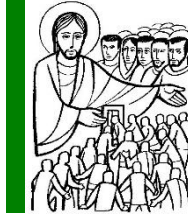


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
23 / 24 AUGUST 2025
21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
VINNIES NEEDS MORE (MALE) MEMBERS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Heaven's Gate

Maybe you remember the parable which Jesus told two weeks ago. There was a man knocking on a friend's door at midnight, wanting to borrow some bread. The friend yelled back, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything."

Jesus responds: "I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence. I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Doesn't it feel good knowing that constant prayer will get the door opened?

God keeps the door open long beyond what anyone would expect.

Well, hold that feeling back for a while and look at this Sunday's Gospel. Here again someone is knocking on the door late at night. But they receive nothing. The master of the house says, "I do not know where you are from. The one(s) knocking replies: "But we ate and drank in your company, and you taught in our streets."

Look carefully at those words: clearly, the askers have to be mere casual acquaintances, if that. Something like this: "We liked what you did, and now we want more!"

The master says, "I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers! Ouch. What about "ask and you shall receive"? As if to rub it in, Jesus says, "There will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see the saved ones—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets—looking down from heaven while you are being cast out!"

What is going on here? Is Jesus just in a bad mood? We know that he is "making his way to Jerusalem" as he tells this parable, walking straight into the crucifixion, so maybe he is just anxious.

Yet notice that, in the other week's parable, even though the owner opens the door just to get the noise stopped, the interruption was being caused by a friend—albeit a rude one—who would not stop asking for what he needed. That parable told us to keep asking God, our friend, for what we need, even though he may be a bit grumpy.

But, in the parable for this Sunday, the people outside are obviously not friends and in fact they have no relationship at all to the master of the house. This parable states that they knew about him only from parties and from the streets. They heard him preaching but they did nothing. They did not come to his house at a reasonable hour and begin a friendship.

No amount of midnight knocking will make up for it.

What is our lesson? That God keeps the door open long beyond what anyone would expect, all the way to the end. But if we are too busy partying and dancing, then finally there is nothing he can do. He has to accept our decision to stay outside.

The message? Get to know God now. Do not delay till you find yourself at the end of your life at heaven's gates and have nothing to show for yourself.

'Will there only be a few saved?' The response of Jesus to this question has often been interpreted in a pessimistic sense – the very opposite of the message of hope he brought to the world. Fortunately, today's biblical scholarship shows this interpretation to be mistaken. The question put to Jesus was much discussed by the rabbis. Their exclusive view had no place for the Gentiles, and their emphasis upon a strict observance of the prescriptions of the Law that was almost impossible for the common people, led them to conclude that the number of the saved would be rather small.

Jesus had no intention of entering into this discussion; in fact, his whole purpose was to lead them beyond the exclusiveness they took for granted. He called them to identify with the generous ways of God. Israel's calling was, in fact, for the sake of the other peoples of the world. They were to be a 'light to the nations', leading them to come to know the life- giving ways of the one true God. The response of Jesus is along these lines. The image of 'two ways' that can be taken in life is a common one. The 'narrow door' of his parable does not imply that salvation is available to only a few; it refers to the conversion called for if his hearers are to accept his teaching and thus become the people God wants them to be. (Matthew has this same thought, comparing a 'narrow gate' into the city with the 'wide and spacious' one that most make use of, 7:13.) Similarly, the point of the parable of the 'locked door' is not exclusion, but the need to hurry in – the opportunity brought by Jesus is coming to an end. Only conversion



✠✠ from the constricted ways the nation has come to take for granted will give entrance to ‘the master’s house’ – knowing Jesus, even sitting at table with him, without heeding his call to become the people God intended them to be will leave them out in the cold.

All this is confirmed by what follows. A people who has not been faithful heirs to what they have received from ‘Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets will find themselves ‘outside’. But God’s purposes will not be frustrated; the peoples of the world will ‘take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God’. Clearly, the Church’s choice of the first reading for today’s liturgy is meant to confirm this optimistic interpretation. This passage, the final lines of the bible’s collection of the Isaian writings, envisages all the peoples of the known world coming to Jerusalem to worship the true God. Jesus was calling Israel back to a sharing in the generous ways of God that was their true faith tradition. But, as he makes his way to Jerusalem, time is running out.

Jesus offers everyone the way to the Father. From heaven he is drawing people all over the world to this way – the way of love. We will be saved (we will find and enjoy meaning in our lives) if we open our heart to him and follow his way. The answer to the question: ‘Will there be only a few saved?’ lies partly with us. Respecting people’s freedom and trusting in the mysterious providence of God, we can honour the trust given us by Jesus and reach out to others in welcoming love.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Isaiah 66:18-21

- ✠ The Israelites were and remain the chosen people. God extended the same “chosen-ness” to others. How has this worked out through the ages? For instance, have Christians always honoured their ancestors, the Jewish people? Do you think God wants your involvement in the unity of all humankind? What are you able to do?
- ✠ From the beginning it was God’s plan to save all humankind. Can you help others in this plan? Are people being excluded? Can you think of anything your parish or the Church as a whole could do to be more inclusive? Welcome immigrants? Fight racism?

Second Reading Hebrews 12:5-7,11-13

- ✠ The Second Reading tells us to “strengthen our drooping hands and our weak knees.” What happens to athletes who don’t exercise? Can you yourself become spiritually “flabby”? Do you ever “work out” spiritually on your own? How?
- ✠ From what you know of the lives of the saints, did/does God handle the saints with “kid gloves”? What about you—how does God treat you? Would you like softer treatment? What is the relationship between God’s love and hardships along the spiritual path?

Gospel Luke 13:22-30

- ✠ “We ate and drank in your company.” Is a membership in a particular group an automatic “opening” of the narrow gate? Can people of all religions receive grace? If God is always creating you, moment to moment; do you think God ever stops offering you moments of grace?
- ✠ “And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south.” Is Pope Leo’s Facebook post an invitation to everyone from everywhere, especially the broken, to come into the Church to be God’s brothers and sisters?

Brothers, sisters ... I speak to you, especially to those who no longer believe, no longer hope, no longer pray, because they think God has left. To those who are fed up with scandals, with misused power, with the silence of a Church that sometimes seems more like a palace than a home. I, too, was angry with God. I, too, saw good people die, children suffer, grandparents cry without medicine. And yes, ... there were days when I prayed and only felt an echo.

But then I discovered something: God doesn’t shout. God whispers. And sometimes he whispers from the mud, from pain, from a grandmother who feeds you without having anything. I don’t come to offer you perfect faith. I come to tell you that faith is a walk with stones, puddles, and unexpected hugs.

I’m not asking you to believe in everything. I’m asking you not to close the door. Give a chance to the God who waits for you without judgment. I’m just a priest who saw God in the smile of a woman who lost her son, ... and yet she cooked for others. That changed me.

So, if you’re broken, if you don’t believe, if you’re tired of the lies, ... come anyway. With your anger, your doubt, your dirty backpack. No one here will ask you for a VIP card. Because this Church, as long as I breathe, will be a home for the homeless, and a rest for the weary. God doesn’t need soldiers. He needs brothers. And you, yes you ... are one of them.

– Robert Prevost (Leo XIV), Facebook post for Divine Mercy, 11 May 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!

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>**

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**.

MENALIVE GROWING GOOD MEN WEEKEND 2025: 5 TO 7 DECEMBER 2025

Friday, 5 December to Sunday, 7 December at The Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops. A powerful weekend for fathers and their teenage sons (ages 12–17). Strengthen your bond, explore the journey into manhood, and share in engaging activities, reflection, prayer, and a memorable Rite of Passage. Places are limited — register early to secure your spot! \$500 per father & son pair (includes accommodation, meals, activities & resources). For more information and registration, visit www.dow.org.au/events

BISHOP’S ANNUAL APPEAL DURING SEPTEMBER

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal will be promoted in our diocese during the month of September. To find out more or make a tax deductible donation please visit www.dow.org.au/giving then scan the QR code or call (02) 4222 2400 to make a donation over the phone. A special collection will take place in our parish on the weekends of 20/21 & 27/28 September.

SIGNS OF HOPE ON THE EDGE: SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2025

Signs of Hope on the Edge: Serving Homeless People with Mental Ill Health

Australia is facing a deepening crisis. Over 273,000 people sought help from homelessness services last year, many also struggling with mental illness. Services are overstretched and many people are left without care, shelter, or hope. Many who are homeless also live with serious mental health challenges. Services are overwhelmed, and too many people are left without the help they desperately need.

This year’s Social Justice Statement calls us to follow the example of Jesus, who always noticed, listened to, and cared for those on the edge of society. Just as Jesus healed the blind man Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52), we are called to see and respond to the needs of our sisters and brothers living in hardship.

The statement shares powerful stories of real people:

Michael, who found new life through care and community after years on the street and battling depression; Sally, who faced deep loneliness and an impersonal health system; Carol, who became homeless at 67 after losing her husband; and Luis, who quietly bore his suffering with dignity. These stories show the human face of homelessness and mental illness. They remind us that everyone has a name and a story, and that everyone deserves to be seen, heard, and loved. We are challenged to go beyond charity and comfort.

The Church must become a place of encounter, where people are not just helped, but befriended and embraced as equals. We must notice those on the edge, truly get to know them, and walk with them in love. The Bishops call for practical action: more affordable housing, better mental health services, stronger support systems, and an end to policies that leave people behind.

But above all, they call on each of us to respond with compassion, courage, and hope. This is not just the work of professionals or institutions.

Every Christian is called to step into the lives of those who are suffering, to befriend them, advocate for them, and journey alongside them.

“The Eucharist commits us to the poor... you have tasted the blood of the Lord, yet you do not recognize your brother.” – St John Chrysostom.

As we enter the Jubilee Year 2025, Pope Francis reminded us that we are all “Pilgrims of Hope.” Let us be a Church that brings healing, dignity, and hope. Let us walk with those who are homeless and mentally unwell, not just as service providers, but as neighbours and friends.

Watch the launch of this year’s Social Justice Statement by clicking [HERE](#).

Download this year’s Social Justice Statement “**Signs of Hope on the Edge – Serving Homeless People with Mental Ill-Health**” by clicking [HERE](#).

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

			Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I	
Monday	25 Aug	Monday of Ordinary Week 21	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	Matthew 23:13-22
Tuesday	26 Aug	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 21	1 Thessalonians 2:1-8	Matthew 23:23-26
Wednesday	27 Aug	St Monica	1 Thessalonians 2:9-13	Matthew 23:27-32
Thursday	28 Aug	St Augustine, bishop, doctor	1 Thessalonians 3:7-13	Matthew 24:42-51
Friday	29 Aug	The Martyrdom of John the Baptist	Jeremiah 1:17-19	Mark 6:17-29
Saturday	30 Aug	Saturday of Ordinary Week 21	1 Thessalonians 4:9-11	Matthew 22:14-30
Sunday	31 Aug	22 ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Thursday, 28 August 19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for September Baptisms
- ✦ Sunday, 31 August Social Justice Sunday
- ✦ 1 September to 4 October The Season of Creation <https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>
- ✦ Monday, 1 September World Day of Prayer for Creation
- ✦ 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: TRIPLE CHOCOLATE GOODNESS MUFFINS – from Raymond

2 eggs; 1½ cups Greek yoghurt; 1 cup vegetable oil; 2 cups self-raising flour; 1 cup caster sugar; ½ cup cocoa powder; 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda; 1 cup milk chocolate chips; 1 cup dark chocolate chips. Icing: ½ cup pouring cream; 1 cup dark chocolate chips.

Preheat your oven to 180°C fan-forced and line 2 x 12-hole regular muffin tins with 16 paper cases (I stacked 2 cases on top of each other for extra lining, you'll need 32 cases all up if you do that). We're about to bake some chocolate magic! In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, yoghurt, and oil until smooth. This is where the deliciousness begins. Add the flour, sugar, cocoa, bicarb soda, and both types of chocolate chips to the bowl. Stir until everything is just combined. Fill the muffin cases until they are about three-quarters full, making sure each one is packed with chocolatey goodness. Bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Your kitchen will be filled with the irresistible aroma of chocolate! While the muffins are baking, it's time to whip up the icing. In a microwave-safe bowl, heat the cream and dark chocolate chips together for 2 minutes. Stir until the mixture is smooth and glossy, then let it cool. Once the muffins and icing are cool, spread the icing generously on top of each muffin. Now, get ready to enjoy triple the chocolate bliss!

THREE WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF CREATION

✓ Use and pray the prayers from the new [Mass for the Care of Creation](#), first celebrated by Pope Leo on 9 July. The Mass calls us to be faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us – not only in daily choices and public policies, but also in our prayer, our worship, and our way of living in the world. ✓✓ Learn more about the Cantic of Creation and integral ecology. ✓✓✓ Join a Pilgrimage of Hope for Creation. *More details next week.*

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.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website	NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C	22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C	MASS TIMES
1st Reading Isaiah 66:18-21	1st Reading Sirach 3:17-20,28-29	Saturday  17:30
2nd Reading Hebrews 12:5-7,11-13	2nd Reading Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24	Sunday 08:00
Gospel Luke 13:22-30	Gospel Luke 14:1,7-14	 Saturday Mass is recorded.
Parish of St Michael – Thirroul <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i> Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i> 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  thirroul@dow.org.au Parish School of St Michael James Bryce Principal  4267 2560	THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES Monday _____ Tuesday  17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>