

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
27 / 28 JUNE 2026
13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
VINNIES WINTER APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

He Said What?!

Have you ever noticed the number of flat-out contradictions in scripture? For example,

- the last shall be first;
- lose your life to find it;
- a virgin will conceive;
- take the lowest seat if you want to have the highest;
- the Son of Man came to serve, not to be served;
- an old woman with an old husband will give birth to a child; and so on.

We might have said that if we want to be first, we would have to get into the front of the line, not the end. And, if we want to be alive, we must make some moves not to lose our lives. And so on. These are common sense, aren't they?

Instead, this Sunday's readings are introducing us, gently and partially, to ways in which such commonsense opinions do not go deep enough. Try this on:

We have to be like lifeless, empty earthen vessels, so that God can pour life and love into us.

In the first reading a distinguished lady in the little village of Shunem shows great hospitality to the prophet Elisha, even to the point of building and furnishing a little room upstairs in her house, with a bed, table, chair, and lamp for him for whenever he visits. Another contradiction: she is childless, yet Elisha promises that in one year she will be fondling her own baby son. She is shocked. But the promise comes true.



Then, when the boy becomes a young man, he suddenly dies (2 Kings 4:18-37). Elisha comes from over thirty kilometres away and brings him back to life. Life is given twice where there was no hope of life: death triumphing but life restored. It is contradictory, but is this the way of the Lord?

Then in the second reading, St Paul writes to the Church in Rome that they are baptized into Christ's death and are buried with him!

A grim statement. But then Paul says, if we die with Christ, we shall also live with him, shall live a life in God.

Die in order to live?

In the Gospel Jesus makes a most enigmatic, not to say contradictory, statement: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

No matter how we try to explain away that statement and neuter its content, it still means what it says. Losing your life is the only way to possess it. Letting go is the only way to hold on. How can such contrary claims simultaneously be true?


I want to suggest a metaphor. A glass has to start out empty in order to succeed as a glass. If it is sealed up, or if it is solid, or if it is already full, nothing can be poured in. Does this sound like one more contradiction? No. A container has to be empty if it is to be filled.

The same goes for us. We have to be like empty earthen vessels, so that God can pour life and love into us. This is the source of all the "contradictions" in the Gospels and certainly in the readings this Sunday.

We have to empty out if we are to be filled up with God's gifts.

On the last two Sundays, our gospel readings have brought us the instructions of the Saviour for those he calls to share in the mission he has received from his Father. Today's reading is the conclusion of the passage we have been reading. Not surprisingly, it takes us to the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Our life as disciples has its beginning in our personal call to follow Jesus. Now he speaks to us of the nature of the relationship he has called us to.

It is a unique relationship – the absolute allegiance to which only God has a right. The original words of Jesus would have used the stark contrast of Semitic expressions – the disciple who 'loves' the Saviour must 'hate' those of their families (cf. Luke 14:26). In presenting these words of Jesus, Matthew removes the danger of misunderstanding. A right relationship with the Saviour will not destroy our human relationships, but deepen them and make them more wholesome. Even the greatest of these, however, must not compromise the allegiance we owe to the Lord – even if this allegiance brings a sharing in his cross, through persecution and rejection. For the community that gave us Matthew's gospel, these words would have had practical implications. The following of Christ would have divided some families, and would have been met with hatred from those who used to be their friends in the synagogue.

But if Jesus calls for the allegiance that is owing to the Lord himself, he assures us – in words that ring with the fullness of his divine authority – that our absolute trust in him will never be misplaced; it will lead us to the 

✠ fullness of life. This assurance of the Lord would have been a great source of inspiration to the Church of the beginning. (As we have seen, the Saviour's commission was given to the apostles as representatives of the whole community of disciples. This is made very clear in Luke's gospel, in which this call to absolute allegiance is addressed to the 'great crowds that accompanied Jesus on his way' [Luke 14:25].)

In the continuation of the text, Jesus promises those who generously entrust their lives to him, that – as they share in his mission – they will already begin to know the reward he promises. In the Jewish society of the time of Jesus, emissaries authorised to carry out a special commission were owed the respect owing to the one by whom they were commissioned. Applying this principle, Jesus promises those who carry out his mission will share in the 'welcome' owing to his coming, and the coming of his Father, through them. It is an experience that is familiar to all unselfish bearers of the gospel.

Paul's magnificent text, from the letter to the Romans – explaining the mystery of 'baptism in Christ Jesus' – is a perfect complement to the gospel reading. 'Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it', Jesus tells us. The life he promises is nothing less than a sharing in the everlasting life manifested to the world in his resurrection. The crucified One – who came to share in the life of a world lost in selfishness and violence – has been 'raised from the dead' by the Father's glorious power, to become a sign of hope and a source of new life for the whole of creation. It is through our baptism that we are united to Jesus in the mission he received from his Father, and begin to share in all that has been realised in his resurrection – 'dead to sin, but alive for God in Christ Jesus'.

A good way to understand what is happening at baptism is to look at a baptistery constructed according to the preferred manner, allowing for full adult immersion. Firstly, there is the deep trench, dug into the ground, just like a grave – which is what it represents. When we are baptised something has to die. As Saint Paul says in today's second reading: 'When we were baptised we went into the tomb with Jesus and joined him in death' (Romans 6:3). At baptism, we renounce behaviour that is self-centred, dysfunctional and destructive. We say goodbye to a lifestyle that never really gave us life. It is just that we didn't know any better. But now we have found life through our union with Jesus and with those who are committed to living as his disciples.

As Christians, we commit ourselves to give up a life that is characterised by the following: • **pride** – thinking, judging and acting in a self-reliant, self-focused way; • **covetousness** – never satisfied with who we are or what we have but grasping for possessions, prestige, reputation; • **lust** – using our sexual energy either for our own self-gratification or to exercise power over others without regard to their true happiness; • **anger** – not the anger which is an appropriate protection of self against unjust aggression, but the anger that resents anyone who crosses our ideas, our preferences, our comfort zones, even when they are right and we are wrong; • **gluttony** – living so superficial a life that bodily gratification is more important to us than the aspirations of our spirit, or the needs of others; • **envy** – when we see someone doing well, instead of experiencing joy we feel ourselves devalued and in overt or subtle ways we find ourselves putting others down, feeling miserable that we do not have their beauty or possessions or success; • **sloth** – unwilling to commit ourselves and our energy to the noble tasks of life, preferring to hang around waiting for life to deal out fortune to us.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16

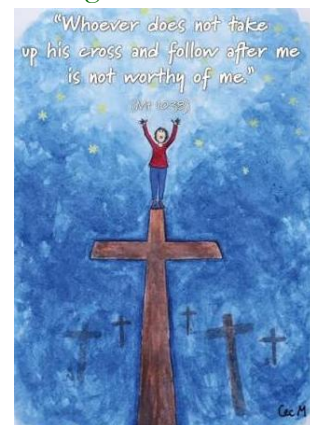
- ✠ What are today's prophets talking about? Ending gun violence? Clean air and water for third world countries? Justice for all races? If prophets speak to transform society, is there some corner of your world you can change for the better? If you feel inadequate about transforming society as a whole, is there anything in the readings that tells you it is all right to start small?
- ✠ Discuss how Elisha and the woman in the story each receive something from the other's graciousness. In the light of this story and our present problems, evaluate your community's racial hospitality?

Second Reading Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

- ✠ If we are living in the "newness of life" in the risen Jesus, are we "living for God"?
- ✠ Think of ways God might use you if your attitude is Christ's and you put yourself at the disposal of God's saving work in the world.

Gospel Matthew 10:37-42

- ✠ Could this quote from today's Gospel "And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink ... " relate to the problem of safe drinking water that Pope Francis speaks of in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*? Is there anything you can do to give someone in a poor country a cup of cold, safe, water?
...Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor. *Laudato Si*, On Care for Our Common Home, Section 30
- ✠ Who is blessed, the one who gives the help or the one who receives it? Are you always the giver or do you need to receive at times?



