing of Cars after Masses
- ✦ Tuesday, 5 November 15:00 Melbourne Cup
- ✦ Wednesday, 6 November 19:30 Spirituality on the Sofa – The Synod on Synodality
- ✦ Saturday, 9 November 17:30 Family Mass followed by BBQ in the school grounds
- ✦ Wednesday, 20 November 10:30 CWL 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass followed by Lunch

## CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – SIXTY YEARS YOUNG!

The Thirroul Catholic Women's League turns sixty (60) this year! There will be a special Mass and light luncheon – 10:30 on Wednesday, 20 November 2024. The Mass is in our Parish church and the luncheon in our Parish hall, the McCarthy Centre, in the grounds of our Parish school. All ladies of the parish are most welcome to attend. Please contact the President of Thirroul CWL, Maureen Heydon ☎ 0438 674 997 or [mheydon50@gmail.com](mailto:mheydon50@gmail.com)

## FAMILY MASS – 17:30, SATURDAY, 9 NOVEMBER

All parishioners and school families are invited to a special Family Mass at 17:30 on Saturday, 9 November. This Mass, an initiative by the Pastoral Parish Council and St. Michael's School Leadership Team, is a wonderful opportunity to deepen the connection between our beautiful parish and school. Our parish and school are deeply linked, with each enriching the life and growth of the other. While many families are connected to our school, we're excited to foster a stronger bond with our parish as well. The parish is a spiritual home for everyone, and through efforts like the Family Mass, we hope to nurture this connection, creating a lasting sense of belonging that extends beyond school years. Together, we can grow as one united spiritual family in Jesus. This Family Mass is the start of an ongoing program of initiatives to nurture this lifelong relationship, so that every family feels at home in our parish well into the future. Our children will play an active role in the Mass, ensuring an uplifting celebration. Afterward, we gather for a BBQ in the school grounds, offering a chance to connect, share, and strengthen our community ties.

**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**

## NEW DONATION TAP DEVICE

A new "Donation Tap Device" has been installed by the Catholic Develop Fund. You may now choose to donate \$5, \$10, \$20 or \$50, or you may use the Custom Donation Amount button to enter any whole dollar amount from \$1 to \$99. Thank you for your generosity to our Parish. Money donated on the "Tap Device" goes to support the running of our Parish.



### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

31<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR B  
 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Deuteronomy 6:2-6  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Hebrews 7:23-28  
 Gospel Mark 12:28-34

### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

32<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR B  
 1<sup>st</sup> Reading 1 Kings 17:10-16  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Hebrews 9:24-28  
 Gospel Mark 12:38-44

### 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

### www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

4268 1910 4268 1976

thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

4267 2560

### THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday  
 Tuesday 17:30  
 Wednesday 09:00  
 Thursday 09:00  
 Friday 09:30  
 Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday