



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
19 / 20 JULY 2025
16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
WELCOME BACK TO TERM 3

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Two stories about hospitality this week.

But as it turns out, it is hospitality to God!

The first reading says that Abraham was sitting outside his tent on a hot day. He looked up to find three men standing nearby on the path, apparently satisfying their curiosity about the tent and its occupants. It is not clear that Abraham knew who they were, but we suspect that they were God appearing to Abraham in human form!

How does Abraham react to this Godly presence?

He flies into action. He bows deeply. He begs the men to relax from their journey and receive comfort, nourishment, and rest. Beautiful hospitality from the Eastern part of the world.

He then rushes into the great tent, issuing pell-mell commands to his wife Sarah. "Quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls." He picks the best steer and orders the servant to prepare it. He dashes outside to get curds and milk. At long last he sets the whole meal before the men.

Quite a scene. Quite a welcome.

All at once the men make a sudden, astonishing statement. Next year Sarah will bear a son by Abraham. As the dinner had progressed, Sarah had stood behind the tent flap listening, and now she actually laughs out loud as she hears this absurdity about her dried-up body, nearly 89 years old, which is to issue forth a tender baby. (Our scripture selection for Sunday leaves out the laughing part.)

As you may know, after a time this amazing prophecy did indeed come to be. We can thank God that Abraham listened to the men, the presence of God.

Second story. In the Gospel, Jesus enters the house of his friends Mary and Martha. He too is warmly welcomed. As he sits, Mary arranges herself at his feet and focuses her clear wide eyes upon him, while Martha bustles about preparing dinner.

Unfair! Martha gets tired and exasperated, and finally asks Jesus to make Mary stop lounging and help out a little.

Surprisingly, Jesus says, no.

"Mary has chosen the better part," he explains.

Isn't this response unjust to Martha? After all, someone has to make the meal or there would be none. Or maybe Martha could have said, "we are not having any food tonight, we are just going to sit and stare at you."

In truth, Martha's trouble was not that she was scrabbling about, but that as she did so she forgot about Jesus. She was not making him welcome, she was constructing a meal. He even tells her that she was anxious and worried about many things, not the one thing necessary.

What is the one thing necessary? Relation to Christ.

Real hospitality means a two-way relationship in which host and guest open to each other, become present to one another in various ways. Hosts do work out the details of preparation, and they work hard. But they always remember the visitor while they prepare. Excellent hosts manage somehow to get everything ready but also to truly listen and converse with the one who has come.

That is how we are supposed to act every day. We are to find God in all things, in all the people we know and/or help, no matter how busy we might be. We are to relate to them because God is within them, deep in their souls. Touch them. Hear them. Prepare meals for them without forgetting them. We will be giving hospitality to God himself.

Abraham gave it. Mary gave it. Martha forgot like you and I do, but she learned.

Let's try to learn it too.

We know from John's gospel that Martha and Mary were friends of Jesus, and that he was frequently in their home. Luke tells us nothing of this; perhaps it was not in the material available to him. However, he immortalises this incident that took place during one of Jesus' visits, because he sees it as having a lesson for us all. Busy preparing special dishes for their guest, Martha feels left out. Jesus tells her not to go to so much trouble: one dish will be plenty. He then goes beyond this homely advice to remind Martha and those present that the 'one thing necessary' in life is finding the truth he is bringing them. Mary does not need to be reminded of this; she shows herself to be a true 'disciple'. In the gospel accounts, 'disciples' are mentioned hundreds of times. For many centuries, however, the idea of 'discipleship' has had little place in our Christian awareness. Today, we are being told that our lives

Welcoming God



✠✠ will be enriched, if we see ourselves as disciples of the Lord. ‘Disciples’ are learners. All inspiring leaders gather around them a group who want to share in their vision. Those who followed Jesus and were inspired by his message were called ‘disciples’; even those who had not known Jesus during his earthly life called themselves his ‘disciples’ – as we know from the Acts of the Apostles. By including this incident in his gospel, Luke is inviting us to become *disciples* of the Lord by identifying with Mary as she sat at his feet – finding the truth that gives meaning to our lives.

If we develop the outlook of disciples it will become second nature to us to recognise that we are never alone in our moments of faith awareness and prayer – ‘Come to me’, the Lord tells us, ‘I am with you always’. He encourages us as we seek the way, to share our lives with him with honesty and courage, to look honestly, in his presence, at the quality of our relationships, at the responsibilities life has brought us, at our hopes and ambitions – comparing our outlook with that of the guest who told Martha that one dish was enough. The light and encouragement this attitude of discipleship brings will surprise us. It will make our personal prayer more meaningful. The strength and inspiration we find will make us more aware of the workings of the Holy Spirit.

How do we know the mind of Jesus, what he stands for? The Scriptures should play an important part in our life of discipleship. Listening to the gospel story, we must be prepared to meet the real Jesus and be challenged by the example of his attitudes. Knowing the Scriptures will help us to situate our lives in the great plan of God – spoken of in today’s readings. We are the beneficiaries of all that is foreshadowed in the promises made to Abraham. We should learn to share Paul’s amazement and gratitude at the generous plan, hidden from all eternity and now revealed in Christ.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Genesis 18:1-10

- ✠ What does this story of Abraham’s hospitality signify? Why is hospitality important? How would you compare it to Martha’s hospitality in the Gospel reading?
- ✠ Was God present in the guests? Abraham begat Isaac as a reward for his hospitality. Who needs your hospitality today? If you show hospitality to immigrants or the unhoused, you probably won’t get an “Isaac,” but what kind of reward might you experience?

Second Reading Colossians 1:24-28

- ✠ Paul said “the riches of God’s glory” were a “mystery among the Gentiles.” What do you think helped Paul spread the good news about the riches of God, to people everywhere, changing much of the world from Gentile to Christian?
- ✠ If you had a task today like Paul’s, to take God’s love places where it is not known well, what would you use? How might you employ the hospitality of Abraham in the first reading and Martha’s in the Gospel?

Gospel Luke 10:38-42

- ✠ Are you Martha or Mary? Are you a little of each? Would you be agitated with Mary for not pitching in? If you were Martha, what would you have done differently? Is it possible to be contemplative and active in ministry at the same time? How?
- ✠ Was Martha wrong and Mary right? Which one is an example of ministry to others? Which is the example of the root of ministry?

Thus, today’s Gospel passage reminds us that the wisdom of the heart lies precisely in knowing how to combine these two elements: contemplation and action. Martha and Mary indicate the path to us. If we want to savour life with joy, we must associate these two approaches: on the one hand, ‘being at the feet’ of Jesus, in order to listen to him as he reveals to us the secret of everything. On the other, being attentive and ready in hospitality when he passes and knocks at our door, with the face of a friend who needs a moment of rest and fraternity. This hospitality is needed.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 21 July 2019

**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**
Winter Items: soup; noodles; scarves; beanies; jackets; gloves; warm socks.

BAPTISM THIS SUNDAY – WELCOME!

WELCOME to **INDIE MARGARET MCFARLANE** baptised in our Parish this Sunday: welcome and thank you to parents, godparents, family and friends from our Parish community.

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Christian Initiation, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist. In most of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the three Sacraments are celebrated together as is done in the Latin Catholic Church with adults and children over the age of reason – that is 7 years or older. If you want your infant son or daughter (under 7 years) to receive Baptism, the next Baptisms to be held in our Parish will be during Masses on **Saturday, 16 August / Sunday, 17 August**. The next Baptism preparation meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 31 July at 19:15**. Call in to the Parish Office to collect the Baptism Enrolment Forms. Baptism is the first Sacrament of Christian Initiation, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist.



Message of Pope Leo for World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Jubilee we are now celebrating helps us to realize that hope is a constant source of joy, whatever our age. When that hope has also been tempered by fire over the course of a long life, it proves a source of deep happiness.

Sacred Scripture offers us many examples of men and women whom the Lord called late in life to play a part in his saving plan. We can think of Abraham and Sarah, who, advanced in years, found it hard to believe when God promised them a child. Their childlessness seemed to prevent them from any hope for the future.

Zechariah's reaction to the news of John the Baptist's birth was no different: "How can this be? I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years" (*Luke* 1:18). Old age, barrenness and physical decline apparently blocked any hope for life and fertility in these men and women. The question that Nicodemus asked Jesus when the Master spoke to him of being "born again" also seems purely rhetorical: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (*John* 3:4). Yet whenever we think that things cannot change, the Lord surprises us with an act of saving power.

