



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
9/10 SEPTEMBER 2023
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR A
SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Forgiveness

What happens when someone misbehaves and hurts you? What should you do, punch them out?

No.

Jesus lays out a detailed plan in the Gospel about how to help a person, who has done you harm, especially someone in the Christian community. This strategy applies whatever the damage was: saying unfair things behind your back; embarrassing you in public; stealing; unfaithfulness; you name it.

First, go to the person and let her or him know that you believe you have been hurt by what they did or said. This is not an opportunity to “let my anger out,” to get my rights, or worse. It is an attempt to repair the relationship, no matter whose fault it was. It is an effort to help, not hurt.

Of course, in Sunday's story, Jesus is presuming that there is a basis of love between you and the other person. Another way to say it is that you are both members of the Church.

But what if going to the person does not succeed?

Jesus says you should next take two or three witnesses along. They will back you up—if your interpretation of the problem is correct. If the person still does not listen, keep trying, he says. Tell the Church. Continue to work on it until the matter is smoothed out. Let truth and forgiveness rule.

The underlying reason behind this whole strategy is hinted at in the first reading. There the Lord says that Ezekiel must speak out to a person who is doing evil to him. The point is not to punish that person, or to turn Ezekiel into a police interrogation unit. It is to try and help the person back from the danger to their own self and to the community. “Frighten the poor sheep back,” the poet Hopkins puts it.

A personal story from someone: “I had a terrible disagreement with a colleague/friend a number of years ago. We were working together on a musical event and it seemed to each of us that the other had done something unforgivable, hurtful and unprofessional. Believe me, I do not know who was right and who was wrong. But we spoke about it one-on-one and gradually came back into each other's good graces. We remain very good friends. The same thing happened a number of summers later. I was the one who ‘blew up’ because of the wrongs I absolutely knew were being done to me. I even sent a peeved email. My friend sent a scorcher in return! Then we worked together to create the event! Both of us knew instinctively what had happened. ‘We were tired and quite stressed out, weren't we,’ my friend said. ‘So, we each did our stressed-out thing. Yet we were both trying to help the performance be wonderful.’ As you can guess, we remained great friends.”

So, we learn how relations can work when Christians are “all too human” and hurt each other. It is not a matter of who broke the rules, because all the rules are summed up in a single saying. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

How good it is.

Today's gospel reading from Matthew comes from a collection of Jesus' teachings applicable to life within the community of the Church, as it awaits the coming of the final Kingdom. In the passages that precede this one, Jesus has warned against arrogance on the part of those called to be leaders: ‘the one who makes himself as little as this child is the greatest’; he has pronounced a terrible judgment on those who lead astray ‘these little ones who have faith’. Matthew also includes here the parable of the lost sheep, as indicating the generous zeal that should be shown by leaders in the community. This reference to those who have gone astray leads into today's reading. It describes the manner in which these people are to be dealt with within the Church community. Clearly, the community Matthew is writing for has developed procedures to be followed in such cases, and they see themselves as acting in accordance with the Lord's own mind. When we recall the authoritative spirit that was taken for granted by those with leadership roles in the ancient world, we recognise how the listening and dialogue of these procedures reflect the fraternal love that was taught by Jesus – and recalled by Paul in our second reading.

In these procedures, we see the origins of the sacrament of reconciliation that is an essential part of the life of the Church during its time of pilgrimage. It was not a question of some private offence committed against the one who admonishes the wrongdoer. In referring to the need for ‘two or three witnesses to sustain the charge’, this procedure echoes the community's Jewish background, citing a prescription of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 19:15), thus making it clear that it is a question of serious and public faults. When these procedures, calling the wrongdoer to conversion, have failed, this person is to be ‘excommunicated’ – excluded from the community. We know from comments of St Paul concerning such cases, that this exclusion aimed to help the wrongdoer find forgiveness: ‘Do not treat them as enemies, but warn them as believers’, Paul writes (2 Thessalonians 3; cf. 1 Corinthians 5). ↗ ↗



✠✠ Being welcomed back to share in the life of the community – especially the Eucharist – was the sacramental sign of reconciliation with God. Note that Matthew follows these procedural instructions with a second reference, in his gospel, to the power to ‘bind and loose’ in God’s name. This time it is given to the Church community, acting through the ministry of those who carry on the leadership role of the apostles. As we said, the sacramental sign of reconciliation with the Lord is being received back into the Church community.

‘The Son of Man has power to forgive sins’, Jesus declared (Mark 2:10). The reconciliation available in the life of the Church is the reconciliation he brings to the world. The words with which our reading ends, though brief, have immense importance for us, as we seek to understand and enter more fully into the mystery of the Church’s common life. You come together ‘in my name’, Jesus tells us. In the biblical tradition, these words have a great depth of meaning: they imply our identification with the Lord through our baptism, and to the fact that he continues to be present in the world of our time through our coming together as his Church and celebrating the Church’s common life. They also remind us of the Saviour’s presence in the public prayer of the Church, uniting our prayers with his, as he intercedes for the world before the Father.

Correcting others is necessarily a delicate task and so Matthew has prepared us for what Jesus has to say here. Matthew records Jesus’ call for humility. If we correct someone from an assumed position of superiority, it is surely not going to work, for we will be putting the other person down and the ones who are being corrected will experience the need to protect themselves from our put down. If we lack humility, if we think that we are better than the other person, once again it is better for us to leave the correction to someone else. Our pride cannot but distort our judgment.

After speaking of the need for humility, Jesus goes on to warn against giving scandal (Matthew 18:6-9). However, sometimes people are scandalised even though what is happening is in fact very good. The Pharisees were scandalised when Jesus ate with sinners and when he healed on the Sabbath. This was because of their narrow-minded view of God and their refusal to look at what was really happening. We cannot please everyone. However, if people of good will, the people Jesus describes as ‘the little ones who believe in me’, are scandalised by the way in which we correct others, we can be sure that there is something wrong with our way of going about things. If good people are scandalised by the way in which those in authority treat people; if good people are scandalised by laws that refuse communion to the broken and struggling, then we need to look again at our systems of exclusion.

Finally, having warned us not to look down on any person, Jesus speaks about the shepherd who goes off searching for the one stray sheep and reminds us: ‘It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. (Matthew 18:14)

It is in this setting and against this background that Matthew gives us Jesus’ words concerning how we should correct one another.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Ezekiel 33:7-9

- ✠ Does God still send watchmen or women or prophets to address injustice in the world today? Who are they? Are they successful and do they live long, happy lives?
- ✠ Do we have a shared responsibility for others and the world? Are you a “watchperson” in some way? What strikes you as unjust as you watch? Can you think of new ways of bringing justice and divine love into the lives of people in your world, your city, your workplace?

Second Reading Romans 13:8-10

- ✠ Which ranks highest: how much you do? How smart or powerful you are? How much you love? According to Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37), who is your neighbour?
- ✠ Why does Pope Francis say that the commandments “should not be locked up in the airless vaults of formal observance”? Why is love the fulfillment of the law? Does it have anything to do with God’s divine abundance?
God does not reason with calculations and tables; God loves us as one who is enamoured: not to the minimum, but to the maximum! God does not say, “I love you up to a certain point.” ... This is the love that gives fulfillment to the Law, to faith, to true life!
... Am I content merely with not doing harm, keeping the “façade” in good order, or do I try to grow in love for God and others? And every now and then, do I check myself on Jesus’ great commandment: do I ask myself if I love my neighbour as God loves me.
– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 12 February 2023.

Gospel Matthew 18:15-20

- ✠ Do you always remember that “if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them”?
- ✠ Can you rely on God’s granting your request in some way when you and another person agree to pray about something? Do you trust that promise?



CENTENARY OF THE PARISH – SATURDAY, 28 OCTOBER

All are invited to join our parish family, old and new, to celebrate the Parish's first 100 years! Mass with Bishop Brian will be held at **17:30 on Saturday, 28 October**, followed by a community gathering: a BBQ in the school grounds for **all**. Further details to follow. In addition, to celebrate the Centenary, you will be able to order special mementos: **100 Year Anniversary Book; Centenary Wine Glasses; Centenary Wines – Sauvignon Blanc or Merlot**. Order forms are available in the church, from the Parish Office, or on the Parish's website or with the Bulletin emails. Orders need to be placed by **Tuesday, 3 October the latest**. Hand or email in your order form to the Parish Office, or in a special box on the front seat in the church. **By 10 October**, please phone or email the Parish Office, or complete the sheet in the church indicating how many from your family will be attending the **BBQ dinner after the 17:30 Mass on Saturday, 28 October**. All are invited to attend.

SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 2023

This weekend, the Catholic Church in Australia marks Safeguarding Sunday and apologises for the harm done by priests, religious and lay people in Church settings. The Church takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. We recommit to practices that support survivors and make the Catholic Church and its ministries the safest possible place for children and people at risk.

Safeguarding Sunday seeks to acknowledge the immense damage caused by the sexual abuse of children and adults at risk, including by priests, religious and lay people within Catholic contexts. It makes a commitment to practices and protocols that create and maintain safe environments for all people. It invites people to pray for those harmed by abuse directly and indirectly.

Gracious God, you love and care for all of your children, especially the smallest and most vulnerable. We entrust to you the lives of children and adults at risk who have been abused, neglected or exploited and whose trust and innocence have been destroyed. Help us to hear their cries of pain and to take responsibility for those whose lives have been broken. Help us to recognise the hurt felt by those wounded by abuse, and the failure to be heard. We pray that with the help of your grace communities and families will find understanding and support, so that now and in the future their wounds may be healed, and they may find lasting peace. Let your grace and love fall gently now upon our children and adults at risk, giving them the inner strength, peace and resilience to seek out assistance when required. We ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

UPCOMING SIGNIFICANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 28 October 17:30 Mass Bishop Brian will celebrate Mass for the **Centenary of our Parish ... dinner and entertainment to follow in the Hall**. *Further details in the coming weeks.*

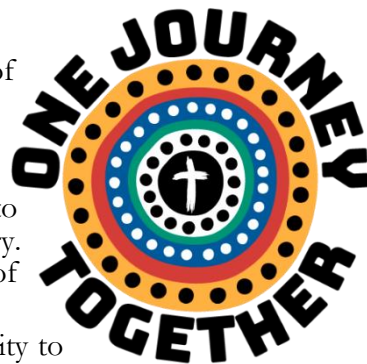
REFERENDUM 2023

At the heart of the upcoming Voice to Parliament Referendum is the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the world's oldest continuing culture, in the Australian Constitution. As Catholics, we have a responsibility to listen to the voices of First Australians and to work towards a more just and equitable society.

The mission of the National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council is to educate and inform our fellow Catholics on this pivotal moment in Australia's history. We have collated and created statements and resources – grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching – to help you on your process of discernment.

The Voice to Parliament Referendum provides all Catholics with a unique opportunity to come together as a community and draw upon our faith and moral grounding to make an informed decision. One Journey – Together. <https://indigenouvoice.church/>

In our Parish, the Pastoral Council has planned to have at least one **information session** for parishioners to find out about the Referendum. ***If you don't know, find out – don't be ignorant.*** Please indicate your preference for a **time for an information session – during the day on a weekday; a weeknight; a Saturday afternoon.**



BLESSING OF ANIMALS, MONDAY, 2 OCTOBER AT 9:30AM

As usual, the Blessing of Animals will take place on the **Monday of the long weekend, 2 October at 9:30am** at the **Parish of Saint Michael, 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul**. The blessing takes place in the courtyard next to the church. All animals under 800kg and their carers are welcome, though please keep the larger crocodiles on a tight leash. The **feast of St Francis of Assisi** is on **Wednesday, 4 October**, with **Mass at 9:00am** – animals are welcome at that Mass.

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	11 Sep	Monday of Ordinary Time Week 23	Colossians 1:24-2:3	Luke 6:6-11
Tuesday	12 Sep	Tuesday of Ordinary Time Week 23	Colossians 2:6-15	Luke 6:12-19
Wednesday	13 Sep	St John Chrysostom, bishop, doctor	Colossians 3:1-11	Luke 6:20-26
Thursday	14 Sep	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Philippians 2:6-11	John 3:13-17
Friday	15 Sep	Our Lady of Sorrows	Hebrews 5:7-9	John 19:25-27
Saturday	16 Sep	St Cornelius, pope, St Cyprian, bishop	1 Timothy 1:15-17	Luke 6:43-49
Sunday	17 Sep	24 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Kerry's Chicken & Chorizo Paella

2 gloves of garlic; 1 onion; 1 carrot; ½ bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley (15g); 70g quality chorizo; 2 free-range chicken thighs, skin off, bone out; olive oil; 1 teaspoon sweet smoked paprika; 1 red capsicum; 1 tablespoon tomato puree; 1 chicken stock cube; 300g paella rice; 100g frozen peas; 200g frozen peeled cooked prawns; 1 lemon.

Peel and finely slice the garlic; peel and roughly chop the onion and carrot. Finely chop the parsley stalks, then roughly chop the chorizo and chicken thighs. Put 2 tablespoons of oil into a large lidded shallow casserole or paella pan on a medium heat, add the garlic, onion, carrot, parsley stalks, chorizo, chicken and paprika, and fry for around 5 mins, stirring regularly. Deseed and chop the capsicum, then add to the pan for a further 5 minutes. Stir through the tomato puree and crumble in the stock cube, then add the rice and stir for couple of minutes so it starts suck up all the lovely flavour. Pour in 750ml of boiling water and add a pinch of salt (sea salt if you have it) and black pepper. Pop the lid on and bring to boil, then reduce to a simmer for 15mins, stirring regularly from the outside in and from the inside out, and adding splash of water if needed. Stir in the peas and prawns, replace the lid, and cook for further 5 minutes, or until hot through. Season again if needed with salt and pepper, then chop the parsley leaves, scatter them over the paella, and serve with lemon wedges on the side for squeezing over.

PLEASE BRING IN ...ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special plastic bins near the church entrances.

These items are currently in short supply:

biscuits, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, long life milk, tea bags, small coffee, tinned seafood, spreads

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 9/10 September Blessing of September Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
- ✦ Saturday, 9 September 18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
- ✦ Tuesday, 12 September 19:30 Parent Information Evening for First Penance and Communion
- ✦ Saturday, 16 September 17:30 One Baptism during Mass
- ✦ Tuesday, 19 September 15:45 First Penance Class #1
- ✦ Friday, 22 September End of School Term 2
- ✦ Monday, 2 October 09:30 Blessing of Animals in courtyard next to the church

USED STAMPS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME – put them in the box in the sacristy

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Ezekiel 33:7-9</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 13:8-10</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 18:15-20</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Sirach 27:30-28:7</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 14:7-9</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 18:21-35</p>	<p>SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday 17:30</p> <p>Sunday 08:00</p> <p>☞ Saturday Mass recorded</p>
<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</p> <p><i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i></p> <p><i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i></p> <p>Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i></p> <p>Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i></p> <p>Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary</p> <p>Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</p>	<p>🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</p> <p>🏠 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive</p> <p>📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515</p> <p>☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976</p> <p>📧 thirroul@dow.org.au</p> <p>Parish School of St Michael</p> <p>☎ 4267 2560</p>	<p>USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES</p> <p>Monday _____</p> <p>Tuesday ☞ 17:30</p> <p>Wednesday 09:00</p> <p>Thursday 09:00</p> <p>Friday 09:30</p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i></p>