

# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



**7/8 OCTOBER 2017**  
**27<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR A**  
**Embrace Justice and Mercy – Welcome All**

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

## *A True Vineyard*

The Church (*that is, all the baptized – not just Catholics*) is the vineyard of the Lord. It has been placed by God “on a fertile hillside; God spaded it, cleared it of stones, and planted the choicest vines.”

Unfortunately, what grows in this vineyard is often not a crop of grapes but wild fruit, of no use to the master.

We have within our community a good share of selfishness, power grabbing, legalism, ignorance, bigotry and short-sightedness. The very same social ills that we see in the world at large can be found right here within our own community: racism, sexism, bigotry, economic injustice and marginalization.

We pray that God “forgive our failings.” We hope that God will “take care of this vine, and protect what your right hand has planted.” The challenge is for us to become a true vineyard of the Lord, free of all the sinful conditions that we lament in the world. We work for the day when Christians will form a Christian community united in love and service.



Is it too much to hope for? No, it is not, as long as we maintain our faith in our God, who can “lead us to seek beyond our reach.”

“For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervour they should, so that the radiance of the Church’s image is less in the eyes of our separated fellow Christians and of the world at large, and the growth of God’s kingdom is delayed. All Catholics must therefore aim at Christian perfection and, each according to their situation, play their part that the Church ... may be daily more purified and renewed.”

– Vatican II, *Decree on Ecumenism*, 1964:4

Seen from a human point of view, salvation history (the story of God’s dealings with humanity) is a tragedy; but the divine mercy and generosity has turned this tragedy into God’s triumph. This great drama comes to its climax, of course, in the life, death and resurrection of the Saviour: ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only Son’. The parable of Jesus in today’s reading from Matthew’s gospel refers to the tragedy that he now recognises to be inevitable. We have already become familiar with the original form of the parables of Jesus: a story that leaves his hearers confronted by an unsettling question. Today’s study of the formation of the gospels makes it clear that, as these parable stories were retold in the preaching of the early Church, they were often added to, ✠ ✠

✚✚ to bring out lessons for later audiences. And it is evident that this parable – originally a challenge to leaders of the Jewish nation – has become, for those who have suffered persecution from the synagogue, a condemnation of the ‘chief priests and elders of the people’. The fact that Jesus foretells his death, but makes no reference to the resurrection that was so central to the faith of the first Christians, makes it clear that the parable is not a creation of the later Christian community, but is recalled as having been told by Jesus himself.



It is not difficult to identify the main elements of the original parable. A story that reflects common experience captures the attention of the audience, and unfolds predictably; the services of tenant farmers was commonly made use of by absentee landlords – a situation that not infrequently gave rise to disputes and conflicts, particularly if the landlord was not close at hand. At the same time, however, in the back of the minds of the audience is an awareness that, in the traditions of Israel, the vineyard theme has often been used to describe God’s dealings with Israel.

We are told that the prophet Isaiah’s ‘Song of love for the vineyard’, echoed in the parable, was so well known in the time of Jesus that many people knew it by heart. It is a remarkable declaration – a moving expression of faith in the mysterious

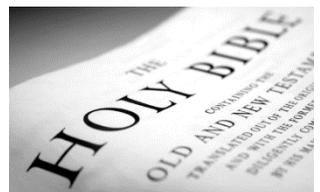


love and generosity that found expression in the election of Israel in the plan of God; and at the same time it is an acknowledgement of infidelity and failure. According to the usual pattern, as the story unfolds the audience is suddenly confronted by an unexpected turn of events. In this case it is the unreasonable decision of the landlord to send his own son on an errand that has led to so much violence and bloodshed: ‘They will respect my son’.

Against the background of the vineyard theme, Jesus, who has come to recognise that his death is inevitable, confronts his hearers with the final expression of the folly of divine love. As Matthew’s community tells the story of the parable, some of the modifications are obvious enough. In their account, the question Jesus puts to the leaders of the people has been added – the lesson of the parable is brought out more clearly, as the leaders are condemned out of their own lips. The reference to the psalm’s ‘stone rejected by the builders’, often repeated in the New Testament, is an explanatory addition, as is the conclusion: ‘The Kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit’. Matthew’s community knows that the parable is also a challenge for them – as the New Israel, they are now God’s vineyard: ‘Every branch in me that bears no fruit’, Jesus declares, ‘my Father cuts away’. Paul tells the Philippians that, if they bear good fruit, ‘The God of peace will be with them’.

## KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS NEWMAN LECTURE

The Knights of the Southern Cross branch is hosting a **Newman Lecture Dinner** on **Saturday, 14 October 2017** at **6:30pm** for **7pm** in the Thirroul Railway Institute Hall, Railway Parade, Thirroul. Ken Cafe ofm will speak on the topic ***The Bible – It Ain’t Necessarily So***. Cost is \$30 each and includes a two course dinner. BYO. Bookings are essential: Contact Paul Tuckerman ☎ 4267 2535. All are welcome!



## PASTORAL LETTER OF THE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE POSTAL SURVEY

Dear sisters and brothers,

As I write to you, the national debate on same-sex civil marriage is in full swing. It is an issue that many feel passionate about and hence, it has potential to polarise the community. I appeal to all Catholics in the Diocese of Parramatta to conduct this dialogue with a deep sense of respect for all concerned, and for the opinion and decision that each person is free to make.

It is important to remember from the very outset that the postal survey is about whether or not Australians want the legal definition of civil marriage changed to include same-sex couples. It is not a referendum on sacramental marriage as understood by the Catholic Church. Many years ago, divorce was legalised in Australia; but this change did not alter the law of the Church. Therefore, whatever the outcome of the survey or the eventual legislation by the government, the Church will continue to hold that marriage is a natural institution established by God to be a permanent union between one man and one woman, directed both to mutual companionship and to the formation of a family in which children are born and nurtured.

For many Catholics, the issue of same-sex marriage is not simply theoretical but deeply personal. These may be same-sex attracted people themselves or that may be the case with their relatives and friends. In such cases, they are torn between their love for the Church and their love for their same-sex attracted child, grandchild, sibling, cousin, friend or neighbour.

As your bishop, I wish to reiterate the commitment I made at my installation: “I am committed to make the church in Parramatta the house for all peoples, a church where there is less an experience of exclusion but more an encounter of radical love, inclusiveness and solidarity.” As a community of disciples, we seek to accommodate, accompany and care for one another irrespective of sexual orientation, marital status and situation.

I invite all Catholics in our Diocese to exercise our responsibility as citizens to engage in this community discernment. It should not be a matter of a simple answer Yes or No to the postal survey. It should be an opportunity for us to witness to our deep commitment to the ideal of Christian marriage. But it should also be an opportunity for us to listen to what the Spirit is saying through the signs of the times.

Throughout much of history, our gay and lesbian (or LGBTI) brothers and sisters have often not been treated with respect, sensitivity and compassion. Regrettably, the Church has not always been a place where they have felt welcomed, accepted and loved. Thus, regardless of the outcome of the survey, we must commit ourselves to the task of reaching out to our LGBTI brothers and sisters, affirming their dignity and accompanying them on our common journey towards the fullness of life and love in God.

Let us pray, discern and act with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Catholics, in keeping with the tradition of the Church, are asked to exercise their consciences, ensuring that they are informed as they come to exercise their democratic rights in the coming postal survey.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta

Religious organisations have freedom under Australian law to practise their own doctrines and marriage rituals for weddings held in their buildings and by their celebrants. This applies to all religions. Religious celebrants are authorised to marry through their churches or religious organisations, and can only do so according to those organisation's respective policies. A Catholic priest, for example, can celebrate a wedding only when at least one party is Catholic and when both parties (the man and the woman) are free to marry. This will not change.

# WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Tuesday 10 Oct 11am CWL Trading Table and Meeting  
 Wednesday 11 Oct St John XXIII, pope  
 Friday 1 Dec 4pm to 8pm Twilight Christmas Markets



## 2017-2018 SURF SEASON GETS UNDER WAY

The surfing season is now underway. Please be safe on our beaches and swim between the flags. No flags – no swim. Already this 2017–2018 season [since 1 July] there have been 230 rescues across Australia! 291 people drowned in Australia last season, between 1 July 16 and 30 June 17.



## MISSION SUNDAY: 14/15 OCTOBER

**WHOEVER DRINKS OF THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE,  
 WILL NEVER THIRST AGAIN**

John 4:14

Next weekend our parish will be holding the annual Catholic Mission World Mission Appeal. This year we are invited to share our support for the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Nha Trang, Vietnam as they work tirelessly to provide critical community resources such as clean drinking water and medical care to the country's 12 million forgotten farming families, living in the coastal mountain regions. Please come prepared next weekend to give generously.



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

### THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

**27<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 5:1-7  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Philippians 4:6-9  
 Gospel Matthew 21:33-43

### NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

**28<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 25:6-10  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Philippians 4:12-14,19-20  
 Gospel Matthew 22:1-14

### SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul  
 Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am  
 Bulli Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm  
 Corrimal Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am

### LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Wombarra [*Liturgy*] Monday 4:30pm  
 Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm  
 Wednesday 9:00am  
 Thursday 9:00am  
 Friday 9:30am

## Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

*Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes*

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive  
 4268 1910 4268 1976

PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515  
[thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

**Parish Office  
 Hours**

Tuesday, Wednesday  
 Friday

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires  
 10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic

[www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

Parish School of St Michael 4267 2560