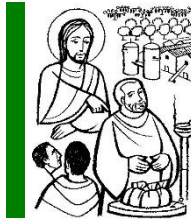


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirrourl



PARISH BULLETIN
2 / 3 AUGUST 2025
18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
VINNIES NEEDS NEW (MALE) MEMBERS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

In Vain, In Vain

The word “vanity” has come to mean “excessive belief in your own abilities or your attractiveness to others.” But the original meaning of the word, the one that makes sense of the first reading, was “empty or valueless.” “In vain” comes closer to the meaning.

So, when Qoheleth, the presumed author of Ecclesiastes says, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity,” he means that everything we do is in vain. This is like a statement of despair. Likely he would be diagnosed today with depression. Maybe, at the bottom of our hearts, we would be tempted to this dark vision also, especially with so many things going wrong today. Is the answer found when the beer commercials tell us “it doesn’t get any better than this,” illustrating people as they drink too much, with laughing, perfect smiles? We have to wonder if maybe there is something more to live for than this.

So let us ask whether the first reading is correct, that our lives are truly “in vain.”

The reading gives a dark answer.

What profit comes to a person from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which they have laboured under the sun? All his days sorrow and grief are their occupation; even at night their mind is not at rest.

Do we recognize this state?

Is our life devoted to riches or looking good? No? Then are we dedicated to “the bottom line,” to fighting for “enough” (so we will have something to live for)? Qoheleth says we seek these things in vain. Maybe we should listen to him. Maybe we should stop ignoring the poor, for instance.

Look at the Gospel. There Jesus says succinctly that our life should not consist of possessions, even though we may have plenty. He tells the famous parable about a very rich man who produces a huge harvest and is busy tearing down his barns to build still larger ones in order to hoard more. Read it.

Then ask, is that a reasonable way to live?

Must be, because we can find it all through our western, self-centred cultures, constructing ever flashier buildings in our cities even while drugs and poverty beset our very lives. Don’t we say that values are unnecessary? Do we use other people to get what we want? Just like the man in Jesus’ story. Just like what Qoheleth calls “vanity.”

Well, this particular rich man got a nasty surprise when he went about eating, drinking and being merry. God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.”

Could this be said to you or me? “You fool!”

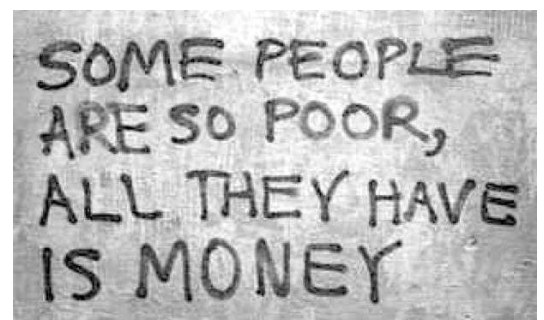
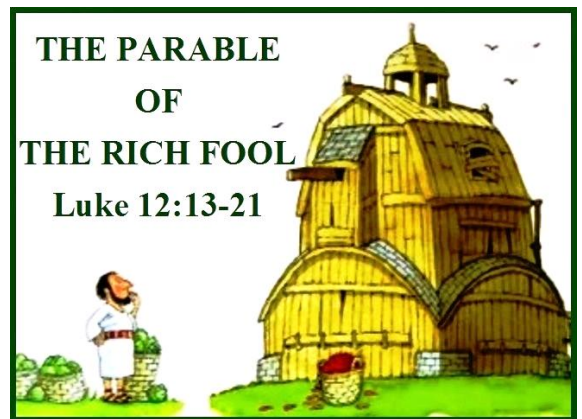
Whether we are rich or poor, are we trying to hoard what we have? Are we being children of God or children of mammon?

Truth is, human beings are fashioned in such a way that we are able to open up to the source and summit of all love, God. This might be the one thing that makes life worth living! If we cannot see over the piles of possessions we have (or wish we had), aren’t our honours and gains in vain?

If death were on its way to us this very night, what would God say to us?

All three readings of today’s liturgy make reference to material possessions. Finances, property, possessions are indispensable for the living of our human lives. But a wrong attitude to these things can have disastrous consequences. The question from the ‘man in the crowd’, in the gospel reading, reminds us that disputes about inheritance can destroy families. The disastrous consequences of greed – the obsession to have more – in the lives of people – both the rich and the poor – are so subtle that they can easily be overlooked.

Ecclesiastes, from which the first reading comes, is one of the most unusual books of the bible. Its writer is not lacking in all that makes a good life in the eyes of the world; but for him, looking at things from a merely human point of view, life seems futile. His is the voice of humanity waiting for the truth Christ brings. He speaks, too, for those today who can find no meaning in life because they do not know Christ. This fullness of life and truth that Christ brings is enthusiastically expressed in the reading from Colossians. Human fulfilment will not be found ☞☞



✠✠ in ‘the things that are on the earth’ alone, but in ‘the life we have with Christ in God’, in the ‘glory’ of a new heaven and a new earth.

The attitude the Christian should have to possessions is one of Luke’s favourite themes. It is he who gives us the first beatitude in the challenging form, ‘How blessed are you who are poor’. He is not praising material poverty; but declaring that those who know material poverty, are those who are most likely to learn to rely upon their relationship with God, rather than upon the specious security that wealth brings. Today’s gospel reading is the first part of a long passage that takes up this theme. The parable of Jesus, with which Luke begins, underlines the false sense of security brought by possessions. The wealthy farmer is not portrayed as being wicked. In fact, worldly wisdom would be inclined to say that he should be commended for his foresight. But in God’s eyes, Jesus bluntly tells us, he is a ‘fool’. The emptiness of his life is clear in the end – when God’s call comes, he has nothing that he can call his own. It is not what we have, but what we are that matters!

Because possessions are so important for our welfare and that of our families, this is not an easy lesson to learn. Paul’s warning in today’s reading from Colossians reinforces the lesson of the parable. In listing the kinds of conduct that are incompatible with our new life in Christ, he warns especially against ‘greed, which is the same thing as worshipping a false god’. The comparison is a forceful one. The unbalanced pursuit of material things, he says, can take possession of a person, so that their life is built on a lie. Jesus concludes his parable with the same thought: ‘make yourselves rich in the sight of God’ – set your heart on what really matters; recognise what it is that you will take with you into eternal life. Luke’s strong convictions in this matter lead him to conclude the continuation of this passage with these challenging words: ‘Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Get yourself treasure that will not fail you’.

Whether we think of the way we clutter our heart with possessions, let us take the cue from today’s readings to check the direction our lives are taking and earnestly pray, ready to listen to the prompting of God’s Spirit guiding us to the way of peace: ‘God, come to my help. Lord, quickly come to my aid. You are the one who helps me and sets me free. Lord, do not delay.’

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

- ✠ Is there more of “toil and anxiety” than you want in your life? Would an increase in faith serve the same purpose as a pill for curing anxiety?
- ✠ This reading is about priorities. Do yours occasionally need to be checked and rearranged? Louisa Mae Alcott, toward the end of chapter 40 in her book, *Little Women*, says, “Love is the only thing that we can carry with us when we go, and it makes the end so easy.” Discuss.

Second Reading Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

- ✠ Not that there is anything wrong with some of our practices in the Church, but might we discover through synodality discussions that taking off the “old self with its practices and putting on the new self” is helpful in “seeking what is above”?
- ✠ “Here there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision. ... ” Could St Paul give the same speech today? How would acting as if “Christ is all and in all” solve today’s problems like racism?

Gospel Luke 12:13-21

- ✠ Many would determine their worth as a person by the greatness of their house or portfolio or the make of their car. What about you? How do you estimate a person’s worth? Is it possible for a person to have much and still give much?
- ✠ “So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” What are some qualities that make you “rich toward God”? Below is a paragraph from near the end of the Extraordinary Synod. How does this reflect a Church that seeks to do “what matters to God”, and as the second reading says, “what is above”?

And this is the Church, the vineyard of the Lord, the fertile Mother and the caring Teacher, who is not afraid to roll up her sleeves to pour oil and wine on people’s wound; who doesn’t see humanity as a house of glass to judge or categorize people. This is the Church, one, holy, catholic, apostolic and composed of sinners, needful of God’s mercy. This is the Church, the true bride of Christ, who seeks to be faithful to her spouse and to her doctrine. It is the Church that is not afraid to eat and drink with prostitutes and publicans. The Church that has the doors wide open to receive the needy, the penitent, and not only the just or those who believe they are perfect! The Church that is not ashamed of the fallen brother and pretends not to see him, but on the contrary feels involved and almost obliged to lift him up and to encourage him to take up the journey again and accompany him toward a definitive encounter with her Spouse, in the heavenly Jerusalem.

– Pope Francis, *Synod of Bishops*, 18 October 2014

**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.
Thank you for your great generosity!

2025 SIGNIFICANT MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARIES MASS

If you are celebrating **25, 30, 40, 50, 60 or over 60 years of marriage** this year, we invite you to the celebration of Significant Marriage Anniversaries, to be celebrated with Bishop Brian Mascord on **Sunday, 24 August 2025 at 14:00 at the St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong**. Mass will be followed by light refreshments in the Xavier Centre Conference Room. Please register online at <https://dow.sh/MA2025> by no later than Monday, 11 August 2025. Any enquiries please email Helen Bennett helen.bennett@dow.org.au

VINNIES THIRROUL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE – FOR NEW MALE MEMBERS

Vinnies Thirroul Conference thanks the two ladies who have responded to our appeal for new members. However, we do need to boost our **MALE membership**.

The Thirroul Conference is on call three times a week, (Monday, Wednesday, Friday). When we go out on a call, we do so in pairs. Our rule is that at least one caller is a male. Currently there are only three male members available to do visits. So, in the event of illness or holidays, one of the other two males will have to double up. Some new male members would certainly ease the pressure.

If you are thinking of joining or want more information, speak with a Vinnies member or phone me, **John Dening**, President of Vinnies Thirroul Conference: ☎ **0468 916 319**.

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.

From all parishioners, thank you to members of our Thirroul Vinnies Conference.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN LECTURE 2025 – SATURDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER

The **Newman Lecture** is a yearly event hosted by the Bulli Branch of the Knights of the Southern Cross. This year, the topic is “**The Legacy of Pope Francis**” and the guest speaker is **Bishop Brian Mascord**, Bishop of Wollongong. The lecture will be on **Saturday, 6 September 2025**, commencing at **14:00**, at the **Xavier Centre**, next to **St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Harbour Street, Wollongong**. The lecture will be live streamed nationally.

There is a 40-minute presentation followed by a Q&A session. **All parishioners and friends** are warmly invited. The live stream link will be provided closer to the date. ☎ contact **John Tuckerman 0429 614 392** and for free bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1434517?embed>

JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE – ☎ links and resources <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/jubilee-year-of-hope/>

WHAT'S ON AROUND THE DIOCESE?

Subscribe here and we will keep you in the loop dow.sh/stayingconnected or visit dow.sh/weeklybulletin to see everything that is on around our Diocese.

MENALIVE DIOCESAN WEEKEND, SATURDAY–SUNDAY, 9–10 AUGUST 2025

menALIVE Diocesan Weekend 9–10 August 2025, Xavier Conference Centre, Wollongong: Come along to our menALIVE weekend and be impacted by an encounter with the Gospel: <https://menalive-weekend-2025>

NATIONAL VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK: 3 TO 10 AUGUST

Are you experiencing a call to serve God and God's people? During this National Vocations Awareness Week, take time to reflect on God's plan for you. Pray for the courage to answer God's call and consider if the priesthood might be your path to fulfilling God's will. Our diocese and community need dedicated priests to lead us in faith and service. If you are discerning a vocation to the priesthood, there are people to support you on your journey.

This National Vocations Awareness Week, we celebrate those who have answered God's call to the priesthood or religious life. Their commitment and dedication inspire us all. If you feel God tugging at your heart to serve in this special way, don't ignore it. God may be inviting you to a life of deep fulfillment and purpose as a priest or religious. Pray for the courage to listen to God's voice and the wisdom to discern God's plan for you. Our parish community is here to support you as you explore this important decision.

If you would like any further support, please don't hesitate to contact **Fr Duane Fernandez**, Vocations Director for the Diocese of Wollongong at vocations@dow.org.au

FEAST OF SAINT MARY OF THE CROSS MACKILLOP – FRIDAY, 8 AUGUST

The Mass for the Feast of Saint Mary MacKillop will be with the whole school, 09:30 on Friday, 8 August.

AV OPERATORS URGENTLY NEEDED – SATURDAY, SUNDAY – call the Parish Office

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	4 Aug	St John Vianney, priest	Numbers 11:4-15	Matthew 14:13-21
Tuesday	5 Aug	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 18	Numbers 12:1-13	Matthew 14:22-36
Wednesday	6 Aug	The Transfiguration of the Lord	2 Peter 1:16-19	Luke 9:28-36
Thursday	7 Aug	Thursday of Ordinary Week 18	Numbers 20:1-13	Matthew 16:13-23
Friday	8 Aug	St Mary MacKillop 1 Kings 17:8-16	Colossians 3:12-17	Matthew 6 25-34
Saturday	9 Aug	Saturday of Ordinary Week 18	Deuteronomy 6:4-13	Matthew 17:14-20
Sunday	10 Aug	19 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Friday, 8 August	09:30	Saint Mry MacKillop Mass with whole school
✦ Saturday, 9 August	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Weekend, 9-10 August		Blessing of August Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Friday, 15 August	09:30	Feast of the Assumption of Mary – Special Mass

RECIPE: POOR MAN HUSBAND CASSEROLE

700g ground beef, 80/20 blend works best; 450g can tomato sauce; 225g cream cheese, softened to room temperature; 225g sour cream; 225g egg noodles, any wide variety; 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese; 2 teaspoons fresh garlic, minced; 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning; 1 teaspoon granulated sugar to balance the acidity; salt to taste; freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Preheat your oven to 177°C and let it come to full temperature while you prep everything else. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the ground beef, breaking it up with a spoon until it's completely browned. Drain off any excess fat, then add the minced garlic and Italian seasoning. Stir in the tomato sauce and sugar, then season with salt and pepper. Let it simmer for 3-5 minutes to let all those flavours come together nicely. In a mixing bowl, combine the cream cheese and sour cream, mixing until it's completely smooth and no lumps remain. Boil the egg noodles in salted water according to package directions until they're *al dente*. Drain them well – you don't want excess water making your casserole soggy. Grease a 20cm x 30cm baking dish. Layer half the noodles on the bottom, spread half the cream mixture over them, then half the meat sauce. Repeat with remaining noodles, cream mixture, and meat sauce. Top with all that shredded cheddar. Bake uncovered for 20-25 minutes until the casserole is bubbling around the edges and the cheese is melted and golden. Let it rest for 5 minutes before serving.

HORSES' BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED ACROSS THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

1 August marks the standardised birthday for every horse, with northern hemisphere equines celebrating their special day on 1 January. The date, based on the equine breeding season, is used to standardise the industry, particularly horse racing, which uses the date to put horses in their age grades for races. Basil Nolan, from Raheen Studs in Warwick, Queensland, said standardising the age of horses was essential for the racing industry. "It is a little bit like kids in school. You have to have a single date you can use to make it more uniform," he said. "Say a horse is born today — the first of August — he or she will race with horses from now until the end of November, December. That puts them all in the same age group. It is very important to have restrictive races. You can't just have it willy-nilly." While he saw the importance of the horses' birthday, Mr Nolan said he was not planning to crack out the party hats. In Australia, all horses celebrate their birthday on 1 August, regardless of their actual foaling date – their actual foaling date is recorded with the Australian Stud Book. **Happy Birthday!**



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

18th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23
2 nd Reading	Colossians 3:1-5,9-11
Gospel	Luke 12:13-21

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

19th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Wisdom 18:6-9
2 nd Reading	Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19
Gospel	Luke 12:32-48

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

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Parish School of St Michael

James Bryce Principal ☎ 4267 2560

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