



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
5 / 6 SEPTEMBER 2026
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

What happens when someone misbehaves and hurts you? What should you do, punch them out?

No. Jesus lays out a detailed plan in the Gospel about how to help a person, especially in the Christian community, who has done you harm. This strategy applies whatever the damage was: saying unfair things behind your back, embarrassing you in public, stealing, unfaithfulness, you name it.

First, go to the person and let her or him know that you believe you have been hurt by what they did or said. This is not an opportunity to “let my anger out,” to get my rights, or worse, to hurt them in return. It is an attempt to repair the relationship, no matter whose fault it was. It is an effort to help, not hurt.

Of course, in Sunday's story, Jesus is presuming that there is a basis of love between you and the other person. Another way to say it is that you are both members of “the church.”

What if going to the person does not succeed?

Jesus says you should next take two or three witnesses along. They will back you up if your interpretation of the problem is correct. If the person still does not listen, keep trying, he says. Tell the church. Continue to work on it until the matter is smoothed out. Let truth and forgiveness rule.

The underlying reason behind this whole strategy is hinted at in the first reading. There the Lord says that Ezekiel must speak out to a person when they are doing evil and especially if they have been warned by the Lord.

The point is not to punish them, or to turn Ezekiel into a police interrogation unit. The point is to try and help them back from the danger to their own self and to the community. “Frighten the poor sheep back,” the poet Hopkins puts it. You speak out.

A personal story someone wrote:

“I had a terrible disagreement with a colleague/friend a number of years ago. We were working together on a musical event, and it seemed to each of us that the other had done something unforgivable, hurtful and unprofessional. Believe me, I do not know who was right and who was wrong. But we spoke about it one-on-one and gradually came back into each other's good graces. We remained very good friends. Still.

“The same thing happened a number of summers later. I was the one who ‘blew up’ because of the wrongs I absolutely knew were being done to me. I even sent a peeved email. My friend sent a scorcher in return!

“Then we worked together to create the event! We knew instinctively what had happened. ‘We were both tired and quite stressed out, weren't we,’ my friend said. ‘So, we each did our stressed-out thing. But we were both trying to help the performance be wonderful.’ As you can guess, we remain great friends.”

This is how it can work when Christians are “all too human” and hurt each other. It is not a matter of who broke the rules. All the rules are summed up in a single saying. “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”.

How good it is.

Today's gospel reading from Matthew comes from a collection of Jesus' teachings applicable to life within the community of the Church, as it awaits the coming of the final Kingdom. In the passages that precede this one, Jesus has warned against arrogance on the part of those called to be leaders: ‘the one who makes himself as little as this child is the greatest’; he has pronounced a terrible judgment on those who lead astray ‘these little ones who have faith’. Matthew also includes here the parable of the lost sheep, as indicating the generous zeal that should be shown by leaders in the community. This reference to those who have gone astray leads into today's reading. It describes the manner in which these people are to be dealt with within the Church community. Clearly, the community Matthew is writing for has developed procedures to be followed in such cases, and they see themselves as acting in accordance with the Lord's own mind. When we recall the authoritative spirit that was taken for granted by those with leadership roles in the ancient world, we recognise how the listening and dialogue of these procedures reflect the fraternal love that was taught by Jesus – and recalled by Paul in our second reading.

In these procedures, we see the origins of the sacrament of reconciliation that is an essential part of the life of the Church during its time of pilgrimage. It was not a question of some private offence committed against the

When Someone Hurts You



✚✚ one who admonishes the wrongdoer. In referring to the need for ‘two or three witnesses to sustain the charge’, this procedure echoes the community’s Jewish background, citing a prescription of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 19:15), thus making it clear that it is a question of serious and public faults. When these procedures, calling the wrongdoer to conversion, have failed, this person is to be ‘excommunicated’ – excluded from the community. We know from comments of St Paul concerning such cases, that this exclusion aimed to help the wrongdoer find forgiveness: ‘Do not treat them as enemies, but warn them as believers’, Paul writes (2 Thessalonians 3; cf. 1 Corinthians 5). Being welcomed back to share in the life of the community – especially the Eucharist – was the sacramental sign of reconciliation with God. Note that Matthew follows these procedural instructions with a second reference, in his gospel, to the power to ‘bind and loose’ in God’s name. This time it is given to the Church community, acting through the ministry of those who carry on the leadership role of the apostles. As we said, the sacramental sign of reconciliation with the Lord is being received back into the Church community.

‘The Son of Man has power to forgive sins’, Jesus declared (Mark 2:10). The reconciliation available in the life of the Church is the reconciliation he brings to the world. The words with which our reading ends, though brief, have immense importance for us, as we seek to understand and enter more fully into the mystery of the Church’s common life. You come together ‘in my name’, Jesus tells us. In the biblical tradition, these words have a great depth of meaning: they imply our identification with the Lord through our baptism, and to the fact that he continues to be present in the world of our time through our coming together as his Church and celebrating the Church’s common life. They also remind us of the Saviour’s presence in the public prayer of the Church, uniting our prayers with his, as he intercedes for the world before the Father.

Today’s Gospel is about the need to correct one another. We find the same teaching in the first reading from Ezekiel. The second reading from Paul alerts us to the truth that all we do, including correcting of others, is to be done in love. If we do not love another person, we certainly do not know them. They are aware of this and they cannot trust our judgment concerning their behaviour. Any correction we offer will not work. We had better leave it to someone who loves and so knows them. It obviously matters how we behave. If we hurt others, we are certainly hurting ourselves. One would hope that there was someone in our lives who cared enough about us to point out the error of our ways. If we don’t care that someone is behaving badly, we must not love that person very much. Jesus is also telling us how we should go about this correction when it concerns people who are part of the Christian community with us.

Having warned us not to look down on any person, Jesus speaks about the shepherd who goes off searching for the one stray sheep and reminds us: ‘It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost’ (Matthew 18:14). It is in this setting and against this background that Matthew gives us Jesus’ words concerning how we should correct one another.

Please God, within the community there will be people who know and love us and who are willing to point out when we are falling short of living the life of a disciple. They want to see us in close companionship with Jesus. Please God we, too, will have the courage and the concern to go out after the straying sheep and point out the way back to the community and to Jesus. May we all do this humbly and with love and ever eager to forgive and to welcome each other to reconciliation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Ezekiel 33:7-9

- ✚ Does God still send watchmen or women or prophets to address injustice in the world today? Who are they? Are they always successful and do they live long, happy lives?
- ✚ Do we have a shared responsibility for others and the world? Are you a “watchperson” in some way? What strikes you as unjust as you watch? Can you think of new ways of bringing justice and divine love into the lives of those people you love? Into your workplace? Into other places in your life?

Second Reading Romans 13:8-10

- ✚ What commandment sums up all the rest? What is it that fulfills the whole law?
- ✚ Which ranks highest: how much you love? how much you do? how smart or powerful you are? According to Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37), who is your neighbour?
God does not reason with calculations and tables; God loves us as one who is enamoured: not to the minimum, but to the maximum! God does not say, “I love you up to a certain point.” ... This is the love that gives fulfilment to the Law, to faith, to true life!
... Am I content merely with not doing harm, keeping the “façade” in good order, or do I try to grow in love for God and others? And every now and then, do I check myself on Jesus’ great commandment: do I ask myself if I love my neighbour as God loves me. – Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 12 February 2023.

Gospel Matthew 18:15-20

- ✚ Can you rely on God to grant your request in some way when you and another person agree to pray about something? Do you trust that promise?
- ✚ Do you always remember that “if two or three of you agree on earth about anything for which they (you) are to pray, it shall be granted to them (you)”?

THE JUBILEE YEAR OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI



PRAYER FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR OF St Francis

Saint Francis, our brother,
you who eight hundred years ago
went to meet Sister Death as a man at peace,
intercede for us before the Lord.

You recognised true peace
in the Crucifix of San Damiano,
teach us to seek in Him
the source of all reconciliation
that breaks down every wall.

You who, unarmed,
crossed the lines of war
and misunderstanding,
give us the courage to build bridges
where the world raises up boundaries.

In this time afflicted
by conflict and division,
intercede for us
so that we may become peacemakers:
unarmed and disarming witnesses
of the peace that comes from Christ.

Amen.

*Prayer offered by Pope Leo XIV
for the Jubilee Year of St Francis, 2026*



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
WOLLONGONG

2026 marks the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis.

