



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
11 / 12 OCTOBER 2025
28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
REFLECTION ON ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Gratitude

Sunday's Scripture narrates two leprosy cures and two reactions to them.

Once, when I presided at a baptism, it was so easy to see the difference between my own old flesh and the soft clean skin of the infant girl who received the sacrament.

What would your reaction be if you were made fresh as a baby, after your skin had been that of a leper? You or I would probably open a website to sell soft skin!

In the Gospel, Jesus heals ten lepers. He sends them off, saying, "Go show yourselves to the priests." They do, but on the way, they find out that they are already cleansed! And maybe the point of the Scripture is that only one former leper—and it is a Samaritan—has eyes to see what this healing means.

Extolling God in a loud voice, this one comes back to Jesus. He drops to the ground giving thanks. The other nine? They must have been glad they had won the sweepstakes and had not thought about who had done the cure.

Jesus offers a soul-cure as well as a bodily one. Too bad those others missed it!

Second, in the first Reading, a leper, Naaman—also a Samaritan—is healed by Elisha the prophet. Naaman is told to plunge into the Jordan river seven times. He carries out this strange routine just as instructed. The result?

His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean of his leprosy.

Naaman rushed back to Elisha to give copious thanks. He declared that there was no other god on earth but Israel's God! He offered a gift in thanksgiving. This was a very healthy and normal reaction: when a person is loved so much, their heart goes out to the giver and, without thinking, their soul wants to give gifts in return.

Strangely, Elisha refused the gift. We are not given an explicit reason, but probably he did not want earthly rewards for doing God's work. In response to the refusal, Naaman the leper made a dramatic pronouncement: "If you will not accept, please let two mule-loads of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god except the Lord." (2 Kings 5:17)

Mules and all, he will use Israeli earth to show his gratitude. It will be a sacrifice to the God of Israel, the God you and I worship.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola are based on this same response of gratitude. Especially in an exercise called the "Contemplation to Obtain God's love," people on retreat realize (over time) how deeply they are being loved. Their great desire is to give back to the one doing the loving, to give in return.

Notice that this implies an adult relationship, not a child's.

An infant is filled with need after need and tells you all about them. The nine cured lepers who did not say thanks might have been like that. But as maturity grows in a person, he or she wants to give back instead of only receiving. Yes, even to give back to God.

God has been seeking a mutual love relationship with each of us from the beginning of our lives. Have you ever sensed this? Have you felt gratitude? Have you ever taken time out to return love?

Could you take some time out this week?

Today's gospel reading follows immediately after last Sunday's reading. This linkage is important, because it helps us appreciate Luke's presentation of this incident, as expanding the teaching on 'faith' in last Sunday's gospel. The miracles of Jesus were, before all else, signs pointing to what was to be expected from the Saviour's presence among us. In this miracle, the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan who returns to give thanks leads us deeper into an understanding of the faith that is God's gift.

Jesus tells the Samaritan that it is 'faith' that has saved him. His companions, too, we may presume, also had faith – evidenced in their common plea with him, and the fact that they too have been healed – because Jesus is surprised that they have not returned. But, unlike the one who returns, they do not have the gratitude that is the expression of a lively faith. If faith is a trusting readiness to receive the great things God does for us, it is also a grateful recognition of what God has done and is doing in our lives. The Samaritan helps us understand what this awareness involves. He 'turned back praising God at the top of his voice'. Our relationship with our God is quite unique; the other relationships that shape our lives cannot be compared with it. Our awareness of our indebtedness to God should deepen more and more this unique relationship, as we grow in wonder at the blessings of each day. It is not by chance that we call our principal act of worship, our 'Eucharist', our 'Thanksgiving'.



✠✠ Shouting his praises, the healed man ‘throws himself at the feet of Jesus’. His faith is a readiness to receive what only God can give; but he recognises that it is through Jesus that God’s blessing comes to him – through the one whose teaching and ministry led him and his desperate companions to appeal to the ‘pity’, the ‘compassion’ they recognised in Jesus; through the one whose authoritative word they accepted immediately, not yet healed, but ready to do what he commanded. The whole sequence presents Jesus as the Saviour. He sends the band to ‘show themselves to the priests’ – in accordance with the accepted custom: that the authority to allow those with contagious diseases rejoin the community was given by Israel’s Law to the priests. Now, in the case of the Samaritan, Jesus himself assumes this authority, ‘Go on your way!’

The gift of God given by God to those who have faith is universal – it excludes nobody. It is not surprising that Luke, the Gentile convert, is especially conscious of this. His care to include reference in his writings to the Samaritans – the renegade group, hated by the Jews as half-pagan – reflects this awareness, pointing to the conversions that were to be so important in the first Christian communities. He alone brings us the story of the Good Samaritan; he devotes a chapter (ch 8) of the Acts of the Apostles to the preaching of the gospel to the Samaritans; and now he alone holds up this Samaritan as an example of lively faith.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading 2 Kings 5:14-17

- ✠ Naaman was expecting special and involved treatment, though his directions from Elisha were simply to wash in the river. How could this be sufficient to cure his illness? Which do you think God uses more often to communicate with you, extraordinary signs or ordinary ones? Explain.
- ✠ Have you ever brought sand, shells, rocks, anything else from foreign places back to your home? What does Naaman’s taking holy ground back to Syria say to you? Where is your holy ground?

Second Reading 2 Timothy 2:8-13

- ✠ What saints would you say have suffered for the gospel? Who suffers for the gospel today? Do you? in what ways?
- ✠ Paul says, “I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.” How would this work? Is Paul saying that your suffering is linked to the salvation of others? Has your faith been affected by the cloud of witnesses who surround you and those who have gone before you?

Gospel Luke 17:11-19

- ✠ This Sunday we see foreigners who were grateful: the Syrian blind man, and in the first Reading the foreigner, Naaman. Does God offer generous love regardless of a person’s origins or accomplishments? Do you give of yourself or your goods when there is ingratitude? Do you take note when God pours grace into your life? Are you grateful?

- ✠ According to Pope Francis, how can we receive the same healing as the lepers?

Like those lepers, we too need healing, each one of us. We need to be healed of our lack of confidence in ourselves, in life, in the future; we need to be healed of our fears and the vices that enslave us, of our introversion, our addictions and our attachment to games, money, television, mobile phones, to what other people think.

The Lord sets our hearts free and heals them if only we ask him, only if we say to him: “Lord, I believe you can heal me. Dear Jesus, heal me from being caught up in myself. Free me from evil and fear.” The lepers are the first people, in this Gospel, who called on the name of Jesus. Later, a blind man and a crucified thief would do so: all of them needy people calling on the name of Jesus, which means: “God saves.” They call God by name, directly and spontaneously. To call someone by name is a sign of confidence, and it pleases the Lord. That is how faith grows, through confident, trusting prayer.

– Pope Francis, *Homily for Mass of Canonization*, 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, 13 October 2019

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.

HEAR FROM POPE LEO XIV – SUNDAY ECHO

Sunday Echo is a limited-release resource our Diocese has developed that contains, using the Holy Father’s most recent homily or reflection and accompanying discussion questions. Each issue will be released the day after Pope Leo XIV gives a homily or reflection on the most recent Sunday Gospel readings. To access or sign up to have these sent to you, go to <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles/>

JUBILEE WEBSITE

The Diocesan Jubilee Website is continually being updated about jubilee events, and has a wealth of information, links and resources to this Holy Year as Pilgrims of Hope at <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/jubilee-year-of-hope/>

A REFLECTION ON SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

This year, as we celebrate the feast of St Francis, we also conclude the eighth centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures (Canticle of Brother Sun) and look forward to the centenary of the Pasch of St Francis, to be celebrated next year (2026).

From the Canticle to the Transitus

We find a link between the Canticle and the death of St Francis in the ancient account of *The Life of Saint Francis*, where, on hearing of the approach of his death, St Francis said: “If I am to die soon, call Brother Angelo and Brother Leo that they may sing to me about Sister Death.”

Those brothers came to him and, with many tears, sang the Canticle of Brother Sun and the other creatures of the Lord, which the Saint himself had composed in his illness for the praise of the Lord and the consolation of his own soul and that of others. Before the last stanza he added one about Sister Death.

St Francis himself, then, encounters death accompanied by the singing of the Canticle. Only a short time earlier, he had added a verse about forgiveness, with the purpose of urging the mayor and the Bishop of Assisi, who were in conflict, to be reconciled with each other.

Pardon and Reconciliation as a Priority

As we celebrate the Life and Death of Francis, we might allow ourselves to be touched by his invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation: *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.*

Both God and the friars are addressed in this invitation; forgiveness is possible through the love of God (“for Your love”) by our entering into a relationship with God and drawing on his immense mercy. In addition, infirmity and tribulation can only be “endured in peace” by looking with faith and hope towards the Most High and his crown. God and the brethren meet in this great invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation from which the mysterious gift of peace blossoms — allowing all difficulties to be “endured in peace.”

We need this peace, this reconciliation, and this forgiveness today more than ever, in our world torn apart by conflicts and wars. Firstly, the far too many wars between peoples and between nations, but also the struggles and discord within individual countries and also, unfortunately, the divisions within our fraternities or our Christian communities. St Francis’ invitation to forgiveness comes to us in our daily lives and invites us — through the gift of pardon offered and received — to take an initial concrete step towards that peace which we implore from God for ourselves and for the whole world.

The Testament — an Invitation to Remembrance

In the months preceding his death, in addition to composing the verse of the Canticle to reconcile the mayor and the Bishop, St Francis dictated his Testament which, in its first section, is a remembrance of the most important stages of his life, beginning with his encounter with lepers, in which he recognises the beginning of his own conversion. He then reviews events such as the practice of prayer in churches, his choice to live in the Catholic Church, the gift of the brothers and the experience of the first fraternity. This fraternity was characterised by the distribution of all goods to the poor; by common prayer; by the choice to be minors and submissive to all; by manual work; and by the proclamation of peace. St Francis thus teaches us to review the important stages of our lives seeing them through the lens of faith which recognises the active presence of the Lord in each of these moments.

“The Lord gave me, Brother Francis, thus to begin ... and the Lord led me among lepers ...and gave me faith in churches ... the Lord gave me some brothers ... the Most High himself revealed to me that I should live according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel ... the Lord revealed a greeting to me that we should say: May the Lord give you peace!”

Therefore, we can learn from Francis to “make remembrance”, that is, to review the stages of our life, until we become attuned to recognising in them the presence of the Lord, who has accompanied us in the story of our vocation. Thus, we discover that everything is a gift from God, and this conviction that all good comes to us from God, the great Giver, is the key to understanding the Canticle, a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the great gift of creation. It is this same conviction that makes the entire life of St Francis a joyful thanksgiving, that is, a restitution to God of the gifts received from Him.

Even Death is a Gift

This capacity for remembrance, that is, to view our story through the eyes of faith, also explains the extraordinary way in which St Francis approaches death, composing the last verse of the Canticle: *Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death, from whom no one living can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin. Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.*

St Francis recognises the mysterious presence of God even in death itself, and so death becomes a gift by which the Lord is to be praised. St Francis can appreciate even death in terms of the beauty of life and creation, because he knows that everything is a gift from God. It is this profound faith that allows him to see the beauty of life even when life ends. All his experiences — bitter and sweet — recalled in his Testament, prepared him for this supreme restoration of his life to God, which our tradition rightly calls the Transitus of St Francis and which we can therefore recognise as a Pasch, a transition through death to a life in fullness. It is Christ’s Pasch, indeed, that has definitively transformed death into a sister for whom we give praise to God. Francis can look at death with eyes full of hope, proclaiming “*blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will, for the second death shall do them no harm.*” His vision is of a new and full life, of that eternal life that the Lord, the Resurrection and the Life, promises to those who believe and hope in him (cf. John 11:25-26).



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Monday	13 Oct	Monday of Ordinary Week 28
Tuesday	14 Oct	Tuesday of Ordinary Week 28
Wednesday	15 Oct	St Teresa of Jesus, virgin, doctor
Thursday	16 Oct	Thursday of Ordinary Week 28
Friday	17 Oct	St Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, martyr
Saturday	18 Oct	St Luke, evangelist
Sunday	19 Oct	29 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i> ⁹

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Romans 1:1-7	Luke 11:29-32
Romans 1:16-25	Luke 11:37-41
Romans 2:1-11	Luke 11:42-46
Romans 3:21-30	Luke 11:47-54
Romans 4:1-8	Luke 12:1-7
2 Timothy 4:10-17	Luke 10:1-9

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Weekend, 11-12 October	Blessing of October Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays	
✦ Saturday, 11 October	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul
✦ Monday, 13 October	09:00	School resumes for Term 4
✦ Tuesday, 14 October	19:30	Meeting for Parents – First Penance and Communion
✦ Sunday, 19 October	08:00	Two Baptisms during Mass
✦ Tuesday, 21 October	15:45	First Penance Class #1
✦ Weekend, 25/26 October	Catechists Sunday – those who teach Special Religious Education World Mission Day – Mission Appeal	
✦ Tuesday, 28 October	15:45	First Penance Class #2
✦ Wednesday, 29 October	17:00	Sacrament of First Penance

RECIPE: GREEK YOGHURT FRENCH ONION DIP

Greek yogurt; mayonnaise; dried onion flakes (dehydrated onion); garlic powder; Worcestershire sauce; salt.
Add the yogurt, mayonnaise, dried onion, garlic, Worcestershire sauce and salt to a mixing bowl. Stir to combine. Cover and refrigerate (minimum 5 minutes). Serve chilled garnished with (optional) parsley and chives.

**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!

SEASON OF SURFING – SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

The surfing season is now in full swing. More than 21,000 volunteer lifesavers brought the iconic red and yellow back to the beach on Saturday/Sunday, 27/28 September as the 2025/26 patrolling season began across NSW. The return of patrolling lifesavers comes at an important time – NSW has experienced unseasonable warmth over the week leading up to the season, and sadly, on Wednesday, 24 September, a man drowned on the Central Coast and three more were rescued after their boat overturned at Killcare, south of Terrigal. *It brings the NSW coastal drowning toll since 1 July 2025 to seven. From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, 52 people drowned along the NSW coastline.* All these drownings occurred outside the red and yellow flags, at unpatrolled locations. **Swim between the flags.**

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM – DIRECT DEBIT

Collect your **Planned Giving Envelopes**. If you do not use the Planned Giving Envelopes, you might consider using the **Direct Debit Program**. Forms to join either Program complete the **GREEN** form available. **Thank you.**

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website		NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
28 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C		29 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C	MASS TIMES
1 st Reading	2 Kings 5:14-17	1 st Reading	Exodus 17:8-13
2 nd Reading	2 Timothy 2:8-13	2 nd Reading	2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:2
Gospel	Luke 17:11-19	Gospel	Luke 18:1-8
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	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
		<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	