

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
18 / 19 NOVEMBER 2023
33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR A
NOVEMBER – PRAY FOR THE DEAD

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Fear Factor

The gospel story is pretty simple. A wealthy man assigns his goods to each of three servants to care for while he is gone. He doesn't give them instructions, at least none that we are told of. When he returns, he sees that two of the three servants have invested the money and got back twice the amount.

He is delighted.

So at this point the moral of the story would be: "make the most of what you have."

But if we look at just the successful servants (as does the shortened version of the gospel in the lectionary!!!), we miss the most interesting part of all. We miss the fascinating and puzzling story of the third servant. This poor soul did not invest the money at all.

He buried it.

Quite simply, he was afraid of what might happen if he committed it and as a result, lost it. Given the owner's attitude, he was right to be afraid.

Having heard the fearful servant's story, the owner then had the man thrown into "the darkness outside," where there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Quite an overreaction, it seems. Hadn't the poor servant just wanted to keep the owner's money safe?

But there is much more to it.

The monetary unit "talent" in Jesus' time was not a small amount. Even one talent could be worth more than a labourer would earn in a lifetime. And the owner entrusted a lot more than just money to the servants—he left them all his possessions, everything he had. In fact, the owner took a great risk, and he wanted them to do the same, not leave the investment decaying somewhere. That is the story.

Ok, now make the switch. Assume that the parable is about God. Maybe God entrusts an even greater amount to you and me. Life, abilities, the gift of loving, the living breathing human beings around us, and—every so often—real and open acts of unselfish love. God gives all this free of charge, gives to us our lives with all their rewards and catastrophes, and he says to us, dive in. You are my beloved!

This seems wonderful. But then an awful question arises. Does God curse those who are afraid and who bury what they are given? Jesus at least seems to say so.

For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. (Gospel)

Ouch!

There is one thing I know of that will go away if it is buried, but which gets greater if you use it.

Love.

Think about it. If fear closes the door tightly against love, guess where the unloved one will be: in the darkness outside the door, wailing and gnashing those teeth. Without love.

We are all frightened.

And God always has compassion upon us. God waits for ages to see if we will accept just a bit of the love he offers. And also, if we will even find just enough courage to invest some of it in other people. God is often disappointed and I'm sure God says, "oh no, not again" when we fail.

But this is the disappointment of someone who loves us very well.

The message to you and me? Let love in. See what happens!

The parable in today's gospel reading is so well known, that the word, 'talent', has become part of our language. The original story of Jesus, however, had a far more serious message than the development of natural gifts. The 'talent' Jesus refers to, was an enormous quantity of precious metal (26kg of gold or silver). The immensity of the wealth entrusted to the servants was far beyond the experience of Jesus' hearers. The parable challenges them to recognise that God's immense blessings bring great responsibilities.

The sharp edge of the parable, as Matthew reports it, seems to indicate a background of controversy. It may well be that the original parable of Jesus was a challenge to the Sadducees – the conservative Temple establishment who were not open to wholesome developments that had taken place in the biblical tradition, and were opposed, therefore, to the mission of Jesus. Scholars find grounds for this in the wording of the parable. The master 'entrusted'/'handed over' the talents; this term was associated in old Israel with the passing on of the traditions of God's people. ↗ ↘



✠✠ The term ‘gained’/‘have made’ – applied to the profits made by the servants – was associated with the winning of converts. In their self-centred conservatism, the Sadducees had no concern to carry forward Israel’s mission to be ‘a light to the nations’. As the parable was recalled in Matthew’s community, however, it may have been directed against the dangers of complacency in that community – that settled for the minimum requirements of life as the Lord’s disciples, and was not ready to set out upon the great adventure of putting into practice the program of the Sermon on the Mount. The conclusion, ‘To all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away’ – a saying of Jesus that appears several times in the gospels – was probably added by Matthew, to drive home the point of the parable. Its meaning for Jesus was that one who is spiritually open will enjoy God’s on-going blessings; whereas one who is closed will miss the opportunities offered them. Matthew emphasises the seriousness of the parable’s lesson by concluding his narrative – as he does in other places – with reference to the ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ in store for those who have no place in the Kingdom.

The parable of Jesus points to the ‘Day of the Lord’ when God’s people will be called to account for the responsibilities brought by the great blessings they have received. In today’s reading from Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians, Paul continues his instruction concerning the Lord’s return, echoing the imagery used by Jesus in the gospels. Life must go on; it is not given to us to know the ‘times and seasons’ of the final reckoning; the ‘Day of the Lord’ will come ‘like a thief in the night’; God’s people must ‘stay awake and sober’, living as ‘children of the light’. It is not difficult to see that these themes provide the background of today’s parable. The master is a long time in coming, and arrives unexpectedly to ‘go through the servants’ accounts’. The servants who have administered well the wealth entrusted to them are to be entrusted with ‘greater things’; they will share in ‘their master’s happiness’ – a clear reference, for those who have ears to hear, of the blessings of the final Kingdom. If we appreciate the greatness of the blessings brought by faith in Christ, we will be aware of the responsibilities they bring.



What is ‘fear of the Lord’? Imagine you are on a cliff at the edge of the ocean. You are safe behind a strong railing. But the sea is thundering, the waves are roaring in and crashing against the cliff and water is being hurled into the sky. It is awesome. Or imagine your wife is expecting her first child, and you are present at the birth. There is always an element of pain, and some level of risk and there is a lot of uncertainty and expectation. Your feelings are intensely involved. Then a baby daughter is born. You are not afraid, but the whole experience has filled you with wonder and awe. These images bring us somewhere near what is meant by ‘fear of the Lord’.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

- ✠ “A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised, ... give her a share in the fruit of her hands.” Do you see a connection between the woman in this reading with the wise servant portrayed in the gospel? How do awe and wonder in the presence of God (“fear of the Lord”) help make a person wise?
- ✠ Do you know some people like the woman in this reading? How are they “reaching out hands to the needy and extending hands to the poor?” Are they feeding the hungry and caring for the sick? Are they working to end wars, fix racial justice and climate change? Are they doing something and not just talking?

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- ✠ Apparently “the day of the Lord” can overtake you “like a thief at night.” Are you always ready? Almost ready? Dozing a little?
- ✠ Where would you put yourself on a continuum that has security with dying in peace at one end and constant dread at the other?

Gospel Matthew 25:14-30

- ✠ Were the gifts of Puccini, Michelangelo and Van Gogh given to them for themselves alone? Do you think your gifts were given to you for yourself, to keep hidden away where no one can see them?
- ✠ Are you willing to take risks, or are you paralysed by fear? If you were a leader in the Church, what kind of risks would you take to insure the growth of the faithful? Why does Pope Francis say we were given gifts?

We possess a great wealth that depends not on what we possess but on what we are: the life we have received, the good within us, the indelible beauty God has given us by making us in his image. ... All these things make each of us precious in his eyes, each of us is priceless and unique in history! This is how God looks at us, how God feels towards us.

This brings us to the *centre* of the parable: the work of the servants, which is service. Service is our work too; it makes our talents bear fruit and it gives meaning to our lives. ... But what kind of service are we speaking of? In the gospel, good servants are those who take risks. They are not fearful and overcautious, they do not cling to what they possess, but put it to good use. ... The reason we have gifts is so that we can be gifts for others. And here, brothers and sisters, we should ask ourselves the question: do I only follow my own needs, or am I able to look to the needs of others, to whoever is in need? Are my hands open, or are they closed.

– Pope Francis, Homily, 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 15 November 2020



SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS – WAVES

Waves are one of the most enjoyable features of the ocean. You can ride them, jump over them, dive under them, simply watch then gently roll in, or gasp as they crash and roar during a big swell.

Waves are formed by the wind. The stronger the wind, the bigger the swell. Waves will form into a regular pattern of larger and smaller waves. The larger waves in the pattern are called sets and the smaller waves referred to as the lull. The time between each wave crest is called the wave period and is measured in seconds.

When the swell reaches shallow water, it pushes itself upward until the slope of the crest cannot support itself. This is when it will break. There are three types of breaking waves each with their own key characteristics. On any beach, there will

commonly be a combination of these three types of waves.

Next week ... a description of the types of waves – how many types of waves do you see at the beach?



Icon of Our Lady of Salvation, Syriac Catholic Monastery, Lebanon

PRAYER FOR Peace in the Middle East

Lord Jesus Christ,

The Holy Land is once again struck by violence, hatred, and death. Lord, look with mercy upon the land that was your earthly home.

Receive the deceased into your presence. Comfort those who mourn, are wounded, or forced to flee. Be close to all who are full of fear and despair.

You are our peace and the light of the nations, put an end to the spiral of terror and suffering in the Holy Land and in the whole Middle East.

Let peace and justice flourish at the holy sites. You are our refuge. Let the people be safe in your Love.

Have mercy on us and on our time. **Amen.**

Aid to the Church in Need is the only international Catholic foundation dedicated to the spiritual and pastoral support of suffering and persecuted Christians.



www.aidtochurch.org

Abbreviations

- a.m. – ante meridiem (before midday)
- CV – curriculum vitae (résumé)
- e.g. – exempli gratia (for example)
- etc. – et cetera (and so on)
- i.e. – id est (in other words)
- p.m. – post meridiem (after midday)
- PS – postscript (to add extra information at the end of a letter)
- vs. – versus (against)



CENTENARY WINE AND CENTENARY WINE GLASSES STILL AVAILABLE

There are still some Centenary Labelled Red and White Wines (700ml) available for \$20 per bottle. There are also a number of Centenary Engraved Wine Glasses for \$12 each.

If you would like to purchase any of these, please contact the Parish Office to place your order: 4268 1910 or thirroul@dow.org.au

NEW PRINCIPAL AT ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, BULLI

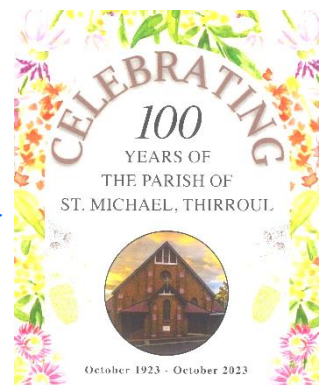
Following an extensive recruitment and discernment process, Peter Hill, Director of Schools, Diocese of Wollongong, is pleased to announce that **Kaylene Costello-Duffin** has been appointed to the position of Principal at St Joseph's Catholic Parish Primary School, Bulli. Kaylene, a parishioner at our Parish and on the Saturday Readers Roster, will commence in the role from the beginning of the 2024 school year.

Kaylene brings a wealth of leadership experience having performed the roles of *Principal* at Holy Cross Catholic Parish Primary School, Helensburgh (2020 to current) and *Assistant Principal* at St Joseph's Catholic Parish Primary School, Bulli (2018-2019). In addition, Kaylene has also worked in leadership positions at St Michael's Catholic Parish Primary School, Thirroul, and St Columbkille's Catholic Parish Primary School, Corrimal.

Congratulations, Kaylene!!

CATHOLICARE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKERS

Becoming a CatholicCare Community Support Worker will give you a career that you love, whilst providing a valuable connection to people living with a disability or the aged in our Diocese. If you want to find out more about becoming a Community Support Worker go to www.catholiccare.dow.org.au/get-involved/careers/ or call 4227 1122.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	20 Nov	Monday of Ordinary Time Week 33	1 Maccabees 1:10-15 +	Luke 18:35-43
Tuesday	21 Nov	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	2 Maccabees 6:18-31	Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday	22 Nov	St Cecilia, virgin, martyr	2 Maccabees 7:1,20-31	Luke 19:11-28
Thursday	23 Nov	Thursday of Ordinary Time Week 33	1 Maccabees 2:15-29	Luke 19:41-44
Friday	24 Nov	Sts Andrew Dung-Lac ++, martyrs	1 Maccabees 4:36-59	Luke 19:45-48
Saturday	25 Nov	Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 33	1 Maccabees 6:1-13	Luke 20:27-40
Sunday	26 Nov	CHRIST THE KING • YEAR A – Scripture Readings are listed below.		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Pepita Slice from our resident Chef Raymond

50g butter; ½ cup brown sugar; ¼ cup honey; 200g pepitas (pumpkin seeds); 1 Weet-Bix, crushed; ½ cup sultanas or diced dried apricots; ½ cup rolled oats; ½ cup self-raising flour.

Preheat oven to 170°C and line a square pan with baking paper. In a saucepan over medium-low heat, combine butter, sugar and honey. Cook 2-3 minutes, stirring until smooth and sugar has dissolved. Cool slightly. Combine the pepitas, Weet-Bix, dried fruit, rolled oats and flour in a bowl. Add the butter mixture. Stir until combined. Spoon into pan. Bake for approximately 25 minutes. Leave in pan until cooled completely. Cut into slices and serve.

Please send in your favourite recipe so it can be shared in the Bulletin – we need more recipes!

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.

CONISTON HOMELESS HUB

The centre is located at 12-16 Miller Street, Coniston. The Vinnies Van operates out of this centre and provides emergency food relief and items for daily living to people experiencing homelessness and those living in difficult circumstances, 5 days a week. The Vinnies Homeless Hub and the Vinnies Van would be grateful for any one off or regular donations of food items, small toiletry items, sleeping bags, warm jackets, gloves, beanies, and snacks/poppers for school aged children. Some of your weekly donations go to the Coniston Homeless Hub. **Thank you for your regular generosity of non-perishable items.** vinniesvan@vinnies.org.au

ADVENT BEGINS YEAR B AND THE GOSPEL OF MARK

To prepare, come and meet Mark, his Gospel and his Jesus. Three Tuesday evenings: 19:30 to 21:30 via Zoom ... **21, 28 November and 5 December.** Booking link: <https://www.trybooking.com/CLYVL> before 13:00, Monday, 20 November. This course is offered by the Catholic School of Evangelisation. For further information about this most valuable Scripture course, call Emilia **0418 120 902.**

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Weekend, 18/19 Nov	No Baptisms this weekend; Blessing of Holy Water at Masses
✦ Tuesday, 21 November	15:45 First Communion Class #2 in the church
✦ Wednesday, 22 November	10:30 Catholic Women's League Mass [no 09:00 Mass]
✦ Friday, 24 November	09:30 Years 3 and 4 at Parish Mas
✦ Friday, 1 December	09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

1st Reading Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20

2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

Gospel Matthew 25:14-30

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

CHRIST THE KING • YEAR A

1st Reading Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26

Gospel Matthew 25:31-46

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 17:30

Sunday 08:00

☞ Saturday Mass recorded

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes

Moving forward as a Parish Family

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00

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Parish School of St Michael

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USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday

Tuesday ☞ 17:30

Wednesday 10:30

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday