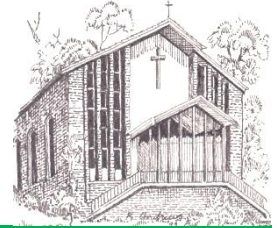




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



21 / 22 SEPTEMBER 2019
25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C
SAMARITAN'S PURSE: OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Prodigal Us

God in the first reading (from the book of the prophet Amos) is quite offended by the people's evil actions, just as we would expect. But in the Gospel parable we find the master of the house rewarding a dishonest steward for cheating. What is going on?

A question: are you shrewd? Can you get troubled circumstances to work to your advantage? If you said yes, doesn't that mean you are un-Christian?

After all, we are supposed to dedicate ourselves to charity, giving always to others. Or at least that is the usual understanding of Christianity.

Starting with the prophet Amos, God sees that the merchants are actually agreeing to "fix their scales for cheating!" This is bad enough, but they have determined also to actually buy poor people, to purchase them and their lives for silver or even for a pair of sandals! "The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: surely, I will never forget any of their deeds."



Such slavery no longer exists in the world today – we hope!

But aren't each of our own lives being bought off by luxury? Haven't you noticed that commerce wishes to buy you with pay TV, or a new car, or prescription drugs, or real-estate plans, or weight reduction, beautiful teeth, slick clothes, perfect wheel chairs, and even breath-freshening chewing gum (whose advertising portrays sexual promiscuity in order to sell their gum)?

God's reaction is very clear, and we should react similarly. God hates it.

Yet in the Gospel, a parable portrays God's attitude quite differently. The master comes back to find that his top steward has been squandering the master's property. Naturally he plans to fire the man, and in this he agrees completely with the reading from the book of the prophet Amos, that cheating should not be tolerated.

But then comes the curve ball. The servant is portrayed as shrewd. He thinks up a plan. If I am to be fired, I had better acquire some friends so I will not be homeless. Since I will remain steward until I give an account, I will go to each of my master's debtors and make a deal. Give me half of what you owe and I will count it on the books as fully paid.

The master actually commends him for this plan! He tells the servant, you have been prudent in preparing a home for yourself!

Why does he treat this dishonest servant differently than the dishonest merchants in the book of the prophet Amos? The answer is in Sunday's Psalm 113, which says: "Praise the Lord, who lifts up the poor!"

Do you think the merchants in Amos were "lifting up the poor"? Weren't they



↪↪ buying and selling them instead, purchasing them for even “a pair of sandals”?

Well, the Gospel’s steward doesn’t show disdain for the poor even though he is taking care of his own future (by making friends with the poor). He gets a portion of their debts back for the master. He never buys or sells them—he makes their life a little easier by cutting their debts in half, and he courts the master’s favour by cutting losses to his property.



So, he was shrewd. He did good by being so clever. The remaining servants were happy. The master was happy. The steward kept his job. Good was served rather than evil.

Maybe the actual moral for Sunday is: be clever when you do good.

All three readings of today’s liturgy point to issues of social justice. In an age in which self-interest and individualism often call the tune, we Christians must not neglect these issues. Our world is far more complex than that of Amos the prophet. Corruption has different forms these days – carefully concealed but just as sinful, because of the damage it does to the life of the community. The inequitable sharing of the world’s resources, often artificially maintained, that contributes significantly to world tensions, should be a matter of concern for all Christians.

The situation described in the letter to Timothy is very different from ours – but at the same time, so similar. The Christians of that community had no possibility of manipulating the levers of power in the politics of the Roman Empire. The Church should not endeavour to manipulate the political processes of today’s democratic state. In both situations, however, Christians still have great responsibility, as citizens. We must make an honourable contribution to the common welfare, at whatever level we are involved. We must have no part in the corruption that can be very tempting, in the complex processes of today’s social order. We must support legitimate authority; and have good will towards our fellow citizens, respecting their different points of view, and seeking to work together with them to make a just society. Our great contribution is the Christian values we live by – the vitality of a human community comes from the values its citizens are committed to.

In today’s gospel, we meet again Luke’s concern to bring home to his fellow Christians the responsibilities and dangers brought by this world’s possessions. All will be well in this area of our social responsibility, if our real concerns look beyond the material things that are a necessary part of our lives. If the Church today, as Pope John Paul II has said, renounces any desire ‘to be a participant or competitor in the game of politics’, it is called to contribute to the wellbeing of the human community by the witness and example it gives. Our lives, and the quality of our relationships as a Christian community, should demonstrate to our troubled world that living according to the ways Christ has given us is not a bondage, but a fulfilment.

The parable of the unjust steward is puzzling. Scholars are not agreed whether the ‘astuteness’ praised by his master was making fraudulent changes to his debtors’ promissory notes, or his forgoing claims for the commission customary in such transactions. In either case the lesson is clear: those dedicated to worldly pursuits are often more wholehearted in their projects than believers are in promoting the things of God. We certainly have a long way to go, if the effective witness held up to us by John Paul II as a goal is to become a reality.

SPRING EQUINOX ... SUMMER IS COMING!!

On the equinoxes the sun shines directly on the equator and the length of day and night is nearly equal – but not quite. The March equinox marks the moment the sun crosses the celestial equator – the imaginary line in the sky above the earth’s equator – from south to north and vice versa in September. In Sydney, the Spring equinox this year is on **Monday, 23 September at 17:50 (5:50pm)**. Roll on summer!!

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.

GROWING GOOD MEN: FATHER & SON WEEKEND

Growing Good Men is an experientially-based program which encourages and enables fathers and sons to strengthen their relationship and to explore important issues of growing into manhood. It is designed for fathers and their adolescent sons ages 12 to 16 years (school Years 7 to 10). The next weekend is Friday, 25 October to Sunday, 27 October at Cataract Scout Park, Appin. Cost is \$350 for father and son. Brochures and registration forms are near the church entrances.

PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF THE FRIARS

Every three years a meeting (chapter) of friars takes place to prepare for the future and to elect a Provincial Council. The friars are meeting this week, Sunday to Friday, 22-27 September at St Joseph Retreat Centre, Baulkham Hills. Andrew and Ken will be in attendance, so this week, there will be Liturgy of the Word with Communion, Tuesday to Friday.

**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.

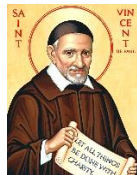
BLESSING OF ANIMALS: MONDAY, 7 OCTOBER, 9:30AM

The annual Blessing of Animals will be held on the long weekend in October, at 9:30am on Monday, 7 October. All animals are welcome ... *Obstreperous camels must be on tight leashes. Leopards must be easily spotted. Chooks must purchase their eggs from IGA. On 4 October, people all over the world will be celebrating the feast day of the Patron Saint of Animals, Saint Francis of Assisi. It's customary that in remembrance of St Francis of Assisi's love for all creatures, animals are led to churches for a special ceremony called the "Blessing of the Animals." Every year, millions of animals are blessed by priests/friars in a ceremony that touches the hearts of most of those in attendance.*

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Mon–Fri 22-27 Sep Provincial Chapter of Friars
 Liturgy of the Word with Communion
 Friday 27 Sep St Vincent de Paul, priest
 Weekend 28/29 Sep Social Justice Sunday

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/social-justice-statements#SJS2019



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, 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 **THIS WEEKEND** [only chance] there will be a tub for the items in the porch of St Michael Church. Thank you for your generosity. *If you have forgotten to bring something, please drop it in to the Parish Office by this Tuesday, 24 September.*

THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C

1st Reading Amos 6:1,4-7

2nd Reading 1 Timothy 6:11-16

Gospel Luke 16:19-31

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