



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirrourl



PARISH BULLETIN
4 / 5 OCTOBER 2025
27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
ST FRANCIS AND THE BLESSING OF ANIMALS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Believe It

Faith.

What is faith?

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” So says the Letter to the Hebrews (11:1).

Do you have any doubt that various cities around the world exist, even though you have not actually walked in them? Moscow, Katmandu, Tokyo? And can you make plans for dinner with a friend if you suspect that s/he is just a figment of your imagination? No. So, you have a conviction of things (or persons) not seen. You have faith.

This is a first answer, a ground level meaning of the word faith, a simple one. We can say “God exists,” but others might reply, “so what? I believe my spleen exists, but so what?” So, maybe there is more than a simple belief that “God exists.”

That “more” might mean relationship.

You have assurance that a friend will be loyal to you, will be true to the promise contained in friendship. You have faith that your relationship with your friend will not expire.

This is a higher level of faith.

It includes doubt as well. There are moments when it feels like a trusted friend has turned away from you. Such moments are terrible. Some people avoid close relationships altogether just for fear of this kind of a betrayal!

Understandable as such fear is, all of us need gradually and prudently to open ourselves up to deeper friendships. We need and want to love and be loved and it takes time to learn how. Hurt does not have to mean cancellation.

We see a third level of faith in the first Reading. The prophet Habakkuk witnesses a lot of harm and speaks to God with great emotion.

How long, O Lord? I cry for help, but you do not listen. Why do you let me see ruin? Why must I look at misery? Maybe Habakkuk did not know that hurt can be part of a good relationship. He demands to know how the Lord could be so unmoved. Surprisingly, God answers, in a lengthy and encouraging reply. “There is still a vision for the appointed time,” he says; “it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.”

Reassuring.

However, the stumbling block in this level is “wait for it.” God will make things better but not yet. Our insides scream “*Not yet! What are you talking about? Why don't you help us right now? Why are you delaying and giving suffering such a feast?*”

The apostles say roughly the same thing to Jesus in the Gospel:

Increase our faith!

What is the Lord's answer? It surely seems like delay, delay, delay.

But, in truth, God is using delay as a way of increasing our faith.

What if we are not yet ready for the depth of God's answers? What if we are not quite ready for true relationship? God brings us along until we become ready for more.

According to Jesus it does not matter how much faith you have, a carload or a teaspoon full. Stay in there and the remainder will come, he says.

The teaching of Jesus in today's gospel, in response to the plea of the apostles, has an important lesson for all Christians. It would be unfortunate if the comparisons he uses - very strange to our ears - got in the way, as we listen to him. Black and white affirmations and vivid images were taken for granted by the cultural tradition in which Jesus shared. Perhaps he was near a mulberry tree as he spoke. That a mulberry bush, a fair-sized tree with an extensive root system familiar to his audience, should suddenly be re-established in the sea, was clearly an impossibility in the world of ordinary experience. But the point Jesus is making is that those who have ‘faith’ will know things that are impossible, except to God.

The notion of faith with which we are most familiar - knowing, through the authority of God, truths that would otherwise be beyond our grasp - is sound as far as it goes, but incomplete when compared with what the



✠✠ Scriptures tell us about God's gift of faith. The 'faith' that Jesus constantly referred to in the gospels was an openness to the coming of God in the miraculous signs he worked. God has been revealed, as the Scriptures constantly remind us, in the 'great things' God has done. The eternal Son was sent by the Father to bring about the final achievement of all. He 'must suffer' and 'rise again' he tells his companions as they press forward to Jerusalem; he looks forward to his 'hour', John's gospel tells us. Though the mission of Jesus meets with resistance, and his followers are told they must expect the same, 'faith' will be their strength – the openness that recognizes – owns, finds new life in – what God has done for the world in the Saviour's Paschal Mystery.

Now the link with the other comparison recalled by Luke in this passage becomes clear. This comparison leaves us uncomfortable, because it refers to the relationship between master and slave that was taken for granted in the world that produced the gospels. Jesus is not approving this system, but he draws a comparison with it to bring out the nature of the relationship with the Lord that the disciple who lives by faith should have. Like the apostles, we are all sent out – given a share in the Saviour's own mission and what God achieves through him. We are reminded, however, that we are no more than God's instruments – whatever has lasting worth for the final kingdom is all God's work. This applies to us all; but it has an obvious importance for those who are called to serve within the Christian community. In the reading from the letter to Timothy, those who have such roles are told, therefore, to 'rely on the power of God' and 'the help of the Holy Spirit'.

The final words of Habakkuk, 'the upright man will live by his faithfulness', had great influence in Christian thought. Paul linked his fundamental principle, 'we are justified by faith', with this text – in his dispute with those who wanted to impose on all the observance of the old Law. Clearly, Paul's principle expresses the mind of Jesus – faith is God's gift, through which we own the new life brought to the world by the Saviour. Though it be as tiny as a mustard seed, our faith will be real when it bears fruit in love.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

- ✠ Can you relate to this reading from the Book of Habakkuk? The writer could no longer endure violence, abuse and oppression in the world. What about you? Where do the challenges of discipleship arise for you?
- ✠ Habakkuk speaks of misery and violence. What helps you survive misery in your life? In a tough situation can faith sustain you? Do you need to exercise your faith in lesser matters in order to be ready?

Second Reading 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

- ✠ What did Paul say God gave us instead of the "spirit of cowardice?" How can we "stir into flames" the power of love and self-control? Can love overcome cowardice and be a weapon for Christians?
- ✠ Discuss authoritarianism, empathy and openness. Which are signs of strength? And which of weakness? What about love or cowardice?

Gospel Luke 17:5-10

- ✠ Is quantity an issue when it comes to faith? Would an infinitely small amount of faith (a mustard seed's worth) fulfill what Jesus promised to the apostles?
- ✠ Do you know people, as Pope Francis suggests below, who, with "incredibly strong faith," have moved mountains? Or as this Gospel asserts, have uprooted mulberry trees? Who are they? What have they accomplished? Can your faith help you do the kinds of things they did? Can it help you overcome obstacles?

The mustard seed is very small, but Jesus says that it is enough to have a faith like this, small, but true, sincere to do things that are humanly impossible, unthinkable. And it is true! We all know people who are simple, humble, but with an incredibly strong faith, who truly move mountains!

– Pope Francis, *Angelus Message*, 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 6 October 2013

CATHOLIC TRADITION OF CARING FOR CREATION

There has always been a strong Catholic tradition of caring for our common home. In the 13th century, St Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of Creation* and many popes since have discussed the natural environment in their encyclicals. Pope Francis released *Laudato Si'*, meaning "Praise be to you", in June 2015. It is clear from Pope Francis' encyclical that, as Catholics, we are called to take action for climate justice.

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM – DIRECT DEBIT

The new series of **Planned Giving Envelopes** are now 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 – **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.**

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]

- ☐ Monthly Direct Debit (a form will be mailed or emailed to the address below)
☐ 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: ____/____/____

POPE LEO SPEAKS WITH PARTICIPANTS IN THE JUBILEE OF JUSTICE

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of the Jubilee dedicated to those who, in various capacities, work in the vast field of justice. I greet the distinguished authorities present, who have come from many countries, representing various courts, and all of you who daily carry out a necessary service for orderly relations between individuals, communities and states. I also greet the other pilgrims who have joined this Jubilee! The Jubilee makes us all pilgrims who, in rediscovering the signs of a hope that does not disappoint, wish “to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God’s gift of creation” (Francis, *Spes Non Confundit*, 25).

What better occasion than this to reflect more closely on justice and its function, which we know is indispensable both for the orderly development of society and as a cardinal virtue that inspires and guides the conscience of every man and woman. Justice, in fact, is called to play a higher role in human coexistence, one that cannot be reduced to the mere application of the law or the work of judges, nor limited to procedural aspects.

The biblical expression, “Love justice and hate wickedness” (*Psalms* 45:7), reminds us and encourages us to do good and avoid evil. Indeed, how much wisdom is contained in the maxim, “Give to each his due!” Yet all this does not exhaust the deep desire for justice that is present in each of us, the thirst for justice that is the key instrument for building the common good in every human society. In fact, justice encompasses the dignity of the individual, his or her relationships with others, and the communal dimension of coexistence, with its structures and shared rules. It establishes a circularity of social relations, which places the value of every human being at its core and seeks to preserve that value through justice, especially in the face of conflicts that may arise from individual actions or from a loss of communal awareness that affects institutions and structures.

Tradition teaches us that justice is, first and foremost, a virtue, that is, a firm and stable attitude that orders our conduct according to reason and faith (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1804). The virtue of justice, in particular, consists in the “constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbour” (ibid., 1807). In this perspective, for the believer, justice calls us “to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good” (ibid.). Its aim is to guarantee an order that protects the weak – those who seek justice because they have been oppressed, excluded or ignored.

There are many examples in the Gospels in which human actions are measured by a justice that can overcome the evil of abuse. For instance, there is the persistence of the widow who urges the judge to recover his sense of justice (cf. *Luke* 18:1-8). There is also a higher justice that pays the worker of the last hour as much as the one who works all day (cf. *Matthew* 20:1-16); a justice that makes mercy the key to understanding relationships and leads us to forgiveness, welcoming the son who was lost and has been found (cf. *Luke* 15:11-32); and even more, a justice that calls us to forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven (cf. *Matthew* 18:21-35). It is this power of forgiveness, intrinsic to the commandment of love, that emerges as a constitutive element of a justice capable of combining the supernatural with the human.

Evangelical justice, therefore, does not take away from human justice, but challenges and refines it. It prompts human justice to go ever further, impelling it towards the pursuit of reconciliation. Evil, in fact, must not only be punished but also repaired, and to this end, it is necessary to look deeply at the well-being of individuals and the common good. This task is arduous, but not impossible for those who, aware of performing a service that is more demanding than others, are committed to leading an irreproachable life.

As we know, justice becomes concrete when it reaches out to others, when each person is given their due, until equality in dignity and opportunity among human beings is achieved. However, we are aware that effective equality is not the same as formal equality before the law. While formal equality is an indispensable condition for the proper exercise of justice, it does not eliminate the reality of growing discrimination, the primary effect of which is precisely the lack of access to justice. True equality, on the other hand, is the possibility given to all to realize their aspirations and to have the rights inherent in their dignity guaranteed by a system of common and shared values – values capable of inspiring the norms and laws on which the functioning of institutions is based.

Today, what compels those involved in the administration of justice is precisely the search for – or recovery of – the values that have been forgotten in our shared life together, as well as their care and respect. This is a useful and necessary process in the face of the emergence of behaviours and strategies that show contempt for human life from its very beginning, deny basic rights essential to personal existence, and fail to respect the conscience from which freedoms flow. It is precisely through the values that underpin social life that justice assumes its central role in the coexistence of individuals and human communities. As Saint Augustine wrote: “Justice is not such if it is not at the same time prudent, strong and temperate” (*Letters* 167, 2, 5). This requires the ability to think always in the light of truth and wisdom, to interpret the law profoundly – beyond its purely formal dimension – in order to grasp the deeper meaning of the truth we serve. Striving towards justice, therefore, demands the capacity to love it as a reality that can only be attained through constant attentiveness, radical selflessness and persistent discernment. When justice is exercised, one places oneself at the service of individuals, society and the state, with full and unwavering dedication. The greatness of justice does not diminish when it is applied to small matters, but it always emerges when exercised with fidelity to the law and with respect for the person, wherever in the world they may be (cf. Saint Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* IV, 18, 35).

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (*Matthew* 5:6). With this beatitude, the Lord Jesus expresses the spiritual tension to which we must be open – not only to obtain true justice, but above all to seek it, especially on the part of those called to accomplish it in different historical circumstances. To “hunger and thirst” for justice means recognizing that it demands personal effort to interpret the law in the most humane way possible. But, above all, it calls for striving toward a “satisfaction” that can only be attained in a greater justice that transcends particular situations.

Dear friends, the Jubilee invites us to reflect also on an aspect of justice that is often overlooked: the reality of so many countries and peoples who “hunger and thirst for justice” because their living conditions are so inequitable and inhuman as to be unacceptable. To the current international landscape, therefore, should be applied the following ever-valid pronouncements: “Without justice, the state cannot be administered; it is impossible to have law in a state where there is no true justice. An act performed according to law is certainly performed according to justice, and it is impossible for an act to be truly lawful if it is carried out against justice... A state without justice is not a state. Justice is, in fact, the virtue that gives to each person what is due to them. Therefore, it is not true justice that separates humanity from the true God” (Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XIX, 21, 1). May these demanding words of Saint Augustine inspire each of us to express the exercise of justice as a service of the people, to the best of our ability, always with our gaze turned toward God, so as to fully respect justice, law and the dignity of every person.

With this hope, I thank and bless each of you, your families and your work. Leo XIV. Rome. 20 September 2025.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Monday	6 Oct	Monday of Ordinary Week 27
Tuesday	7 Oct	Our Lady of the Rosary
Wednesday	8 Oct	Wednesday of Ordinary Week 27
Thursday	9 Oct	Thursday of Ordinary Week 27
Friday	10 Oct	Friday of Ordinary Week 27
Saturday	11 Oct	Saturday of Ordinary Week 27
Sunday	12 Oct	28 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Jonah 1:1–2:1,11	Luke 10:25-37
Jonah 3:1-10	Luke 10:38-42
Jonah 4:1-11	Luke 11:1-4
Malachi 3:113-20	Luke 11:5-13
Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2	Luke 11:15-26
Joel 4:12-21	Luke 11:27-28

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ 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/
✦ Sunday, 5 October	02:00	Daylight Saving begins – “Spring forward”
✦ Monday, 6 October	09:30	BLESSING OF ANIMALS
✦ Wednesday, 8 October	11:00	Catholic Women’s League Meeting
✦ Saturday, 11 October	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul
✦ Weekend, 11-12 October		Blessing of October Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Monday, 13 October	09:00	School resumes for Term 4
✦ Tuesday, 14 October	19:30	Meeting for Parents – First Penance and Communion

RECIPE: BISCOFF CARAMEL SLICE

Crust 250g Biscoff biscuits; 100g melted butter. Caramel: 1 tin condensed milk; ½ cup brown sugar; 100g Biscoff spread (smooth); 2 tbsp treacle; 50g butter; 1 tsp salt. Biscoff topping: 100g white chocolate; 100g Biscoff spread.

Prepare the tin with baking paper. Crush your biscuits. Melt the butter and add to the crushed biscuits until wet sand vibes. Pour crumbs into the cake tin and press down firmly until it is all even. Add all caramel ingredients to a saucepan and mix over a medium heat. Allow the caramel to bubble and thicken until it starts to slightly crust around the edge. Pour caramel over the biscuit base and smooth out. Add to a preheated oven set at 180°C, and bake for about 10-15 minutes until the caramel has browned at the top and the edges are browned, it should look crinkly wrinkly. Allow to cool to room temp and then set in the fridge for at least 4 hours or overnight. Prepare the topping by melting the chocolate and adding the Biscoff spread. Mix and pour over the caramel layer and smooth out. Before it has set, add the biscuits in side-by-side and allow to set. Using a giant hot knife, cut into rectangles.

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!

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.

SEASON OF SURFING – SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website

27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

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

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

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	2 Kings 5:14-17
2 nd Reading	2 Timothy 2:8-13
Gospel	Luke 17:11-19

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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