



# Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**7 / 8 SEPTEMBER 2024**  
**23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B**  
**THE SEASON OF CREATION**

## **THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

## *He Began to Teach Them*

Jesus cures a deaf mute in this Sunday's reading and arouses astonishment in the crowd.

Some of us tend to think that the healing of people was the main goal in Jesus' life. Yet, after this Sunday there are only four more healings by Jesus in Mark's Gospel. Earlier (in the first seven chapters) he had worked so many cures that people were mobbing him.

And that was the trouble. He was in danger of becoming famous as a wonderworker. People were besieging him at every stop, thinking that he would solve their problems. If only he gave back their health, or if only he took away their poverty and death, or if only—well, you name it. He was in danger of receiving the illustrious "fifteen minutes of fame," and only that.

But would such celebrity really reveal God's love for the world and its peoples? Jesus wanted to go further. In the gospel of Mark, Jesus stopped the miracles and began a new phase of his mission.

He turned his face toward Jerusalem. And the cross.

This change of direction will come next week. Suddenly and without warning Jesus will say to the disciples, "the Son of Man is to be handed over to men and they will kill him, and three days after his death the Son of Man will rise" (Mark 9:31). What more shocking statement could this famous and supposedly invincible leader and healer make to them?

How could death go together with healing?

A married couple spoke of the death of their tiny son, and how they had prayed so hard for his healing. They said that their prayers were not answered. Yet, somehow, they discovered that God had been present throughout the dying, that God had been immersed in their son's life and death, and that this intimate presence was enough, more than enough for those left behind. Their sorrow was bathed in love, and their son was safe in God's arms.

The point? A human person is made to be loved by God, not merely to have good health, riches, or reputation. Real life consists of love exchanged with God and with others, not just in seeming to be a leader or a success. There is a greater good than this, a relationship with the divine being, a seeking of the one who is already close. Such an intimate relationship sends us out to help give that love to the world. Miracle cures help for a while, but pretty soon the suffering world has to be faced as such, in its full suffering self.

As a result, Jesus moved toward the events that would show God's solidarity with us in our anguish, in our rejections, and in that famous event which each and every one of us will face sooner or later: death. God gives us, beyond cures—which are wonderful yet partial—companionship within every instant of our life, not just in this or that particular need.

This Sunday at Mass, let us ask ourselves whether the intimate presence of God is part of what we desire in our own lives. Do we know that Christ is deeply involved with each of us? Do we let his love flow into us and from within us to others, or must it just fight its way through?

Let's pray to hear, as the deaf man finally could.

Our readings from the Gospel of Mark make us aware of the way in which this gospel makes use of material concerning the life of Jesus – perhaps supplied in part by the apostle Peter. While he allows the events speak for themselves, Mark's presentation points to implications he wishes to emphasise. Today's reading concerns the healing of a deaf man with a speech impediment. While the healing and the wonder it provoked are described in detail, the fact that Jesus 'ordered them to tell no one' is again emphasised. Mark is maintaining a delicate balance: Jesus was truly a miraculous healer, but Mark wants those who hear the gospel to look beyond this fact to the nature of the mysterious mission Jesus has received from his Father, as the messiah who 'must suffer'.

'Be opened!' These dramatic words of Jesus are the climax of the story. In Mark's text, the Galilean mission of Jesus has ended with rejection by those of his 'home town'. Mark begins his account of the cure by describing the strange route taken by Jesus – through pagan territories – probably pointing to the infant Church's mission to the gentiles and the openness with which that mission to preach the gospel truth was received. We too are invited to reflect upon the importance of openness, and to acknowledge the many ways in which we can be more open to God's call to the fullness of life. For Mark, life and joy will be found by those who become true disciples of the Crucified One, and so enter with him into his glory.

The second reading, from the Letter of James, brings this whole program down to earth. Let us be open and generous to those around us, and not imprisoned in our selfish outlooks, 'making distinctions between classes of people'. The teaching of James does not remain an abstraction. Who is not moved to reflect upon assumptions taken



✚✚ for granted, when confronted by the simple example of the ‘beautifully dressed’ person and the poor person ‘in shabby clothes’? But for James this is more than a moral story; it is a story about discipleship – learning, in the company of Jesus, to identify with the ways of God: ‘those who are poor according to the world God chose to be rich in faith and to be heirs to the kingdom’.

The first reading from Isaiah – describing the liberating ways of God – comes from the final pages of the first part of the Isaian tradition. It is taken from a passage that proclaims the magnificent future God has in store for Israel. The confidence of the Prophets expectations is amazing – in the continuation of the passage, he foresees God’s people ‘shouting for joy, their heads crowned with joy unending. We can rejoice, with James, that we know already the mysterious intimations of that future. We are challenged by the prophet’s confidence, to become a Church giving the vital witness our troubled world needs, if that world to find hope by being ‘open’ to God’s future.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading      Isaiah 35:4-7a

- ✚ Can it be that healing will abound, and that God will also transform all nature? What lines in the reading indicate this? How might this ancient promise of hope work for all people today?
- ✚ Isaiah writes in hope about deliverance from exile. Today, from what sufferings do people need to be liberated: those “whose hearts are frightened”? Climate change, war (Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan), gang wars (Haiti) racial injustice, immigration, trafficking?
- ✚ What if everyone practiced “love your neighbour”? Could that be one of the ways God “comes to save you”?

### Second Reading      James 2:1-5

- ✚ “Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith?” Do you give the same respect to people who have money and prestige as to those who don’t? Do you show partiality?
- ✚ The disabled receive the blessings in the first reading and the poor are chosen heirs in the second. What is the message for us here?

### Gospel                      Mark 7:31-37

- ✚ In the Gospel the people relate Jesus’ curing the deaf man to the prophet’s promise in the first reading (“Then will ... the ears of the deaf be cleared; ... the tongue of the mute will sing ...”) What does it say to you about your Christian job of hearing the cries of the poor and speaking out for justice?
- ✚ Will we come to the assistance of those who are suffering and in need if our hearts are deaf? What does Pope Francis say is the cure for “deafness of the heart”?

We all have ears, but very often we are not able to hear. Why is this? Brothers and sisters, there is an interior deafness that we can ask Jesus to touch and heal today. It is interior deafness, which is worse than physical deafness, because it is the deafness of the heart. Taken up with haste, by so many things to say and do, we do not find time to stop and listen to those who speak to us. We run the risk of becoming impervious to everything and not making room for those who need to be heard. I am thinking about children, young people, the elderly, the many who do not really need words and sermons, but to be heard. ... Let us ask ourselves: how is my capacity to listen going? Do I let myself be touched by people’s lives?  
...

But if we dedicate time to the Gospel, we will find the secret for our spiritual health. This is the medicine: every day a little silence and listening. Today, as on the day of our Baptism, we hear the words of Jesus addressed to us: “*Ephphatha*, be opened!” Open our ears. Jesus, I want to open myself to your Word; Jesus, open me to listening to you; Jesus, heal my heart from being closed. ....

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time B, 5 September 2021

## RECIPE: MULLED WINE – a Proven and Tried Recipe!

750ml red wine [your choice, Merlot is good!]; 150g castor sugar; ½ cup orange juice; peel of one lemon; peel of one orange; 1 star anise; 1 cinnamon stick; 5 cloves; 1 teaspoon fresh nutmeg; pinch of fresh ginger.

Place all the ingredients, except the wine, into a large saucepan and place on medium heat. Add just a small glug of red wine to the saucepan to ensure the sugar is covered. Let it cook for 4–5 min until it becomes thick and sticky. This should let all the spices infuse well. Once the mixture has become sticky enough, add the rest of the wine and turn down the heat. You don’t want the wine to boil otherwise all the alcohol will evaporate! Let cook for 5 minutes and serve hot with slices of fresh orange. It is best strained for serving to obtain a clear liquid – but always to be served hot to keep away the winter cold. *Even though it is **spring**, this still tastes great!*

**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**

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/>

# WORLD DAY FOR THE CARE OF CREATION 2024

## MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS (Part 2)

4. Why is there so much evil in the world? Why so much injustice, so many fratricidal wars that kill children, destroy cities, pollute the environment and leave mother earth violated and devastated? Implicitly evoking the sin of Adam, Saint Paul states: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now” (Romans 8:22). The moral struggles of Christians are linked to the “groaning” of creation, ever since the latter “was subjected to futility” (v. 20). The entire universe and every creature therein groans and yearns “impatiently” for its present condition to be overcome and its original state to be restored. Our liberation thus includes that of all other creatures who, in solidarity with the human condition, were placed under the yoke of slavery. Creation itself, like humanity, was enslaved, albeit through no fault of its own, and finds itself unable to fulfil the lasting meaning and purpose for which it was designed. It is subject to dissolution and death, aggravated by the human abuse of nature. At the same time, the salvation of humanity in Christ is a sure hope also for creation, for, “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:21). Consequently, thanks to Christ’s redemption, it is possible to contemplate in hope the bond of solidarity between human beings and all other creatures.

5. In our hopeful and persevering expectation of the glorious return of Jesus, the Holy Spirit keeps us, the community of believers, vigilant; he continually guides us and calls us to conversion, to a change in lifestyle in order to resist the degradation of our environment and to engagement in that social critique which is above all a witness to the real possibility of change. This conversion entails leaving behind the arrogance of those who want to exercise dominion over others and nature itself, reducing the latter to an object to be manipulated, and instead embracing the humility of those who care for others and for all of creation. “When human beings claim to take God’s place, they become their own worst enemies” (*Laudate Deum*, 73), for Adam’s sin has tainted our fundamental relationships, namely with God, with ourselves, with one another and with the universe. All these relationships need to be integrally restored, saved and “put right”. None of them can be overlooked, for if even one is lacking, everything else fails.

6. To hope and act with creation, then, means above all to join forces and to walk together with all men and women of good will. In this way, we can help to rethink, “among other things, the question of human power, its meaning and its limits. Our power has frenetically increased in a few decades. We have made impressive and awesome technological advances, yet we have not realized that at the same time we have turned into highly dangerous beings, capable of threatening the lives of many beings and our own survival” (*Laudate Deum*, 28). Unchecked power creates monsters and then turns against us. Today, then, there is an urgent need to set ethical limits on the development of artificial intelligence, since its capacity for calculation and simulation could be used for domination over humanity and nature, instead of being harnessed for the service of peace and integral development (cf. Message for the World Day of Peace 2024).

7. “The Holy Spirit accompanies us at every moment of our lives”. This was clearly understood by the boys and girls assembled in Saint Peter’s Square for the first World Day of Children, which was held on Trinity Sunday. God is not an abstract notion of infinity, but the loving Father, the Son who is the friend and redeemer of every person, and the Holy Spirit who guides our steps on the path of charity. Obedience to the Spirit of love radically changes the way we think: from “predators”, we become “tillers” of the garden. The earth is entrusted to our care, yet continues to belong to God (cf. Leviticus 25:23). This is the “theological anthropocentrism” that marks the Judeo-Christian tradition. To claim the right to possess and dominate nature, manipulating it at will, thus represents a form of idolatry, a Promethean version of man who, intoxicated by his technocratic power, arrogantly places the earth in a “dis-graced” condition, deprived of God’s grace. Indeed, if the grace of God is Jesus, who died and rose again, then the words of Benedict XVI certainly ring true: “It is not science that redeems man: man is redeemed by love” (*Spe Salvi*, 26), the love of God in Christ, from which nothing and no one can ever separate us (cf. Romans 8:38-39). Creation, then, is not static or closed in on itself, but is continuously drawn towards its future. Today, thanks to the discoveries of contemporary physics, the link between matter and spirit presents itself in an ever more intriguing way to our understanding.

8. The protection of creation, then, is not only an ethical issue, but one that is eminently theological, for it is the point where the mystery of man and the mystery of God intersect. This intersection can be called “creative”, since it originates in the act of love by which God created human beings in Christ. That creative act of God enables and grounds the freedom and morality of all human activity. We are free precisely because we were created in the image of God who is Jesus Christ, and, as a result, are “representatives” of creation in Christ himself. A transcendent (theological-ethical) motivation commits Christians to promoting justice and peace in the world, not least through the universal destination of goods. It is a matter of the revelation of the children of God that creation awaits, groaning as in the pangs of childbirth. At stake is not only our earthly life in history, but also, and above all, our future in eternity, the eschaton of our blessedness, the paradise of our peace, in Christ, the Lord of the cosmos, crucified and risen out of love.



✚✚ 9. To hope and act with creation, then, means to live an incarnational faith, one that can enter into the suffering and hope-filled “flesh” of others, by sharing in the expectation of the bodily resurrection to which believers are predestined in Christ the Lord. In Jesus, the eternal Son who took on human flesh, we are truly children of the Father. Through faith and baptism, our life in the Spirit begins (cf. Romans 8:2), a holy life, lived as children of the Father, like Jesus (cf. Romans 8:14-17), since by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ lives in us (cf. Galatians 2:20). In this way, our lives can become a song of love for God, for humanity, with and for creation, and find their fullness in holiness.

– Rome, Saint John Lateran, 27 June 2024, FRANCIS

## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

<b>Monday</b>	<b>9 Sep</b>	<b>Monday, Ordinary Time Week 23</b>	1 Corinthians 5:1-8	Luke 6:6-11
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10 Sep</b>	<b>Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 23</b>	1 Corinthians 6:1-11	Luke 6:12-19
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>11 Sep</b>	<b>Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 23</b>	1 Corinthians 7:25-31	Luke 6:20-26
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>12 Sep</b>	<b>Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 23</b>	1 Corinthians 8:1-7,11-13	Luke 6:27-38
<b>Friday</b>	<b>13 Sep</b>	<b>St John Chrysostom, bishop, doctor</b>	1 Corinthians 9:16-19,22-27	Luke 6:39-42
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>14 Sep</b>	<b>The Exaltation of the Holy Cross</b>	Philippians 2:6-11	John 3:13-17
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>15 Sep</b>	<b>24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – Scripture Readings are listed below.</b>		

## 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
- ✚ **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
- ✚ **Weekend, 14/15 September** One baptisms during Saturday 17:30 and Sunday 08:00 Masses

## 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](mailto:janeh@catholiccare.dow.org.au)

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### THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website

**23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** Isaiah 35:4-7  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** James 2:1-5  
**Gospel** Mark 7:31-37

### NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website

**24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** Isaiah 50:5-9  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** James 2:14-18  
**Gospel** Mark 8:27-35

### 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**

### 🌐 [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

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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 1<sup>st</sup> Friday*