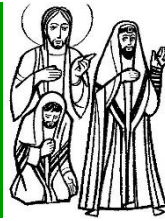


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
25 / 26 OCTOBER 2025
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR C
WORLD MISSION SUNDAY APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Cry of the Poor

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector speaks so clearly to us that it needs little commentary. We can recognise the deep implications Luke saw in this story, when we situate it within the compilation made by the evangelist – that we have followed during the past weeks. As Jesus courageously takes the road to meet his fate, he is giving his final instructions to the disciples he will leave behind. Faith, he has taught them is an obedient openness to God's coming in their lives, and to the plan of God about to reach its moment of climax. Their prayer should be the living expression of this faith, teaching them to trust in the Father who will show his care for them – whatever the difficulties they may have to face. In the end they should see themselves as God's 'unprofitable servants'. Today's short parable sums up what his teaching should have brought home to them – in a few words, everything depends, in the end, not on our own efforts, but upon the grace and mercy of God. It is this outlook that has shaped the lives of the outstanding disciples of Jesus, one after the other, down through the ages.

The Pharisees are a tragic group in the gospel story. Theirs was a movement of popular piety that aimed to promote a revival of Israel's traditions. Many of them were honourable; and not a few found faith in Christ. This parable, however, highlights the issue that brought some of them into conflict with Jesus. These people thought they were 'at rights with God', and faithful to the God of the covenant, through their strict observance of the externals of the Law's requirements. Luke has already described Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees for preferring external observance to 'justice and the love of God' (11:42), and for a love of money that had no thought for almsgiving (16:14). The Pharisee in the story is pleased with himself, because he does more than the Law requires in his fasting and the tithes he gives. He brings these practices of his to the Lord, as establishing his claim on God's favour. His spirit of self-sufficiency is echoed ironically in the telling of the story – in his prayer, he is speaking 'to himself'.

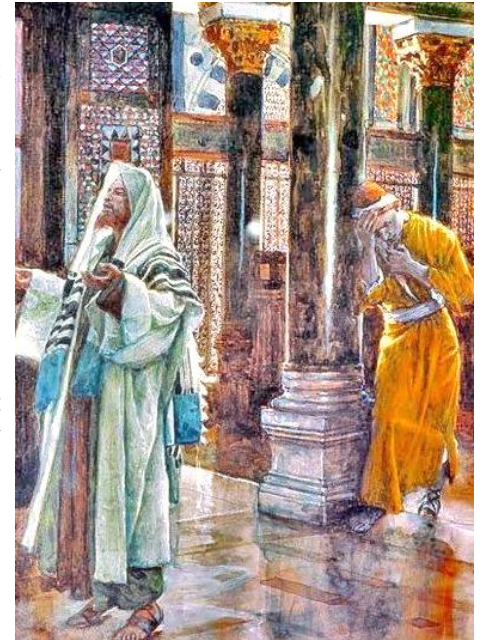
The only attitude on our part, that opens a genuine meeting with God, is one of humility. We should stand naked before the Lord, aware that there is nothing we can bring to God that is not, in the first place, his gift. All that we bring before him that is truly our own is our sinfulness.

The tax collector, on the other hand, 'went home at rights with God' because of the humble confession that made up his prayer. The generous mercy of God is emphasised by the fact that a repentant tax collector would probably bring before God an impossible situation, as far as recompense was concerned. Despised by his people for being the agent of the occupying power, and constantly tempted to take advantage of his position by defrauding the people, he was bound to make restitution of the amount unjustly taken, plus twenty per cent.

Today's readings have a lot to say to those in positions of power in society, but it has a lot to say to all of us. Just public institutions are among the most important fruits of a just community. We all have to learn to be just in all our dealings, and today's readings offer us some key reflections.

God's judgment is always true, that is, it is always in accordance with the way things really are. Since God is love, God's judgment is always faithful to love; it is always merciful. This is the key theme of the readings of today's Mass. We might be able to deceive ourselves, and we might be able to deceive others. We cannot deceive God. Because God is love he sees with the eyes of love. But love neither distorts nor lies. God sees us exactly as we really are. God sees us from the inside. God knows our hearts.

Our faith tells us that, even if we manage to avoid the consequences of our sinful behaviour here on earth, we have to stand before God who sees who we really are and what we have really done. God does not punish. God simply acknowledges the truth. What we call 'punishment' is the necessarily negative effects of our negative behaviour. The ultimately disastrous effect of our sinful behaviour is what we call hell. Let us not pretend that there is no hell. It is clearly taught by Jesus and by the whole tradition of the Church. At the same time let us not think of it as some kind of punishment arbitrarily inflicted on a sinner by a vengeful God. A lot of people have an image like this and they wonder how a merciful God could possibly send anyone to hell. God does not send to hell. Hell is where we decide to be when we refuse God's love and persist in behaviour that is destructive of others and is self-destructive. The Catholic catechism is clear: 'To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from God for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell" (n. 1033). Most imagine hell as a fire. It is important to realise that this is only an image. The reality is that we choose not to be in communion with God, and a God of love ↗ ↗



✠✠ cannot force us to change. Love respects freedom, however stupidly and destructively we exercise it. God's judgment is simply the recognition by God of the truth of our determined and obstinate will. Hell is something we choose. We can choose it here, where we can hide behind distractions or blame others. After death there will be nothing to hide behind. The experience of hell is the experience of absolute frustration of being for ever separate from the source of life and love and from the life of the blessed. We can think of nothing worse. No image of pain could capture the awfulness of such a condition.

But God is not cruel. God will remain loving for all eternity. We think of the father of the prodigal son, unable to drag the boy home, and waiting in love for any sign of his return. Here on earth, there is always hope of repentance. Death sets a seal upon our choices, so let us not put off our response to grace till it is too late.

The setting of Jesus' story in today's gospel is the atonement ritual in the temple. The first character presented to us is the Pharisee. He typifies the wrong attitude. He is self-focused and self-reliant. He is standing by himself. He sees himself as pure and is determined not to allow his purity to be in any way tainted by mixing with the community since, in his judgment, they are sinners.

He is not actually praying, for his attention is not on God but on himself. He thinks he is speaking to God, but he is speaking to himself. He thinks he is looking upon the face of God, but he is seeing only himself in the mirror of his own self-satisfied projection. This is made abundantly clear by the way he looks down on the tax collector – a certain sign that he knows neither God nor himself. He is using prayer in order to draw attention to himself, and to instruct others to live as he lives. Note that Jesus does not condemn him. He simply states that the Pharisee's prayer does him no good, leaving him in the same state after as before.

The second character is a tax collector. He is also standing apart, but it is because he feels unworthy of being part of the assembly. He does not even dare to raise his eyes to heaven. However, he is there, pleading with God to forgive him his sins. Unlike the Pharisee, he is in touch with reality, and his humble plea opens him to God's forgiving love. Luke concludes by repeating an exhortation to humility. We cannot raise ourselves up to God.

Only God can raise us. And God can do this only when we recognise our lowliness and look to God to raise us up. If we want our hearts to remain open to God's mercy, we must keep them open in mercy to others. We have to face the truth of our own behaviour and the behaviour of others. We have to protect the community against crime. But this protection will never work unless we remain humbly open to God's grace, and unless we treat others, even those who commit crimes against us, with the respect that flows from grace.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Sirach 35:12-14,16-19

- ✠ “The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds.” How are the orphan, widow and oppressed lowly or humble? Name some people you know who fit their description. What does humility look like on them? How is your humility? Are you honest with God?
- ✠ Do you do anything when you hear the cry of the oppressed, the wail of the orphan or the widow's complaint? Is there something you could do to help anyone in need that you are not doing now? How is our own Pope Francis like Sirach in biblical times?

Second Reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18

- ✠ Do you sometimes feel as if you are being “poured out as a libation,” or that everyone has deserted you? What do you think Paul did to combat these feelings in himself? What do you think would help you?
- ✠ Paul was rescued from the lion's mouth, and he trusted that he would be safe from every evil threat. What are the evil threats to the earth? To the Church? What threatens to you? How is your trust?

Gospel Luke 18:9-14

- ✠ The Pharisee says a prayer in this Gospel. Is it to God or to himself? If you were in God's place, what kind of prayers of the two would you answer first? Which one has a sincere heart?
- ✠ According to Pope Francis, God has a weakness for the humble ones, and their prayers open God's heart wide. Which heart can God fill with mercy: the humble empty one, or the one who keeps track of all his/her good deeds and his/her neighbours' misdeeds?

Dear Brothers and Sisters: In our continuing catechesis for this Holy Year of Mercy, we now turn to the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. Jesus contrasts the arrogance and self-righteousness of the Pharisee's prayer with the tax collector's humble recognition of his sinfulness and need for the Lord's mercy. True prayer is born of a heart which repents of its faults and failings, yet pleads for the grace to live the great commandment of love of God and neighbour. Indeed, the proud disdain of the Pharisee for the sinner at his side prevents him from being righteous in God's sight. To pray well, then, we need to look into our own hearts and there, in humble silence, let the Lord speak to us. The honesty and humility which God asks of us is the necessary condition for our receiving his mercy. – Pope Francis, General Audience, 1 June 2016

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/>

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY – APPEAL THIS WEEKEND



This week, you're invited to partner with the Church in Zambia to help women overcome poverty and mothers give birth safely.

The Women's Cooperative, led by Sr Jane will provide women with the training and support required to break the cycle of scarcity, and the Chilonga Mission Hospital is determined to ensure every woman and baby receives a safe and dignified start to life.

During World Mission Sunday, we are called to be 'Missionaries of hope among all peoples', and we invite you to extend Christ's love to those in need in Zambia. You can support this work by using the appeal envelope, going online at catholicmission.org.au/mission, or scanning the QR code. Your gift will also assist many other Church programs around the world.

**catholic mission**
Freecall: 1800 257 296
catholicmission.org.au/mission



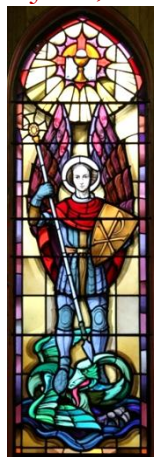
THIS WEEKEND, 25/26 October, our Parish will celebrate World Mission Sunday. Pope Francis: “On World Mission Sunday every year, the whole Church prays, united, particularly for missionaries and the fruitfulness of their apostolic labours. When I served as a missionary priest and then bishop in Peru, I saw first-hand how the faith, the prayer and the generosity shown on World Mission Sunday can transform entire communities. I urge every Catholic parish in the world to take part in World Mission Sunday. Your prayers, your support will help spread the Gospel, provide for pastoral and catechetical programs, help to build new churches, and care for the health and educational needs of our brothers and sisters in mission territories. As we reflect together on our baptismal call to be ‘missionaries of hope among the peoples,’ let us commit ourselves anew to the sweet and joyful task of bringing Christ Jesus, our Hope, to the ends of the earth. ‘Thank you.’ *Thank you for your generosity with this appeal.*

MASS COUNT

This weekend and the next two weekends, the annual Mass Count will continue.

STAINED GLASS WINDOW OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Behind the altar in our church is the stained-glass window of St Michael, the Archangel. A quote from our Parish Bulletin of **18 July 1982**: “A very beautiful stained glass window depicting St Michael, the patron of our Church, was donated and recently installed in the church. The artist for the window is Stephen Mohr, considered to be the leading artist in Australia. We are deeply grateful to the donors and pray that God will bless them for their generosity.” The inscription on the bottom of the window says, “In your charity pray for Grace and John Parker and family”.



BLESSING OF CARS – NEXT WEEKEND AFTER BOTH MASSES

After both Masses, next weekend, 1/2 November, there will be the annual Blessing of Cars. Park your car close, or, after Mass, “drive by” for a drive-by blessing. **Please be safe on our roads**, especially near schools.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – WORLD FAMOUS CAKES/CRAFT STALL

THIS WEEKEND, 25/26 October, before and after both Masses, the CWL World Famous October Cakes and Craft Stall will take place. On sale will be cakes and slices, reduced second-hand books, knitted coat hangers, plants and jars of raw honey. Cash only. **Get in early for the goodies – and thanks for supporting our local CWL!**

HEAR FROM POPE LEO

Sunday Echo is a **limited-release resource** the 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 sent straight to you, go to <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles/>.

WHAT'S ON AROUND THE DIOCESE?

Check out upcoming formation courses, youth events, walks, camping and jubilee events – too many to list in one place. Subscribe here and we will keep you in the loop: <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/staying-connected/> or to see everything that's on in or around the Diocese, visit: <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/weekly-bulletin-notices/>

THANK YOU TO OUR DEDICATED CATECHISTS

In our Parish, there are four State Public Schools – Thirroul, Austinmer, Coledale and Scarborough. Each week, several parishioners go to these schools for **Special Religious Education** to teach the students about Jesus Christ. These are our trained **Catechists** who give up 30 minutes each week to help our young parishioners. **Thank you** to our Catechists for your dedication and care in this ministry. *Find out more, and what about becoming a Catechist??*

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Monday	27 Oct	Monday of Ordinary Week 30	Romans 8:12-17	Luke 13:10-17
Tuesday	28 Oct	Saints Simon and Jude, apostles	Ephesians 2:19-22	Luke 6:12-19
Wednesday	29 Oct	Wednesday of Ordinary Week 30	Romans 8:26-30	Luke 13:22-30
Thursday	30 Oct	Thursday of Ordinary Week 30	Romans 8:31-39	Luke 13:31-35
Friday	31 Oct	Friday of Ordinary Week 30	Romans 9:1-5	Luke 14:1-6
Saturday	1 Nov	All Saints	Revelation 7:2-4,9-14	1 John 3:1-3
Sunday	2 Nov	ALL SOULS' DAY (COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED)	Matthew 5:1-12	
Scripture Readings are listed below				

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Weekend, 25/26 October	Catholic Women's League World Famous October Cakes and Craft Stall		
	Catechists Sunday – those who teach Special Religious Education		
	WORLD MISSION SUNDAY – MISSION APPEAL AND COLLECTION		
✦ Tuesday, 28 October	15:45	First Penance Class #2	
✦ Wednesday, 29 October	17:00	Sacrament of First Penance	
✦ Thursday, 30 October	19:15	Parents's Meeting for November Baptisms	
✦ Saturday, 1 November	09:30	Special Mass for ALL SAINTS DAY	
✦ Weekend 1/2 November	All Souls' Day – Commemoration of the Faithful Departed		
	Blessing of Cars after Weekend Masses		
✦ Tuesday, 11 November	11:00	Remembrance Day Services	

RECIPE: ROASTED RED POTATOES WITH BACON AND ONION

6 slices bacon; 700g small red potatoes; 1 medium head garlic clove; 1 medium onion, peeled and cut into 2.5cm wedges; salt; freshly ground black pepper; 1½ teaspoons dried thyme.

Adjust an oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 230°C. Place the bacon on a large, rimmed baking sheet and set it in the oven. Cook bacon just until browned and crisped about 10 minutes. Remove the bacon from the oven and cut-up or crumble it; set aside. Remove all except 2 tablespoons bacon fat from the pan. Reduce oven temperature to 200°C. Place potatoes, garlic cloves and sliced onion onto the baking sheet, and toss with the bacon fat. Sprinkle vegetables with dried thyme and season liberally with salt and black pepper. Turn the potato halves cut-side-down and separate the vegetables so there is no crowding. Roast, shaking the pan every 15 minutes, and continue cooking until vegetables are tender and caramelized. Taste, and if needed, season with salt & pepper. Garnish with the crumbled bacon. This dish can be served hot or at room temperature. Enjoy!

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

Go to this website for some great tips about surf safety, the right gear to wear in or on the water, marine creatures, and marine stingers, rip currents and more: <https://beachsafe.org.au/surf-safety> Try these tips: swim between the flags; swim with a friend; if you need help, stay calm, raise your arm to attract attention. Check out this frightening data: **630** people drowned at **unpatrolled beaches** between 2014 and 2024. Only **6%** of Australia's beaches are patrolled by lifesaving personnel – one of those beaches in McCauley's!

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website	NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR C	ALL SOULS' DAY (COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED)	MASS TIMES
1 st Reading Sirach 35:12-14,16-19	1 st Reading Isaiah 25:6-9	Saturday 17:30
2 nd Reading 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18	2 nd Reading Romans 6:3-4,8-9	Sunday 08:00
Gospel Luke 18:9-14	Gospel John 6:37-40	 Saturday Mass is recorded.
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	 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	THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES Monday Tuesday 17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 Anointing of the Sick 1 st Friday