



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
5 / 6 OCTOBER 2024
27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR B
THE BLESSING OF ANIMALS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

God did a wonderful job in creating things. God did it with a Big Bang, out of which came the universe and galaxies, and ... well, whatever else.

So, God is a great artist. Let's look.

For all eternity the three persons in God have loved each other so much that they are one. When God wanted to create a living being that could share in this inmost characteristic, God knew that they would share in what was called "deep love."

But unfortunately, in the sequence of creation, God made a mistake. The first reading tells us that God created the male first. Everyone knows that a man, left on his own, will likely be helpless. He needs company, needs partnership, correction, and sometimes just a lot of forgiveness. For almost all men, this means being with, or at least open to, the creature called woman.

But there were no creatures called women in existence. Since God is a relationship of three persons to the point of forming one being, maybe God thought that adding another creature would make the same thing possible for created beings.

There came the experiment: he took scoops of earth and made ... various wild animals and various birds of the air, and God brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name.

But none of the wild animals proved to be the suitable partner for the man. So next, God made a move that was actually quite smart. Instead of trying to form a partner out of the earth for the man, as God had done with the animals, God spread a deep sleep over the man and removed a rib from him.

God fashioned this into a woman.

This new gambit worked.

There was a great intimacy between the man and the woman. She was, as the man put it clumsily, "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh!" The two were made out of the same stuff—how much closer can you get?

Marriage came next. As the first reading puts it, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one flesh."

Sadly, divorce made its entrance. It had been around for centuries by the time the Pharisees came to Jesus with the following argument: "Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss [his wife]".

Jesus reminded them sternly of why God had made both man and woman, not just the one, not just the other. God wanted them to share an intimate relationship that would be like the Trinity. He stated it this way: "What God has joined together, no human must separate."

So, if today you find yourself divorced, or alone, or left without your beloved because of death, or if your mate and you do not get along, what can you do?

Do everything you can.

Like the rest of us, you are trying to mirror in your life the loving unity of the Trinity. Pray and do it as you are able.

The Church's liturgy is our great teacher. As its weeks pass it reviews the great issues of our existence, and the Word of God points the way forward. In today's world, marriage is in crisis, and the break-up of families leaves many young people seriously deprived in their formative years. Without the guidance of Christ, we would be at a loss to find the truth that should guide us. In today's reading from Mark, Jesus is asked whether divorce was permissible. In the time of Jesus, although divorce was permitted (see Deuteronomy 24:1-4) the proper grounds for divorce were debated. Jesus bypasses this debate, and speaks of what marriage is in the plan of the Creator – 'in the beginning'. Citing today's first reading from Genesis, he makes the startling assertion that true marriage is more than an arrangement entered into by two human persons; it involves God – 'What God has united, man must not divide'.

One of Pope John Paul II's contributions to the Church's life was his series of addresses on human love and sexuality, given at his weekly audiences (1979-1984). Explaining how it is that Jesus can make such an assertion, he interprets today's reading from Genesis. This seemingly simple text speaks with great depth and subtlety of what it means to be human. The solitude of Adam finds no companion in the animal kingdom – because, made in the image of God, Adam has in him a depth that they will never fill. It is only in the sharing of human companionship that this mysterious depth in the human person can be filled. The Creator provides for Adam the perfect companion: ✠ ✠

Flesh of My Flesh



✠✠ “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh’. Paradoxically, this companionship becomes life-giving in self-donation, and destructive in selfish exploitation. The true beauty of human sexuality shines out as this self-donation finds expression in the body language which is part of God’s creation; Jesus quotes the Genesis text, ‘the two become one’. The body language of sexuality is not only the expression of authentic self-donation, but also the source of new human lives – marriage is a sharing in the work of the Creator. Though the account of Jesus welcoming the ‘little children’ is a separate incident, it follows on well from the discussion of marriage, reminding us of the children who are so often forgotten in the discussion of marriage relationships today. Marriage breakdown is a very complex pastoral problem. But the great ideal Jesus puts before us must never be forgotten.

We begin reading from the Letter to the Hebrews, a treatise written to give heart to Jewish converts, who were tempted to lapse into a mood of anticlimax and nostalgia, in a world that seemed little changed after the Resurrection. Its message is straightforward; the things of old Israel were only shadows; now – by faith – we possess all that these shadows promised. Today’s passage is a fine description of the Paschal Mystery that should be central to Christian faith. Jesus is ‘crowned with glory and splendour’ after he has shared life with us. His death has been a source of life for all mankind – after sharing our ‘imperfect’ world and its ‘suffering’ he has given us a share in his ‘glory’ and ‘holiness’. He is forever our ‘leader’ and our ‘brother’.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Genesis 2:18-24

- ✠ In *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint-Exupèry has the fox say, “you become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed.” God allowed Adam, one of us, to give each creature its name. This is, in a way, a taming process. Do we feel responsible for the planet and all the life on it? Are there areas in our environment where we are not acting responsibly? Discuss what you can do in your home or place of work to make changes for the better.
- ✠ Are there cultures that don’t value women the same as men? What would you say to a person who thinks the superiority of men over women is divinely revealed in this text? What will you do if the women and men in your work place were not treated as equals?

Second Reading Hebrews 2:9-11

- ✠ In the initial line of the first reading, the Lord says, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” Contrast this with the following line from the second reading: “He for a little while was made lower than the angels.” What ideas do you get from this contrast?
- ✠ Jesus consecrated himself to his Father and us along with him. He called us sisters and brothers. How does this create reverence toward our present-day brothers and sisters? Do you treat the bag lady with the same respect that you treat the CEO?

Gospel Mark 10:2-16

- ✠ After being tested and questioned on the topic of divorce by the Pharisees and his disciples, do you think Jesus was ready for a pleasant distraction? (“He embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.”) How did he handle his disciples’ rebuking the people for bringing their children to him? Is there something that makes you “indignant”? What?
- ✠ The Gospel today says that “Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.” Why does Pope Francis say that *with God frailty is not an obstacle but an opportunity*?

Here is what is new: the disciple must not only serve the little ones, but also acknowledge himself as a little one. And does each of us recognize ourselves as being little before God? ...

In life, recognizing oneself as little, is a starting point for growing. If we think about it, we grow, not so much on the basis of our successes and the things we have, but above all in difficult and fragile moments. There, in our need, we mature; there we open our hearts to God, to others, to the meaning of life.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 3 October 2021

BLESSING OF ANIMALS – MONDAY, 7 OCTOBER, 09:30

The Annual Blessing of Animals will take place on the **Monday** of the long weekend, **7 October** at **09:30** in the courtyard next to the church. All animals under 900kg and their carers are welcome, though please keep fleas well-muzzled, and, if you are bringing your pet crocodile, please have it more restrained than on a piece of string. **All animals and their carers are welcome.** Please pass this message on around our local community.

The **feast of St Francis of Assisi** is on **Friday, 4 October**, with Mass at **09:30** – animals are welcome at that Mass.

Prayers of Blessings of animals speak of animals as useful not only for work, but also for our “needs” in general. Here is where pets come in. They teach children how to care for others, and they supply a certain kind of affection and companionship that human beings find consoling and attractive. When we bless them, we seek to foster all these things.



THE SONG OF THE POOR

– from *The Tablet*, 26 September 2024 ... *(continued next week)*

Inspired by Óscar Romero, who had been assassinated in 1980, a young Scottish priest decided to live and work in civil war-torn El Salvador. The notes and poems he wrote on loose sheets of paper and posted to friends and family record a remarkable ministry of service.

January 1987, Chalatenango, El Salvador. I remember vaguely a poem we recited in class years ago. I can only remember one line: “Take her up tenderly ... loving, not loathing.” Maybe the poem is entitled “Bridge of Sighs”. It’s about the death of an unknown girl and the sadness this causes the poet. I was visiting a family in Yerba Buena when they told me about Carolina. She was killed in mid November 1986, as she fled from a surprise attack of soldiers. She fell dead on the dirt track outside the family’s house.

They say Carolina was a small girl. She was known as La Negrita (“The Wee Dark One”) because of her dark, Indian features. She would have been only slightly taller than the M16 rifle she lugged around with her. She was about 16 years old when she died. It was a single army bullet that pierced her back and passed through her left breast. Yet, somehow, in a last, desperate lunge before she fell, Carolina managed to toss her M16 rifle over the cliff edge, foiling the enemy of a prize possession. This act of impish resistance forces a wry smile from the storyteller.

Carolina was very thin and rather frail. Only shortly before her death, she had returned with the others from the taking of “El Poy”, a frontier army post. She was vomiting all the way back; nerves had got the better of her.

I look at her grave on the slope. A plank of wood jutting out of the soil gives leverage to her corpse. Silent beneath the dust and rocks, hidden by bushes, safe from the hungry pigs. She died young and she died poor. “Guess you were never cut out for guerrilla warfare, Carolina. But what drove you to take this option? What cause did you find that was greater than life itself?” I imagine the men of Yerba Buena lifting her remains, carrying her these 10 yards to her final resting place. And the line of poetry echoes in my mind: “Take her up tenderly ... loving, not loathing”.

May 1987

Tired and feeling a need for inspiration, I went to the cathedral in San Salvador and sat down on the bench at the side of the tomb which contains the mortal remains of Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero.

Monseñor Romero was killed by an assassin’s bullet as he celebrated the Eucharist on the evening of 24 March 1980. “The oppressors” killed him because he spoke out boldly in the name of God against the slaughter of defenceless people. “The misery of the poor touches the very heart of God ... I beg you, I implore you, I order you in the name of God, ‘stop the repression.’” The blood of Monseñor Romero, shed at the altar for the poor and oppressed, is the seed of freedom which, one day, will flourish in El Salvador.

His rectangular-shaped tomb is made of brick, coated with cement and cream-coloured paint. It is simple and humble, no great ornamentation, no great stateliness. Beside it, women were kneeling for a long time, motionless, in prayer. Then an old man dressed in well-worn clothes shuffled forward, carrying in his hand a bunch of purple flowers. These he crammed into a tin at the base of the tomb. And then he walked away.

There was no need for long prayers or many words; these purple flowers were the old man’s prayer. They were his silent homage to a prophet dearly loved by the defenceless. They also expressed a deep sadness for all innocent victims of violence. In a sense, the purple flowers of an old man were evoking the tears of El Salvador which had so burdened the heart of Monseñor Romero during the last three years of his life. These flowers were pleading to God for a just end to El Salvador’s civil war and for the health and happiness of its people.

20 June 1987

Not for the first time I found myself sitting, awaiting the arrival of government troops on a military operation in the area. Eventually they arrived and hurried to take up defensive positions at strategic points of the village.

A few soldiers recognised me as the priest who had been celebrating the Eucharist with the people in the previous village the night before. They made overtures of conversation, realising that to display open hostility to the village’s padrecito doesn’t help them win the minds and hearts of the people.

Apparently solicitous, one of them asked if the guerrilla ever gave me any trouble. Rather than be blatantly honest and say the guerrilla show me nothing but respect and courtesy, I gave him the stock reply: “They know we’re of the people and if they offend us, they offend the people.”

Cradling his machine gun, the young recruit nodded, “That’s good. There’s only one true Church – the Catholic Church ... the Catholic Church is sacred ...” I cringed inwardly and said nothing. At times prudence is the better part of valour. My memory involuntarily cast itself back two days before. While walking the muddy track I had met a group of five teenagers belonging to the guerrilla. Dipping into the string bag, I shared bone-hard biscuits with them and gifted an orange to the pretty young lady with the M16 rifle. Conversation flowed easily between us. On taking leave of these young people, I felt a tinge of sadness. Death shadows their young lives. The army was at that moment searching hard among the hills, eager to kill them. God, our Creator, is the Giver of Life. And so all human life ultimately belongs to God; every human being is sacred.

I wanted to tell the soldier, “All human life is sacred. The lives of the young people in the guerrilla are sacred. The institutional Church is not, in itself, sacred. It’s the servant of the sacred, the unworthy servant of all human life. “Besides this, a church service itself, cushioned from human hurt, is not the true, crucified Church of Jesus Christ. The Church is called to defend and promote human life. Life is sacred; not the institutional Church.” I wanted to tell the soldier that but, on this occasion, judged it wiser to “retire to my estate and hold my own counsel”.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	7 Oct	Our Lady of the Rosary	Galatians 1:6-12	Luke 10:25-37
Tuesday X	8 Oct	Tuesday, Ordinary Time Week 27	Galatians 1:13-24	Luke 10:38-42
Wednesday	9 Oct	Wednesday, Ordinary Time Week 27	Galatians 2:1-2,7-14	Luke 11:1-4
Thursday	10 Oct	Thursday, Ordinary Time Week 27	Galatians 3:1-5	Luke 1:69-75
Friday	11 Oct	Friday, Ordinary Time Week 27	Galatians 3:7-14	Luke 11:15-26
Saturday	12 Oct	Saturday, Ordinary Time Week 27	Galatians 3:22-29	Luke 11:27-28
Sunday	13 Oct	28 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Friday, 4 October 09:30 **FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI**
Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ WEEKEND, 5–7 OCTOBER **TRANSPORT HERITAGE EXPO – CENTRAL STATION**
<https://www.transportheritageexpo.com/>
- ✦ Sunday, 6 October 02:00 Daylight Saving begins
- ✦ Monday, 7 October 09:30 **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS**
- ✦ Monday to Wednesday 7–9 October: Andrew and Ken in Sydney at meeting of the friars
Liturgy of the Word on Tuesday and Wednesday
- ✦ Wednesday, 9 October 11:00 **Catholic Women’s League Meeting in Parish Hall**
- ✦ Saturday, 12 October 18:30 **Dinner at Club Thirroul**
- ✦ Weekend, 12-13 October Blessing of those celebrating October Wedding Anniversaries/Birthdays
- ✦ Tuesday, 15 October 19:30 **Parent Meeting for First Penance and First Communion**

PARISH CENSUS 2024

Please complete a Parish Census 2024 form and return it to the Parish Office, or put the completed form on any collection basket at weekend Masses.



CATHOLIC WOMEN’S LEAGUE – RAFFLE AND CAKE STALL

The Catholic Women’s League will be holding a Cake and Craft Stall after Masses on the weekend of 12/13 October. As well as the popular fruit raffle there will be cakes, craft items and plants for sale. Raffle tickets will be available each weekend until 12/13 October. All donations gratefully received!

TRANSPORT HERITAGE EXPO 5-7 OCTOBER

Steam Train Rides – Vintage Bus Rides – Dining Car Experience – Electric Train Rides (Red Rattler) – Steam Boat Rides – Vintage Displays – Railmotor Rides – Clock Tower Tours ... **Central Station** ... check out the details and have a transport heritage weekend. More and to book: <https://www.transportheritageexpo.com/>

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

Thank you to all who contribute to the Planned Giving Program – via the envelopes or direct debit!

<p>THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website</p> <p>26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR B</p> <p>1st Reading Genesis 2:18-24</p> <p>2nd Reading Hebrews 2:9-11</p> <p>Gospel Mark 10:2-16</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website</p> <p>27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR B</p> <p>1st Reading Wisdom 7:7-11</p> <p>2nd Reading Hebrews 4:12-13</p> <p>Gospel Mark 10:17-27</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUNDAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday 17:30</p> <p>Sunday 08:00</p> <p> Saturday Mass is 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 style="text-align: center;">THIS WEEK’S LITURGIES</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>