



**Welcome to
the Parish of
Saint Michael
Thirroul**



PARISH BULLETIN
31 AUGUST / 1 SEPTEMBER 2024
22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B
THE SEASON OF CREATION

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Heart of the Matter

The people in this week's Gospel are quarrelling about who has and who hasn't washed his hands for dinner. You would know, if you were a follower of the Jewish custom of that time, that every person was required to wash up before eating. This rule was "a tradition of the elders," to preserve physical health, of course. But Jesus is now telling people they have to live also from the inner meaning of traditions and laws. Let's look.

What about children? They do not yet have a developed interior value system, as parents know. "It is bedtime. Let's brush our teeth and get our pyjamas on." "I don't want to." "I know, it is hard to stop playing and go to bed. I understand. But bedtime is here so let's get started." "But why?" "Because we have to get our rest so we can be bright and cheerful tomorrow." "Why?" "Because I said so, now get moving." Or something more extended! Rules, the right ones, often must be imposed upon a child.

As we grow up, the child's "why?" question gets answered by experience and maturity. Adults go to bed because they need a certain amount of sleep each night and they know it. Well, at least a lot of us do.

But why have rules and laws in the first place? Some say: rules are meant to describe the minimum that has to be done in order to belong to a country or state or city or business or group or family. Not too many rules, not too few.

This is difficult to achieve. Under the best circumstances, people follow rules because their allegiance comes from within, and they act from their own desire.

Apply this to a group.

Take a faith-sharing group, for instance. It has an implicit expectation, even a requirement, that its members be present at each weekly meeting. What if a person shows up only once or twice a year, but in that case, is the heart-and-soul of the discussion? And what if another person attends every single meeting but contributes nothing and in fact has no interest in the topics?

Neither one really fits well into the group, but which would you rather work with? The first has real relevance to the organization and might not need much convincing to come more often (and would therefore better comply to the rule). But it would be much harder to kindle a fire in the second, wouldn't it, the one who is following the external rule but, out of fear perhaps, not its insides.

The interior life of Jesus is the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew that any law in the Kingdom of God must emerge from love or else be empty. He was angry that leaders of the people had manipulated exterior laws to serve their own agendas. "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me," he said.

He is not telling the people to ignore the laws and to just have just inner devotion. He is saying you must have both, external plus internal adherence.

Would it be worth it for you and me to look at the various obligations in our lives and weigh how much they flow also from our inner values and convictions?

Yes? Well, maybe that would help us have the right heart both inside and outside.

We resume our readings from Mark's gospel. Life in a human community is governed by 'laws and customs', as Moses reminds the people of old Israel in the first reading. These regulations and their interpretation can give rise to confusion; so, Moses urges the people to 'add nothing' and 'take nothing from' the law which he gives them in the name of God. We meet the same issue in today's gospel reading: Jesus is being hounded by antagonists – some of whom have come from Jerusalem for the purpose. They resent the fact that the disciples of Jesus 'do not respect the traditions of the elders' and observe ritual purifications. The response of Jesus has an important lesson for every age, as we endeavour to make Church regulations that are truly life-giving.

As is usually the case, the Psalm expresses well the message of the liturgy's readings: "The just will live in the presence of the Lord". As the Sermon on the Mount (Mt chapters 5 and 6) teaches us, we are truly the People of God if our life together gives expression to the ways of our Father in heaven. This is the standard against which we should evaluate the 'laws and customs' we draw up for the Church's common life, and the way they are applied.

The words of Jesus, in this and similar exchanges, are surprisingly sharp. The issue is far more important than a detail of ritual observance. Those who were leaders in Israel should have been helping the people to live according to the ways of God – so that they would be 'a light to the nations', as the prophets had taught. Instead, they had lost sight of Israel's great destiny, and worked against it, in fact, by elaborating a system of self-serving regulations. They have no real concern for the ways of God, Jesus tells them, and he quotes against them the words of Isaiah: "This people honours me only with lip service, while their hearts are far from me". Jesus shows himself a true interpreter of Israel's faith as he urges his followers to find integrity through the motives of the heart rather than in the



✠ observance of external rituals of purification. No wonder the people followed him so eagerly. But in what follows – as Jesus departs radically from the provisions of the Old Law concerning foods considered to make a person ‘impure’ – we recognise that he is conscious of an authority that is above the Law of Moses.

In the second reading we begin to read from the Letter of James. This letter, associated with the name of James ‘the brother of Jesus’, a leader of the Jerusalem church, gives us a glimpse of the outlook that united the first Jewish converts to faith in Christ. It is very down to earth and practical, filled with the spirit of the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. And because this literature fosters life in harmony with the ways of God, it illustrates well the spirit Jesus advocates in the gospel. James points to ‘the Father of lights’, the giver of ‘everything that is perfect’; he urges making the message of the ‘Word’ of God our life standard; and we should honour God especially by our generosity to those in need.

Throughout the 40 years of their journeying through the Sinai desert the people of Israel lived in tents. They knew that God was journeying with them, and so they had a special tent or as we often say a ‘tabernacle’ which they set aside for God. They were very conscious of their own broken, sinful lives and so they made sure that God’s tabernacle, God’s tent, was pitched outside the camp. Moses would speak with God there, but the ordinary people did not dare to come close to God’s dwelling.

The Incarnation changed all this. In the prologue to his gospel, John, the beloved disciple, gives expression to his wonder and delight when he recalls that the Word of God ‘pitched his tent among us’. In his First Letter he gives lyrical expression to what it meant to him and to his contemporaries to see Jesus, to listen to the words that came from his heart, and to touch him with his own hands and experience the warmth of Jesus’ embrace. The beautiful, homely intimacy became a real, everyday event in the lives of those who were privileged to know Jesus. It continues in the lives of his disciples. Our bodies, consecrated in baptism, are his favourite tent or tabernacle as he journeys with us, day and night. He comes to us in a special way here in the Eucharist, and the tabernacle in the Church reminds us that he is here in the midst of the community, dwelling with us.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

- ✠ How would “wise and intelligent people” create the “statutes and decrees” needed today to fulfill the “love your neighbour” part of the law (commandments 6-10), that God gave to Moses? Feed the hungry? Fix the climate change? Welcome the immigrant?
- ✠ Discuss some human rights issues that would change if everyone in the world observed the law (love your neighbour)? Would everyone have access to housing, clean water, clean air, good education, health care? How might your community or city change?

Second Reading James 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27

- ✠ James says the law is planted in us. Would you like to see it planted in your mind or in your heart? What difference would it make? Discuss Karl Rahner’s statement: “in the heart of knowledge stands love, from which knowledge itself lives.”
- ✠ Are you a hearer of the word or also a doer of it? Have there been times when you just “talked the talk” but did not want to “walk the walk”? How would you feel if you went ahead and did the walking?

Gospel Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

- ✠ What was missing from the Pharisees’ observance of the law? How much is religious observance worth if it is just exterior? On the other hand, what is it worth if what you do comes from the Word living in your heart, whether it’s fishing or fasting?
- ✠ “And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. ...” Why does Pope Francis say Jesus was not concerned with this? Was Jesus’ interest more with hearts than with kettles and beds and rubrics?

We too could ask ourselves: why do Jesus and his disciples disregard these traditions? ... Why is Jesus not concerned with such things? Because for him it is important to bring faith back to its centre. We see it repeatedly in the Gospel: this bringing faith back to the centre. And to avoid a risk, which applies to those scribes as well as to us of observing outward formalities, putting the heart and faith in the background. Many times, we too “put makeup” on our soul. Outward formality and not the heart of faith. This is a risk. It is the risk of a religiosity of appearances: looking good on the outside while neglecting to purify the heart. There is always the temptation to “deal with God” with some outward devotion, but Jesus does not settle for this worship. Jesus does not want outward appearances; he wants a faith that touches the heart.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 22nd Sunday Ordinary Time B, 29 August 2021

**PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

WORLD DAY FOR THE CARE OF CREATION 2024

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS (Part 1 – continued next week)

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

“**Hope and Act with Creation**” is the theme of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to be held on 1 September 2024. The theme is drawn from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Romans (8:19-25), where the Apostle explains what it means for us to live according to the Spirit and focuses on the sure hope of salvation that is born of faith, namely, newness of life in Christ.

1. Let us begin with a question, one perhaps without an immediately obvious answer. If we are truly believers, how did we come to have faith? It is not simply because we believe in something transcendent, beyond the power of reason, the unattainable mystery of a distant and remote God, invisible and unnameable. Rather, as Saint Paul tells us, it is because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. We are believers because the very love of God “has been poured into our hearts” (Romans 5:5) and the Spirit is now truly “the pledge of our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:14), constantly prompting us to strive for eternal goods, according to the fullness of Jesus’ authentic humanity. The Spirit enables believers to be creative and pro-active in charity. He sends us forth on a great journey of spiritual freedom, yet one that does not eliminate the tension between the Spirit’s way of thinking and that of the world, whose fruits are opposed to each other (cf. Galatians 5:16-17). We know that the first fruit of the Spirit, which sums up all the others, is love. Led by the Holy Spirit, believers are children of God and can turn to him with the words “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15), just as Jesus did. Moreover, they can do so with the freedom of those who no longer fall back into the fear of death, for Jesus has risen from the dead. This is our great hope: God’s love has triumphed and continues to triumph over everything. Indeed, even in the face of physical death, future glory is already assured for those who live the new life of the Spirit. Nor does this hope disappoint, as was affirmed in the recent Bull of Indiction of the forthcoming Jubilee.

2. The life of a Christian, then, is one of faith, active in charity and abounding in hope, as we await the Lord’s return in glory. We are not troubled by the “delay” of the Parousia, Christ’s second coming; for us the important question is whether, “when the Son of man comes, he will find faith on earth” (Luke 18:8). Faith is a gift, the fruit of the Spirit’s presence in us, but it is also a task to be undertaken freely, in obedience to Jesus’ commandment of love. Such is the blessed hope to which we must bear witness. Yet where, when, and how are we to bear that witness? Surely by caring for the flesh of suffering humanity. As people who dare to dream, we must dream with our eyes wide open, impelled by a desire for love, fraternity, friendship and justice for all. Christian salvation enters into the depths of the world’s suffering, which embraces not only humanity but also the entire universe, nature itself, and the oikos, the home and living environment of humanity. Salvation embraces creation as an “earthly paradise,” mother earth, which is meant to be a place of joy and a promise of happiness for all. Our Christian optimism is founded on a living hope: it realizes that everything is ordered to the glory of God, to final consummation in his peace and to bodily resurrection in righteousness, as we pass “from glory to glory.” Nonetheless, in the passage of time we are not exempt from pain and suffering: the whole creation groans (cf. Romans 8:19-22), we Christians groan (cf. vv. 23-25) and the Spirit himself groans (cf. vv. 26-27). This groaning expresses apprehension and suffering, together with longing and desire. It gives voice to our trust in God and our reliance on his loving yet demanding presence in our midst, as we look forward to the fulfilment of his plan, which is joy, love and peace in the Holy Spirit.

3. The whole of creation is caught up in this process of new birth and, in groaning, looks forward to its liberation. This entails an unseen and imperceptible process of growth, like that of “a mustard seed that becomes a great tree” or “leaven in the dough” (cf. Matthew 13:31-33). The beginnings are tiny, but the expected results can prove to be infinite in their beauty. Similar to the anticipation of a birth – the revelation of the children of God – hope can be seen as the possibility of remaining steadfast amid adversity, of not losing heart in times of tribulation or in the face of human evil. Christian hope does not disappoint, nor does it deceive. The groaning of creation, of Christians and of the Spirit is the anticipation and expectation of a salvation already at work; all the same, we continue to find ourselves enduring what Saint Paul describes as “tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword” (Romans 8:35). Hope, then, is an alternative reading of history and human affairs. It is not illusory, but realistic, with the realism of a faith that sees what is unseen. This hope is patient expectation, like that of Abraham. I think of that great visionary believer, Joachim of Fiore, the Calabrian abbot who, in the words of Dante Alighieri, “was endowed with a spirit of prophecy”. At a time of violent conflicts between the Papacy and the Empire, the Crusades, the outbreak of heresies and growing worldliness in the Church, Joachim was able to propose the ideal of a new spirit of coexistence among people, based on universal fraternity and Christian peace, the fruit of a life lived in the spirit of the Gospel. I spoke of this spirit of social friendship and universal fraternity in *Fratelli Tutti*, but this harmony among men and women should also be extended to creation, in a “situated anthropocentrism” (*Laudate Deum*, 67) and in a sense of responsibility for a humane and integral ecology, the path to salvation for our common home and for us who inhabit it.

(continued next week)



Each year from 1 September to 4 October Christians worldwide in celebrating the Season of Creation. Plenty to read, much to reflect on, and a plethora of things to do: <https://laudatosimovement.org/season-of-creation/>

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	2 Sep	Monday, Ordinary Time Week 22	1 Corinthians 2:1-5	Luke 4:16-30
Tuesday	3 Sep	St Gregory the Great, pope, doctor	1 Corinthians 2:10-16	Luke 4:31-37
Wednesday	4 Sep	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 22	1 Corinthians 3:1-9	Luke 4:38-44
Thursday	5 Sep	Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 22	1 Corinthians 3:18-23	Luke 5:1-11
Friday	6 Sep	Friday, Ordinary Time Week 22	1 Corinthians 4:1-5	Luke 5:33-39
Saturday	7 Sep	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 22	1 Corinthians 4:6-15	Luke 6:1-5
Sunday	8 Sep	23 RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Weekend, 31 Aug / 1 Sep** Blessing of Fathers for Father's Day at both Masses
- ✦ **Sunday, 1 September** World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation
- ✦ **1 September to 4 October** The Season of Creation – "To Hope and Act with Creation"
- ✦ **1 to 11 September** Ken travels to Brisbane for the Canon Law Conference
Andrew will look after the parish
Masses will not be 'televised' while Ken is away
Daily Mass is available at: <https://www.facebook.com/GBHparish/>
- ✦ **Friday, 5 September** 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ **Tuesday, 10 September** Closing Date for Enrolments for First Penance and Communion
- ✦ **Thursday, 12 September** 10:00 Diocesan Launch of Catholic Mission Month @ Thirroul

CROSS + GENERATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

This program is a partnership between CatholicCare, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong and Holy Spirit College (Bellambi). The program pairs students with seniors to assist you with technology. Bring in your device, either your phone, laptop or tablet and the students will assist you with becoming more confident and familiar with downloading apps, sending messages, using google maps or other help you may need. Refreshments will be provided at each session. Holy Spirit College, Bellambi: 09:30–11:00 on these Thursdays ... 24 October; 7 November; 21 November; and 5 December. Please join us in this unique opportunity to connect with seniors, and students for some information sharing in a fun relaxed setting here at the high school. Places will fill quickly, so please contact Jane Hollier Parish and Community Officer CatholicCare on ☎ 0417 018 152 or janeh@catholiccare.dow.org.au

RECIPE: AIR FRYER 'TOP DECK' CHOC-CHIP COOKIES

150g butter, at room temperature; 155g (¾ cup) caster sugar; ½ tsp vanilla extract; 1 egg; 300g (2 cups) plain flour; 1 tsp baking powder; 120g white chocolate, coarsely chopped; 120g milk chocolate, coarsely chopped.

Use an electric beater to beat butter, sugar and vanilla in a bowl until pale and creamy. Add egg and beat until light and fluffy. Add the flour and baking powder and stir until just combined. Add white and milk chocolate and stir until combined and a soft dough forms. Transfer the dough to a large piece of baking paper. Roll into a 24cm long log. Roll over the paper to enclose and twist the ends to seal and compress any air inside. Freeze for up to 3 months. Remove the biscuit dough from the freezer and set aside for 30 minutes to soften slightly. Cut into 1cm-thick slices. Line the air fryer basket with baking paper. Place a few biscuits on the paper, allowing room for spreading. Cook at 150°C for 18 minutes or until golden and cooked through. Use the baking paper to transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining cookie dough. *Do you have a favourite spring recipe? Email it to the Parish Office.*

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B

1 st Reading	Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8
2 nd Reading	James 1:17-18,21-22,27
Gospel	Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B

1 st Reading	Isaiah 35:4-7
2 nd Reading	James 2:1-5
Gospel	Mark 7:31-37

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday ~~X~~ 17:30
Sunday 08:00

☎ Saturday Mass is 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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THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday _____
Tuesday ~~X~~ 17:30
Wednesday 09:00
Thursday 09:00
Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday