



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
11 / 12 JULY 2026
15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
NAIDOC WEEK ENDS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Yearning for God's Goodness

The readings for this coming winter Sunday reflect the beauties of the earth, its golden harvests, its astonishing Spring, its delicate birds, beasts, mountains, hills and plains. Infinite surprise for those whose eyes can see.

The Jesuit poet Hopkins was so filled with the world's beauty that he can speak here, in the poem called "Pied Beauty."

Glory be to God for dappled things — For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow; For rose-moles in all stipple upon trout that swim; Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings; Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough; And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim. All things counter, original, spare, strange; Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?) With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim; He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: Praise him.

Some of the language is unusual. But if you spend time with these glorious images you will come to love our ever-evolving blue planet like someone bathing in the gentle tide of ocean swirl. All of it luxuriant, all of it precious.

The Lord uses this ebb and flow of seasons in the first reading to show how his visceral love for the earth works. Just as the rain and snow come to earth, he says, so too does God's word, which then returns to the heavens when it has done its job of watering. It does not return until it has moistened and nourished life in every single creature that will receive it. A fruitful harvest, says the Psalm.

St Paul speaks of all creation groaning in labour pains even until now (second reading). Human beings too groan within themselves like seeds which break open and push their way through tough ground and then evolve into full trees that stretch up for Christ's light.

Can such rich images apply to you and me? How good is our own soil? God pours his grace into it always. Do we groan and yearn for the goodness of God which is ready to be lavished upon us? Do we take time each day to let love in? Or do we listen on Sunday, perhaps with some interest, but then forget everything by Monday? Or not at all?

Jesus lists a number of things we might have to correct in order to accept the gifts he has ready for us. We might be shallow ground, he says. Or rocky soil. Weeds might choke us. How discouraging. Must I pretend to be rich soil, though I know my shallowness? No. I must be fully myself and allow God to do the rest.

That great poet from India, Tagore, put it this way: "The cloud stood humbly in a corner of the sky. The morning crowned it with splendour."

Let us be humble! Let's join in the revolving refreshment of all earthly things! Open our leaves! Allow in the sun!

As we have already indicated, Matthew's gospel alternates narrative passages with passages presenting the teaching of Jesus. Last week's reading was from a narrative sequence describing the difficulties Jesus encountered in his Galilean ministry. Today's reading is from the section that follows; it contains seven parables of 'the Kingdom' – a central theme of this gospel. It begins dramatically with the parable of the sower. People have come to hear Jesus crowd the shore of the lake, and he speaks to them from a boat. His parable – to an audience of rural Galileans – is about farming. But this farming is very different from the farming we are familiar with. The single spike ploughs used were not very effective; they would hardly make an impression on the hard ground of paths through the field; they left patches of brambles behind them; the Palestinian soil they ploughed was in many places a shallow covering of the underlying rock; much of the seed, broadcast by hand, would therefore come to nothing, while some that fell in soil made ready by the ploughing would produce the miracle of a fresh harvest. Parables are common in the Scriptures, and their appeal to the imagination, to convey a challenging message, was often used by the Jewish rabbis. The parables of Jesus were distinctive, however. He had already announced the essential message of his preaching in clear words – 'Make yourselves ready, the reign of God you have looked forward to is upon you!' His parables describing the coming of this reign were intended to puzzle his hearers – 'Listen anyone who has ears'. He wanted them to discover a meaning that brought home to them how different the Kingdom he proclaimed was from popular expectations – expectations that looked forward to a political vindication of the nation. (The reply Jesus gave, when asked why he taught through parables, does not mean – as we might expect – that he wanted to withhold the truth from his hearers; it means that he recognised – as the prophet Isaiah recognised before him, in the text he quoted – that many of his hearers would not have the dispositions necessary to find the meaning he wishes to convey.)

If we disregard the detailed explanation of the parable at the end of today's reading – probably an addition made by preachers in the early Church tradition, as they adapted this parable of Jesus to a very different audience – the

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Matthew 13:1-23



✚✚ meaning of Jesus' parable on the shore of the lake is not difficult to grasp. His preaching – and that of the evangelisers who will carry on his mission – will encounter difficulties of many kinds (like the seed of the sower). He has already encountered reversals in Galilee; and as he looked at the crowds curious to hear him he must have realised that his teaching would have little effect on many of them. Nevertheless, the meaning to be found in his parable is forthright: the harvest is certain, and it will be abundant; and there is a note of urgency: God's time has come; there is no second chance – there is only one sowing for each harvest.

Early Christian preachers, as we have said, developed an explanation of the parable for an audience in a very different situation from the crowd on the shore of the lake. That this addition is included in the gospel has an important lesson for later times. The message of Jesus must be applied to the changing circumstances of the Church's life. If the original parable urged the disciples of Jesus to sow the word with confidence, now those who have heard the word must show its fruits in their lives. In today's Church, the biblical revival opens the way for us.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading **Isaiah 55:10-11**

✚ The rain originates in the heavens, and falls to the earth making it fertile, helping to produce fruit for our consumption. Accomplishing its mission, it returns to the heavens. In what way is God's word reliable in this manner? "So shall my word be, ... achieving the end for which I sent it." What is the end for which God sent God's Son?

✚ Rain makes the seed germinate and grow. Apply this to God's grace. Now apply it to God's grace in your own life. Discuss.

Second Reading **Romans 8:18-23**

✚ "We know that all creation is groaning in labour pains even until now." Does God continually create us moment by moment?

✚ What do you think is the corruption from which creation is trying to free itself? Is there some pain involved in trying to end war, birth a cleaner environment for the planet, and establish new and better kinds of race relations? If God continually creates us moment by moment, will God help with these difficult births?

Gospel **Matthew 13:1-23**

✚ Jesus mentions "cares of the world and lure of wealth" as rocky ground and thorns that keep the seed from taking root. What is your "rocky ground"? Are you a busy pathway where the Word is sown but then is trampled? And can the thorns of worldly anxiety choke the Word when it comes to you?

✚ According to Pope Francis, no one, not one person, is excluded from receiving the seed. What kinds of things might you do to allow such seed to grow?

This Parable of the Sower is somewhat the 'mother' of all parables, because it speaks about listening to the Word. It reminds us that the Word of God is a seed which in itself is fruitful and effective; and God scatters it everywhere, paying no mind to waste. Such is the heart of God!

Each one of us is ground on which the seed of the Word falls; no one is excluded! The Word is given to each one of us. We can ask ourselves what type of terrain am I? Do I resemble the path, the rocky ground, the bramble bush? With the grace of God, if we want, we can become good soil, ploughed and carefully cultivated, to help ripen the seed of the Word. It is already present in our heart, but making it fruitful depends on us; it depends on the embrace that we reserve for this seed.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus, 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time A*, 12 July 2020

NAIDOC Week – Celebrating 50 Years

National NAIDOC Week 2026 takes place from **5 to 12 July 2026**, celebrating the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth. You can support and get to know your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities through activities and events held across the country.

For five decades, NAIDOC Week has celebrated the voices of our communities — steady, unapologetic, and proud. Each year, its themes have called for truth, celebrated culture, honoured resistance, and reminded the nation of who we are. It's a tribute to the people who built this movement, the Elders who stood firm, the organisers who made space, the artists who turned resistance into expression, and the communities who keep showing up, year after year.

NAIDOC has always been more than a week — it's a platform, a protest, a celebration, and a statement of survival. This moment is about looking back at the stories, the marches, the languages, the art, the leadership. At the strength it took to get here. It's about recognising how far we've come, not by chance, but because generations of people refused to be silenced.

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL 2026: Total for the Appeal SO FAR: \$5,531!

THANK YOU for your generosity and kindness this winter — you certainly have help someone who has lost everything – through no fault of their own – get back on track and rebuild their life.

You can still donate using your credit/debit card 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>

WORDS OF POPE LEO

World Refugee Day, established by the United Nations, was celebrated yesterday on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Convention relating to the status of refugees, which was adopted to protect those who are persecuted and forced to leave their homeland, homes and families. I hope that the spirit that inspired the drafting of this important international instrument may also continue to enlighten the consciences of national leaders today. No one can turn a blind eye to those who are seeking protection and safety. I also urge everyone to welcome those who are victims of persecution so that they may live in peace, with dignity, and look to the future with hope.

– *Angelus*, Sunday, 21 June 2026

Together, we share the urgent task of confronting hunger and malnutrition, while also tackling the underlying structural causes that sustain them. To meet this task effectively, we must examine the challenges before us, their underlying causes and the paths toward lasting solutions.

Today, crises have evolved from isolated events into persistent realities, marked by prolonged conflicts, chronic food insecurity, economic volatility and growing climate vulnerabilities. This raises a fundamental question: what configuration of the global order is capable of producing, reproducing and, at times, normalizing such conditions? The issue is no longer limited to how to intervene; rather, it extends to understanding why the system constantly produces the very problems it is then forced to correct.

The international order has become increasingly fragmented, arising in part from the crisis of the multilateral system. As I noted recently in the Encyclical Letter *Magnifica Humanitas*, “the institutions established to safeguard the concept of a common future for all peoples and a global common good appear to have been weakened” (201). In the absence of a shared ethical horizon capable of sustaining genuine cooperation, the international system has shifted from multilateralism toward “a disorderly and conflict-ridden multipolarism with a prevailing sense of mistrust” (ibid.). Consequently, States have increasingly allocated their resources towards national security, economic growth and domestic stability, disregarding the close link between these issues and multilateral cooperation.

This trend reveals a striking paradox: unprecedented global productive capacity exists alongside expanding zones of extreme vulnerability. The same forces that drive economic growth often exacerbate exclusion and marginalization. Although alleviating human suffering is widely recognized as essential in principle, humanitarian concerns increasingly risk being relegated to a secondary place among international priorities.

It is precisely within the gap between acknowledgement in principle and prioritization in practice that we witness the progressive bureaucratization of solidarity alongside the quiet commodification of human life. On one hand, humanitarian action is increasingly burdened by bureaucratic procedures that can delay assistance to those in need. On the other hand, access to essential goods, including food, is too often influenced by economic or strategic considerations. As a result, those who do not generate quantifiable value risk becoming invisible.

This twofold dynamic creates a serious ethical challenge: the human person is no longer consistently placed at the centre of international action. In this context, it is important to acknowledge that “whereas forms of aid and development projects are obstructed by involved and incomprehensible political decisions, skewed ideological visions and impenetrable customs barriers, weaponry is not” (Francis, *Address to the Executive Board of the World Food Programme*, 13 June 2016). In effect, conflicts are “fed” more readily than people are nourished. This reality reflects not only operational shortcomings but also a fundamental imbalance in political and moral priorities.

The consequences extend well beyond those immediately affected. More than merely a humanitarian concern, hunger erodes social cohesion, heightens the risk of conflict and fuels forced migration. Moreover, it undermines the capacity of States and societies to build resilient institutions, provide effective education and foster sustainable economic development. In doing so, it perpetuates cycles of fragility that ultimately affect the broader international community.

From this perspective, it becomes clear that humanitarian action is not extraneous to the international order. Rather, it reflects the global community’s responsibility to strengthen solidarity, resist exclusion and recognize the inherent God-given dignity of every human person. Beyond managing crises, therefore, international institutions embody a principle of shared responsibility and affirm that the international community is bound together by concern for those in the most vulnerable situations. In this sense, the World Food Programme is more than a political, economic or technical actor; it is a concrete expression of international solidarity. Indeed, where national institutions recede and community networks disintegrate, its presence helps to prevent humanitarian crises from deteriorating into irreversible collapse.

For this reason, a renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation is essential. In an increasingly fragmented and multipolar world, no single State can address global challenges alone. Lasting peace and integral, sustainable human development are possible only through the participation of all, fostered by genuine international dialogue and cooperation oriented toward the common good. – *Visit to the Headquarters of the World Food Programme*, 22 June 2026

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	13 Jul	Monday, 15 th Week in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 1:10-17	Matthew 10:34–11:1
Tuesday	14 Jul	Tuesday, 15 th Week in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 7:1-9	Matthew 11:20-24
Wednesday	15 Jul	St Bonaventure, friar bishop, doctor	Isaiah 10:5-7,13-16	Matthew 11:25-27
Thursday	16 Jul	Thursday, 15 th Week in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 26:7-9,12,16-19	Matthew 11:28-30
Friday	17 Jul	Friday, 15 th Week in Ordinary Time	Isaiah 38:1-6,21-22,7-8	Matthew 12:1-8
Saturday	18 Jul	Saturday, 15 th Week in Ordinary Time	Micah 2:1-5	Matthew 12:14-21
Sunday	19 Jul	16 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Weekend, 11/12 July** **Blessing of July Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays**
- ✦ **Saturday, 11 July** **18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass**
- ✦ **Tuesday, 14 July** **10:00 Funeral of John Dignam and Interment of his ashes**
- ✦ **Saturday, 18 July** **17:30 One Baptism during Mass**
- ✦ **Friday, 24 July** **09:30 Grandparents and The Elderly Special Mass**

SEAFARERS SUNDAY – STELLA MARIS AUSTRALIA

Mariners live on the margins of society and most of their working life is spent beyond the reach of land. During the COVID pandemic, seafarers were unable to set foot on dry land for a year and a half, and now the war-torn seas of the Straits of Hormuz highlight how dangerous the work is. Stella Maris had its humble beginnings through the St Vincent de Paul Society over 100 years ago in Scotland. Formerly known as the Apostleship of the Sea, the official maritime welfare agency of the Catholic Church operates in more than 300 ports worldwide. Sea Sunday is a time when we reflect on the lives and the work of all the seafarers of our world – and pray for all seafarers.

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

VINNIES NO INTEREST LOANS SCHEME [NILS]

No Interest Loans [NILs] provide individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair, affordable credit with **no fees or charges applied**. If you hold a Health Care Card or Pension Card, or earn less than \$70,000 before tax (\$100,000 for couples or people with dependents), and if you have lived at your current address for at least 3 months (* some exceptions apply), and if you can show you can afford to repay the loan, you are eligible for a loan – loans are available up to \$2,000 for essential goods and services including: household items; car repairs and registration; medical and dental services; technology; furniture; education. Loans are not available for bills, debts, fines, cash, food, penalties. Apply 4283 3730 or nils@vinnies.org.au **Pass this information on ...**

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

15th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A
1st Reading Isaiah 55:10-11
2nd Reading Romans 8:18-23
Gospel Matthew 13:1-23

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

16th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A
1st Reading Wisdom 12:13,16-19
2nd Reading Romans 8:26-27
Gospel Matthew 13:24-43

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 📺 **17:30**
Sunday **08:00**
 📺 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*

Mary Pahulu-Falevai • Parish Secretary

Tues, Thurs 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 1st Friday