

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
25 / 26 NOVEMBER 2023
34TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR A
CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Your Choice?

This is the last Sunday of the Church year. We will begin a new one, starting with Advent—which is our time of awaiting the birth of Jesus. On this last Sunday, the Church appropriately overviews the career of Christ the King.

Here is the story.

God has continually sought out his people throughout history, inviting them to a covenant (a formal alliance or agreement made by God with a religious group or with humanity in general) relationship. But the “shepherds of Israel” have let God’s sheep scatter over the face of the earth. They actually ate the sheep (which were God’s people), feeding themselves instead of feeding them (See Ezekiel 34: 1-10). So, God pledged the words of the first reading: “I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep. I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak.”



God’s care for God’s people has been exquisite, and it is the foundation of all our belief. God shepherds us today in this same way.

The Psalm, “The Lord is My Shepherd,” is used here simply as a reflection to the first reading: to paraphrase the psalm – “We sheep understand that God is shepherding us as God promised. Goodness and kindness are all around us. God lets us walk beside restful waters, through green pastures. We are filled with thanks.”

People of different generations sometimes have called God’s love to mind and sometimes have simply ignored it. The ones who forget it filled their lives with other gods—whichever seemed most attractive. Idols, these are called.

So, in the second reading, St Paul tells us about Christ the shepherd, who is God made flesh. Although death and sorrow and sin had been on the rampage, Christ brought the light and peace and wholeness of the first reading.

Then, in a parable, the Gospel tells us who will receive this light and peace. Not everyone! Some people have acted as perfect goats instead of sheep.

Which are you? The standard is extremely clear. Have you cared for the hungry? Have you given water to the thirsty? What about welcoming the stranger, giving clothes to those who have none, and what about visiting people in prison? This is what God did in the first reading. It is what Jesus did in his life on earth. It is the loving duty he has entrusted to us who are his body, his band of shepherds. If you have acted in this way, then you are one of the sheep who have received Christ’s love and who are very grateful.

But maybe you or I have never taken time to care for our least sister or brother.

Maybe we are goats!

If we continue that way, we should not be surprised when God says at the end of time, “you never did pass on to others the care I gave to you. You did not let me into your life. If you had, your gratitude would have led you to others! I have desired to shepherd you even now, but all I can do is affirm the choice you have made with your life. You have chosen to live without me, your God, and I have to respect that choice.”

This action of God shows the way a real king acts. He respects and honours his subjects’ needs and desires.

Do you or I want this? We have to ask ourselves in freedom whether we are letting God’s love into us now.

The tableau in today’s gospel concludes Matthew’s collection of the teachings of Jesus concerning the End. Unique to Matthew’s gospel, it is a masterpiece. Strictly speaking, it is not a parable, but an allegory – a narrative in which details have symbolic significance. It may be the development of a simple parable, in which Jesus likened the expected coming of the ‘Son of Man’ with divine authority (Daniel 7) to a shepherd ‘separating sheep from goats’. It provides, in a simple form, a splendid summary of the teaching of Jesus in Matthew’s gospel, concerning the living of our Christian faith.

For the first Christians, Jesus was the ‘Son of Man’, invested in his risen glory with divine authority (Mathew 26:64). In today’s second reading, Paul celebrates the divine authority with which the Saviour brings his saving work to completion. In the triumph of the resurrection, he has authority over the whole of creation; when ‘the end’ comes, having overcome all the forces of evil, he will deliver the New Creation into the hands of his Father, and those who share in his triumph will rejoice in a divine generosity that has no limits. Paul’s account of ‘the end’ is somewhat overwhelming. Matthew’s tableau, on the other hand, presents the final Judgment in terms that are easy to understand – terms that can be related to the ways of God that found expression in the Sermon on the Mount. Despite its simplicity, however, the more we ponder this tableau the more we come to appreciate how rich it is in inspiration for those who want to live as followers of Jesus.



✠✠ The criterion by which we will be judged when we come into the presence of God is practical, simple and clear. It is not so much what we do for the God ‘we cannot see’ that matters, in the end, but what we do for one another – expressing the fact that we are true children of the same Father (cf.1 John 4:20). And among God’s children it is the poor and needy who should have our special care – our ‘preferential option’. The things that will establish our worth in the sight of God, and our readiness to share in God’s friendship, are simple things, possible to all, learned and simple, rich and poor. What overturns our expectations and is immensely reassuring is the fact that those who have proved themselves worthy of hearing the Lord’s invitation – ‘Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world’ – may well be taken unawares. Responding to the grace of God, working in them ‘in a hidden way’ (*Gaudium et spes*, n.22), they have shown themselves true children of the Father – helping for the sake of those in need, without any thought of a reward. Matthew’s tableau finds a place among the elect for all who fight unselfishly humanity’s ancient enemies: ‘ignorance, poverty, disease, injustice, bigotry, death of body or soul’ (B Vawter). The greatest inspiration of all, however, is found in the Lord’s affirmation, ‘You did it to me’. Sharing our humanity and experience in a struggling world, the ‘Son of Man’ has made himself one in a privileged way with those in greatest need.

Placing us on the threshold of the final Kingdom, this tableau gives us a glimpse of what it will be like – one family of the Father, united in God’s generous and merciful ways. Today, we venerate Christ the King; today’s gospel reminds us that it is only in his final ‘glory’ that he exercised his kingship. Among us, he makes himself the ‘Servant’ of all.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17

- ✠ “As a shepherd tends his flock when he finds himself among his scattered sheep, so will I tend my sheep.” If an evangelizing community gets involved in people’s daily lives, embracing their sufferings, will they, in a way, take on the “smell of the sheep” [*Evangelii Gaudium* n.24]? Will that make it easier for the sheep to hear the evangelizer’s voice?
- ✠ According to this reading, what kind of shepherd is the Lord God? If there is a message in this reading for people in Church leadership positions, what is it? What can you do to “bind up the injured and heal the sick”?

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28

- ✠ “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” Name some signs of “death or serious illness” that you see in the world, or the environment? What can you do to restore life? How can you help Christ accomplish the task of destroying death?
- ✠ Besides the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, what are some of the many other forms of violence in the world today? How can you help Christ challenge them? Pray and fast with others? Advocate for laws?

Gospel Matthew 25:31-46

- ✠ This king is the almighty and glorious God who comes to heal, seek out and bind up. Why did he come into the world in solidarity with the poor, wear thorns for his crown and have a cross for his throne? Can you relate on a personal level to a very rich, brilliant leader? How about to a poor and suffering one?
- ✠ In this Gospel Jesus has a “double identity”. He is the king-shepherd who also identifies himself with the lost sheep, the most needy of his sisters and brothers. What does he ask us to do? Is our final judgment based on our love?

And he thus indicates the criterion of the judgment: it will be made on the basis of concrete love given or denied to these persons, because he himself, the judge, is present in each one of them ... The judgment will be on love, ... we will be judged on works, on compassion that becomes nearness and kind help. Do I draw near to Jesus present in the persons of the sick, the poor, the suffering, the imprisoned, of those who hunger and thirst for justice? Do I draw near to Jesus present there? This is the question for today.

– Pope Francis, Homily, Angelus for Christ the King, 22 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 them gently roll in, or gasp as they crash and roar during a big swell.

Plunging or dumping waves create a hollow tube when they break. Surfers call this the ‘barrel’ or ‘tube’. Plunging waves are particularly dangerous as they can pick people up and ‘dump’ them onto shallow sandbanks or reefs with great force.

Spilling or rolling waves are found where there are generally flat shorelines. These are generally safer types of waves. They occur when the crest breaks onto the wave face itself.

Surging waves may never actually break as they approach the water’s edge since the water is very deep. They are commonly seen around rock platforms and beaches with steep shorelines. They are dangerous because they can appear suddenly and knock people over before dragging them back into deeper water.

Check out this video of waves at Shipstern Bluff, Tasmania: <https://youtu.be/zUsNjR-rhNA>



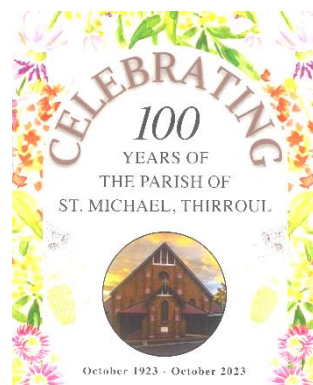
FIRST COMMUNION 2023

There are **30 Candidates** this year who will receive Holy Communion for the first time. The Candidates will begin receiving First Communion from next weekend: **9** on Saturday, 2 December; **7** on Sunday, 3 December; **10** on Saturday, 9 December; **1** on Saturday, 16 December; and **1** on Sunday, 17 December. **2** are undecided. Please remember before the Lord these Candidates and their families.

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 *Great Christmas gifts!!*



WISDOM – WHAT CHARACTERISES WISDOM?

Wisdom 7:22 – 8:1

In Wisdom there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating all spirits, that are intelligent, pure and altogether subtle.

For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things. For she is a breath of the power of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore, nothing defiled gains entrance into her. For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of God's goodness. Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets; for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with Wisdom. She is more beautiful than the sun and excels every constellation of the stars. Compared with light she is found to be superior, for it is succeeded by the night, but against Wisdom evil does not prevail.

She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well.

CATHOLIC CARE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKERS

Becoming a Catholic Care 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**.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKENDS

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal will be held over the next two weekends, 2/3 and 9/10 December.

As well as the usual hampers and toys, from next weekend please bring in *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, tinned veggies, chips, jelly – no cigarette or alcohol products please.*



There will be an opportunity for you to make **cash or credit card donations** – during Masses on the next two weekends – or you can donate online:

<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way-conference/vinnies-thirroul-2023-christmas-appeal-page/donate>

Thank you for your anticipated and continuing generosity to the needy of our local communities.

ADVENT DAILY REFLECTION BOOKS

As usual our Diocese has produced another excellent daily reflections book for Advent, this year called, *The Sign*. These are **FREE** and available in the church or from the Parish Office.



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



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	27 Nov	Monday of Ordinary Time Week 34	Daniel 1:1-6,8-20	Luke 21:1-4
Tuesday	28 Nov	Tuesday of Ordinary Time Week 34	Daniel 2:31-45	Luke 21:5-11
Wednesday	29 Nov	Wednesday of Ordinary Time Week 34	Daniel 5:1-6,13-14 ++	Luke 21:12-19
Thursday	30 Nov	Saint Andrew, apostle	Romans 10:9-18	Matthew 4:18-22
Friday	1 Dec	Friday of Ordinary Time Week 34	Daniel 7:2-14	Luke 21:29-33
Saturday	2 Dec	Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 34	Daniel 7:15-27	Luke 21:34-36
Sunday	3 Dec	FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Better than Take Away Fried Rice

4 cups cooked long-grained rice, chilled; 1 small onion, diced; 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced; ½ cup frozen green peas; 2 cloves garlic, minced; ½ teaspoon ginger, minced; 4 tablespoons unsalted butter at room temperature; 2 large eggs; 4 tablespoons soy sauce; 2 teaspoons oyster sauce; 1 teaspoon sesame oil, toasted is preferable; ½ teaspoon chili sauce; salt and pepper to taste; 3 green onion, thinly sliced.

Whisk the eggs in a bowl. In a large wok or pan, add about 1 tbsp butter and heat it on medium to low heat. Once the butter is melted and foamy, add eggs to it and scramble them. Once the eggs are cooked, remove them from the pan and set them aside. In the same pan, add 1 tbsp butter and heat it on medium to low heat. Add garlic, ginger, onions and carrot to the butter and sauté them for a minute or two. Add frozen peas and remaining butter to the pan. Increase the heat to high and cook the mixture for 3 minutes. Add the rice, soy sauce, chili sauce, oyster sauce, salt and pepper to the vegetables and cook for 3 minutes. Stir occasionally for crispy rice. Remove the pan from the heat, and add eggs and sesame oil. Taste and adjust soy sauce. Serve hot and enjoy!

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.

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

- ✦ Thursday, 30 November 19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for December Baptisms
- ✦ Friday, 1 December 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ Weekend, 2/3 December Advent begins – Year B – The Year of Mark
Vinnies Christmas Appeal – Week 1
Blessing of the Christmas Tree
First Communion – Week 1
- ✦ Monday, 4 December 14:00 Year 6 Graduation Liturgy
- ✦ Tuesday, 12 December 19:30 Reconciliation Rite II



THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR B

1st Reading Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11
2nd Reading 2 Peter 3:8-14
Gospel Mark 1:1-8

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 09:00
Thursday 09:00
Friday 09:30
Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday