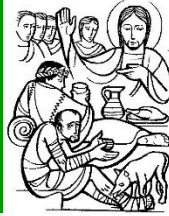


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
27 / 28 SEPTEMBER 2025
26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
THE SEASON OF CREATION

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Rags and Riches

A wise man came to a banquet, dirty and dressed in rags. The host protested his sloppy appearance and told him to go dress properly. Then he would be welcome.

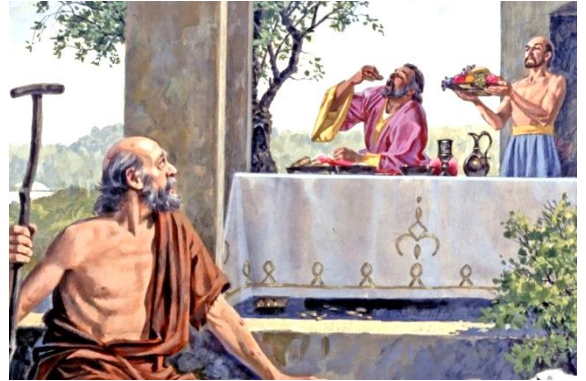
So, the prophet went and bathed in the river and then dressed himself in the finest clothing he could borrow. Returning to the party he found himself warmly welcomed and even honoured.

But as the evening proceeded, someone noticed the man sitting in a corner. The host demanded to know why the man was putting all the expensive food, spoon by spoon, into the sleeve of his fine garment!

The man answered, "It was not me that you invited to the banquet; obviously it was my clothes. So, I am giving them what a guest should receive!"

Which is more important, the human person or the luxuries of life by which s/he is surrounded?

A second story, this one from the Gospel for Sunday. A rich man went to hell. In life a poor beggar had lain at his door, starving, but he had ignored this tramp entirely. When both of them died, the poor man, surprisingly, was cradled in heaven in the bosom of Abraham, while the rich man was agonizing in flames. Fine food and fine clothes, his normal fare, did not save him.



The first Reading has a description of the luxury which the rich man had preferred instead of his fellow human being. God used this story to describe the complacent people in Zion, who were lying on beds of ivory. ... They eat lambs from the flock and calves from the stall! ... They drink wine from bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils. ... God says they shall be the first to go into exile.

If you live in the "First World"—in the Australia, for example—the amount of coddling you receive every single day far surpasses anything described in these stories. Our population uses a significant portion of the world's resources. Are we helping to overlook the world's people as we "relax on our couches" and gobble up our television shows? Are we, like the rich man, never glancing at the poor outside our door? In death, that man got exactly what his whole life had pointed to: a future empty of true relationship to anyone else!

The rich man cried out from Hades, "Send Lazarus [the poor man] to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames." But father Abraham replied from heaven that the gap was too wide. The rich man then at last thought to ask help for someone else: "send Lazarus (from the dead) to warn my five brothers so that they will not also come into this place of torment!"

Father Abraham answered, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Listen to those words!

Someone at last has risen from the dead. Will we be persuaded finally to give people in need what they deserve, or will we continue, totally absorbed in how we are fed and dressed?

Luke returns to the teaching of Jesus concerning poverty and wealth. In today's gospel reading, however, we are taken to a new level of understanding, as the issue is related to the very heart of the Good News brought by the Saviour. With the parable of Lazarus at the rich man's gate, Jesus shows his skills as a storyteller, able to enthrall his listeners, as he challenges their complacency.

This story, we are told, is addressed 'to the Pharisees', many of whom were attached to their wealth, seeing it as a sign of God's favour. The rich man in the story is not condemned for evil behaviour. Reading between the lines, we may well conclude that he thought he had treated Lazarus well – he had allowed him to remain at the gate in his destitution; and he was happy for him to have the leftovers of his feasting. The Pharisees are told, however, that when he repeatedly addressed Abraham as his 'father' he was rejected. On the other hand, Lazarus – whose name means '**God helps**' – is received by Abraham as the guest of honour – at the eschatological banquet looked forward to by the prophets ('in the bosom of Abraham' indicates his reclining at table next to Abraham). The rich man, and those like him, are not accepted as true children of Abraham, because, in their complacent insensitivity, they have disregarded the teaching of the Law of Moses and the exhortations of God's prophets – a teaching that Jesus makes his own.

Lazarus represents 'the poor', whose cry the Lord hears – the common people looked down upon by the Pharisees, people whose straitened circumstances made it next to impossible for them to carry out the many prescriptions seen by this well-to-do group as a true observance of the covenant. Because the power structures of their people left these '*anawim*' disenfranchised, they must stand before God in a trust and hope that kept alive the genuine faith



✠ traditions of Israel's covenant with their God. Jesus himself comes from their midst; and his great mission will carry forward the ways of his Father, the God of the covenant – revealed from the first as the champion of the poor and oppressed. Those who follow him are from this background; and the communities they form will share their outlook (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27: 'Consider, brothers and sisters, how you were called ... not many influential ... God chose those who are weak to shame the strong'). Jesus appeals, in his parable, to the prophets, so often defenders of the powerless and mouthpieces of their faith – as in the stinging rebuke of Amos in today's Reading. It was the prophets who condemned the empty ritualism that was an escape from what the covenant really required – 'Is this not the fast that pleases me ... sharing your food with the hungry and sheltering the homeless poor' (Isaiah 58:6-7).

The lesson of the parable, of course, extends far beyond the need for material assistance. Our neighbours have also emotional and spiritual needs, to which true followers of Jesus will respond in friendship and concern.

The Gospel reminds us that the most important thing for us is to do the will of God. This is not a matter only of words or of good intentions. It is a matter of decision. Jesus could say of himself that he always did what was pleasing to his Father. Let us watch Jesus, let us follow him, and let us pray that his Spirit will so inform our minds and hearts that we too will want only what God wants and find our pleasure in doing God's will.

How do we know God's will? The community can be of great help to us here. We have a long and rich tradition that holds a good deal of wisdom, for it is the product of the reflections and saintly lives of millions of disciples of Jesus. We are rather foolish if we think that we know better than the Church. Sometimes, in particular instances, what is presented as Church teaching concerning human behaviour is not based on faith or on properly assessed human experience. In matters that are not central to our communal faith there can be room for disagreement. But if we always think we know better than the community, and if we fail to take notice of the ordinary wisdom that is contained in time-honoured teaching, we are neglecting a most important source for the discovery of God's will.

In all matters, however, our conscience is primary. By conscience we do not mean our personal preferences. We do not mean the way we happen to look at things. We are not referring to our prejudices or what gratifies our self-interest. We are talking about the sacred encounter between God and ourselves that takes place in the depths of our being. Whatever advice we receive from others, we must take it to prayer and listen to our hearts where God is inspiring us to follow his ways. God is calling each of us to take a step in love from where we now are. Ultimately only we can know what that step is, for only we can know our readiness and where grace is leading us at this moment. The art of obedience, therefore, is based on a humble listening to others and a courageous trust in God, whose Spirit is inspiring us to do the truth in love.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said that he was doing this 'so that sin might be forgiven' (Matthew 26:28). When we accept the Bread, the Body of Christ, and drink from the Cup, the Blood of Christ, at this Eucharist we are saying that we will do what he does. May our broken lives witness to our desire to further Jesus' dream, for only through forgiveness can we sinful human beings find the courage to continue our journey to the heart of God.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Amos 6:1,4-7

- ✠ Do self-indulgence and wealth necessarily go together? Are indulgences and related complacency related to your ability to hear the cry of the poor?
- ✠ Would you choose the people in this reading to be your best friends? Why? What's missing in a person's life if all possible time and effort is consumed with caring for his or her needs and desires? Put the people in this reading at one end of a self-indulgence spectrum and Mother Teresa at the other. Where do you fall?

Second Reading 1 Timothy 6:11-16

- ✠ Jesus said to Pilate, "the reason I have come into the world is to bear witness to the truth." What do you do that bears witness to the truth? Do you think, "Lay hold of eternal life" means that you should try to grab eternal life or that you should let God grab you?
- ✠ How do patience, gentleness, and love relate to your bearing witness to the truth? How is your gentleness? Your patience? Your love?

Gospel Luke 16:19-31

- ✠ Where would you find the poor person today? What would he or she look like? Do you recognize and care for him or her as God's beloved child, or do you want to roll up your window or shut your door when you see him/her coming? Are you somewhere in between these alternatives?
- ✠ What did Pope Francis suggest as a help for us when we find ourselves acting as the rich man in the parable?

Let us think seriously today about the rich man and Lazarus. This happens every day. And many times also — shame on us — it happens in us, this battle, between us, in the community. And when hope is extinguished and we feel within us the loneliness of the heart, inner weariness, the torment of sin, the fear of failure, let us again return to the taste of bread. We are all sinners: each one of us bears his or her own sins. But, sinners, let us return to the taste of the Eucharist, the taste of bread. Let us return to Jesus, let us worship Jesus, let us welcome Jesus. Because he is the only one who defeats death and always renews our life.

— Pope Francis, *Homily*, 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 25 September 2022

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM – DIRECT DEBIT

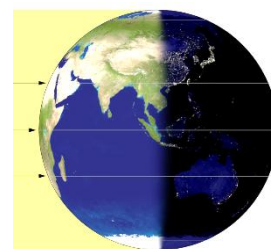
This weekend, the new series of **Planned Giving Envelopes** are available – they start on 4/5 October. Planned Giving helps maintain the parish funds so the parish can survive financially. If you do not use the Planned Giving Envelopes, you might consider using the **Monthly Direct Debit Program**. Forms to join the Planned Giving Program – either with the **weekly envelopes** or the **monthly direct debit** – are available this weekend. **Please consider joining this program to assist the parish.** Complete the **GREEN** form and return it next weekend – **put it on any collection basket or hand it to the parish office.** The back of the **green** form gives an explanation of what “Planned Giving” is all about. **Thank you for your generosity to the parish.**

PLANNED GIVING 2025-2026	
Please complete this form if you are already in the Planned Giving Program or you would like to join the Planned Giving Program. See over for explanation.	
Method of contribution: (please ✓ one box)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly Direct Debit (a form will be mailed or emailed to the address below)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly envelopes (new envelopes commence Sunday, 4/5 October 2025)
FIRST NAME: _____	
FAMILY NAME: _____	
STREET ADDRESS: _____	
SUBURB: _____	POST CODE: _____
Home Phone: _____	Mobile: _____
Email address: _____	
Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____	

PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA – FOOD ITEMS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED
Thank you for your great generosity!

SPRING EQUINOX 2025

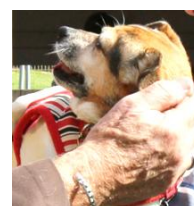
The Spring Equinox, marking the start of astronomical spring in Sydney, 2025, will occur on **Tuesday, 23 September 2025, at 04:19**. It is important to note the difference between a solstice and an equinox: the solstice is the longest or shortest day, while the equinox is when day and night are nearly equal in length. The Spring Equinox is one of the two days of the year when the sun and the earth's equator align, resulting in nearly equal amounts of daylight and darkness.



BLESSING OF ANIMALS, MONDAY, 6 OCTOBER AT 09:30.

As usual, the Blessing of Animals will take place on the **Monday** of the long weekend, **6 October at 09:30**. The blessing takes place in the courtyard next to the church. All animals under 800kg and their carers/handlers are welcome, though please keep the larger pythons on a tight leash. The **feast of St Francis of Assisi** is on **Saturday, 4 October**, with a special **Mass at 09:30 on Saturday, 4 October** – animals are welcome at that Mass.

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan; it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.



SEASON OF CREATION

The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration to pray and respond together to the cry of Creation: the ecumenical family from all over the world unites to listen and care for our common home.

The “Celebration” began on 1 September, the Feast of Creation, and ends on 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations.

Pope Leo's Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2025: “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.”



SEASON OF SURFING

This weekend, the **flags** will go up on our beaches – surfing season is back. **SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS**. In the **2024-2025** period, Australia recorded its highest ever drowning death toll with **357 fatalities**, a **27% increase** from the 10-year average. There was a significant rise in deaths among older adults, a decrease in swimming skills, and a higher proportion of drownings in coastal and inland waterways rather than pools. **Be safe on our beaches.**



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	29 Sep	Sts Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, archangels	Revelation 12:7-12	John 1:47-51
Tuesday	30 Sep	St Jerome, priest, doctor	Zechariah 8:20-23	Luke 9:51-56
Wednesday	1 Oct	St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, virgin, doctor	Nehemiah 2:1-8	Luke 9:57-62
Thursday	2 Oct	The Holy Guardian Angels	Exodus 23:20-23	Matthew 18:1-5
Friday	3 Oct	Friday of Ordinary Week 26	Baruch 1:15-22	Luke 10:13-16
Saturday	4 Oct	St Francis of Assisi	Sirach 50:1,3-4,6-7	Galatians 6:14-18
Sunday	5 Oct	27 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Thursday, 2 October	19:15	Baptism Preparation Meeting for October Baptisms
✦ Friday, 3 October	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Saturday, 4 October	09:30	MASS FOR THE FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI
✦ Weekend, 4–6 October		Transport Heritage Expo, Central Station https://www.transportheritageexpo.com/
✦ Monday, 6 October	09:30	BLESSING OF ANIMALS
✦ Wednesday, 8 October	11:00	Catholic Women's League Meeting

RECIPE: NO-BAKE CARAMEL SLICE

Base: 250g Vanilla Wine Biscuits, or Marie, Arrowroot, Digestive, Rich Tea etc.; 155g Butter, melted; 1 tspn Vanilla Flavoured Essence; (optional - 2 Tablespoons Finely Desiccated Coconut). Filling: 1 x 395g can Sweetened Condensed Milk; 60g Butter, cubed; 2 tablespoons Golden Syrup (30ml); pinch Salt. Topping: 125g Milk or Dark Chocolate; 1 tspn Oil (vegetable or coconut).

Line a 20 or 23 cm square baking tin with baking paper (20cm for a thick slice, 23cm for thin) and set aside. Melt the butter in a small bowl, in 20-30 second bursts in the microwave, then add to this the vanilla and set aside to cool slightly while you prepare the biscuits. In a food processor or blender add the biscuits and crush to a fine crumb. pour the butter mixture into the biscuits and blend well (if using coconut add this now also). Tip this into the lined tin and gently press this into a flat layer, then using the back of a measuring cup or similar press the crumbs into an even compact layer, not too firm but well packed. Pop this into the fridge while you prepare the caramel. In a small saucepan, add the condensed milk, cubes of butter, golden syrup and a pinch of salt. *You will need to use a heat-proof rubber spatula, with a squarish end, to constantly scrape the sides, base and corners of the saucepan, never leaving the pan during the cooking time or it will quickly catch and burn.* Caramel is HOT. On the stove top, on a medium/low heat begin to melt the butter into the mixture, constantly scraping the base, sides and corners of the saucepan to ensure it does not catch. Once the butter has melted, set a timer for 10 minutes, and the mixture will come to a gentle bubble, adjusting the temperature down if need be. Continue to scrape and stir constantly, the colour will begin to change. At the ten-minute mark, reduce the temp a little further and continue to cook and scrape for 5-7 minutes more until the caramel really starts to thicken and become a lovely golden colour. Remove from the heat and pour this over the cooled base, then spread evenly with the back of a spoon or a spatula, then give the dish a jiggle to evenly disperse the caramel. Place the pan in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to cool slightly before preparing the chocolate topping. In a small microwave proof bowl or ramekin, place pieces of chocolate and melt in 20-30 second increments until no lumps remain, then add the oil and mix it through well. Pour the melted chocolate over the slightly cooled caramel and spread evenly with the back of a spoon. Then give it a little jiggle to settle the chocolate into a smooth even layer. Refrigerate for 6 hours to set the caramel, or overnight. Before cutting the slice, remove it from the oven 20 minutes before to bring it slightly to room temperature.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Amos 6:1,4-7
2 nd Reading	1 Timothy 6:11-16
Gospel	Luke 16:19-31

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

27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Habakuk 1:2-3, 2:2-4
2 nd Reading	2 Timothy 1:6-8,13-14
Gospel	Luke 17:5-9

🌐 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

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