

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
8 / 9 AUGUST 2026
19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
CONFIRMATION ✨ COMMISSIONING

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Trust in the Lord

This Sunday we will hear the wonderful story of Jesus walking on water. This miraculous event is mainly what we will remember, together with Peter sinking into the water when he tried the same thing. But there is another very interesting spiritual dimension that I would like to suggest.

What do you think was going on in Jesus' own heart and soul during these events?

Remember the Gospel from last Sunday? Jesus did preach to the multitude and miraculously feed them, but he had wanted to be by himself to tend to his grief. He had just been told of the death of John the Baptist, and it hit him hard. He had gotten into a boat and had rowed to what he thought would be a deserted place. But the crowd got there first and instead of quiet time for prayer and grief, Jesus had hour after hour of healing and curing.

Then comes the story for this Sunday. Jesus finally sends the crowd away. But besides that, he does one other thing that is very telling: he "made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side" (Matthew 14:22). He still wants to be alone. He wants to process the death of John the Baptist. He goes up on the mountainside to pray.

It is by now evening, Matthew tells us, and Jesus prays into the night, even with gusty wind coming up. I wonder what his prayer was like?

He had studied the Scriptures since his youth. Is it too fanciful to think that the story in our first reading came into his mind? There the prophet Elijah too was up on a mountainside, and there too, a heavy wind came up. The Lord was not in the wind, we are told in the reading. Nor in the earthquake that followed. Nor in the fire that came next. The Lord God was in "a sound of sheer silence" that followed.

This is how God speaks most often. In the quiet moment of grace, in the gentle assurance that we are not alone even in the face of tragedy, in the joy of knowing that love lives.

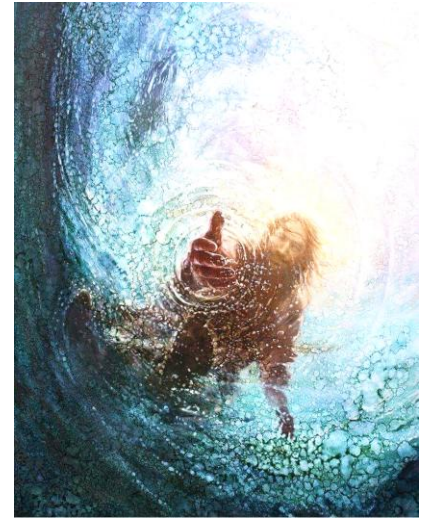
Sometimes the voice of God whispers so softly that you or I do not hear it.

But Jesus on the mountaintop heard. His great trust in his *Abba* (= daddy, much loved parent) opened his ears. Perhaps *Abba* assured him that a human being has to rely on God even against the evidence, even when it seems that tragedy has the upper hand. This is not a blind trust, but a quiet memory of God's faithful love even when events like death seem to contradict it. It appears to be counter intuitive. Does death support belief in God any more than water supports human footsteps?

But Jesus does walk on water. Peter loses hope and starts to sink. Let this lesson be ours as we worship this Sunday. We only start to sink when we lose our trust in the source of hope and love and promise. Listen. Remember.

The people who gave us the scriptures had a very different outlook from ours. Because they had no doubt that miracles frequently occur, their traditions in the scriptures often make use of miracle stories to express their faith that God has been active in their history. Elijah was a 9th century prophet who profoundly influenced the faith of old Israel, teaching the incomparable greatness of the divine mystery. He is remembered through stories like that in today's first reading. This story describes Elijah meeting the Lord at Mount Horeb (Sinai). Whereas God's presence was shown to Moses at Sinai, through earthquake and fire, Elijah's meeting was very different – in 'the sound of a gentle breeze'. Clearly, such things as the wind's shattering of rocks are contrived, to show how Elijah's teaching about God went even beyond that of Moses. Historically, there is no doubt that Jesus worked miracles – raising people to life, and healing them in a manner that defied explanation. A very limited number of such events are recalled in the gospel narratives. Studies made of these narratives show that do not have the form of 'wonder stories' – the wonder is not emphasised; Jesus even discourages the awakening of popular enthusiasm, wanting those involved to recognise in faith that what has happened is a sign of the coming of the Kingdom he is proclaiming. The fact that this common pattern is not found in this narrative has led many interpreters to see the miraculous events of today's gospel reading as a symbolic creation of early Christian teachers, expressing the lessons of Jesus for his disciples. This reading, we should recall, belongs to a narrative section of Matthew's gospel describing the formation Jesus is giving to his disciples. Perhaps it is related to the story of the calming of the storm by Jesus, that Matthew has included in an earlier chapter (8:23-27).

Sudden storms are frequent on the Sea of Galilee. For the people of the Middle East, the waters of the sea were a mysterious and menacing element of creation, kept in place by divine power. They provided a ready symbol of forces hostile to God's designs. This narrative is also found in the gospels of Mark and John. Neither of them, however, mentions the astonishing experience of Peter. In Matthew's gospel, on the other hand, this incident is one of three that single out Peter's place among the disciples (Matthew 16:17-19; 17:24-27). Let us not be distracted by the ✨



✠✠ question of the origin of this unusual narrative. As a symbolic account of the formation Jesus was giving it has great value for the Church of every generation.

Sending his disciples on their way, Jesus gives himself to prayer. Only his living relation with his Father explains the authority and serene courage that were so evident in his life. He invites us to learn from his example. The symbol of the Church as ‘the bark of Peter’ has long been part of Catholic awareness. Those in the boat are sustained by the words of Jesus, promising that, in the end, he will rejoin them, when they reach the shore to which he has directed them. More than that, they are assured that, despite the hostile forces of the sea and the deepest darkness of the night, they will experience the Saviour’s mysterious presence assisting them. His words, ‘It’s me! Don’t be afraid’, are the turning point in all three gospel accounts. In Matthew’s account, it is the inimitable Peter – the one who is to ‘strengthen his brothers’ in their doubts (Luke 22:31) – who leads the others to recognise the Lord’s presence, and make their confession of faith, ‘Truly, you are the Son of God’.



Today’s Gospel takes us to the very heart of our Christian faith. How often we find ourselves unable to cope. Everything around us is crashing in on us and we feel we are being overwhelmed. We are afraid and when we pray, God seems to be far away. There is no answer. That is the situation of the apostles in the boat out on the lake.

Matthew presents this portrait for his community which was in a similar situation. Refugees were pouring in from Judea, trying to escape the war with the occupying Roman army. As Jews who had joined the Christian community, they were being accused of failing to support the Jewish cause. Jesus had taught them to forgive and to work for peace, and now, over and above the terrible Roman-Jewish war, their fellow Jews and members of their own family were turning against them. Incidentally, some of the pain of this is expressed in today’s beautiful second reading in which Paul expresses the suffering he experienced because of his fellow Jews who did not open their minds and hearts to Jesus and to the community of Jesus’ disciples who were experiencing the fulfilment of the dreams and hopes of Israel. Matthew’s church felt the absence of Jesus acutely. Matthew is asking his community to believe that even though Jesus is no longer with them in the way he was before his death, he is in intimate communion with God (we see him in prayer on the mountain while they are battling the storm) and therefore he knows what they are going through. He is praying for them and cares for them and will save them.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading 1 Kings 19:9,11-13

- ✠ Some of us have to have a “great wind, earthquake, or fire” in our lives before we look for God. But do you ever take time to listen for “a sound of sheer silence”? If you created a quiet time in your life each day, could you do this?
- ✠ Discuss all the traces of God you find in your life, or the ways God can/does speak to you. When is it easiest to hear? When in your life is it the hardest? At the end of the day do you ask yourself when you saw these traces?

Second Reading Romans 9:1-5

- ✠ Paul is in “great sorrow and unceasing anguish” because some of his own people have not accepted the fact that the Messiah has come. What do you do when your loved ones reject some beliefs that are important to you.
- ✠ What would be a good way to handle “great sorrow and unceasing anguish”? Scream at the people causing it? Show them love? Pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance for them and you?

Gospel Matthew 14:22-33

- ✠ How is living with this environmental crisis, the Ukraine war, the genocide in Gaza, the war in Iran, racial problems similar to the raging sea Peter was trying to walk on toward Jesus? What do you think would have helped Peter keep walking? Ignore the wind? Keep his eyes on Jesus? What might help you now?
- ✠ Instead of looking at Peter’s desperate cry for help as shameful, why does Pope Francis say it is a beautiful prayer for everyone?

This Gospel narrative is an invitation to abandon ourselves trustingly to God in every moment of our life, especially in the moment of trial and turmoil. When we have strong feelings of doubt and fear and we seem to be sinking, in life’s difficult moments where everything becomes dark, we must not be ashamed to cry out like Peter: “Lord, save me” (v. 30). To knock on God’s heart, on Jesus’s heart. “Lord, save me.” It is a beautiful prayer! We can repeat it many times. “Lord, save me.” And Jesus’s gesture, who immediately reaches out His hand and grasps that of His friend, should be contemplated at length: this is Jesus. Jesus does this. Jesus is the Father’s hand who never abandons us, the strong and faithful hand of the Father, who always and only wants what is good for us. ... Jesus wanted to teach this to Peter and the disciples, and also to us today. In dark moments, in sad moments He is well aware that our faith is weak –all of us are people of little faith, all of us, myself included, everyone – and that our faith is weak our journey can be troubled, hindered by adverse forces. But He is the Risen One! Let’s not forget this: He is the Lord who passed through death in order to lead us to safety.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 9 August 2020.

CONFIRMATION – ASHER DEVEZA, SUNDAY, 9 AUGUST 2026

The Sacrament of Confirmation was celebrated in our Parish by Bishop Brian on Thursday, 2 July. However, **Asher Deveza** and his family were overseas on that date, so Ken has been delegated by Bishop Brian to celebrate Asher's Confirmation this Sunday morning during the 08:00 Mass. **Congratulations, Asher.**



COMMISSIONING OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Following Covid restrictions and since reintroducing the distribution of Holy Communion under both species, the Body and the Blood of Christ, we have used just two ministers distributing the Blood of Christ. This has slowed down the distribution of Communion. So, from 8/9 August, four ministers will now distribute the Blood of Christ at weekend Masses. In order to achieve that an appeal was made for more Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to complete the necessary training. That has now been completed. This weekend and next, all **forty-two ministers** will be commissioned for our Parish.

Those ministers are: Chris Agnew; Barbara Bosley; Anne Bower; Trish Buchan; Judy Bull; Anne Clarke; Ted Clarke; Monique Davis; Anne Denning; John Denning; Paul Gallagher; Gary Grace; Marie Grace; Chris Halloway; Denny Halloway; Pat Hazell; Maureen Heydon; Cesia Holowinski; Patience Hook; Belinda Hughes; Paul Hughes; Henrie Idziak; Belinda Jordan; Julie Joyce; Kate Kors; Michael Martellozzo; Pat Mirabito; Frank Nowlan; Genevieve Nowlan; Ronelle Peardon; Dominic Philippa; Deirdre Platt; Jo Pye; Patricia Roberts; Claire Ryan; David Ryan; Janice Ryan; Joan Scott; Jodi Steel; Lyn Toohey; Karl Weber; and Therese Weber. **Thank you** to these parishioners who are entrusted with this service in our Parish.

GREETING OF POPE LEO TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE “CANTICLE OF PEACE” PRAYER, 29 JUL 26

Dear friends,

My dear young people from Uganda, the Holy Land and Italy.

Welcome! I am very happy that you have come to join us today. It is a joy to share these moments with you. I thank all the choir members for your hard work in preparing this recital, and I congratulate the choir directors.

We have just listened to your beautiful singing. Music has the remarkable ability to bring different voices together in unison, where each one contributes something unique to the whole. In this sense, choir becomes an ideal symbol of harmony and cooperation.

It is significant that Sacred Scripture and the Liturgy of the Church speak of “choirs of angels and saints” when describing the joy of heaven, not because they are literally singing all the time, but because united in love they behold God together and find in him the fullness of happiness.

My dear young friends, as you were singing, did you notice how music drew all of us into an experience of something new, something that was greater than any one of us alone could create? This is the experience of beauty. It opens before us a new horizon, and it awakens within us the desire to go out to meet that horizon. When we set out toward it, we discover not simply something, but Someone. We encounter God our Creator. Just as we can follow a stream back to its source, the beauty of music invites us to encounter the one who is beauty itself.

In this regard, continue to cultivate the gifts that God has given you, and allow them to lead you towards him. He is everything we are looking for in life, the one who alone can quell our restless hearts. Remember that you have been made for great things, and that this world is not enough to quench your thirst for meaning and happiness.

Know too that the Holy Father loves you and prays for you, for your families and for your countries. In a particular way, I pray that peace may reign in your homes and in all those places throughout the world that continue to suffer from violence.

In closing, I would like to thank the Andrea Bocelli Foundation for the work you carry out on behalf of young people who experience educational and social disadvantages. Through the power of music, you are contributing to the Church's mission of promoting the integral development of every human person and serving the common good. May God bless your efforts.

Dear friends, thank you again for coming to lift our hearts with your beautiful music. Entrusting you to the intercession of Mary our Mother, I will gladly impart to each of you my heartfelt blessing. Thank you.

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO TO PARTICIPANTS IN NATIONAL YOUTH DAY, PERU, 1 AUG 26

Dear young people: The long-awaited moment has arrived, which you have been preparing for with such enthusiasm over the past few months: the National Youth Day in Chulucanas. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for responding to this initiative, which renews and strengthens the life of the Church.

The theme that brings you together for this gathering is: “Be courageous, Christ lives”. It is precisely the certainty of the Lord's living presence amongst us that is the inner flame driving us to be courageous and to step out of the comfort of individualism, to become part of a community of brothers and sisters in the faith, to forge true bonds of friendship and thus bear witness to the fact that it is possible to live united in Christ.

I invite you to open your hearts fully to receive the gifts that the Lord wishes to bestow upon you during these days. And whatever you experience during this Day, do not keep it to yourselves; do not let it remain merely in the photos on your mobile phones or in videos on social media. Share it and reflect it in your lives, for many people today need that joyful and infectious witness which a young person who loves Christ can convey. Do not be afraid to be instruments of God in rekindling the hope of many, many hearts that are suffering.

I commend you to the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Evangelization. May she intercede for you, so that you may be the “salt and light” of Christ in this beloved Peruvian land. God bless you! And may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you. Amen!

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	10 Aug	St Lawrence, deacon, martyr	2 Corinthians 9:6-10	John 12:24-26
Tuesday	11 Aug	St Clare of Assisi, virgin	Ezekiel 2:8-3:4	Matthew 18:1-5,10-14
Wednesday	12 Aug	Weekday, 19 th Week in Ordinary Time	Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22	Matthew 18:15-20
Thursday	13 Aug	Weekday, 19 th Week in Ordinary Time	Ezekiel 12:1-12	Matthew 18:21-19:1
Friday	14 Aug	St Maximilian Kolbe, friar priest, martyr	Ezekiel 16:1-15,60,63	Matthew 19:3-12
Saturday	15 Aug	The Assumption of Mary	Revelation 11:19,12:1-6	1 Corinthians 15:20-26
Sunday	16 Aug	20 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 8 August	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul with fellow parishioners after Mass
✦ Weekend, 8/9 August		Blessing of those celebrating August Wedding Anniversaries, Birthdays
✦ Wednesday, 12 August	10:30	Catholic Women's League Monthly meeting – BYO lunch
✦ Saturday, 15 August	09:30	Mass for the feast of the Assumption of Mary [Holy Day]
✦ Sunday, 16 August	08:00	One Baptism during Mass

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** – animals welcome at these Masses for a blessing. There will also be the Blessing of Animals at 09:30 on Monday, 5 October in the courtyard next to the church.

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.

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: MIXED BERRY & DARK CHOCOLATE MUFFINS FROM CHEF RAYMOND

350g plain flour (or mix with wholemeal); 2 tsp baking powder; 200g sugar; 100g Greek yogurt; 250ml milk or water; 50g melted butter and 2 eggs; 250g mixed berries (fresh or frozen); 200g dark chocolate, chopped.

Heat oven to 180°C and line a 12-hole muffin tray. Mix dry items in a large bowl. Mix wet items in a separate bowl, then pour into the dry mix. Fold gently in the berries and dark chocolate. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until golden and cooked.

WHAT'S ON AROUND THE DIOCESE?

Check out upcoming Diocesan events and courses – too many to list in one place. Subscribe here and you will be kept in the loop dow.sh/stayingconnected about what's happening around our Diocese.

THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY – THE DORMITION OF MARY

The feast of the Assumption of Mary, known in the Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches as the Dormition [Falling Asleep] of Mary, the *Theotokos* (God-bearer). Both traditions or terms are relating to the end of Mary's life and to her departure from the earth. Both views agree that she was taken up into heaven bodily. The Assumption was proclaimed a dogma of the Church on 1 November 1950. In Australia it is a holy day of obligation.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website	NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
19 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A	20 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A	MASS TIMES
1 st Reading 1 Kings 19:9,11-13	1 st Reading Isaiah 56:1,6-7	Saturday 17:30
2 nd Reading Romans 9:1-5	2 nd Reading Romans 11:13-15,29-32	Sunday 08:00
Gospel Matthew 14:22-33	Gospel Matthew 15:21-28	☒ Saturday Mass is recorded.
Parish of St Michael – Thirroul <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> 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 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>