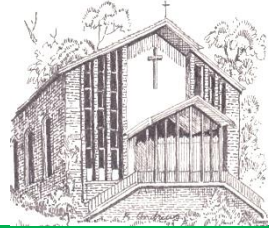




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



19 / 20 OCTOBER 2019
29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C
MISSION SUNDAY – SPECIAL COLLECTION

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Everlasting Arms

There are two sides to Sunday's readings. One theme is "Do not get tired when you are praying." The other is, of course you will, but there will be support.

Most of us have experienced drowsiness when we try to pray. Even Moses gets fatigued as he is doing the equivalent of prayer in the first reading. He stands on the top of a hill where he can see a fight going on below, one he has ordered. To give his general, Joshua, victory over enemy forces, he holds out what our reading calls "the staff of God" over the battle. He has to continue holding it out, straight-armed, until the combat is completely done because whenever he lowers his arms the enemy starts to win. This goes on for a long time and Moses' arms do grow exceedingly weary.



Moses did have people to support his arms, Aaron and Hur. They even found a rock for him to sit on. The theme: go ahead and get tired, someone will help you.


But in the Gospel, in order to illustrate why we should keep praying (asking for things) and not grow tired, Jesus tells a parable about the unjust judge and a widow who does not stop asking. [Notice that Jesus' real name was Joshua, just like Moses' General above. The name "Jesus" is a Greek translation.]

The widow, with very little to lose, comes to public court every single day and demands justice from the admittedly bored judge. Much like today's scene! After a while the judge thinks to himself, if I don't do something this woman will humiliate me in front of everyone. I give up. I will rule in her favour.

The point we are given for this parable is: how much more God—who certainly is not bored—will make sure we have what we need, even if it is only a very basic need. The widow's persistence is therefore an example for all of us. **Persistence.**

But did Jesus have someone supporting his arms as he spread them wide upon the cross? No?

Even though Jesus was weary unto death and was no longer able to sense any presence of God whatsoever, he still prayed without ceasing. "Father, why have you abandoned me?" is one of the most riveting prayers in history. It set the stage for Mother Teresa's persistence and fortitude throughout a life devoid of consolation.

God's love was strong enough to bring Jesus (and Mother Teresa) through, when 

every assurance had been taken away. Jesus stretched out his arms in a position that came to be the medieval position of prayer (arms lifted to God), and won a great victory, just as the Old Testament Moses and Joshua had done. He opened his arms to us so that we can fall into them when we ourselves are so very weary and discouraged.

“The eternal God is your refuge,” Moses said. “Underneath are the everlasting arms”.



A very typical human situation: a corrupt judge, pestered by a persistent widow, finally gives in to her, not because he is won over to acting justly, but because she is going to ‘worry him to death’. We see an unfamiliar side of Jesus in this parable; he is not long faced – he can speak of human foibles with an ironical humour. The story was all too common in the world that Jesus knew. The widow who cannot get a fair hearing, probably concerning her inheritance, represents ‘the poor’ with whom Jesus identifies. He is certainly not likening his Father to the judge of the parable, but is using the parable as the basis of an ‘even more so’ argument, such as we find in other parables. Having caught their attention with his ironical little story, Jesus is presented by Luke as emphasising the trust in God that should motivate the prayer of his disciples.

The sequence of Luke’s compilation leading to this text helps us to understand the implications of Jesus’ teaching. Between the teaching on ‘faith’ that we have considered on the last two Sundays, and today’s reading, is a passage concerning ‘the coming of the kingdom of God’ and the day of ‘the Son of Man’s return’. Faith, we have seen, is an expectant openness to God’s action in our midst. Our prayer this Sunday is linked with the openness we should have, as we look forward to the day ‘when the Son of Man comes’.

If the first concern of a lively faith is being alive to God’s action in our lives, our prayer should begin and end in recognition that our lives have their real meaning in the unfolding of the plan conceived before all ages in the loving designs of God. This plan – the great virtue of Christian hope assures us – will certainly be realised; and in its realisation, all things will be turned to good. Of course, our personal needs and the concerns of those dear to us should be brought constantly before God in our prayer; but this should be done in the knowledge that these things are part of the plan of God, revealed in all its mercy and generosity in the coming of the Saviour, and realised through a providence that touches every detail of our lives and those who are dear to us. Prayer, Jesus is teaching us, is a living out of our faith; and, at the same time, our faith grows and matures through our life of prayer.

