



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN 1 / 2 NOVEMBER 2025 ALL SOULS' DAY

COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Halloween is observed on **31 October**, the “een” or “eve” of All Hallows’ Day (All Saints’ Day) on 1 November. As Halloween gains global popularity each October, stores are filled with bats and pumpkins, and children eagerly don costumes of their favourite characters. For Christians, questions often arise about whether this festivity aligns with their faith. Are children unintentionally honouring pagan traditions or dabbling in something darker by participating in trick-or-treating or dressing up in Gothic costumes?

The holiday of Halloween is actually one of the most Christian holidays in the entire calendar. The word ‘Hallow’ means ‘holy’ in archaic English, the same way we use it in the phrase ‘Hallowed be Thy Name’ (may God’s name be held holy) in the ‘Our Father.’ Halloween is directly tied to the Christian celebration of “All Hallows’ Eve” or the evening before All Saints’ Day, when Christians honour all women and men who have gone before us. Halloween refers to the fact that the day after, 1 November, is the Feast of All Saints, honouring all of the holy ones.

While Halloween’s symbolism may seem secular or even sinister to some, it has a Christian heritage. The roots of the holiday go back to the 8th century, when Pope Gregory III dedicated a chapel in St Peter’s Basilica to all the saints and moved All Saints’ Day to 1 November. The date of Halloween and the Feast of All Saints are actually connected to Rome. The dedication of this chapel to all the saints on 1 November 1 marked the origin of the holiday.

Why, then, do Halloween celebrations seem so entwined with Gothic themes? The tradition of dressing up on Halloween can be traced back to medieval practices. The custom of dressing up for Halloween probably has its root in two different ancient customs, one is ‘guising,’ a medieval practice where children would dress up and go door-to-door asking for sweets. The other involves donning frightening costumes to ward off evil spirits.

The two traditions—Medieval and Celtic—merged over time with the Christian celebration of All Hallows’ Eve, creating the holiday we recognize today. These traditions likely travelled to the United States with Anglo-Saxon immigrants, eventually transforming Halloween into a cultural event now celebrated in a number of countries.

Christians should try to reclaim Halloween as a day connected with our faith. Halloween ought to be celebrated in all its innocence. There’s nothing wrong with dressing up and going trick-or-treating; it’s actually a delightful thing. But we shouldn’t forget its connection to All Saints’ Day. It’s important to remember, especially for children, that Halloween is a vigil of a great feast day.

Approach Halloween with reverence for its origins, teaching children to celebrate not only in fun but also in faith.

All Saints’ Day – Already by the end of the 2nd century, there is evidence that the saints were already being venerated. First, the holy martyrs, who were soon joined by the apostles, the official witnesses of the faith. After the great persecutions under Imperial Rome, other women and men who had lived heroic Christian lives gradually became the object of veneration as well. The first non-martyr to be venerated as a saint was the bishop, Martin of Tours (died 397). Toward the end of the year 1000, due to the uncontrolled development of “saint making” and the “purchase” of relics, a process for canonization was developed which required evidence of miracles. The Solemnity of All Saints began in the East in the 4th century, and then spread elsewhere, being observed on different dates: on 13 May in Rome, on 1 November in England and Ireland beginning in the 8th century. It was the latter date that was adopted in Rome as well, beginning in the 9th century. The solemnity falls toward the end of the liturgical year, when the Church fixes its gaze on the last things. It is, therefore, fitting that the thought of those who have already crossed over the gates of Heaven should find a place in their hearts.

Holy women and men – true friends of God – to whom the Church today invites us to turn our gaze, are women and men who were fascinated by this proposal, who decided to tread the path of the Beatitudes. They did this not because they were better than us, but simply because they “knew” that we are all children of God and they experienced precisely this. They knew they were “sinners who had been forgiven”: these are the Saints. They learned to know themselves and to direct their efforts toward God, toward themselves and toward others, knowing in their weakness how to trust in the divine Mercy.

Today they encourage us to aim high, to look in the distance toward the goal and the prize that awaits us. They invite us not to resign ourselves before the difficulties we face each day because life will not only come to an end, but it also presents us with a goal – eternal union with God. Through this feast, the Church shows us the saints who are at our sides, friends of God and models of a blessed life who intercede for us, who encourage us to live this last part of the liturgical year with greater intensity. This path is actually made up of eight paths traced out by Jesus which are mapped out in the Gospel: the Beatitudes. ① “Blessed are the poor



✠✠ *in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven...*". The emphasis is not such much on "Blessed", as on the "for". Someone is not "blessed" because they are "poor", but they are blessed because since they are poor, they are in the privileged condition of receiving the kingdom of heaven. The same is valid for the other seven conditions. ② *"Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted"*; ③ *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land"*; ④ *"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied"*; ⑤ *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy"*; ⑥ *"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God"*; ⑦ *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God"*; ⑧ *"Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven"*; *"Blessed are you when they insult you ... Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven"*. It is this **"for"** that explains everything, that reveals where the meek will find trust, where peacemakers will find joy... "Blessed" is, therefore, not understood as a simple emotion, even though this is important, but as the hope to spurs us to get back on our feet and not let life get us down, not to give up, to keep on going...because God is with us. In us.

The point, therefore, is to see God, to be on God's side, to become an object of God's attention, to contemplate God not sometime in the future in heaven, but right now, today. We are invited to tread these eight paths so that we can already participate in the joy described in the Book of Revelation. All of us can take these paths: *"See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. We are God's children now; what we shall be, has not yet been revealed"* (cf. 1 John 3:1-3). With the refrain of the Psalm, we can say: *Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face*". And not because we are more or less good, but because God loves us.

All Souls' Day – The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed – Already back in the 2nd century, evidence exists that Christians prayed for and celebrated the Eucharist for their beloved dead. In the beginning, they would pray on the third day after burial, then on the anniversary. Later, the 7th and 30th day after death became days on which it became customary to pray for the deceased. Remembering the dead on 2 November became official in the year 998 when Abbot Odilo of Cluny (994-1048) made it obligatory in all the monasteries subject to him. In 1915, Pope Benedict XV granted permission to priests to celebrate several Masses on this day. The liturgy proposes various Masses on this day, all of which are geared toward highlighting the Paschal Mystery, Jesus' victory over sin and death.

Jesus said to the crowds: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise them up on the last day". (John 6:37-40)

The revolutionary message is that whoever *"sees the Son and believes in him...I shall raise them up on the last day"*. We know from experience that the body decays. But the body is not the only part of the human person! The human being is a person and partner in dialogue with God. And God will not forget, God will not renege on God's promise, because God is faithful to God's promises. God has written each one of us on the palm of God's hand and will not forget anyone, because God is a Father. This is the heart of the message that Jesus left us. Because of this truth, Jesus became human, he died on the cross and rose to make us participants in the joy of the resurrection: *"Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in Christ, a place of refreshment, light and peace."*

That we will survive is a sure thing, Jesus told us this! How this will happen, we do not know. We can hypothesize about it by listening to the Word of the Gospel. The hope remains, however, of being surprised by God's goodness, by His mercy. We have our own parameters by which to measure what happens in life, but we must allow God to have His own parameters which are not ours. This is exactly what will surprise us once we cross the threshold of heaven.

Death is not an annihilation, but of living in a new way. It is knowing that those who have preceded us are a "step ahead" of us on the path of life. They have reached the top, while we still find ourselves on the path of life. They have turned the corner, while we are still on the straight and narrow. Death, therefore, is not the end of everything, but the beginning of a new life for which we are and have been preparing ourselves for quite some time. Commemorating the dead, then, is not only a "remembrance" of those who are no longer present, but a bridge that awaits us at the end of our lives and that will lead us to the other shore to which we are all destined. It's a help so we do not let ourselves drown when life is overwhelming, forgetting that everything passes, while only God remains.

After having reconciled himself with God, with himself and with creation, Saint Francis of Assisi, toward the end of his life, was able to reconcile himself with death to the point that he was able to call her his "sister". This symbolizes that even he understood that death is a mystery to embrace. Unlike today's culture that tries to deny death in every way through the illusion that we are eternal, Saint Francis teaches to look on it, to understand it and to consider it as a "sister", as part of us. After all, death is just as real as the fact that we exist. This is a step toward intellectual honesty, even more so than a spiritual movement. Fear of "sister death" is certainly dictated by fear of the unknown, of not knowing what lies beyond the "veil". This creates a certain discomfort. Secondly, let's not deny it, we fear the "weight" of our actions at the end of our lives when everyone is a believer. We will all ask ourselves then how we have lived our lives. This experience leads us to pray for those who have gone before us, almost as if we still want to help and protect them, as well as asking for their help and protection. One thing is certain: we need to understand death in the light of Jesus' resurrection. This is where our strength and serenity come from. He opened the Way that leads through Truth to Life. Jesus Himself reminded us that have been made for eternity. A thousand years are as a day gone by for God. A lifetime is extremely brief, fleeting. It has no sense if it is not directed toward an experience that is truer. As Jesus Himself reminded us: *"everyone who sees the Son and believes in him has eternal life"*.



FIFTY YEARS OF MARRIED LOVE – MARIE AND GARY GRACE

Congratulations to Marie and Gary Grace who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 2 November. Marie and Gary were married at Holy Spirit Parish Church, Lavington NSW on Saturday, 2 November 1975. Thank you for your witness to married love and for your service in our Parish. Please congratulate Marie and Gary next weekend as they receive a special message from Leo in Rome. Congratulations!



BLESSING OF CARS – AND DRIVERS – THIS WEEKEND AFTER BOTH MASSES

This weekend after all Masses, there will be the annual Blessing of Cars – and drivers! The blessing prayer will take place during the Masses with the blessing afterwards. **Lord Jesus, you teach us to love others, and to serve them as you served us. Help us to drive safely and carefully, to be courteous and kind to others, and to use my car for your glory. Come, Lord Jesus, and guide me as I drive.**

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY LAST WEEKEND – THANK YOU!



We would like to thank you for your generosity supporting the Church in Zambia and missionaries like Sr Jane and Kayula.

Thanks to your kindness, women like Sharon will have the skills to provide for their families, and mothers like Grace can give birth with dignity. Your gift will also support a variety of Church programs around the world.

To learn more about the impact your support is making, please visit catholicmission.org.au/our-work. Here, you can also sign up to our regular newsletter to keep up to date with the latest news.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to give, please do so at catholicmission.org.au/mission. Your action will make a profound change on people's lives.

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

\$1,461.60 donated last weekend


MASS COUNT

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

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – THANK YOU ... AND ANNUAL MASS

THANK YOU to all who contributed to the CWL World Famous October Cakes and Craft Stall last weekend. Plant sales \$81.00, cakes, books etc. \$247.10 and the Wagga Wagga honey \$150.00 – for a total of **\$478.10**. Thank you to the CWL ladies (and their helpers) who worked on the stalls.

The Catholic Women's League annual Mass will be held at our Parish Church of St Michael on Wednesday, 12 November 2025 at 10:30. All welcome!

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??*

THE MESSIAH – SYDNEY TOWN HALL, SUNDAY, 14 DECEMBER

Peter Clifford ofm is one of the 350+ 'star' singers in the 84th performance of Handel's Messiah at 15:00 on Sunday, 14 December at the Sydney Town Hall – trains from Thirroul stop at Town Hall! A group of parishioners are going and if you would like to be in the group – and get group discount tickets – please call or email the Parish Office THIS WEEK so we can secure tickets. This breathtaking performance features the Peter Clifford ofm, a 350+ choir, the world renowned Organ of the Town Hall, professional conductor, soloists and orchestra.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Monday	3 Nov	Monday of Ordinary Week 31
Tuesday	4 Nov	St Charles Borromeo, bishop
Wednesday	5 Nov	Wednesday of Ordinary Week 31
Thursday	6 Nov	Thursday of Ordinary Week 31
Friday	7 Nov	Friday of Ordinary Week 31
Saturday	8 Nov	Saturday of Ordinary Week 31
Sunday	9 Nov	THE DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Romans 11:19-36	Luke 14:12-14
Romans 12:5-16	Luke 14:15-24
Romans 13:8-10	Luke 14:25-33
Romans 14:7-12	Luke 15:1-10
Romans 15:14-21	Luke 16:1-8
Romans 16:3-9,15,22-27	Luke 16:9-15

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 1 November	09:30	Special Mass for ALL SAINTS' DAY
✦ Weekend 1/2 November		All Souls' Day – Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed Blessing of Cars after Weekend Masses
✦ Sunday, 2 November	08:00	Annual Sydney to the Gong MS Bike Ride – plenty of bikes about
✦ Tuesday, 4 November	15:00	Melbourne Cup
✦ Friday, 7 November	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Tuesday, 11 November	11:00	Remembrance Day Services
	15:45	First Communion – Class #1
✦ Wednesday, 12 November	10:30	Catholic Women's League Annual Mass [NO 09:00 Mass]

RECIPE: HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN PIE

One large up mashed, cooked pumpkin; one cup hot milk; ¼ teaspoon nutmeg; ½ teaspoon cinnamon; ½ teaspoon ginger; ½ cup brown sugar; one slightly beaten egg.

Mix all together. Have ready two pieces of good pastry. Lay one round in a pie dish. Spread the mixture evenly and cover with the second piece of pastry. Mark for slicing. Brush with the white of an egg, sprinkle with sugar and bake for about half an hour in a moderate oven. Serve hot with custard or cream. 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!



SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Stay safe on our beaches, and swim between the flags. There are about 17,000 rips at beaches around Australia on any given day. Chances are that – unless you're a skilled surf lifesaver or an extremely experienced surfer – you'd prefer not to be dicing with them. Yet Australians do: **4.3 million** aged between 16 and 69 have been caught in a rip at least once in their lives. The results can be anything from frightening to fatal. How do you spot a rip? Here's what to look for:

- Deeper, darker coloured water. Once waves hit the shore they have to go somewhere. ...
- Fewer breaking waves. ...
- A rippled surface surrounded by still water. ...
- Seaweed, sediment and churning, sandy clouds floating towards the back of the waves.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

ALL SOULS' DAY (COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED)

1st Reading	Isaiah 25:6-9
2nd Reading	Romans 6:3-4,8-9
Gospel	John 6:37-40

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

DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA

1st Reading	Ezekiel 47:1-2,8-9,12
2nd Reading	1 Corinthians 3:9-11,16-17
Gospel	John 2:13-22

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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