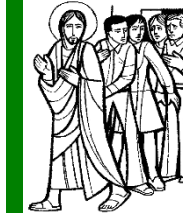


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
6 / 7 SEPTEMBER 2025
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

My Own Heart

Here is a question we will look at this week: what is life about? Many times has this been asked! Let us look at Christ's answer.

According to the first Reading from the Book of Wisdom: "The reasoning of mortals is worthless, and our designs are likely to fail; for a perishable body weighs down the soul, and this earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind. We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labour"

Sounds like the writer was having a bad day. But these words actually do apply to all life. We have choices, we have problems. What are we to do?

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.

This is the Serenity Prayer, well-known, possibly trite to some people. But it shows us the essence of humility: be who you are, not more, not less. Trust in God for everything you cannot do. Let go, let God.

Look at the apostle Paul in the second Reading—the fiery, tempestuous Paul—now an old man and in prison. We are reading a personal letter here, one he wrote to Philemon. It turns out that Philemon's slave Onesimus ran away and came to Paul in his jail cell. Paul became like a father to him, converted him to Christianity and now sends him back to Philemon not as a slave but "as a man and in the Lord."

Listen to the language Paul uses. "I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you." Onesimus is not a servant anymore. Paul is sending someone so dear to him that he refers to that man as "his own heart."

This is true personal love. It is what life here on earth is all about.

The Gospel tells us, is to get our values straight. Jesus says he wants you to "hate your father, mother, children, brothers, sisters, and your own life, and renounce all your possessions, and carry your own cross just as he carries his. Hang on, don't panic. These sound horrible – but examine them.

The word "hate" is probably an oratorical way to say "love them in proportion." If you let love of God be first in your life, your beloved family will come right along with it. If you do not, you will lose them. Hate means not having them be overboard in their importance to you.

Renounce all your possessions: if you are tempted to love material things above all else, then renounce them. It is God you need to love above all things, and everything else only in proportion.

Why are we supposed to carry a cross? Because it is far too easy for us to pretend that the world is not really painful, that no one actually suffers. But they do and we do, in a big way. Taking up our cross sends us out with Jesus to help others carry theirs.

And that is the real and final answer to the problems presented in the first Reading. What is life about here on earth? It is about being humble, about loving others truly, and about loving God above all things.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

From time to time, we should stop and consider how momentous is the decision we have made to be a follower of Jesus. So easily we expect our Christian life to be undisturbed and unchallenged; so that it can become little more than engaging from time to time in consoling practices. We can fail to recognise that we are caught up in nothing less than the life and death struggle of the whole world. The one we are called to follow is the eternal Son of the Father, who became one of us, that through his Paschal Mystery, he may lead us out of the world of selfishness and violence we have made, into a new heaven and new earth, where all is shaped by the generous and merciful ways of his Father. We should not be surprised that, as he undertakes his courageous journey to Jerusalem, his teaching has a sharp edge. It is important, however, to understand what he is asking of us, so that it will not remain little more than a seemingly impossible ideal.

Luke has Jesus giving this teaching to 'great crowds'; it is not teaching for an elite group but teaching that all those who call themselves his followers should take to heart. We must not be misled, of course, by the stark Semitic turn of phrase he uses. He does not tell us that we should have no love for the things most precious in our lives, our many bonds of kinship, even our own life itself. He is telling us that even these things must not be given a preference in our decisions that would amount to a renunciation of Christ and what he stands for. He is showing us the seriousness of the mysterious mission he has received from his Father, as he makes for the Holy City to take up his cross. If we are to be his true followers, we must 'carry his cross and come after him'. Our following must



✠✠ not be half-hearted his two parables tell us. We must weigh up fully the implications of our decision not to allow any consideration to destroy our commitment to him; we must be ready to carry it through to the end. Otherwise, our situation will be like that of the man whose half-completed building is a monument to his foolishness; or worse, like that of the king whose lack of foresight leads him to defeat and death. In the continuation of Luke's text, Jesus tells us that we – who are called to share in his mission to bring wholesomeness to the world – should not become like salt that has lost its taste.

The final words of the gospel are the most challenging of all: 'whoever of you does not give up all their possessions cannot be my disciple'. But these very words help us to understand that Luke is not holding up to us an impossible ideal. Luke stresses the place of poverty in the Christian life; the wording of his first beatitude is blunt: 'Happy are you who are poor' (Luke 6:20); but what follows makes it clear that he does not expect all followers of Jesus to give up all their possessions – they are urged to 'lend, without hope of return' and to 'give' generously. What the Lord asks for is that, in our life commitments, we place all that is most dear to us in his hands, ready to accept whatever he asks of us. Some Christians, of course, receive a personal call to immediate renunciation – a reminder to us all of the seriousness of our following of Christ.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Wisdom 9:13-18

- ✠ It is hard enough "to guess what is in our grasp"—according to the Letter to the Hebrews, "let alone the things of heaven." Can you relate to that statement? Is there anything you are uncertain about in the political arena in your country? Is there anything you are uncertain about in your spiritual life?
- ✠ Does God give you help when you are unclear? Which do you think God prefers in you, perfect certainty—or your best guess, trusting in God?

Second Reading Philemon 9-10, 12-17

- ✠ How did Paul bring about a change or a conversion in Onesimus? What part does love play in any change for the better? Has love worked any changes in your life?
- ✠ Slavery was an accepted institution in Paul's time, but he states a revolutionary idea anyway: there are no divisions in Christ. What causes social divisions in the world today? Can you do anything to change that?

Gospel Luke 14:25-33

- ✠ Is following Jesus a one-time choice or do you have to make it daily? Which would you rather have, all the possessions you could ever want, without Christ, or Christ with no possessions? Can you name some people who lived/live in Christ and have possessed nothing? What does this freedom allow them to do?
- ✠ "Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Do crosses make discipleship desirable? Is there anything that makes us want discipleship, even though it involves crosses? How would Pope Francis answer?

The human heart desires joy. We all desire joy; every family, every people, aspires to happiness. But what is the joy the Christian is called to live out and bear witness to. It is the joy that comes from the closeness of God, from his presence in our life. ...

Jesus has come to bring joy to all people for all time. It is not just a hopeful joy or a joy postponed until paradise, as if here on earth we are sad but in paradise we will be filled with joy. No! It is not that, but a joy already real and tangible now, because Jesus himself is our joy, and with Jesus joy finds its home, ... joy is at home in Jesus.

And our joy is just this: to be his disciples, his friends.

— Pope Francis, *The Joy of Discipleship*, Chapter 5, pp. 78, 79, 89

**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!

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

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

CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES BY ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI – 1225

St Francis composed the Canticle of the Creatures in the Italian dialect of Umbria between 1225 and 1226, during the last year of his life and while suffering from illness and near blindness. Written in a cottage at the little church of San Damiano, where he was cared for by Saint Clare and her nuns, the hymn of praise for God's creation was dictated by Francis, who was unable to physically write it due to his blindness. The Canticle concludes with verses of forgiveness and praise for Sister Death, and was first sung in its entirety by Francis and his close companions, Brothers Angelo and Leo, on his deathbed.

In the last year of his life, Francis was suffering from severe illness and a painful eye disease that left him legally blind. While recovering from an illness at San Damiano, he was cared for by Saint Clare and the Poor Ladies. After a difficult night of suffering and torment, Francis conceived the Canticle as a way to counter feelings of self-pity and find reasons to praise God, dictating it as a hymn of gratitude and wonder.

The Canticle celebrates the beauty of God's creations, from Brother Sun and Sister Moon to Sister Water, Brother Fire, and Brother Wind. Francis viewed all creation as a universal family, a reflection of God's goodness and love, where humans are not isolated but are part of a harmonious relationship with all things. The Canticle also addresses forgiveness, illness, and the praise of Sister Death as a final, necessary part of God's creation. It represents Francis' mature faith, a culmination of his life's journey and conversion, transforming suffering into a profound sense of awe and unity with God's creation.

St Francis once said to a brother who had been a famous troubadour, 'Brother Pacifico, when you preach, go and sing to the people The Canticle of the Creatures, saying that we are God's minstrels, and as our fee for this performance, we want you to live in true penitence.

The Canticle is a very spontaneous poem or prayer flowing from the heart of Francis, it falls into distinguishable segments. The first six lines are devoted to God alone, our Creator, whose exalted status deserves first place in our reverence and high praise. And so, we do well to imitate Francis by letting ourselves be swept up into giving "all praise" and "all glory" and "all honour" to our most high Lord.

Looking ahead at the Canticle's next 19 lines, we focus on the various "brother" and "sister" creatures God has made. We praise God for their beauty and preciousness and for the way they reflect God's own goodness. It is fitting therefore that we embrace these creatures as brothers and sisters and as members of the same family to which you and I belong.

St Francis "did not turn away from creatures; he became one with them in a fraternal relationship that resisted domination." It is with great joy and reverence therefore that we warmly accept these creatures and praise God with them and through them.

Some time after Francis wrote and joyfully sang the original lines of the Canticle, he composed four lines to help resolve a dispute that had arisen between the mayor of Assisi and the bishop. Francis asked a friar to sing these lines in the presence of the two men so they might be reconciled. And, indeed, a reconciliation did take place. These words also inspire us in our day to seek reconciliation with one another out of love for God. They will also lead us to peace—and to great blessings from the Most High: *Praised be you, my Lord through those who give pardon for your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, shall they be crowned.*

Finally, not many days before Francis saw his own death approaching, he added the final seven lines to his great *Canticle of the Creatures*.

SAINT CARLO ACUTIS: PATRON SAINT OF THE INTERNET

On Sunday, 7 September 2025, Pope Leo will canonise **Carlo Acutis** who was born in London on 3 May 1991 and died on 12 October 2006. When he was a few months old, he moved with his parents to Milan, Italy. Carlo was diagnosed with leukemia as a teenager. Before his death, he offered his sufferings for Pope Benedict XVI and for the Church, saying: "I offer all of my suffering to the Lord for the pope and for the Church in order not to go to purgatory but to go straight to heaven." From a young age, Carlo had a special love for God, even though his parents weren't especially devout. Antonia Salzano, his mum, said that before Carlo, she went to Mass only for her first Communion, her confirmation, and her wedding. But as a young child, Carlo loved to pray the rosary. After he made his first Communion, he went to Mass as often as possible at the parish across from his elementary school. Carlo's love for the Eucharist also inspired a deep conversion for his mother.

Carlo's witness of faith as a child led adults to convert and be baptized. Rajesh Mohur, who worked for the Acutis family as an au pair when Carlo was young, converted from Hinduism to Catholicism because of Carlo's witness. Carlo taught Mohur how to pray the rosary and told him about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Mohur said that one of the things that most impressed him as a non-Christian was the witness of Carlo's love and concern for the poor — how he interacted with the homeless man who would sit at the entrance of the church and would bring containers filled with food out to people living on the streets.

Carlo wasn't afraid to defend Church teaching, even in situations when his classmates disagreed with him. Carlo was a faithful friend. He was known for standing up for kids at school who got bullied, especially kids with disabilities. When a friend's parents were getting a divorce, Carlo made a special effort to include his friend in the Acutis' family life. Carlo was fascinated with computer coding and taught himself some of the basic coding languages. Carlo loved playing video games. His mother recalls that he liked Nintendo Game Boy and GameCube as well as PlayStation and Xbox.

Carlo died of leukemia on 12 October 2006; he was buried in Assisi. His feast day is 12 October.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	8 Sep	The Nativity of the Virgin Mary	Micah 5:1-4	Matthew 1:1-16,18-23
Tuesday	9 Sep	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 23	Colossians 2:6-15	Luke 6:12-19
Wednesday	10 Sep	Wednesday of Ordinary Week 23	Colossians 3:1-11	Luke 6:20-26
Thursday	11 Sep	Thursday of Ordinary Week 23	Colossians 3:12-17	Luke 6:27-38
Friday	12 Sep	Friday of Ordinary Week 23	1 Timothy 1:1-2,12-14	Luke 6:39-42
Saturday	13 Sep	Saturday of Ordinary Week 23	1 Timothy 1:15-17	Luke 6:43-49
Sunday	14 Sep	THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ 1 September to 4 October The Season of Creation <https://seasonofcreation.org/resources/>
- ✦ 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 for ALL followed by pizza dinner for all**
- ✦ Weekend, 13-14 September Blessing of those celebrating September Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays

RECIPE: CHICKEN AND ASPARAGUS CASSEROLE

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves; 1 bunch asparagus (about 10 spears), trimmed and cut in half; ~400g can reduced-fat cream of chicken soup; ¼ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise; 2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice; ¼-½ teaspoon curry powder, depending on taste; ½ cup reduced-fat shredded cheddar cheese; ¼ cup breadcrumbs; 2 tablespoons melted butter. Preheat oven to 180°C. Fill a large pot two-thirds full of water and bring to a boil. Boil chicken until tender, about 20 minutes. Let chicken cool and shred into pieces by hand. Set aside. While chicken is boiling, mix together soup, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and curry powder, and then set aside. Spread asparagus on the bottom of a large casserole dish. Arrange chicken on top of asparagus, and pour the soup mixture over the top. Sprinkle the casserole with cheese and breadcrumbs, drizzle melted butter over the top, and bake at 180°C for 30-35 minutes, until crisp and bubbly. Cover with foil if it starts to get too brown.

BLESSING OF FATHERS – HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

May the God of strength be with you, holding you in strong-fingered hands. May you be a strength to those whose hands you hold. May the God of gentleness be with you, caressing you with sunlight, rain and wind. May God's tenderness shine through you, to warm all who are hurt and lonely. May the God of mercy be with you, forgiving you, beckoning you, encouraging you. May your readiness to forgive calm the fears, and deepen the trust of those who hurt you. May the God of wonder be with you, delighting you, enchanting your senses, filling your heart, giving you wide-open eyes for seeing the splendour in the humble and the majestic. May you open the eyes and hands and hearts of the blind and the deaf and the insensitive. May the God of wisdom and love be with you, lighting within you the fires of faith and hope. May your children honour you always with a spirit of profound respect and friendship.

Happy Father's Day to all fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers – and father-figures.

FAMILY MASS – AND DINNER: NEXT SATURDAY, 17:30 MASS

All parishioners are invited to the Family Mass and Dinner **next Saturday, 13 September**. Families from our Parish Primary School will be coming to the Parish for the Mass. **Even if you don't come to the Mass, come along afterwards for pizza and drinks in the church.** A great way to celebrate. A great way for parishioners to mix with the families from our Parish Primary School. **All are welcome, so please come along and enjoy the evening.**

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

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

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

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS	
1 st Reading	Numbers 21:4-9
2 nd Reading	Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel	John 3:13-17

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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