Our reading from the letter to Timothy is a good complement to the lesson of the gospel – urging us to a greater familiarity with the Scriptures. The whole story of the ‘inspired Scriptures’ is the unfolding of God’s plan and the great promise it brings to Christian hope. This story of the Scriptures is important in the life of the Church ‘for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people’s lives and teaching them to be holy’.

Scholars assure us that the last words of the Gospel are not pessimistic. Jesus knows that he will find faith when he comes – in ‘the chosen ones who cry out to God day and night’ – but his words are a warning for those who need it.

The word for “widow” in Hebrew means “silent one” or “one unable to speak.” In the patriarchal Mediterranean world males alone play a public role. Women do not speak on their own behalf. A widow who has lost her husband and spokesperson to death is in an even worse condition if the eldest son is not married. Because the widow appears alone in this parable, we can assume that she has no male family member who can appear on her behalf. She is truly alone and therefore in a very vulnerable situation. At the same time, she is desperate. *Being already deprived of everything of value in this society, what else does she have to lose?*

MISSION SUNDAY 2019: MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS

For the month of October 2019, I have asked that the whole Church revive her missionary awareness and commitment as we commemorate the centenary of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* of Pope Benedict XV (30 November 1919). Its farsighted and prophetic vision of the apostolate has made me realize once again the importance of renewing the Church's missionary commitment and giving fresh evangelical impulse to her work of preaching and bringing to the world the salvation of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again.

The title of the present Message is the same as that of October's Missionary Month: *Baptized and Sent: The Church of Christ on Mission in the World*. Celebrating this month will help us first to rediscover the missionary dimension of our faith in Jesus Christ, a faith graciously bestowed on us in baptism. Our filial relationship with God is not something simply private, but always in relation to the Church. Through our communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we, together with so many of our other brothers and sisters, are born to new life. This divine life is not a product for sale – we do not practise proselytism – but a treasure to be given, communicated and proclaimed: that is the meaning of mission. We received this gift freely and we share it freely, without excluding anyone. God wills that all people be saved by coming to know the truth and experiencing his mercy through the ministry of the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation.

This missionary mandate touches us personally: I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life-giving. As far as God's love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God's love. Even if parents can betray their love by lies, hatred and infidelity, God never takes back his gift of life. From eternity he has destined each of his children to share in his divine and eternal life.

– Pope Francis

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 ☞
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.

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

WELCOME TO MONSIGNOR DAVID O'BRIEN

Thank you to Monsignor **David O'Brien** and to **Andrew Granc ofm** who will be filling in for Ken who is away until 30 October. David was Parish Priest of West Wollongong, but has now retired – but helps out in parishes when not relaxing!

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Tuesday 22 Oct 3:45pm, Class for 1st Penance
Weekend 26-27 Oct Catechists Sunday
 Tuesday 29 Oct 3:45pm, Class for 1st Penance
 Wednesday 30 Oct 7:00pm, First Penance



SURFING SEASON HAS BEGUN

Our surfing season is well underway and runs until 26 April 2020! **Please be safe on our beaches and waterways.** So far, since 1 July, there have already been 132 rescues! Last season there were **122** coastal and ocean drowning deaths in Australia, and **10,176** rescues by surf lifesavers. **Be safe!**



OCTOBER: BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Breast Screen NSW encourages you to join in celebrating the 25th year of empowering women to put their health first. Women between 50 and 74 are encouraged to take the '2 and 5 challenge' – pair up with a woman you care about and support each other to tackle the 5 steps: **be screened**; **be a breast friend**; **be inspired** [visit breastscreen.nsw.gov.au]; **be giving** [give feedback after your breast screen test]; **be encouraging** [share this important message with others]. Book online at book.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au ☎ 13 2050.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE ANNUAL MASS

Thirroul Catholic Women's League – we will be celebrating our 55th Anniversary on **Wednesday, 6 November**, with Mass at 10:30am, followed by a luncheon at Thirroul Bowling Club at 12 noon. **All are welcome to join us!** Cost \$30. Bookings/enquiries/payment to Lucy 4268 5405 or Maureen 0438 674 997 by 30 October. Thank you to our CWL!

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading Exodus 17:8-13
2nd Reading 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2
Gospel Luke 18:1-8

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C
1st Reading Sirach 35:12-14,16-19
2nd Reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8
Gospel Luke 18:9-14

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

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