



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



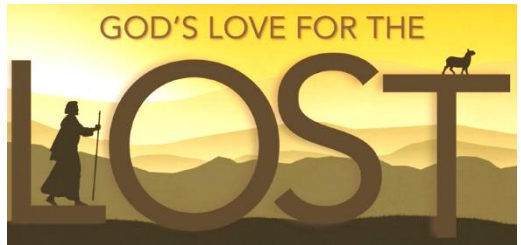
14 / 15 SEPTEMBER 2019
24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C
BAPTISMS – WELCOME ❖ BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Prodigal Us

A ridiculous story.

Who would be dumb enough to adore something they have constructed with their own hands! Imagine worshipping a molten calf! Of course, we do have our beautiful houses, refrigerators, cars, magazines and clothes, don't we? And our famous "bottom line" in business. And a low score at golf or high score at football. And money. And cigarettes. And drink. And sex all over the place. More people in the USA watch pornography than watch sports. And we do often worship the current "stars" in Hollywood or on MTV, things we have created with our own hands.



But never mind that. In the first reading we find God becoming quite upset because the people in ancient days put up cheap products as their God. While Moses is away, they have built a golden calf, and are making it their God. Ridiculous.

God had a different idea of God's relation to the people. We could sum it up as follows: What about the two-way covenant of love I have been offering you? "I will be your God and you will be my people. I will love you more than you can ask or imagine. Won't you just love me in return?"

But they refuse and wilfully run away to their paltry desires. God becomes angry, maybe in the way a parent would with a seriously disobedient child. He shouts at Moses, "Now let me alone, so that my wrath may blaze up against them and I may consume them."

A few lines later, Moses acts as a family friend. He says, "O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your own people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ... Let your blazing wrath die down; relent in punishing your people."

Just calm down, give them some time. God agrees.

Yet they were "worshipping" false gods! Maybe you and I do not exactly worship (fall down and adore) all the human-made items that demand our time, but have you ever run away from God so you can have whatever arouses your own addictions?

For sure the prodigal (the first) son did. He left what he felt were the "shackles" of home life, and also the confining love from his father. He made himself "free"! He squandered his property on dissolute (= degenerate, depraved) living, the equivalent of our many ↗ ↘

🔗🔗 things, refrigerators, cars, houses, magazines and clothes. When he finally comes crawling back home, defeated, we would expect his father to say: “Oh sure, now you turn up, thinking everything will be just like it used to be. Well think again, pal.”



But instead his father actually runs out to meet his son, embraces him and prepares a huge feast of welcome – *not only for the family and household, but for the whole village*. Did the young man get what he deserved? No, he got what his father prepared for him. Entire forgiveness, welcome and reconciliation.

God does not want to keep us from the things that attract us. God wants us to value them in due proportion. Love God above all things. Then you can love everything and everyone else as they deserve.

We fail, of course, like the prodigal, and like the ancient Israelites did. So, Jesus pleads for us, just as Moses pleaded. God puts his arms around us and says, “welcome, welcome, welcome. You came back! We can love one another again, can’t we?”

We will do our best, we say.

The generous attitude of Jesus to ‘tax collectors and sinners’ scandalised those who saw themselves as the guardians of Israel’s true traditions. Luke gives us three parables with which Jesus responded directly to this criticism – he was, he said, giving expression to the merciful ways of his Father. The best known of the three, of course, is the story of the son who, after foolishly squandering his inheritance, is received back by his rejoicing father.

When we recognise how this elaborate story fits into the message that was central to Jesus teaching, we understand that it conveys far more than the brief parables before it. The story hinges on the relationship between the lost son and his father. The real shortcoming of the son, as the story shows, was not his prodigality, but the fact that, though he has lived with his father all his years, he had not had the generosity of spirit that would bring him to understand the love his father had for him. Even when he comes to his senses, his attitude is that of a mercenary – though he has lost the rights of a son, his father is a good man, he will give him a place among his slaves. Jesus saw his immediate mission as calling the nation to identify with the ways of the God of the covenant. Their situation is like that of the prodigal; they have lived for centuries in covenant with God; and they have found themselves in exile for their infidelities; but even after their return they are far from appreciating the ways of the God of the covenant, and the loving designs God has for them. The elder brother in the story – whose relationship to his father, and his claim on his father, is established by his ‘obeying the orders’ he has received – also has the outlook of a mercenary. It is clear that he stands for the leaders who should have led God’s people to an understanding of God’s loving and generous ways, but have persuaded themselves that they show their faithfulness to the covenant by an exact observance of the requirements of the Law. Jesus is calling God’s people to learn at last the clear message of the covenant experience, the loving, merciful and inclusive ways in the heart of his Father.

The words of the father in the story, to the sulking elder brother, are filled with the pathos of Jesus’ appeal: ‘My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours’. The ‘best robe’, the ‘ring’, the ‘sandals’ and the ‘feast’, all marks of special regard, point to a mercy and generosity that have no limits. We are left to imagine the aftermath. Surely, the son’s life is transformed, as he comes, at last, to share in the love in the heart of his father. The future the Saviour promises to the world, in fact, will be a sharing in the love of his Father (cf. John 14:25 etc.).

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 – DISCERNMENT STAGE

This is a process of communal discernment in which we pray, reflect, share, think nationally, think locally and respond with proposals for action will take place across three of the Northern Suburbs Parishes over the next few months. You are invited to read about the national themes for discernment, prayerfully contemplate them, and then come to one or more of the sessions across our parishes. Each session has a cut-off date for registrations to allow the Animators time to distribute materials and prepare.

Session times and dates are below. How is God calling us to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is ☩:

	☩ 2:00pm ☩	☩ 7:30pm ☩	at	☩ Register by ☩
missionary and evangelizing	Saturday, 28 Sep	Monday, 30 Sep	Corrimal	Sunday, 22 Sep
humble, healing, merciful	Saturday, 12 Oct	Monday, 14 Oct	Bulli	Sunday, 29 Sep
open to conversion, reform	Saturday, 26 Oct	Monday, 28 Oct	Thirroul	Sunday, 13 Oct
inclusive, participatory, synodal	Saturday, 9 Nov	Monday, 11 Nov	Corrimal	Sunday, 27 Oct
prayerful and Eucharistic	Saturday, 23 Nov	Monday, 25 Nov	Bulli	Sunday, 10 Nov
joyful, hope-filled, servant	Saturday, 30 Nov	Monday, 2 Dec	Thirroul	Sunday, 17 Nov

Sign-up sheets are in the church ... sign up to make practical suggestions.

BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

My sisters and brothers in Christ. It is the responsibility of our diocese to support and care for the retirement and health of our clergy. Your donation to this appeal will help me ensure a dignified retirement for our diocesan clergy through suitable accommodation, transport assistance and holistic health care. Currently, there are 12 clergy in retirement. It is likely that we will have an additional seven clergy retiring over the next five years. As a matter of priority, we need to ensure that we have the resources to continue to care for our aging clergy. I am grateful for your consideration of these needs and for your generous practical support. Yours in Christ, Most Rev Brian G Mascord, Bishop of Wollongong.

BAPTISMS THIS SATURDAY

Welcome to those baptised in our Parish this Saturday: **MITALI NOLAN; HENRY LUKUNIC;** and **LILY NOLAN**. Congratulations and thank you to their parents, godparents and families for bringing their children to our Parish for baptism.



Next Baptisms in our Parish will be during the weekend Masses on **17/18 November**. If you want your infant daughter or son baptized on 17/18 November, at least one parent needs to attend the Baptism Preparation Class which will be held at 7:15pm on **Thursday, 31 October**. ☎ Collect Baptism enrolment

forms from the Parish Office. **There will be no baptisms during October.**

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

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 sacristy or please call at the Parish Office. Thank you, again, to all who contribute to our Parish.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday 16 Sep **St Cornelius**, pope, martyr
St Cyprian, bishop, martyr
Wednesday 18 Sep **Liturgy of the Word with Communion**
Friday 20 Sep **Sts Andrew Kim Taegon & Companions**, martyrs
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 Austimmer 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, biro, 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** **NEXT WEEKEND** [only chance] there will be a tub for the items in the porch of St Michael Church. **Thank you for your generosity.**

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading Amos 8:4-7
2nd Reading 1 Timothy 2:1-8
Gospel Luke 16:1-13

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
Liturgy of the Word 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

Parish Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

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

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560