VINNIES WINTER APPEAL 2026 – 27/28 JUNE AND 4/5 JULY

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW has launched its annual Vinnies Winter Appeal with a focus on the fact that “**Homelessness is Just One Sudden Crisis Away**”.

People like David need urgent assistance.

David found out how easy it is to lose everything and be pushed into homelessness.

He'd worked all his life. But when the work dried up, he simply couldn't pay the rent.

In a few short months, he went from a well-paid job to sleeping in a park. It was a devastating shock.

All it took was one sudden setback – a change in his circumstances – and David was sleeping rough.

At the beginning, I didn't even have a sleeping bag,” he said. “All I had was a suitcase and shoulder bag that I used as a pillow at nighttime. I couldn't believe how quickly it happened.”

David reached out to Vinnies, where he received the immediate and long-term support he urgently needed, thanks to generous people like you.

Slipping through the cracks

With fuel, the cost of living and rental prices higher than ever, an unexpected bill, the loss of a job or a relationship break down can be enough to push someone into homelessness.

For more and more people, homelessness is just one sudden crisis away.

And this winter, more people than ever before are facing homelessness and poverty in Australia.

Your generous gift this weekend or next can help people at risk of or experiencing homelessness get the support they need to find and keep a safe place to stay.

I never thought I'd be homeless. It just goes to show that homelessness can happen to anyone.” – David

This winter, more and more people like David are being pushed into homelessness. All it takes is one sudden crisis.

Your donation can provide healthy meals, help with living expenses and accommodation assistance, for somebody at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

And your gift can provide the lasting, long-term support that helps someone like David find a safe, secure and sustainable place to live.

Your kindness this winter can help someone who has lost everything – through no fault of their own – get back on track and rebuild their life.

Check out this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4Xn2HI4KQI&t=38s>

The appeal will be held in our Parish on the weekends of 27/28 June and 4/5 July. **Help end homelessness.**

There will be a special collection at both Masses these two weekends. You can donate cash or use your credit/debit card. **You can also donate online to Thirroul Vinnies Conference:** go to this link to donate:

<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way-conference/vinnies-thirroul-winter-appeal-2026>

POPE LEO – VISIT TO PAVIA, NORTHERN ITALY – 20 JUNE 2026

Good evening! Thank you all for being here. Greetings to all of you. We heard a moment ago of the importance of hope and peace. We all want to live in peace. It's very important that we never lose hope. As St Augustine told us, if we want to change the times, if we want the world to live in peace, we must begin with ourselves, meaning enough with words of hate, enough with the insults, bullying, enough with all those things that wage war between people, between communities, between countries! We must all learn to be builders of peace and promoters of reconciliation.

POPE LEO – DIALOGUE WITH YOUTH ON SUMMER PROGRAM – 22 JUNE 2026

Technology can be very good, and we need it for many things. But when we are together, there is no need to have a mobile phone, smartphone, or tablet in our hands all the time. In fact, we are happy whenever, even for a little while, we are not tied to our tablets or our phones. That would be the first point. It is very important to build friendships—to spend time together, to play together, perhaps even to study together—as people, not as computers or machines, not as techno-robots. We are human beings; we are persons. *Personal contact with others is very important.* That is the first thing.

The same is true in the family. When the family is together, it is not enough for everyone simply to sit there, each looking at his or her own phone. It is very important to learn how to talk with one another, to have conversations, to enjoy being together, to play together, and also to pray together. Even if we can have the Bible or some prayers on our phones, God does not want to look at our phones; God wants to look at our hearts and at our lives. So, we need to be free from these things which, in themselves, can be entertaining, helpful, and even good, but it is far more important to develop our humanity through friendship, conversation, and all the activities you are doing here during these weeks. I think that is something very important.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	29 Jun	Sts Peter and Paul, apostles	Acts 12:1-11	2 Timothy 4:6-8,17-18	Matthew 16:13-19
Tuesday	30 Jun	Tuesday, 13th Week in Ordinary Time		Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12	Matthew 8:23-27
Wednesday	1 Jul	Wednesday, 13th Week in Ordinary Time		Amos 5:14-15,21-24	Matthew 8:28-34
Thursday	2 Jul	Thursday, 13th Week in Ordinary Time		Amos 7:10-17	Matthew 9:1-8
Friday	3 Jul	St Thomas, apostle		Ephesians 2:19-22	John 20:24-29
Saturday	4 Jul	Saturday, 13th Week in Ordinary Time		Amos 9:11-15	Matthew 9:14-17
Sunday	5 Jul	14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – Scripture Readings are listed below.			

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Saturday, 27 June** 14:00 **Concert for the Children of Gaza, Railway Institute, Thirroul**
- ✦ **Weekend, 27/28 June** **Vinnies Winter Appeal Week #1 at both Masses**
- ✦ **Wednesday, 1 July** 19:00 **Sacrament of Confirmation practice**
- ✦ **Thursday, 2 July** 19:00 **Sacrament of Confirmation with Bishop Brian Mascord**
- ✦ **Weekend, 4/5 July** **Vinnies Winter Appeal Week #2 at both Masses**
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday
- ✦ **Week 6 to 13 July** **NAIDOC Week: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/>**
- ✦ **Week, 6 to 10 July** **Meeting of Friars in Auckland NZ – Ken and Andrew away**

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

MARY PAHULU-FALEVAI is our new Parish Secretary. *Call in and say hi!* Parish Office hours will now be **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays, 09:00 to 15:00**, and **Fridays, 08:30 to 15:00**, with lunch **12:30 to 13:00**. **Welcome Mary.**

JUBILEE OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI 2026

Our Parish warmly welcomes pilgrimage groups to visit St Michael Church during the Jubilee Year of St Francis of Assisi – 800 years since his death. A plenary indulgence is available, under the usual conditions, to all the faithful “who, with a heart detached from sin, participate in the Year of Saint Francis by visiting, in the form of a pilgrimage, any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship anywhere in the world dedicated to Saint Francis.” (Decree, 10 January 2026) Our parish will be celebrating the Feast of St Francis with special Masses on **Saturday, 3 October** and **Sunday, 4 October 2026**. There will also be the **Blessing of Animals** at **09:30** on **Monday, 5 October**.

PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA – THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
Winter Items: soup; noodles; scarves; beanies; jackets; gloves; warm socks.

CELEBRATING A SIGNIFICANT WEDDING ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR?

25, 30, 40, 50, 60 years?? 2026 Significant Marriage Anniversaries Mass. If you are celebrating 25, 30, 40, 50, 60 or over 60 years of marriage this year, you are warmly invited to the Significant Marriage Anniversaries, celebrated with Bishop Brian Mascord on **Sunday, 6 September 2026 at 14:00 at the St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong**. Mass will be followed by light refreshments in the Xavier Centre Conference Room. **Registration is essential and must be completed online at dow.sh/ma26** by no later than **Monday, 17 August 2026**. Any enquiries please email Helen Bennett helen.bennett@dow.org.au

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading 2 Kings 4:8-11,14-16</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 6:3-4,8-11</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 10:37-42</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website</p> <p>14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Zechariah 9:9-10</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 8:9,11-13</p> <p>Gospel Matthew 11:25-30</p>	<p>SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Saturday 📺 17:30</p> <p>Sunday 08:00</p> <p>📺 Saturday Mass is recorded.</p>
<p>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</p> <p><i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i></p> <p><i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i></p> <p>Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i></p> <p>Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i></p> <p>Mary Pahulu-Falevai • Parish Secretary</p> <p>Tues, Thurs 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</p>	<p>🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</p> <p>📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive</p> <p>📧 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515</p> <p>☎ 4268 1910</p> <p>📧 thirroul@dow.org.au</p> <p>Parish School of St Michael</p> <p>James Bryce Principal ☎ 4267 2560</p>	<p>THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES</p> <p>Monday _____</p> <p>Tuesday 📺 17:30</p> <p>Wednesday 09:00</p> <p>Thursday 09:00</p> <p>Friday 09:30</p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i></p>