

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
22 / 23 FEBRUARY 2025
7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME · YEAR C
WELCOME BACK TO THE WEEKLY BULLETIN

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

How To Love

Do you or people you know seek advice and examples as to how we can live a loving and (more) peaceful life?

Are you interested?

Here is a way to be patient rather than upset when someone else does an annoying thing. For instance, if a car swerves in front of you, instead of your asking, “why in the %\$# did he do that?” ask the question, “what is he trying to teach me?” It is like a game in which everyone is wise, and you want to learn.

This new attitude can be helpful. Honestly, it can soften your attitude and awakened some compassion. If something like that happens to you on the road, try it and maybe learn forgiveness.

Jesus was a teacher; he had also suggested a big perspective change. In Sunday's Gospel he describes people trying to bargain for everything—if someone loves you, only then do you agree to love them in return; if they run their cart over your flower-bed or nearly knock you out of their way, then you are angry and substitute bad feelings for love. After all, who could be nice to a robber in their act of overpowering you?

Jesus recommends the opposite. “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” Don't ask for anything in return.

How can we “love without return?” Or, how can we “lend money and expect nothing back”? If you get a reward for each thing you do, Jesus says, you are just like the pagans!

What?!! Is it even possible to just love and love and never get our own empty tank filled back up? Doesn't that lead to burnout?

Yes.

But the wonderful clue to Jesus' answer is found toward the bottom half of today's reading. He says that if we can give without guile, then we will be like “children of the Most High,” who is always kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

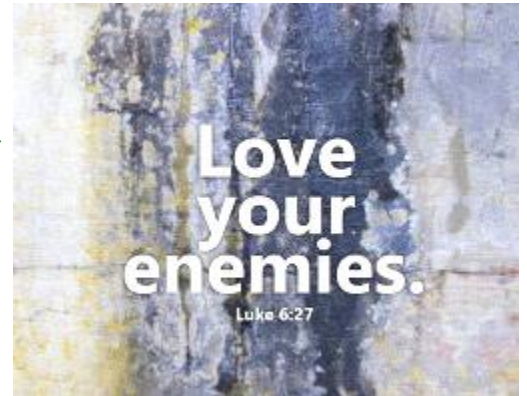
How can God be “always kind” to us? Is it because God's own needs are already filled? Does God show tender love because the divine being does not need a reward! Such a love overflows to us as we are, no matter our actions. Maybe Jesus was a model of that same love, in the divine-human form.

If we see this, if we experience it—say, in the Sacraments, or in prayer, or in another person—and if we let it in, then maybe our need-tanks will not be so empty. Maybe we can (over and over) allow ourselves to be loved, and thus team with Christ and his Abba.

Are you someone who hears what he says?

Well that is surely a change in perspective.

Last week's Gospel in Ordinary time was Luke's presentation of ‘The Beatitudes’. Today we continue the same passage – as Jesus spells out practical implications of a teaching that has immense importance for those who want to be his followers. We have heard many times of the ‘New Commandment’ and the ‘Law of Love’; but have we made them our rule of life? Today's gospel can help us to do this. ‘Love your enemies’, Jesus tells us. David's gesture towards king Saul demonstrates a certain nobility; but it is still far removed from the ideal of selflessness Jesus sets before us. ‘Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you ... lend without any hope of return’ may well seem an impossible ideal as a way of life. The first disciples of Jesus may well have made this judgment, had it not been for the memory of the life Jesus had lived in their midst. In the New Testament, these first followers share with us how they came to recognise the central importance of the New Commandment of love - as they reflected on the selfless life of Jesus and its culmination in his tragic death. St Paul, in today's second reading, tells us that he has come to see how Jesus has inaugurated a new beginning for the whole of humanity - far greater than that of the first creation. ‘Bear one another's burdens’, he wrote in another place, ‘and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ’ (Galatians 6:2). It is the gift of the Saviour's own Spirit, he has come to see, that makes this possible: ‘God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us’ (Romans 5:5). John's interpretation of the teaching of Jesus is the same: ‘I give you a new commandment ... that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends’ (John 13:34; 15:12-13).



✠✠ Clearly, this Law of Love – so insistently spelt out by Luke – is an ideal that none of us will ever fully realise. How can we love others as Christ himself has loved them? ‘Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate’. How can our concern for the needy around us be compared with the loving mercy of the Father who ‘gave his own Son’, that the world may ‘have eternal life’(John 3:16). Perhaps it is because this Law of Love seems an impossible ideal that Christians rarely think of it as a practical way of life. As his true disciples, however, Jesus tells us that we must never turn away from this ideal; it must be the measure of our lives. In the presence of the mystery of divine love, we will certainly be humbled, as we reflect upon our own performance. But in today’s gospel takes us beyond this: Jesus teaches us how we can put the Law of Love into practice – we should never set limits to the practical good will we have towards our fellow human beings: be they friend or enemy, likely to repay us or not, reasonable or unreasonable in their demands. An impossible ideal it may still seem; but through the gift of God’s own spirit, the example of followers of Jesus in every age is there to encourage us, as they gave their times a glimpse of what Jesus was really like. With them, the only reward we should seek is the joy that we share with our Lord, the joy of the selfless giver. And so Luke’s presentation of the teaching of Jesus ends as it began, pointing the way to true happiness – in the gifts of God that will be ours when we identify with the generous ways of God, our joy will be ‘a full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running.)

We all know that you must love your friends, and love those who love you. We know that you can’t let people get away with slapping you in the face. We know that when someone takes something away from you, steps must be taken to have the stolen goods returned. We know that when you lend someone something, you expect them to pay it back. We know that criminals are to be judged, and wrongdoers are to be condemned.

Such things are obvious. They are part of the wisdom of the ages that has been passed on to us, and which we are passing on to our children. But there is another wisdom, that revealed in God’s Son and for which we pray.

According to this wisdom, you are to love your enemies, bless those who curse you, give people your other cheek to slap, offer more goods to those who are taking things from you, lend without expecting repayment, and go through life without judging or condemning anyone. This is the wisdom Jesus challenges us with in his sermon.

So, how much “faith” are we to put in Jesus’ words? Are we to take them literally, or at least very seriously? What would happen if Christians everywhere were to base their lives on such “wisdom”?

“Jesus yielded up his life for us in perfect loving union with the Father’s will, and this is the meaning of his life which also gives meaning to our lives as his followers. If we can acknowledge selfishness as folly and self-sacrifice as victory, if we can love enemies, be vulnerable to injustice and, in being so, still say that we have triumphed, then we shall have learned to live in Christ Jesus.”

US Bishops, *To Live in Christ Jesus*, 1976:116.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading 1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,12-13,22-23

✠ In what way does this reading teach us about magnanimity (which means “generous in overlooking injury and insult, rising above pettiness and meanness”)? Can you think of any saints/prophets who were or are magnanimous? Do you know any magnanimous people in your own life? What about you?

✠ Saul was mean and insane, but David showed respect for him because he was anointed. Can you show respect for someone yet disagree with him/her? What do you think the outcome is when neither side respects the other?

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

✠ Is it true that “we have been born in the image of the earthly Adam,” as St. Paul says? Contrast that with “the heavenly Adam,” Christ.

✠ Fr Hans Urs von Balthasar (Swiss theologian) said that Christ “cut a path” for us as grace ascending and grace descending. Is Christ just as much creation’s highest response to the Father as he is the Father’s Word to creation. Does the heavenly Adam coming together with the earthly Adam cut a path for us? What does bearing the image of the heavenly Adam allow us to do?

Gospel Luke 6:27-38

✠ Jesus goes one step farther than David’s “don’t kill” your enemies. He says, “love them.” Don’t expect anything back when you lend, and if someone takes something of yours, give that person much more. Who practices absolute generosity like this? Who do you know besides God who comes close? A parent with his/her child? With grace, can we think of everyone as our family?

✠ Jesus said, “Be merciful, just as you Father is merciful.” Pope Francis says mercy is Jesus’ most powerful message. In the interview below, what does he say is the most important task of ministers of the Church? Can being too locked up in rules hinder us from accompanying people who are in need of mercy?

The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you. And the ministers of the church must be ministers of mercy above all. ... In pastoral ministry we must accompany people, and we must heal their wounds.

– Pope Francis’ focus on the Bible and mercy, America interview, 5 January 2024

JUBILEE 2025 – PILGRIMS OF HOPE

A Jubilee Year is traditionally proclaimed by the Universal Church every 25 years. It is a particular year set aside to encourage the faithful to embark on pilgrimages, to repent of their sins and forgive the sins of others, and to renew a focus on the spiritual life. In the Hebrew tradition, as recorded in Leviticus, a Jubilee was celebrated every 50 years with the freeing of slaves and the forgiveness of debts. In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII instituted the first Christian Jubilee, and since then the Church has designated each new Jubilee as a special year of grace and forgiveness, offering the faithful an opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence.



As boldly stated in the opening words of Pope Francis' Bull of Indiction, "*Spes non confundit*. **Hope does not disappoint**", hope is the unifying theme of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025. The Jubilee Year began with the traditional opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica on 24 December 2024 by Pope Francis and continues until the closing of the Holy Door on 6 January 2026, the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Pope Francis and St John Paul II have explained the tradition in official documents. "In Catholic tradition, the Holy Door represents the passage to salvation — the path to a new and eternal life, which was opened to humanity by Jesus," explained Pope Francis in *Spes Non Confundit* (Hope Does Not Disappoint), the papal bull officially proclaiming the Holy Year of 2025.

A quarter of a century earlier, St John Paul II wrote of the Holy Door in *Incarnationis Mysterium*, his bull of indiction of the Great Jubilee, explaining how it "evokes the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish. Jesus said: 'I am the door' (John 10:7), in order to make it clear that no one can come to the Father except through him. This designation which Jesus applies to himself testifies to the fact that he alone is the Saviour sent by the Father. There is only one way that opens wide the entrance into the life of communion with God: this is Jesus, the one and absolute way to salvation. To him alone can the words of the Psalmist be applied in full truth: 'This is the door of the Lord where the just may enter' (Psalm 118:20)."

Although Pope Boniface VIII inaugurated the "Holy Year" tradition, called a "Jubilee," in 1300, it was not until over a century later that the Holy Door played an integral role. According to 15th century documents, in 1423, at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Pope Martin V opened the Holy Door for the first time in the history of the Jubilee. Holy Years were celebrated every 33 years at that time, in commemoration of the years Jesus lived on earth. It was not until Christmas 1499 that Pope Alexander VI requested the Holy Door be opened not only at St. John Lateran but also in St Peter's, St Mary Major and St Paul's Outside the Walls.

Jubilee Years when the Holy Door is opened now occur every 25 years. The Pope can proclaim a Holy or Jubilee Year at another time also, such as happened in 1933 on the anniversary of Jesus' death on the cross and in 2000 at the turn of the millennium.

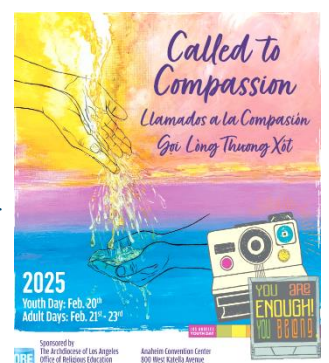
The 2025 Jubilee is centred on the theme "**Pilgrims of Hope.**" Pope Francis beautifully expressed it: "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision." During the Jubilee Year, the Pope invites every one of us to embark on a pilgrimage of hope, so that, "Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it."

LOS ANGELES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONGRESS

The Los Angeles Religious Education Congress (RECongress) is a four-day event held by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The event began in 1956 as an "Institute" of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, popularly known as CCD. In 1967, the first three-day "Congress" was held. In 1970, the event moved to the Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, California. It had been named as the largest annual gathering of Catholics in the United States with roughly 40,000 people attending. In recent years, after COVID, attendance has dropped to approximately 12,000 people over the four-day event. The focus of the RECongress is for those in attendance to learn more about the Catholic faith as well as seeking personal growth. It is open to all people of different faiths.

The 2025 RECongress is being held Friday, 21 to Sunday, 23 February and the theme is "**Called to Compassion**". The Los Angeles Religious Education Congress is the largest annual meeting of its kind in the world. Participants hear keynote addresses as well as participating in the many workshops over the two days.

For ten years now, the Diocese of Wollongong has each year sent a number of principals and religious education coordinators, along with a priest-chaplain to the RECongress. This year, James Bryce and Ronelle Peardon (Principal and Religious Education Coordinator at our Parish School), along with seven other educators (including Kaylene Costell-Duffin, parishioner and Principal at St Joseph's Bulli), together with Ken as chaplain will be attending the RECongress. Ken will be away 12 to 28 February, as Ken has to see a "dog about a man" in Hawaii on the way to the RECongress. A report will be provided to the Parish upon return to Thirroul. Please remember these "pilgrims" before the Lord, and that many in our schools and parishes will benefit from their travels.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C · Weekdays Year I

Monday	24 Feb	Monday of Ordinary Week 7	Sirach 1:1-10	Mark 9:14-29
Tuesday ✘	25 Feb	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 7	Sirach 2:1-11	Mark 9:30-37
Wednesday	26 Feb	Wednesday of Ordinary Week 7	Sirach 4:11-19	Mark 9:38-40
Thursday	27 Feb	Thursday of Ordinary Week 7	Sirach 5:1-8	Mark 9:41-50
Friday	28 Feb	Friday of Ordinary Week 7	Sirach 6:5-17	Mark 10:1-12
Saturday	1 Mar	Saturday of Ordinary Week 7	Sirach 17:1-15	Mark 10:13-16
Sunday	2 Mar	EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME · YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ 12 to 28 February Ken and some of our teachers will be at a Religious Education Conference in Los Angeles;
 ✦ Andrew will be looking after the Parish – thank you, Andrew;

✦ PLEASE RETURN PALMS FROM LAST YEAR'S PALM SUNDAY BY TUESDAY, 4 MARCH

- ✦ Tuesday, 4 March **Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) is on Tuesday, 4 March**
 17:30 burning of palms after the 17:30 Mass
- ✦ Wednesday, 5 March 09:15 Ash Wednesday Mass *with blessing and imposition of ashes*
 19:00 Ash Wednesday Mass *with blessing and imposition of ashes*
- ✦ 6 to 9 March Diocesan Women's Retreat, Varroville – \$320 – ☎ 0417 041 721
- ✦ Friday, 7 March 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ Friday, 7 March 11:00 Annual World Day of Prayer, St David's Church, Thirroul
- ✦ Saturday, 22 March 17:30 Claudia Smith's ashes will be placed in the Columbarium
- ✦ Thursday, 27 March 19:15 Baptism Preparation Information for parents

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

BE SAFE ON OUR BEACHES – SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Encourage others, especially visitors, to swim between the flags – and to learn how to “read the surf”, spotting rips and places to avoid. Enjoy our beaches and keep them clean.

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Mushroom and Spinach mini Handpies

1 knob of butter; 1 drizzle of olive oil; 1 shallot; 250g mushrooms, sliced; 60g spinach (fresh or frozen); 2 cups cream; salt & pepper; rosemary; 1 pinch of nutmeg; 2 puff pastries; 1 egg.

Melt butter with olive oil in a hot pan. Add chopped shallot, sliced mushrooms and stir for 5 to 10 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, nutmeg and rosemary. Add spinach and stir until cooked. Pour in the cream and reduce for 10 minutes. Refrigerate this preparation for 2 hours. Cut some discs in the puff pastry with a bowl. Put some filling on one side, leaving a border. Fold the disc to form the mini pie. Press the borders to close the pie. Put the pies on a parchment paper on a baking tray. Make some slashes (vents) with a knife on top of the mini pies and brush with a beaten egg. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes at 180°C. Could add cooked chicken, ham or other meat to mixture.

If you have a favourite recipe you would be willing to share, please email it to the Parish Office.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1st Reading 1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,12-13,22-23
 2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:45-49
 Gospel Luke 6:27-38

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1st Reading Sirach 27:4-7
 2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:54-58
 Gospel Luke 6:39-45

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday ✘ 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

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

📮 PO Box 44 · Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

☎ 4267 2560

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday _____
 Tuesday ✘ 17:30
 Wednesday 09:00
 Thursday 09:00
 Friday 09:30
Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday