



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
15/16 JUNE 2024

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
WELCOME TO MAIA, BAPTISED SATURDAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Grow

In olden days farmers would sow seeds in their lands and then simply wait. When a crop was ready they would reap it, using a scythe (a “blade”).

A whole process then had to follow. The neighbours would gather with a farmer at each step, to help. They would collect each other's crops into stacks, so that by counting stacks each farmer could know how much grain to expect from his harvest.

Threshing came next—separating the husks and straw from the grain—followed in the older cultures by “winnowing,” which detached the heavier grain from the lighter chaff.

A farmer would ... sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, without his knowing how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. (Mark 4:26)

The grains were tiny morsels at first, but at the last, they presented a massive display, poised for harvest. The farmer and his friends modestly worked along with this mysterious process. This older method of farming promoted community among farmers as they helped one another.

Jesus says this parable is about the kingdom of God. But he does not explain how. It recommends modesty, for sure. We Christians must arrange ourselves humbly and trustingly, like the farmers, while the mystery takes place within our souls.

And of course, we need to “detach the husks and straw from the lighter chaff.” This would mean pulling ourselves away from distractions and fascinations that drag us away from who we are meant to be. Distractions such as impressing others, winning all the time, using God's name in vain, criticizing people ... fill out the list.

But the Holy Spirit of God plants seeds in our souls and quietly begins their growth. Followers of Christ must let the seeds grow at their own rate, and then go on to the next step only when they are ready. Our job has been to prepare the land, which is us, and then see the result that happens of its own accord.

In a second parable, the quiet status of a seed is apparent. Jesus says that the mustard seed is the smallest and humblest of all the seeds on earth. The tiny mustard seed, the size of a pinhead, unassumingly grows to be a great big shrub or even a tree that is taller than a man's head.

So are we to be humble in a similar way. The Spirit's plantings in our souls will seem exceedingly tiny, even unnoticeable. Our humility—like the farmers' with the seeds—means waiting, or in other words, being patient. We are fallow lands. We must be ready and anticipating for something greater than ourselves, something the Spirit bestows.

This means that the “greatest of all shrubs” will not be you or me, but God—present in our lives and in our communities. Since God is great and to be loved above all things and within all things, since God is taller than a man or woman's head, so to speak, then he is large enough to found our greatest plans or hopes.

Definitely, let us put our actions into the world! But first ... let us be fallow.

Today's gospel passage comes from a sequence called Mark's ‘day of parables’. In the parables we can meet Jesus as an imaginative friend who is explaining his concerns and hopes to us. He tells us of ‘the Kingdom’, in which Israel's great hopes and all our human longings will be fulfilled. In Jesus' time, expectations were high and false human hopes were widespread. Jesus used figurative language, as more effective than plain language, to engage the people and awaken in them a sense of the mysterious message he brought. As our understanding of the mystery is awakened, so too is our understanding of the Saviour himself, for it is to the realisation of the ‘Kingdom’ that his whole existence among us is given.

Mark begins his ‘day of parables’ with three ‘seed’ parables. The familiar parable of the sower is not included in today's passage; it gives us the parable of the seed that grows mysteriously to produce a full harvest, and the parable of the mustard seed, the smallest seed familiar to Palestinian farmers, which can produce a bush three to four metres high. The most striking feature of these parables is the contrast between the tiny seed and what it goes on to produce. The ‘Kingdom’ Jesus announces is not a worldly triumph (something we need constantly to be reminded of); of its nature it has beginnings which are unimpressive and obscure by human standards. But in the end, it initiates the realisation of the final achievement of God. Reference to the sickle and harvest echoes what the prophets had said about the End-time. Mark's audience, who had already seen the Church grow from being a marginal



✠✠ Jewish movement into an international *communio*, would have appreciated the prophetic promise of the original parable of Jesus. The ‘birds of the air’ may be an echo of this. The seed growing mysteriously has a lesson for every age. The growth of the ‘kingdom’ is God’s work, a work that is vast and mysterious. Vatican II teaches that God’s grace is at work in every human existence ‘in a way known only to God’ (*Gaudium et spes*, n.22). We must distinguish the Church and the ‘Kingdom’ – of which the Church is the ‘first-fruits’ and sign in the world. And even in the Church, as we all recognise, what is important to God is often humble and hidden.

The whole life of Jesus, we can say, is a parable, leading us into the mystery of God’s generous and merciful dealings with us. As we come to appreciate the ‘Kingdom’ Jesus announced, and see him caring for God’s people in their needs, we come to know the commitments which shaped his human existence. More than one of the Fathers spoke of Jesus as the ‘seed’. In fact, he himself said he was the seed that must fall into the ground and die to produce God’s final harvest.

What God is asking is that we should accept to be loved utterly not because we are good but because God is good. We, at times, want to earn God’s love. We hate to feel we do nothing for God and must receive love as a free gift. The purest love of God accepts one’s being just as a receptacle to receive this outpouring of God’s love, and the more poor and wretched we are the more we are fitted for that ... True prayer is a giving of self to God, an opening of the self to God, not a seeking to feel God and God’s action.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Ezekiel 17:22-24

- ✠ What are the similarities between the “tender sprig” in this parable and the mustard seed in the Gospel? In each case, “Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.” What do you think of when you read this? Can the insignificant turn into the most significant?
- ✠ The tender shoot becomes a majestic cedar. In the Gospels, Jesus refers to the “least” becoming the “greatest” numerous times. How is Jesus’ own life an example of this? Can you think of others who followed or now follow this example?

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

- ✠ “Walk by faith, not by sight.” What does that mean to you? Why would we need the courage Paul mentions twice in this reading, in order to walk by faith? Were Oscar Romero, other martyrs – both ancient and recent – were they walking by faith or sight?
- ✠ Do you have confidence all the time, even when your spiritual weather is stormy? When Paul says “we do have confidence,” is it true? Do you have confidence? Always? What helps when you are?

Gospel Mark 4:26-34

- ✠ What is the farmer’s job in both of these parables? What is God’s job? Could you ask yourself the same two questions about your ministry? ... about your job and God’s? Are your duties to start discussions or participate in programs against climate change and racial bias? Can you trust God to do God’s job? Does God use our small gifts (the smallest of seeds) to bring all creation into the kingdom of God (the largest of shrubs)?
- ✠ According to Pope Francis, why is there always hope when we use our mustard-seed-sized gifts? Who is in charge of the outcome?

The Pope also observed that we need to be aware even in the Church of the “weeds of doubt” seen with the crisis of faith and various projects or initiatives that do not seem to work out. The help here, he said, is to always remember that the results of sowing does not depend on us; rather, “they depend on the action of God” and it is our concern simply “to sow, with love, dedication, patience.” The force of the seed is divine, he noted, while the other parable in today’s Gospel explains how the farmer sows the seed and is amazed at how it “grows spontaneously, day and night, when he least expects it,” showing “there is always hope,” even in the most infertile soil. – Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 13 June 2021

BAPTISM THIS WEEKEND – WELCOME MAIA EMBLETON

Welcome and congratulations to MAIA BELLE EMBLETON, baptised in our Parish this Saturday evening. Congratulations and thanks to Maia’s parents, grandparents and families. The next Baptisms to be held in our Parish will be during Masses on **20/21 July**. Following that, Baptisms will be on **Saturday, 17 August or Sunday, 18 August**. The next Baptism meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 25 July at 19:15**. Call in to the Parish Office to collect the Baptism Enrolment Forms. Baptism is the first Sacrament of Christian Initiation, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist.

If your daughter or son is **7 years or older** and is not baptised, then their preparation for baptism will be over a few months, as they will receive together the three Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist – this is called **RCIC**, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children. Please contact the Parish Office to enrol in the RCIC program which will be commencing in the second half of July.

Please remember before the Lord the **eighteen Year 6 Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation**. They are currently preparing for the Sacrament, which they will receive on **Thursday, 27 June 2024**.



49 FACTS ABOUT AUSTRALIA – DID YOU KNOW THEM ALL? ARE THEY ALL TRUE?

1. The Australian Alps get more snow than the Swiss Alps.
2. 90% of Australians live on the coast.
3. Tasmania has the cleanest air in the world.
4. The Great Barrier Reef is the largest ecosystem in the world. It is made up of nearly 3,000 individual reefs and can be seen from space.
5. Australia has over 60 separate wine regions.
6. Fraser Island is the largest sand island in the world.
7. The Indian Pacific train has the longest straight section of train track in the world.
8. The Great Ocean Road is the world's largest war memorial.
9. 80% of Australian animals are unique to Australia.
10. 5 km of Ayers Rock (Uluru) is underground.
11. Australia has the world's longest golf course measuring more than 1,350 kms long.
12. Australia is home to 21 of the world's 25 most venomous snakes.
13. Perth is the only city in the world which can have aircraft land in its CBD.
14. Mainland Australia is bigger than we realise, it's almost the same size as mainland USA.
15. The largest cattle station in the world is located in Australia, Anna Creek Ranch in South Australia and it's bigger than Israel.
16. The first Police Force in Australia was made up of the most well-behaved convicts.
17. It would take around 29 years to visit one new Aussie beach every day – there are 10,685 of them!
18. AFL, invented to keep cricketers fit in the off season, there are claims that the game may have been influenced by Indigenous Australians.
19. The world's largest rock is not actually Ayers Rock (Uluru), but Mount Augustus in Western Australia and actually twice the size of Ayers Rock.
20. Australia is the 6th largest country in the world.
21. There are 1 million camels that roam wild in Australia's deserts, the largest number of purebred camels in the world, they are exported to the Middle East.
22. You can fly from Perth to Melbourne faster than you can fly from one end of Western Australia to the other.
23. There are over 60 different types of kangaroos and a baby kangaroo when born is only about two centimetres long.
24. Aboriginal culture is the oldest on Earth – it is estimated that the continent's original inhabitants, the aboriginal people, have been in Australia for between 40,000-60,000 years.
25. Australia has 19 World Heritage Listed sites.
26. 91% of the country is covered by native vegetation.
27. 33% of Australians were born in another country.
28. Over 300 different languages and dialects are spoken in Australia including 45 Indigenous languages. In fact, 21% of Australians don't speak English at home!
29. WA is home to what is believed to be the oldest evidence of life on Earth – the Stromatolites.
30. Australia is the only continent in the world without an active volcano.
31. In Australia, sheep outnumber people 2.5 to 1 (in 2020).
32. Australia was the second country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1902.
33. Per capita, Australians spend more money on gambling than any other nation, with over 80 percent of Australian adults engaging in gambling of some kind.
34. Canberra was selected as the capital because Sydney and Melbourne could not stop arguing which city should be the capital.
35. Australia is home to the longest fence in the world, the Dingo Fence. Originally built to keep dingos away from fertile land, the fence is now 5,614 km long.
36. The Australian dollar is considered to be the most advanced currency in the world – its waterproof, made of polymer and notoriously hard to counterfeit.
37. Australia is the only continent covered by a single country.
38. The world's oldest fossil was discovered in Australia – 3.4 billion years old.
39. Australia has around 600 varieties of eucalypt trees.
40. Australia was one of the founding members of the United Nations.
41. Stonemasons in Australia instituted the 8-hour working day back in 1856.
42. In Aboriginal culture women are not allowed to play the didgeridoo.
43. The venom of the elusive platypus can kill a small dog.
44. Australia's most deadly marine animal is the Box Jellyfish and is responsible for more deaths per year than snakes, sharks and saltwater crocodiles.
45. The only two mammals in the world that lay eggs are found in Australia – the echidna and platypus.
46. Before the arrival of humans, Australia was home to megafauna, three-metre tall kangaroos, seven-metre long goanna's, horse-sized ducks and a marsupial lion the size of a leopard.
47. Both kangaroos and emus lack the ability to walk backwards. This was the reason they were chosen for Australia's coat of arms – to symbolise a country always moving forward.
48. The termite mounds that can be found in Australia are the tallest animal-made structures on earth.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

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|-----------|--------|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Monday | 17 Jun | Monday, Ordinary Time Week 11 | 1 Kings 21:1-16 | Matthew 5:38-42 |
| Tuesday | 18 Jun | Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 11 | 1 Kings 21:17-29 | Matthew 5:43-48 |
| Wednesday | 19 Jun | Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 11 | 2 Kings 2:1,6-14 | Matthew 6:1-6,16-18 |
| Thursday | 20 Jun | Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 11 | Sirach 48:1-14 | Matthew 6:7-15 |
| Friday | 21 Jun | St Aloysius Gonzaga, religious | 2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20 | Matthew 6:19-23 |
| Saturday | 22 Jun | Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 10 | 2 Chronicles 24:17-25 | Matthew 6:24-34 |
| Sunday | 23 Jun | 12 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i> | | |

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Monday, 17 June until Friday, 21 June, Ken teaching at Baulkham Hills
- ✦ Thursday, 27 June 19:00 Sacrament of Confirmation, 17 Candidates
- ✦ Monday, 1 July until Friday, 12 July, Ken teaching at the Seminary in Suva, Fiji

RECIPE: RAYMOND RETURNS WITH QUICK-MIX CHOCOLATE CAKE

Melted butter, to grease; 270g brown sugar; 185ml milk; 125g butter, cubed; 50g cocoa powder; ¼ tsp bicarbonate soda; 150g self-raising flour; 2 tbsp plain flour; 3 eggs, lightly whisked. Chocolate icing: 195g pure icing sugar; 1 tbsp cocoa powder; 10g butter, at room temperature; 1 tbsp boiling water.

Preheat oven to 160°C. Brush a deep, square, 19cm (base measurement) cake pan with the melted butter to lightly grease. Line the base and sides of the pan with non-stick baking paper. Place the sugar, milk and butter in a large saucepan. Use a fine sieve to sift the cocoa powder and bicarbonate of soda over the mixture. Place the pan over medium-low heat and use a whisk to stir until the mixture is smooth (don't boil the mixture). Remove the pan from the heat and set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly. Use a sieve to sift half of the self-raising and plain flour into the pan. Use the whisk to stir until the mixture is smooth. Repeat with the remaining flours. Add the eggs and continue to stir until well combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake pan and gently tap the pan on a bench to release any large air bubbles. Bake in preheated oven for 45-55 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Set aside for 2 minutes before turning onto a wire rack. Set aside for 1¾ hours or until completely cool. To make the chocolate icing, sift the icing sugar and cocoa powder into a medium bowl. Add the butter and water, and stir with a wooden spoon until smooth. Use the back of a spoon or palette knife to spread the icing evenly over the top of the cooled cake. Set aside for about 50 minutes or until the icing is firm.

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**.

menALIVE MAX national Conference – Varroville 19–21 July

Many men have benefited from the challenges, encouragement and faithful brotherhood that comes from menALIVE. Here's a chance for men from all round Australia to come together – be renewed in faith for action, for good – and it is happening in our Diocese – so don't miss this. It is now time to book: for ① and to book go to <https://menalive.org.au/events/max-weekend-2024> or contact jude.hennessy@dow.org.au or ☎ 0408 236 191

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

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|---|----------------------|
| 11 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B | |
| 1 st Reading | Ezekiel 17:22-24 |
| 2 nd Reading | 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 |
| Gospel | Mark 4:26-34 |

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 12 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B | |
| 1 st Reading | Job 38:1,8-11 |
| 2 nd Reading | 2 Corinthians 5:14-17 |
| Gospel | Mark 4:35-41 |

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

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|--|---------|
| Monday | _____ |
| Tuesday | ☒ 17:30 |
| Wednesday | 09:00 |
| Thursday | 09:00 |
| Friday | 09:30 |
| <i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i> | |