The elderly as signs of hope

In the Bible, God repeatedly demonstrates his providential care by turning to people in their later years. This was the case not only with Abraham, Sarah, Zechariah and Elizabeth, but also with Moses, who was called to set his people free when he was already eighty years old (cf. *Exodus* 7:7). God thus teaches us that, in his eyes, old age is a time of blessing and grace, and that the elderly are, for him, *the first witnesses of hope*. Augustine asks, "What do we mean by old age?" He tells us that God himself answers the question: "Let your strength fail, so that my strength may abide within you, and you can say with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then I am strong'". The increasing number of elderly people is a sign of the times that we are called to discern, in order to interpret properly this moment of history.

The life of the Church and the world can only be understood in light of the passage of generations. Embracing the elderly helps us to understand that life is more than just the present moment, and should not be wasted in superficial encounters and fleeting relationships. Instead, life is constantly pointing us toward the future. In the book of Genesis, we find the moving episode of the blessing given by the aged Jacob to his grandchildren, the sons of Joseph; his words are an appeal to look to the future with hope, as the time when God's promises will be fulfilled (cf. *Genesis* 48:8-20). If it is true that the weakness of the elderly needs the strength of the young, it is equally true that the inexperience of the young needs the witness of the elderly in order to build the future with wisdom. How often our grandparents have been for us examples of faith and devotion, civic virtue and social commitment, memory and perseverance amid trials! The precious legacy that they have handed down to us with hope and love will always be a source of gratitude and a summons to perseverance.

Signs of hope for the elderly

From biblical times, the Jubilee has been understood as a time of liberation. Slaves were freed, debts were forgiven, and land was returned to its original owners. The Jubilee was a time when the social order willed by God was restored, and inequalities and injustices accumulated over the years were remedied. Jesus evoked those moments of liberation when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he proclaimed good news to the poor, sight to the blind and freedom for prisoners and the oppressed (cf. *Luke* 4:16-21).

Looking at the elderly in the spirit of this Jubilee, we are called to help them experience liberation, especially from loneliness and abandonment. This year is a fitting time to do so. God's fidelity to his promises teaches us that there is a blessedness in old age, an authentic evangelical joy inspiring us to break through the barriers of indifference in which the elderly often find themselves enclosed. Our societies, everywhere in the world, are growing all too accustomed to letting this significant and enriching part of their life be marginalized and forgotten.

Given this situation, a change of pace is needed that would be readily seen in an assumption of responsibility on the part of the whole Church. Every parish, association and ecclesial group is called to become a protagonist in a "revolution" of gratitude and care, to be brought about by regular visits to the elderly, the creation of networks of support and prayer for them and with them, and the forging of relationships that can restore hope and dignity to those who feel forgotten. Christian hope always urges us to be more daring, to think big, to be dissatisfied with things the way they are. In this case, it urges us to work for a change that can restore the esteem and affection to which the elderly are entitled.

That is why Pope Francis wanted the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly to be celebrated primarily through an effort to seek out elderly persons who are living alone. For this reason, those who are unable to come to Rome on pilgrimage during this Holy Year may "obtain the Jubilee Indulgence if they visit, for an appropriate amount of time, the elderly who are alone... making, in a sense, a pilgrimage to Christ present in them (cf. *Matthew* 25:34-36)" (Apostolic Penitentiary, *Norms for the Granting of the Jubilee Indulgence*, III). Visiting an elderly person is a way of encountering Jesus, who frees us from indifference and loneliness.

As elderly persons, we can hope

The Book of Sirach calls blessed those who have not lost hope (cf. 14:2). Perhaps, especially if our lives are long, we may be tempted to look not to the future but to the past. Yet, as Pope Francis wrote during his last hospitalization, "our bodies are weak, but even so, nothing can prevent us from loving, praying, giving ourselves, being there for one another, in faith, as shining signs of hope" (*Angelus*, 16 March 2025). We possess a freedom that no difficulty can rob us of: it is the freedom to love and to pray. Everyone, always, can love and pray.

Our affection for our loved ones – for the wife or husband with whom we have spent so much of our lives, for our children, for our grandchildren who brighten our days – does not fade when our strength wanes. Indeed, their own affection often revives our energy and brings us hope and comfort.

These signs of living love, which have their roots in God himself, give us courage and remind us that "even if our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (*2 Corinthians* 4:16). Especially as we grow older, let us press forward with confidence in the Lord. May we be renewed each day by our encounter with him in prayer and in Holy Mass. Let us lovingly pass on the faith we have lived for so many years, in our families and in our daily encounter with others. May we always praise God for his goodness, cultivate unity with our loved ones, open our hearts to those who are far away and, in particular, to all those in need. In this way, we will be signs of hope, whatever our age. *From the Vatican, 26 June 2025.* LEO PP. XIV

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	21 Jul	Monday of Ordinary Week 16	Exodus 14:5-18	Matthew 12:38-42
Tuesday	22 Jul	St Mary Magdalene	2 Corinthians 5:14-17	John 20:1-2,11-18
Wednesday	23 Jul	Wednesday of Ordinary Week 16	Exodus 16:1-5,9-15	Matthew 13:1-9
Thursday	24 Jul	Thursday of Ordinary Week 16	Exodus 19:1-2,9-11+	Matthew 13:10-17
Friday	25 Jul	St James, apostle	2 Corinthians 4:7-15	Matthew 20:20-28
Saturday	26 Jul	Sts Joachim and Anne, parents of Mary	Exodus 24:3-8	Matthew 13:24-30
Sunday	20 Jul	17 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Friday, 25 July 09:30 Grandparents Day – Mass with Grandparents and Students

RECIPE: CRUNCHY GRANOLA BARS... from Raymond, your weekend chef

250g rolled oats; 100ml olive oil; generous pinch of sea salt; 125g honey; 75g light brown sugar; 1 tablespoon vanilla extract; 1 teaspoons ground cinnamon; 100g slivered almonds; 100g pepitas; 100g sunflower seeds; 100g shredded coconut; 85g dried cranberry.

Preheat oven to 180°C. and grease 2 rimmed baking pans (33cm by 22cm). Mix the oats, salt and EVOO in a mixing bowl. Spread the mixture over the 2 baking pans and toast it for 20 minutes (or until golden brown). Reduce oven heat to 150°C. Pour the toasted oats into a mixing bowl. Stir in the nuts, seeds, shredded coconut and dried cranberries. Heat the honey and brown sugar in a saucepan until the sugar has melted (stirring frequently, about 5 minutes). Take it off the heat and add in vanilla extract and cinnamon. Pour the sugar mixture over the toasted oats/seeds/fruit mixture and mix thoroughly. Divide the granola mixture into 2 pans. Compress the granola into the pans with an “oiled” metal spatula. Bake the granola mixtures for another 30-40 minutes until golden, rotating the pans as necessary for even baking. Cool the granola sheet for 15 minutes (to firm up) , use a sharp knife to score and cut into bars. If the bars fall apart, press them back into shape, they will stick together and harden once completely cooled. Result speak for itself. Cries of “more, please.”.

VINNIES APPEAL WITH A DIFFERENCE – AND THANK YOU!

Our local Thirroul Vinnies Conference has ministered in our Parish for **decades**. Currently, all members are over seventy and not in the first flushes of youth. Hence, **Vinnies are looking for new members – MALE membership needs a boost!** What is involved? There is a meeting every fortnight, 16:30 to 17:30 every second Tuesday. In addition, and depending on the local needs, members make visits in pairs to local people to offer support such as food, vouchers, referrals and advocacy. Training, support and encouragement from fellow members is provided so new members can approach situations confidently, non-judgmentally and willing to share and listen.

Are you a person who would like to help people in need in the local area here? Would you like to engage in meaningful service with others? Do you have a concern for the social inequities visible in Australia today? Then our Thirroul Vinnies Conference will welcome you with open arms as a new member.

Thinking about joining or want more information? Contact a Vinnies member or ☎ 0468 916 319.

Our St Michael Conference recently presented me with 8 washing baskets and 2 smaller ones, of food and also clothes for the Winter Appeal. This overwhelming amount is more than our Thirroul Conference will be able to utilize. However, you can be safe in the knowledge that the Drop-in Centre at Coniston and the Food Van, will also make good use of your donation. Our Conference is in awe of the support the school has provided to our Appeals over the years. Thanks go to the staff, the Mini Vinnies and of course the parents, who make this possible. We certainly do live in a very generous Community! – John Denning (Thirroul Conference President)

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Genesis 18:1-10
2 nd Reading	Colossians 1:24-28
Gospel	Luke 10:38-42

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

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Genesis 18:20-32
2 nd Reading	Colossians 2:12-14
Gospel	Luke 11:1-13

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Parish School of St Michael

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SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 📺 17:30

Sunday 08:00

📺 Saturday Mass is recorded.

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday

Tuesday 📺 17:30

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday