



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
29 / 30 AUGUST 2026
22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
THE SEASON OF CREATION

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

This week, Peter is in for a big surprise.

In last week's Gospel Jesus retired the name "Simon" and replaced it with the name Peter.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

We heard that, at root, the name Peter meant "rock." Simon is to be a "Rock," the foundation of the Church.

Surprise, surprise, the name Jesus gives Peter this week has a very different flavour: he calls him "Satan". If this name were to stick, Peter would be the leader of the very "netherworld" which Jesus promised could not prevail against the Church.

What has happened?

First, it is quite clear that Jesus' emotional state has changed.

He is obviously dreading the suffering and death he will soon have to face. His rebuke to Peter is so sharp, so instant, so contradictory, that its emotional roots are showing. He knows what a terrible toll human misery and affliction will take on him. He snaps at Peter and even resorts to name-calling.

Second, Jesus had been gradually schooling the disciples about who he really is. Not just a great teacher, or good friend, or magnetic preacher, but the complete revelation of divine love. They had achieved their first high mark last week when Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (Gospel, 21 Ord A 20)

Up until now he had not spoken a word to them about the crucifixion. At this stage, they should be able to begin to understand what it means for Jesus to be the Christ. Shouldn't they? So, this week he shows the real meaning of Christly love: for the good of the world, he must suffer greatly under the elders, chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Do the Apostles get it? No. The Gospel reports that Peter "rebukes" Jesus. Something like this:

No, no, no, no, Lord, we will protect you—this will not happen to you, please don't worry so much. Everything will be ok, you'll see. We need you to be alive. You are the Christ, the Messiah! Use your powers!

It is an impulsive response. Very human. But notice that Peter is telling Jesus to avoid pain by selfish use of his divine powers.

This is just what the devil had recommended in the desert temptations (Matthew 4:1-11)! When Jesus was hungry, Satan had said, stealthily, you are Messiah! Why don't you simply turn these stones into bread? After that, have your angels save you from all danger. And then, be a real Messiah, be in charge of all the lands there are. Why not?

Because all of this would require bowing down and worshipping Satan.

To put it another way, Jesus would have to act according to the self-seeking, self-interested part of human nature. Go for the wealth, the power and the reputation. Forget Godly love.

Since he was human, Jesus must have felt within himself the rewards that would come with such desert temptations. And he must feel it now as Peter gives him the same enticement.

So, he reacts strongly. Does he really mean that Peter is Satan? No. But surely, he remembers with pain the devil's temptations. No wonder that name slips out.

In last week's gospel reading, Matthew celebrated Peter's commission as the guardian of unity in the Church. The continuation of that passage, in today's reading, recalls the rebuke Peter received from Jesus after his confession. It was the mission of Jesus, to fulfil all the expectations of the Old Testament. In the questions put to the disciples that led to Peter's confession, Jesus speaks of himself as the 'Son of Man', and he repeats this reference in the concluding words of today's reading. The 'Son of Man' was the triumphant figure of the book of Daniel who was to come on the clouds to establish God's universal reign. Now, in the first of three predictions of his passion, he identifies himself with the 'Servant' of the Isaian writings who, by his sufferings, would lead God's people to the fulfilment of their God-given destiny. These references would have been treasured by Matthew's community, as they recalled their great theme that the life and death of the Saviour took place 'to fulfil the scriptures'. In Peter's condescending response to Jesus' prediction of the outcome of his rejection by the leaders in Jerusalem – 'This must not happen to you' – we glimpse something of the trusting relationship Jesus maintained with his disciples. But the sharp reaction of Jesus makes clear the seriousness of Peter's mistake. There is a great irony in the rebuke of Jesus: the 'rock' is told that he is a 'stumbling block'.

What's In A Name



✠✠ Jesus is forming his disciples, we remember. And now he challenges them to begin to come to terms with the mystery of the Cross – his reconciling and healing of a shattered world. Though Jesus was aware that his conflict with the Jerusalem authorities was a matter of life and death – ‘the elders, chief priests and scribes’ were the three groups of leaders who made up the Sanhedrin that was to condemn him – his words do not necessarily involve a miraculous foreknowledge of his fate. ‘Taking up the cross’ was a proverbial way of referring to the bearing of adversity and suffering. Under Roman rule, crucifixion – with its prelude of the criminal’s bearing of the heavy crossbeam to the place of execution – was a familiar reality. Those who wish to be his followers, Jesus declares, must be warned that this means a readiness to bear the burden of suffering. The community, from a Jewish background, that Matthew is writing for have been filled with wonder and gratitude, as they recalled the Isaian description of the Suffering Servant: ‘He was being wounded for our rebellions ... the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises’ (Isaiah 53). Now they recall the words of Jesus inviting them to enter into this mystery of reconciliation: ‘Anyone who wants to save his life will lose it’ – a reference to the martyrdom that has already been the fate of some of their fellow Christians; ‘Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it’. These words of Jesus imply an astounding claim. ‘For my sake’, Jesus says. For Old Testament faith, it is only God who deserves to be loved with all one’s ‘heart, soul and mind’ (Deuteronomy 16); now Jesus is claiming the same absolute allegiance for himself. For Jesus, this taking up of the cross is a daily, life-long calling.

The other readings of today’s liturgy help us to reflect upon what this call involves in practical everyday terms. Jeremiah’s heroic faithfulness was to become a source of blessings and encouragement for God’s people of every age. Today’s passage from Paul to the Romans can serve as a commentary on the call of Jesus. We can offer our faithfulness as a ‘living sacrifice’, uniting our offering to the Saviour’s gift of himself for the sake of the world. It is the mystery of the Eucharist that makes this possible.

One thing suffering can do is force us to face up to the truth of our dependence – on others, but especially on God. This is something that we can forget when everything is going well. A second consideration is that when we suffer, we are forced to engage psychic energy to face whatever it is that is causing the suffering and the effects it has upon us, and to listen at every level to what is going on in our psyche as well as in our body. We are forced to take stock of our lives and if we are wasting them or living a distracting existence, suffering can help focus us on what really matters. Thirdly, we are reminded that every new life comes after a dying. Death is the ultimate situation in which this happens, but all along the road of life there are ‘deaths’: the ordinary psychic stages of maturation; any occasion which requires that we leave someone or something we value; coming up against our own or other people’s limitations which require us to let go our self-image or our image of others and our unrealistic hopes and dreams and expectation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading **Jeremiah 20:7-9**

- ✠ Jeremiah couldn’t ignore the call to prophecy even though it brought him much ridicule. Who today speaks out about injustice in human trafficking, police profiling, and the economy? What social or economic structures of injustice would you like to transform so much that you can’t keep quiet about it?
- ✠ How does Pope Francis’ statement in his 2013 *America Magazine* interview relate to “it becomes like fire burning in my heart.” from today’s reading? Could racial, immigration, and environmental problems be some of the “wounds” to which he is referring?

Instead of being just a Church that welcomes and receives by keeping the doors open, let us try also to be a Church that finds new roads, that is able to step outside itself and go to those who do not attend Mass, to those who have quit or are indifferent. The ones who quit sometimes do it for reasons that, if properly understood and assessed, can lead to a return. But that takes audacity and courage. ... We need to proclaim the Gospel on every street corner, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing, even with our preaching, every kind of disease and wound.

A Big Heart Open to God: An interview with Pope Francis, 30 September 2013

Second Reading **Romans 12:1-2**

- ✠ How do you discern God’s will? Does certainty about the will of God come suddenly? Can it emerge gradually? Do you imagine you have made the decision and then check for feelings of consolation or desolation?
- ✠ Do you think Christ will use your suffering for the salvation of the world if you unite your trials with his?

Gospel **Matthew 16:21-27**

- ✠ Which of these situations fit into Christ’s instruction, “Lose your life for my sake and find it? doctors and nurses treating people with infectious diseases or terminal illnesses; dads and mums making sacrifices for the good of the family; priests, brothers and sisters generously serving others; young people daring to follow their consciences, unafraid to go against the current; people renouncing their own interests to work with immigrants, elderly, disabled, trafficked?
- ✠ You cannot take your money and possessions with you when you die. If you “lose your life” out of love for others, does that give you something to take with you? Is it the love in your heart that goes with you when you die?

POPE LEO: 11TH WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION, 1 SEP 2026

"They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isaiah 2:4)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Our Lord Jesus Christ came so that we might have life and have it in abundance (cf. John 10:10). This gift of life lies at the very heart of our mission as disciples and of our shared calling to build a civilization of love. As we observe this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, we are once again invited to contemplate the gift of life and to cherish the earth that sustains it, for they are tangible ways of offering praise to our Creator.

Today, we are witnessing many crises and much human suffering. At the same time, it seems that the disruption to the harmonious balance of creation is accelerating. These phenomena are not unrelated; they are a single plea for healing and peace arising from a wounded world. The God of life, revealed in Jesus Christ, offers a peace that the world cannot give: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" (John 14:27). This peace is neither superficial nor fleeting; it flows from the enduring love of Christ and his care for every human person.

Yet this promise of peace stands in stark contrast to the realities we see in many parts of the world. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a time when nations "shall beat their swords into ploughshares" (Isaiah 2:4), transforming what destroys life into what sustains it. But today, we too often witness the very opposite, as efforts continue to be directed toward violence and war.

War leaves wounds that extend far beyond the battlefield. It claims lives, tears families apart and forces millions to flee their homes, thereby deepening fear, injustice and division (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 77-82). War also leaves behind social and ecological destruction that endures for generations. Moreover, the interaction between armed conflicts and environmental degradation often creates a vicious cycle, which destroys ecosystems, contaminates essential resources, such as air and water, and undermines food security. This fuels poverty, inequality, and new social tensions that can contribute to the emergence of further conflicts.

What is more, war creates wounds that damage the whole fabric of life, harming not only individual persons and communities, but also their broader network of relationships with the whole human family, and their harmony with creation. It reveals a deeper failure to live in God's image and likeness, to respect life and to care for the earth entrusted to us. This is not only a political failure, but also a moral and spiritual one. Rooted in distorted desires and the misuse of human freedom and power, war stands as a counter-witness to the Gospel of peace.

The above-mentioned crises call not only for responsibility but also for a conversion of heart that will bear fruit in a deeper fidelity to God, love of one another and respect for the gift of creation. Indeed, the discord we see in the world, such as violence, injustice and ecological degradation, is not simply the result of flawed systems or structures; it is a "symptom of the deeper dichotomy that is rooted in humanity itself" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 10). In fact, the human heart is the place where the deepest struggles unfold, and our fallen condition reveals itself. It is not merely the seat of emotion, but the centre of the person — the place where reason, desire, will and conscience converge. It is here that we wrestle with the contradictory desires within us between love and indifference, truth and illusion, justice and injustice (cf. James 1:14–15). The wounds of war and the degradation of the earth, then, are profoundly linked to the condition of the human heart. The conflicts that torment humanity are in many ways the outward expression of interior discord and division. When the heart is distorted, relationships suffer, and the structures we build begin to reflect that disorder.

Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that "the external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast" (Homily for the Solemn Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry, 24 April 2005). This calls us to recognize that, in some way, what is broken around is also broken within us. In order to build a peaceful society, therefore, we must not only reform structures but also renew our hearts. The deep-set causes of conflict and the exploitation of creation stem from an ethical and cultural crisis, including the loss of a sense of limits, the desire for domination, the pursuit of immediate profit, and the inability to recognize the God-given dignity of each human person.

The prophetic call to "beat swords into ploughshares" (Isaiah 2:4) is therefore not only a vision for nations, but a call to each person. It invites us to transform harm into life. Yet this transformation cannot be achieved through external change alone. It requires, through cooperating with God's grace, a deeper personal and collective conversion — a returning to God, who will reorder our desires, heal our wounds and help us grow in virtue.

Without this inner transformation, peace will remain fragile and short-lived. But where hearts are renewed, new possibilities begin to open. What has been used for destruction can be redirected toward life, toward the care of the poor, the nourishment of the hungry, and the safeguarding of creation. This is the path of authentic ecological conversion, where the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us (cf. Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 217). Peace, then, begins in the heart and flows outward to our relationships, communities and the broader world.

Although the challenges before us are enormous, God does not leave us without the means of healing and transformation. In place of the weapons of war, the God of peace grants us the strength to heal, to reconcile and to build a civilization of love. In this way, we are called to safeguard the many "ecosystems" entrusted to us: the ecosystems of creation, of human relationships and of the human heart itself.

Let us imagine a world in which the energies currently invested in war are directed toward integral human development, to overcoming poverty, protecting human dignity and reconciling divided peoples. Such a vision reflects faith in the coming of God's Kingdom.

The true tools for building peace are not weapons of destruction, instead they are truth, dialogue, patience, goodness, justice, mercy, understanding, care and love. These flow from hearts shaped by the Gospel and sustained by God's grace. Only these qualities possess the power to transform individuals, renew communities and heal the wounds of our world.

Dear brothers and sisters, the path before us is clear, though it is not easy. We are called to allow our hearts to be renewed, so that we might seek peace and care for creation. Scripture tells us to guard our hearts, for everything we do flows from them (cf. Proverbs 4:23).

If we take up this task with humility and faith, we will become collaborators in God's work of renewal. We will move, slowly but surely, from desert to garden, from division to communion, and from violence to peace.

May the Lord grant us the courage to walk along this path, so that in our time, swords may indeed be beaten into ploughshares, and the promise of the Gospel may take deeper root in our world, and the peace of Christ may reign over all of creation.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	31 Aug	Weekday, 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 2:1-5	Luke 4:16-30
Tuesday	1 Sep	Weekday, 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 2:10-16	Luke 4:31-37
Wednesday	2 Sep	Weekday, 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 3:1-9	Luke 4:38-44
Thursday	3 Sep	St Gregory the Great, pope, doctor	1 Corinthians 3:18-23	Luke 5:1-11
Friday	4 Sep	Weekday, 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 4:1-5	Luke 5:33-39
Saturday	5 Sep	Weekday, 22 nd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 4:6-15	Luke 6:1-5
Sunday	6 Sep	23 RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Monday–Thursday, 31 Aug to 3 Sep Canon Law Conference in North Sydney [Ken away]
Andrew at Thirroul – no ‘televised’ Mass on Tuesday, 1 Sep
- ✦ Friday, 4 September 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass, *followed by morning tea!*
- ✦ Weekend, 5/6 September Father’s Day – Blessing of Fathers during both Masses
- ✦ Tuesday, 8 September Enrolments CLOSE for First Penance and First Communion (Year 2)

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: HONEY, OAT, MIXED BERRY AND GREEK YOGHURT SMOOTHIE

1 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen); ½ cup Greek yoghurt; ¼ cup rolled oats; 1 tablespoon honey; ½ cup milk (dairy or plant-based); ½ teaspoon vanilla extract (optional).

Put all items into a high-speed blender. Blend on high speed for 30 to 60 seconds until completely smooth. Pour into a glass and serve right away.

60 YEARS OF MARRIED LIFE – CONGRATULATIONS KAY AND PAUL TUCKERMAN

On Thursday, 20 August, Kay and Paul celebrated the 60th wedding anniversary, having been married at St Kevin’s Catholic Church, Dee Why and been parishioners of St Michael’s Thirroul ever since! Last Sunday, Kay and Paul were given a special blessing and presented with a Blessing from Pope Leo. **Congratulations and thanks Paul and Kay!**



FIRST PENANCE AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The Sacraments of First Penance and Communion are celebrated when a child is in Year 2 or seven years old (or older). Enrolments for 2026 close on **Tuesday, 8 September**. Check the parish website for details.

THE SEASON OF CREATION 2026

The Season of Creation 2026 runs from **1 September to 4 October**, and its official theme is “Living Water,” with the symbol “Immersion in Living Water,” inspired by Ezekiel 47:9–12, which describes the life-giving water flowing from God’s sanctuary, restoring ecosystems and symbolizing spiritual renewal and ecological healing. The Season of Creation is an annual ecumenical celebration observed worldwide by Christian communities. It focuses on prayer, reflection, and action for ecological justice and care for creation. It begins on **1 September**, recognized as the **World Day of Prayer for Creation**, and ends on **4 October**, the **Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi**. Key emphases include: ecological restoration; spiritual renewal; human responsibility; climate justice.

THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website

22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A	
1 st Reading	Jeremiah 20:7-9
2 nd Reading	Romans 12:1-12
Gospel	Matthew 16:21-27

NEXT Sunday’s Readings – on website

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A	
1 st Reading	Ezekiel 33:7-9
2 nd Reading	Romans 13:8-10
Gospel	Matthew 18:15-20

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

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Parish School of St Michael

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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>	