



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
30 / 31 AUGUST 2025
22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Let Love Live

It is said that we are made in the image and likeness of God. Sometimes this doesn't seem very likely.

Look at the "images and likenesses" that can settle into our hearts. Think about marriage, that institution which cradles the future of—not just of its delicate offspring—but also of the whole society, and which has become just a temporary arrangement, "just for the time being," followed by divorce.

Deep within our own selves, in imitation of Jesus, are we capable of making room for such love?

And wouldn't you agree that sexual mores in the Western world are in the process of firmly and finally divorcing themselves from consideration of commitment, responsibility and care? Aren't we tempted to addict ourselves to convenience, entertainment, internet, drinks, drugs, pleasures, pornography, and so on?

And how about the increasing number of very well-known people—even priests and even bishops—who have wrecked the lives of children, some well-knowns still reaping pleasure from youths while still professing to be dedicated to the one who said "there is no greater love than to give up your life for your friend"?

I know, I know, the good has to be factored in as well. But with so much powerful evil stirred into the mix, what can be left of the image of God in human beings?

The poet E E Cummings wrote a particularly strong poem that includes the following lines: King Christ, this world is all a-leak, and life preservers there are none, and waves that only he can walk who dares to call himself a man.

By "man," cummings means "human being," of course, and the one he refers to in this poem did in fact become a man, one named Jesus. He let his "boat" be rocked and wrecked and finally sunk. Then he arose and walked and continues to walk the waves of our rough, drowning world.



He is a man in the image and likeness of God. Within himself, in the place where it matters most, Jesus has complete openness to love. He lets it come in and he lets it go out to others.

Do you and I dare to unite with the image of such a human being? Deep within our own selves, in imitation of Jesus, are we capable of making room for such love? Can love-incarnate come to life in us if we gradually allow it to?

Yes.

Love-incarnate wants to unite with us in the deep image and likeness of God. You and I have been created in it. This is the "image and likeness" we are made for. If we addict ourselves instead, if we "exalt" ourselves, as Jesus puts it in the Gospel, we will wrap our souls in layer after layer of fraud. We will try to become our possessions, we will try to become what other people think of us, what culture manipulates us to be.

Our tiny boats of life actually are ship-worthy after all. If only we do not think they are ocean liners, able to grab whatever we want, we will "conduct our affairs with humility"; we will allow God to love us and live in us. And then we will be able to make a difference in the world. We will become the image and likeness of God's tolerance shining forth.

Jesus was sometimes invited to a meal by those who were curious to hear him. They were sometimes unfriendly to him we know from the gospel accounts. But most of his hosts were probably motivated by curiosity to hear what this teacher who was making such a stir had to say. This reconstruction of one such meal by Luke shows the Saviour's skills as a teacher; and the kind of challenge he brought to those who were leaders in the community. Those at table with are 'watching him closely'; he knows that he is expected to entertain them with his table talk.

He uses as his starting point what has been taking place as the guests assembled. To our modern ears, it all seems rather stilted; but the scene described by Jesus was familiar to his listeners, and taken for granted by them, as the customary way to behave in a culture with rules of status and precedence that were very complex – determined by such things as age, learning, public standing and wealth. This situation provides the material of a parable that invites his listeners to see beyond these old conventions. He who is happy to make himself the servant of all and urges his followers to do the same knows how important the openness and generosity of true humility will be in the life of his disciples when his mission has been accomplished in Jerusalem – for 'God opposes the proud but gives his blessings to the humble' (James 4:6). There is a lesson here for every Christian community: the quality of the relationships that make up a community will be the measure of the blessings they receive, and the effectiveness of their missionary outreach.

But Jesus has a deeper lesson to give. He uses the rapport he has established with his audience to speak to them of the revolutionary ways of God, the main burden of his preaching. 'When someone invites you to a wedding 

✠✠ feast, he begins – not wanting to offend them by making too obvious reference to the behaviour he has observed; but also, probably, pointing to the messianic theme he will take up later, after one of the guests has commented, ‘Blessed is anyone who will share the meal in the kingdom of God’. His reference to seeking the ‘place of honour’ is an echo of his criticism of the Pharisees for liking ‘to take the seats of honour at the synagogue’ (Luke 11:43). His story of ‘invited guests’ probably also challenges the presumption of the ‘leading Pharisees’ that their strict observance marked them out as the ‘elect’, or chosen ones, of God, certain to take part in the messianic feast. This is backed up by the parable to which we have made reference that follows on from today’s reading. It tells of the guests who do not accept their invitation to the banquet, and are replaced by ‘the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame’. In today’s reading, Jesus has already startled his listeners by saying that God will bless those who invite these very ones to their table. These interpreters of the Law, he knows, forbade entrance to the temple to the lame and the blind.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Sirach 3:17-18,20,28-29

- ✠ The word used by the ancient Romans, “humus,” had a lot of meanings, among which were ground, earth and soil. Using this meaning as a springboard, make up your own definition of the word humility.
- ✠ Name someone you think is a truly a great person. Is that person humble? What does humility look like in him/her? The Gospel mentions the lame, poor, crippled and blind. From your experience with these people would you say most of them are humble?

Second Reading Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24

- ✠ What do you feel when you read the words from the old covenant (“blazing fire,” “gloomy darkness,” “storm,” “trumpet”)? What mood do the words from the new covenant bring to you (“heavenly Jerusalem,” “countless angels in festal gathering”)?
- ✠ What is a covenant? What does it mean to say that Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant? Why does the sprinkled blood of the new covenant speak more eloquently than that of Abel, as this reading asserts?

Gospel Luke 14:1,7-14

- ✠ Does anything cripple you, or sometimes make you blind? Discuss the fact that Jesus experienced our human pain along with us in order to help us get to the banquet. Do you feel any responsibility as a member of the body of Christ to help other people get to the banquet?
- ✠ “When you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind. ...” In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis offers an explanation of one way “you will be blessed” if and when you do this. Have you experienced this blessing?

... I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, (sense of the faithful) but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.

– Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.198, 24 November 2013

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>**

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

10TH WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION – 1 SEPTEMBER

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The theme of this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, chosen by our beloved Pope Francis, is “**Seeds of Peace and Hope**”. On the tenth anniversary of the establishment of this Day of Prayer, which coincided with the publication of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, we find ourselves celebrating the present Jubilee as “Pilgrims of Hope.” This year’s theme thus appears most timely.

In proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Jesus often used the image of the seed. As the time of his Passion drew near, he applied that image to himself, comparing himself to the grain of wheat that must die in order to bear fruit (cf. John 12:24). Seeds are buried in the earth, and there, to our wonder, life springs up, even in the most unexpected places, pointing to the promise of new beginnings. We can think, for example, of flowers springing up on our roadsides from seeds that landed up there almost by chance. As those flowers grow, they brighten the grey tarmac and even manage to break through its hard surface.

In Christ, we too are seeds, and indeed, “seeds of peace and hope.” The prophet Isaiah tells us that the Spirit of God can make an arid and parched desert into a garden, a place of rest and serenity. In his words, “a spirit from on high will be poured out on us, and the wilderness will become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the work of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places” (Isaiah 32:15-18).

These words of the prophet will accompany the “Season of Creation,” an ecumenical initiative to be celebrated from 1 September to 4 October 2025. They remind us that, together with prayer, determination and concrete actions are necessary if this “caress of God” is to become visible to our world (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 84). The prophet contrasts justice and law with the desolation of the desert. His message is extraordinarily timely, given the evidence in various parts of the world that our earth is being ravaged. On all sides, injustice, violations of international law and the rights of peoples, grave inequalities and the greed that fuels them are spawning deforestation, pollution and the loss of biodiversity. Extreme natural phenomena caused by climate changes provoked by human activity are growing in intensity and frequency (cf. *Laudato Deum*, 5), to say nothing of the medium and long-term effects of the human and ecological devastation being wrought by armed conflicts.

As yet, we seem incapable of recognizing that the destruction of nature does not affect everyone in the same way. When justice and peace are trampled underfoot, those who are most hurt are the poor, the marginalized and the excluded. The suffering of indigenous communities is emblematic in this regard.

That is not all. Nature itself is reduced at times to a bargaining chip, a commodity to be bartered for economic or political gain. As a result, God’s creation turns into a battleground for the control of vital resources. We see this in agricultural areas and forests peppered with landmines, “scorched earth” policies,[1] conflicts over water sources, and the unequal distribution of raw materials, which penalizes the poorer nations and undermines social stability itself.

These various wounds are the effect of sin. This is surely not what God had in mind when he entrusted the earth to the men and women whom he created in his image (cf. Genesis 1:24-29). The Bible provides no justification for us to exercise “tyranny over creation” (*Laudato Si'*, 200). On the contrary, “the biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world [cf. Genesis 2:15]. ‘Tilling’ refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature” (ibid., 67).

Environmental justice – implicitly proclaimed by the prophets – can no longer be regarded as an abstract concept or a distant goal. It is an urgent need that involves much more than simply protecting the environment. For it is a matter of justice – social, economic and human. For believers it is also a duty born of faith, since the universe reflects the face of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created and redeemed. In a world where the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the first to suffer the devastating effects of climate change, deforestation and pollution, care for creation becomes an expression of our faith and humanity.

Now is the time to follow words with deeds. “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (*Laudato Si'*, 217). By working with love and perseverance, we can sow many seeds of justice and thus contribute to the growth of peace and the renewal of hope. It may well take years for this plant to bear its first fruits, years that, for their part, involve an entire ecosystem made up of continuity, fidelity, cooperation and love, especially if that love mirrors the Lord’s own self-sacrificing Love.

Among the Church’s initiatives that are like seeds sown in this field, I would mention the Borgo *Laudato Si'* project that Pope Francis bequeathed to us at Castel Gandolfo. It is a seed that promises to bear fruits of justice and peace, and an educational project in integral ecology that can serve as an example of how people can live, work and build community by applying the principles of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

I pray that Almighty God will send us in abundance his “Spirit from on high” (Isaiah 32:15), so that these seeds, and others like them, may bring forth an abundant harvest of peace and hope.

The Encyclical *Laudato Si'* has now guided the Catholic Church and many people of good will for ten years. May it continue to inspire us and may integral ecology be increasingly accepted as the right path to follow. In this way, seeds of hope will multiply, to be “tilled and kept” by the grace of our great and unfailing Hope, who is the risen Christ. In his name, I offer all of you my blessing. From the Vatican, 30 June 2025, Memorial of the First Martyrs of Holy Roman Church. Leo XIV



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	1 Sep	Monday of Ordinary Week 22	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	Luke 4:16-30
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION				
Tuesday X	2 Sep	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 22	1 Thessalonians 5:1-6,9-11	Luke 4:31-37
Wednesday	3 Sep	St Gregory the Great, pope, doctor	Colossians 1:1-8	Luke 4:38-44
Thursday	4 Sep	Thursday of Ordinary Week 22	Colossians 1:9-14	Luke 5:1-11
Friday	5 Sep	Friday of Ordinary Week 22	Colossians 1:15-20	Luke 5:33-39
Saturday	6 Sep	Saturday of Ordinary Week 22	Colossians 1:21-23	Luke 6:1-5
Sunday	7 Sep	23 RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ 1 September to 4 October The Season of Creation <https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>
- ✦ Monday, 1 September World Day of Prayer for the Care of 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
- ✦ Saturday, 13 September 17:30 Family Mass followed by pizza dinner for all

RECIPE: DATE CREAM TART – Recipe from 47 years ago!

Melt 2 tablespoons butter and 1 tablespoon flour in a saucepan. Add 2 cups milk gradually, and ½ cup sugar, ½ cup chopped dates. Simmer till dates are soft. Add the yolks of 2 eggs. Line a dish with tart pastry, fill with the mixture and bake. Put meringue made with whites of 2 eggs and sugar on top. Return to oven and brown.

SIGNS OF HOPE ON THE EDGE: SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2025

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

This year's Social Justice Statement from the Australian Bishops 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. 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.

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](#)

AGED CARE AT HOME

CatholicCare, a ministry of the Diocese of Wollongong, can assist you to access aged care support services at home ensuring you or your loved ones receive the right care and support in your own home. Call ☎ 4211 6103 or go to www.catholiccare.dow.org.au

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C
1st Reading Sirach 3:17-20,28-29
2nd Reading Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24
Gospel Luke 14:1,7-14

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

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C
1st Reading Wisdom 9:13-18
2nd Reading Philemon 9-10,12-17
Gospel Luke 14:25-33

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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 ~~X~~ 17:30

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday