



## Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**16 / 17 AUGUST 2025**  
**20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C**  
**VINNIES NEEDS NEW (MALE) MEMBERS**

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

### *God as Victim*

“And there shone on them in that dark hour a light that has never darkened; a white fire clinging to that group like an unearthly phosphorescence, blazing its track through the twilights of history and confounding every effort to confound it with the mists of mythology and theory; that shaft of light or lightening by which the world itself has struck it and isolated and crowned it; by which its own enemies have made it more illustrious and its own critics have made it more inexplicable; the halo of hatred around the Church of God.” – G K Chesterton wrote those words in 1939 (*The Everlasting Man*, Hodder & Stoughton, p. 188). One of the things that, for him, gave the Church credibility is the fact that, invariably, it is surrounded by a halo of hatred.

His words are quoted, not as an attempt to offer an apologia for the Church today as it suffers through a period within which it is frequently an object of intense hatred. Defensiveness is not the purpose here since a lot of anger is currently being directed towards us in the Church. Some of this anger is justified, after a few centuries of privilege, and all of it will be helpful in fuelling an important period of purification within the Church. Rather, living in a time of anti-clericalism than in a time within which priests and Church are unduly privileged, is far easier to live the gospel in the former situation. Thus, we, inside the Church, should have a curious gratitude for all that anger that is being directed against us today. Pope Francis made confronting clericalism a hallmark of his papacy, urging humility among priests, empowering laypeople and reshaping Church leadership.



Besides, as Chesterton points out, paraphrasing Jesus, the Church will always be hated.

Our own culture creates a category of persons that it deems expendable and then it subsequently victimizes through exclusion, ridicule, scapegoating, and often through actual death. The point here is not to defend the Church, but to make a critical point about God and the theology of God—a theology which is often grossly misunderstood.

The point is this: Christianity is the only religion which worships the scapegoat, the one who is hated, excluded, spat upon, blamed for everything, ridiculed, shamed, and made expendable. Christianity is the only religion that focuses on imitating the victim and which sees God in the one who is surrounded by the halo of hatred.

There are some important lessons to be learned from this, not the least of which has to do with where we see God, truth, and goodness. We need, today, some correctives since we live in a culture which, not unlike most cultures in the past, scapegoats some persons to the benefit of the others and then identifies God and holiness with those who have created the scapegoats.

God is not to be confusedly identified with the myths of success, power, glamour, and popularity. Never confuse God and what is holy with current cultural religion which, antithetical to Christ, worships the included, the glamorous, the ones who aren't shamed and ridiculed, and the ones who seem important and indispensable. The God of our culture and the God that is preached in so many of our churches is not the God who dies on a cross, is hated, spat upon, and is excluded and scapegoated in ignorance. No, our culture does not worship a crucified God. The God Jesus that revealed is still, in our very own culture, excluded, mocked, scapegoated, made expendable, and often killed, mostly in the name of God and truth. Where do we see this?

Our own culture, like every other culture past and present, creates a category of persons that it deems expendable and then it subsequently victimizes through exclusion, ridicule, scapegoating, and often through actual death. The ones who constitute that category shifts slightly from time to time, but there is always a common denominator: it includes always those who are the weakest.

Thus, for instance, our culture marginalizes and scapegoats the sick, the poor, the handicapped, the unborn, the unattractive, the non-productive, the indigenous and the aged. These we deem expendable and subsequently decertify in terms of full status within the human race. Worse still, we identify God and holiness with those who are doing the excluding. But that is antithetical to true religion—and true wisdom.

Where is God? God is on the side of the victim, standing with the one who is excluded, especially present in the one being ridiculed, and dying with the one who is being put to death.

True Christianity knows this: it worships the scapegoat—the one who is surrounded by the halo of hatred.

No doubt Luke knows that his readers would be startled by today's reading: 'Do you suppose I bring peace. No, I tell you, but rather division'. But he sees these statements of Jesus as important for the Church community of his time, that was facing great difficulties: not only from persecution on the part of outsiders, but also from internal disputes and divisions that sometimes ended up in the civil court, disputes that divided the Christian community itself and even the families that belonged to it. Such a situation calls for stern measures.

✠✠ The whole story of the Scriptures leaves us in no doubt that evil, or ‘sin’, is real. God’s designs for the human family have been continually frustrated by selfishness and destructiveness – sometimes motivated by the evil in human hearts; sometimes more an expression of ignorance and foolishness, but destructive, nonetheless. Jesus did not come to provoke dissension; but the decision to live by the ways of God, that was essential to the message he preached, inevitably led to disagreements. If selfishness and destructiveness are to have their way unchallenged, the peace Christ came to bring – as a foretaste of the final ‘kingdom’- will never become a reality.

It is important – in a moment of history marked by an increase of violence that is often motivated by religious differences – to understand the paradox involved in these startling words of Jesus. Luke has already made it clear that Jesus came to bring peace – rebuking the brothers who called down vengeance on the unfriendly Samaritans (9:55); proclaiming the demands of his New Commandment: ‘Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you’ and you will be true children of the Father who ‘is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked’ (6:27-35). The very words Luke quotes invite us to understand the paradoxical truth of what he is saying. The ‘fire’ he brings can symbolise destruction or purification. When we recall Luke’s account of the message preached by John the Baptist, that the one who came after him would ‘baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire’ (3:16), and we link this with reference to the ordeal that awaits him in Jerusalem as a ‘baptism’, we can conclude that his is a purifying fire. His standing up to the forces of violence and destructiveness in opposition to him are to be a healing and reconciliation for a world unable to overcome its divisions and antagonisms. The true disciples of Jesus have understood the paradox: ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself’ (2 Corinthians 5:19); ‘For he is the peace between us’ (Ephesians 2:14); ‘a peace the world cannot give, that is my gift to you’ (John 14:27). When we know the challenge to having to oppose the forces of destructiveness, we have the example of the Saviour’s courage, as he pressed on to Jerusalem, and ‘endured the cross, for the sake of the joy which was still in the future.

Today’s readings are about life. They are about blades of grass forcing their way through concrete to make contact with the sun. They are about spring flowers bursting through the ice of winter, to display their beauty and propagate life. They are about people like Jeremiah thrown into a disused well and sinking in the mire, crying out to God in their distress and being hauled back to safety. The readings are about life and they are about putting our trust in God from whom our life comes. We are part of nature, and we know that we need to break through to communion with God if we are to experience the life for which we long.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading      Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

- ✠ Jeremiah was a prophet thrown into a cistern to die for speaking out against the waging of war. Can you think of people in the present time that were/are treated the same way for speaking out against injustice? Are people listening now to those holding out against racism and climate change?
- ✠ Besides Jeremiah, who else in this reading do you think you could count on if you were in trouble? Why? Do you have friends who will help you when you are in need? Are you such a friend to anyone else?

### Second Reading      Hebrews 12:1-4

- ✠ What is the “cloud of witnesses” referred to? What does everyone in the “cloud” have in common with the others? Do you have favourites in this cloud? Did everyone in the “cloud” keep his/her eyes on Jesus?
- ✠ If someone follows Jesus’ plan of spreading God’s love and unity to the earth, is there a chance of running into opposition—and being thrown into the cistern like Jeremiah or in jail like so many innocent refugees? Were many of the cloud of witnesses treated this way?

### Gospel      Luke 12:49-53

- ✠ According to this Gospel reading, what did Jesus come to earth to do? What is the “fire” he wants the earth consumed by? Will part of that fire consume you?
- ✠ According to Pope Leo, what does that fire, the one that sets the world ablaze, ignite in us?

He described the Holy Spirit’s arrival like a “fire that illuminates us,” emphasizing its transformative and illuminating power. The Holy Spirit, he said, overcomes fear, breaks down inner barriers, heals wounds, and empowers individuals with courage to spread God’s message. He also noted that the Holy Spirit “opens borders” within our hearts, allowing us to embrace love and overcome selfishness and fear. The Holy Spirit, according to Pope Leo XIV, facilitates unity between people and nations, breaking down walls of indifference and hatred. He stated that “Pentecost renews the Church and the world!” His message highlights the Holy Spirit as a dynamic force that sets the world ablaze with love, not in a destructive sense, but in a way that ignites compassion, understanding, and transformation. He encourages embracing this fire to live more boldly, generously, and fully, spreading God’s love to everyone.

– Pope Leo XIV, *Pentecost Homily*, 8 June 2025

**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!**

## BAPTISMS THIS WEEKEND – WELCOME TO RUMI AND HUDSON

WELCOME to **RUMI DARCIE HUNT** baptised in our Parish this Saturday, and **HUDSON KAI HANNON** baptised this Sunday: *welcome and thank you to parents, godparents, family and friends from our Parish.*

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, 20 September / Sunday, 21 September**. The next Baptism preparation meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 28 August 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.



## 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>

## 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**.

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

## WORDS OF POPE LEO TO ‘DIGITAL MISSIONARIES’ 29 JULY 2025

How much we need peace in these times marked by hostility and war, which in turn calls us to give witness to the greeting of the Risen Lord: “Peace be with you!”. May his peace be with all of us, in our hearts and in our actions. This is the mission of the Church: to proclaim peace to the world! The peace that comes from the Lord, who conquered death, brings us God’s forgiveness, gives us the life of the Father, and shows us the way of Love! This is the mission that the Church entrusts to each of you who have come to Rome for your Jubilee. You are here to renew your commitment to nourish Christian hope in social networks and online spaces. Peace needs to be sought, proclaimed, and shared everywhere, both in the places where we see the tragedy of war and in the empty hearts of those who have lost the meaning of life and the desire for introspection and the spiritual life. Perhaps, today more than ever, we need missionary disciples who convey the gift of the Risen Lord to the world; who voice to the ends of the earth the hope that Jesus gives us; and who go wherever there is a heart that waits, seeks, and is in need. Yes, to the ends of the earth, to the farthest reaches, where there is no hope. There is a second challenge in this mission: always look for the “suffering flesh of Christ” in every brother and sister you encounter online. Today we find ourselves in a new culture, deeply characterized and formed by technology. It is up to you – it is up to each one of you – to ensure that this culture remains human. Science and technology influence the way we live in the world, even affecting how we understand ourselves and how we relate to God, how we relate to one another. But nothing that comes from man and his creativity should be used to undermine the dignity of others. Our mission – your mission – is to nurture a culture of Christian humanism, and to do so together. This is the beauty of the “network” for all of us. Faced with cultural changes throughout history, the Church has never remained passive; she has always sought to illuminate every age with the light and hope of Christ by discerning good from evil and what was good from what needed to be changed, transformed, and purified. Today we are in a culture where the technological dimension is present in almost everything, especially as the widespread adoption of artificial intelligence will mark a new era in the lives of individuals and society as a whole. This is a challenge that we must face: reflecting on the authenticity of our witness, on our ability to listen and speak, and on our capacity to understand and to be understood. We have a duty to work together to develop a way of thinking, to develop a language, of our time, that gives voice to Love. ... Create an encounter of hearts: seek out those who suffer, those who need the Lord, so that they may heal their wounds, get back on their feet and find meaning in their lives. Be agents of communion, capable of breaking down the logic of division and polarization, of individualism and egocentrism. Centre yourselves on Christ, so as to overcome the logic of the world, of fake news, of frivolity, with the beauty and light of Truth.



## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Monday	18 Aug	Monday of Ordinary Week 20
Tuesday	19 Aug	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 20
Wednesday	20 Aug	St Bernard, abbot, doctor
Thursday	21 Aug	St Pius X, pope
Friday	22 Aug	The Queenship of Mary
Saturday	23 Aug	Saturday of Ordinary Week 20
Sunday	24 Aug	21 <sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>

## Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Judges 2:11-19	Matthew 19:16-22
Judges 6:11-24	Matthew 19:23-30
Judges 9:6-15	Matthew 20:1-16
Judges 11:29-39	Matthew 22:1-14
Ruth 1:1,3-6,14-16,22	Matthew 22:34-40
Ruth 2:1-3,8-11, 4:13-17	Matthew 23:1-12

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Thursday, 28 August 19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for September Baptisms
- ✦ Monday to Thursday, 1-4 September Canon Law Conference, Adelaide – Ken attending
- ✦ Friday, 5 September 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ Weekend, 6-7 September Blessing of Fathers and Grandfathers at both Masses
- ✦ Tuesday, 9 September Enrolments close for First Penance and First Communion 2025

## RECIPE: GREEK YOGURT FRENCH ONION DIP – *from Raymond*

Extra virgin olive oil (or similar to sauté the onion); diced medium white (or yellow) onion; .one clove minced garlic; 1 cup 0% fat Greek yoghurt [extra thick]; ¼ tsp paprika; ¼ tsp Worcestershire sauce; sea salt.

Heat the olive oil in a small skillet over medium-low heat. Add the diced onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20-25 minutes until the onions become golden. You want them to begin to caramelize. Reduce the heat to low, if needed. Add the minced garlic and cook for 30 more seconds. Remove from heat and set aside to cool. Once the onions are cooled, stir together the Greek yogurt, paprika, Worcestershire sauce, sea salt, and onion mixture in a bowl. Serve with your favourite chips or veggies for dipping..

## COMPASS: “BUSH” FAMILY CAMPING WEEKEND

Friday, 12 September – Sunday, 14 September 2025 at Guntawang–Wooglemai Catholic Camping Facility. We are excited to be returning for the second of our 2025 Catholic family camping weekends at Guntawang Catholic Youth Centre. This weekend is designed to bring together families of all ages, including couples with or without children, single parents with their children, and grandparents, to celebrate the incredible gift of family life. Mark your calendars for a wonderful opportunity to connect with families from across the diocese in a laid-back setting. Enjoy shared meals, games, music, prayer, and Mass together. To secure your spot, register now. Cost is \$50 per adult or \$100 per family. <https://www.dow.org.au/events/compass-bush-family-camping-weekend/> RSVP: Friday, 29 August 2025.

## UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG CATHOLIC SOCIETY

UOW Catholic Society invites all UOW students, staff, and friends to our start of semester BBQ! This is a great way to connect with other Catholics on campus and become involved with the many activities CathSoc hosts. Follow @uowcathsoc on Instagram for more details. 12:30 on Saturday, 23 August at Stuart Park, North Wollongong. Free! Register now: <http://tiny.cc/CathSocBBQ>

## WHAT'S ON AROUND THE DIOCESE?

Subscribe here and we will keep you in the loop [dow.sh/stayingconnected](http://dow.sh/stayingconnected) or visit [dow.sh/weeklybulletin](http://dow.sh/weeklybulletin) to see everything that is on around the Diocese.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website	NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
20 <sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C	21 <sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C	MASS TIMES
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Jeremiah 38:4-6,8-10	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 66:18-21	Saturday 17:30
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading Hebrews 12:1-4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading Hebrews 12:5-7,11-13	Sunday 08:00
Gospel Luke 12:49-53	Gospel Luke 13:22-30	Saturday Mass is recorded.
<b>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</b> <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting <b>Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary</b> <b>Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</b>	<a href="http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au">www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</a> 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515 4268 1910 <a href="mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au">thirroul@dow.org.au</a> Parish School of St Michael James Bryce Principal  4267 2560	<b>THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES</b> Monday Tuesday 17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i>