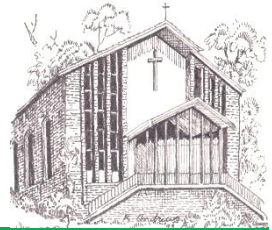




# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



**7 / 8 SEPTEMBER 2019**  
**23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C**  
**PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 – DISCERNMENT STAGE**

## **THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

## *My Own Heart*

Here is the question we will look at this week: what is life about? Many times has this been asked! Let us look at Christ's answer.

According to the first reading: "The reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail; for a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind. ... What is at hand we find with labour."

Sounds like the writer was having a bad day. But these words actually do apply to all life. We have choices, we have problems. What are we to do? God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. *Change the things I cannot accept – an addition.*



This is the Serenity Prayer, well-known, possibly trite to some people. But it shows us the essence of humility: be who you are, not more, not less. Trust in God for everything you cannot do. Let go, let God.

So, there is a first answer. Life here on earth, even though timid and weighed down, is about humility.

The second answer is love. Real, toiling, sweating love.

Look at the apostle Paul in the second reading—the fiery, tempestuous Paul—now an old man and in prison. We are reading a personal letter here, one he wrote to Philemon. It turns out that Philemon's slave Onesimus ran away and came to Paul in his jail cell. Paul became like a father to him, converted him to Christianity and now sends him back to Philemon not as a slave but "as a man and in the Lord."

Listen to the language Paul uses. "I am sending him, that is, [I am sending] my own heart, back to you." Onesimus is not a servant anymore. Paul is sending someone so dear to him that he refers to that man as "his own heart."

This is true personal love. It is what life here on earth is all about.

The third answer, as the Gospel tells us, is to get our values straight. Jesus says he wants you to: 1. hate your father, mother, children, brothers, sisters, and your own life'; 2. renounce all your possessions; 3. carry your own cross just as he carries his.

Hang on, don't panic. These sound horrible, but examine them.

1. The word "hate" is probably an oratorical way to say "love them in proportion." If you let love of God be first in your life, your beloved family will come right along with it. If you do not, you will lose them. Hate means not having them be overboard in their importance to you.



2. “Renounce all your possessions.” If you are tempted to love material things above all else, then renounce them. It is God you need to love above all things, and everything else only in proportion.

3. Why are we supposed to carry a cross? Because it is far too easy for us to pretend that the world is not really painful, that no one actually suffers. But they do and we do, in a big way. Taking up our cross sends us out with Jesus to help others carry theirs.

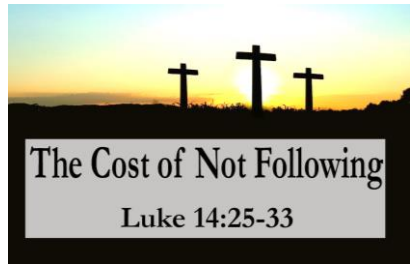
And that is the real and final answer to the problems presented in the first reading. What is life about here on earth? It is about being humble, about loving others truly, and about loving God above all things.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

From time to time we should stop and consider how momentous is the decision we have made to be a follower of Jesus. So easily we expect our Christian life to be undisturbed and unchallenged; so that it can become little more than engaging from time to time in consoling practices. We can fail to recognise that we are caught up in nothing less than the life and death struggle of the whole world. The one we are called to follow is the eternal Son of the Father, who became one of us, that through his Paschal Mystery he may lead us out of the world of selfishness and violence we have made, into a new heaven and new earth, where all is shaped by the generous and merciful ways of his Father. We should not be surprised that, as he undertakes his courageous journey to Jerusalem, his teaching has a sharp edge. It is important, however, to understand what he is asking of us, so that it will not remain little more than a seemingly impossible ideal.

Luke has Jesus giving this teaching to ‘great crowds’; it is not teaching for an elite group, but teaching that all those who call themselves his followers should take to heart. We must not be misled, of course, by the stark Semitic turn of phrase he uses. He does not tell us that we should have no love for the things most precious in our lives, our many bonds of kinship, even our own life itself. He is telling us that even these things must not be given a preference in our decisions that would amount to a renunciation of Christ and what he stands for. He is showing us the seriousness of the mysterious mission he has received from his Father, as he makes for the Holy City to take up his cross. If we are to be his true followers, we must ‘carry his cross and come after him’. Our following must not be half-hearted, his two parables tell us. We must weigh up fully the implications of our decision not to allow any consideration to destroy our commitment to him; we must be ready to carry it through to the end. Otherwise our situation will be like that of the man whose half-completed building is a monument to his foolishness; or worse, like that of the king whose lack of foresight leads him to defeat and death. In the continuation of Luke’s text, Jesus tells us that we – who are called to share in his mission to bring wholesomeness to the world – should not become like salt that has lost its taste.

The final words of this week’s gospel are the most challenging of all: “whoever of you does not give up all their possessions cannot be my disciple.” But these very words help us to understand that Luke is not holding up to us an impossible ideal. Luke stresses the place of poverty in the Christian life; the wording of his first beatitude is blunt: ‘Happy are you who are poor’ (Luke 6:20); but what follows makes it clear that he does not expect all followers of Jesus to give up all their possessions – they are urged to ‘lend, without hope of return’ and to ‘give’ generously. What the Lord asks for is that, in our life commitments, we place all that is most dear to us in his hands, ready to accept whatever he asks of us. Some Christians, of course, receive a personal call to immediate renunciation – a reminder to us all of the seriousness of our following of Christ.



## PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 – DISCERNMENT STAGE

How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church that is:

- ✓ missionary and evangelising;
- ✓ inclusive, participatory and synodal;
- ✓ prayerful and Eucharistic;
- ✓ humble, healing and merciful;
- ✓ open to conversion, renewal and reform; and
- ✓ a joyful, hope-filled and servant community?



These are the six national themes for discernment in preparation for the Plenary Council. There will be parish and local meetings where we will spend time in prayer and discernment for each theme. A handout on the six national themes is provided with this week's Bulletin. More details will be in later Bulletins regarding dates, times and locations for meetings.

## BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

Next weekend, 14/15 September, will be the **Bishop's Annual Appeal** for ministries of the bishop, including how we care for the retirement and health needs of the clergy of our Diocese. Thank you for your anticipated generosity.

## 1 SEPTEMBER IS WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CREATION

This day marks the beginning of the Season of Creation which runs from **1 September** through to **4 October**. It is an opportunity for Christians around the world to celebrate creation through prayer and action. As Pope Francis has said, "The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation to be custodians of creation."

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

## CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Next **Tuesday, 10 September**, commencing 11:00am in the McCarthy Centre, Judy will talk on CUPS. Please bring your own favourite cup to show and tell. Light luncheon to follow. All welcome! Monthly meeting 1:30pm.

## PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES FOR 2019–2020

Thank you to all who contribute to our **Parish Planned Giving Program** by way of **direct debits or the Planned Giving Envelopes**. The next series of envelopes commences on 5/6 October 2019. Your new series of envelopes are available in the church from this weekend – if you cannot collect them from the church, please call the Parish Office. Thank you, again, to all who contribute to our Parish.

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

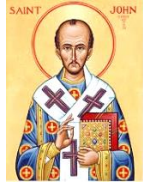
Some have noticed that the Christmas lights on the presbytery were lit up for a few days recently – of course, the reason was to celebrate the end of winter, 31 August.

## CHILD PROTECTION SUNDAY – 7/8 SEPTEMBER

In 2019, National Child Protection Week focuses on introducing a 'child development' communication frame to promote the messages that: kids do well when parents are supported; and to raise thriving kids, parents need support to navigate life's choppy waters.

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

**Tuesday 10 Sep** First Penance/Communion Enrolments Close  
**Friday 13 Sep** St John Chrysostom, bishop, doctor  
**Saturday 14 Sep** Exaltation of the Holy Cross  
**Weekend 14/15 Sep** Bishop's Annual Appeal in support of ministries  
**Weekend 21/22 Sep** Samaritan's Purse: Christmas boxes for children



## SAMARITAN'S PURSE: OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



Operation Christmas Child hand delivers gift-filled shoeboxes to children in many countries who have nothing. Thailand, New Guinea and Cambodia are among those countries. Thirroul Catholic Women's League combines with Austinmer Uniting Church Fellowship to fill shoeboxes. We are asking



please, for the support of parishioners for gifts and donations to enable boxes to be filled for boys and girls aged 2yrs to 14yrs.

**Items required are** ... small soft toys, toothbrushes, soap, hair clips and hair bands, combs, shorts, t-shirts, undies, exercise books (48p, 64p, 96p), small colouring books, lead and colour pencils, biros, note pads, marbles, chalk, erasers, sharpeners, balloons, tennis balls (that bounce), skipping ropes (not heavy), Matchbox and Hot Wheels cars and trucks. NB all items must be NEW. (No toothpaste or liquids.)

On the weekend of **21/22 September** [only chance] there will be a tub for the items in the porch of St Michael Church. **Thank you in anticipation for your generosity.**

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

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** Wisdom 9:13-18  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** Philemon 9-10,12-17  
**Gospel** Luke 14:25-33

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

**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** Exodus 32:7-11,13-14  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** 1 Timothy 1:12-17  
**Gospel** Luke 15:1-32

### 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