To mark the occasion, Pope Leo declared “The Jubilee Year of Saint Francis, from **10 January 2026 to 10 January 2027**.”

Saint Francis died in Assisi on the evening of **3 October 1226**.

All are invited to follow the example of Saint Francis of Assisi and become witnesses of peace and reconciliation. The life of the Poor Man of Assisi shows that God’s mercy works in history also through people who have opened their hearts to God’s action. Looking at his example, we see that God’s grace can transform even the greatest weaknesses. Precisely indulgence makes it possible to free the heart from the burden of sin

A **plenary indulgence** is the remission of all temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. To receive the indulgence during the Jubilee Year of Saint Francis, the requirements are: receive the Sacrament of Penance; receive Holy Communion; pray for the Holy Father’s intentions; a pious pilgrimage to Franciscan churches; participation in Jubilee celebrations; prayer and meditation in the Franciscan spirit, as well as daily acts of charity and humility that express the spirituality of Saint Francis, concluding with the Our Father, the Creed and invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Clare and all the Saints of the Franciscan Family.

The indulgence may also be offered for a soul in purgatory.

Pilgrimage Churches: during the Jubilee Year, pilgrims in the Diocese of Wollongong are encouraged to visit **St Michael Church, Thirroul** or **St Francis of Assisi Church, 1 Bruce Road, Warrawong**.

The biography of Saint Francis shows that true imitation of Christ is not based on declarations or ideas, but on a concrete and real lifestyle rooted in the Gospel. He reminds us of the timeless value of poverty and simplicity. By renouncing wealth and social prestige, Francis showed that freedom of heart is born of detachment from material goods. For today’s person, living in a world of consumerism, this is an extremely timely invitation to moderation, responsible use of goods, and placing God and neighbour above material possessions: it is a matter of “being” more than “having.”

Jubilee celebrations at **St Michel Church, Thirroul** will culminate on the long weekend of Saturday, 3 October, Sunday, 4 October and Monday, 5 October.

T Saturday, 3 October, 17:30 – Mass of Saint Francis and *Transitus*

T Sunday, 4 October, 08:00 – Mass of Saint Francis

T Monday, 5 October, 09:30 – Blessing of Animals

Pets are welcome at Masses on Saturday and Sunday, and on Monday.

The ***Transitus*** is a short liturgical celebration observed by Franciscans worldwide commemorating the death of Saint Francis. It is celebrated on the evening of 3 October. The term “*Transitus*” means “passage” or “crossing over” in Latin, symbolizing St Francis’s transition from earthly life to eternal life with God. The *Transitus* is distinct from the Feast of St Francis on 4 October, focusing specifically on his passing rather than his overall legacy – which is the focus of the feast itself, on 4 October.

All are welcome to these celebrations of the life of Saint Francis.

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS, MONDAY, 5 OCTOBER AT 09:30

As usual, the Blessing of Animals will take place on the **Monday** of the long weekend, **5 October at 09:30** at the **Parish of Saint Michael, 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul**. The blessing takes place in the courtyard next to the church. All animals under 800kg and their carers are welcome, though please keep the larger crocodiles on a tight leash. The **feast of St Francis of Assisi** is celebrated with **special Masses** on **Saturday, 3 October at 17:30** and on **Sunday, 4 October, at 08:00 – pets are welcome at both Masses**.

Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. May we always praise you for all your beauty in creation. We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	7 Sep	Weekday, 23 rd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 5:1-8	Luke 6:6-11
Tuesday 	8 Sep	The Birth of the Virgin Mary	Micah 5:1-4	Matthew 1:1-16
Wednesday	9 Sep	Weekday, 23 rd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 7:25-31	Luke 6:20-26
Thursday	10 Sep	Weekday, 23 rd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 8:1-7,11-13	Luke 6:27-38
Friday	11 Sep	Weekday, 23 rd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 9:16-19,22-27	Luke 6:39-42
Saturday	12 Sep	Weekday, 23 rd Week in Ordinary Time	1 Corinthians 10:14-22	Luke 6:43-49
Sunday	13 Sep	24 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ 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)
- ✦ Saturday, 12 September 17:30 Family Mass followed by Pizza dinner

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: CHOCOLATE BLUEBERRY BROWNIES

125g unsalted butter, chopped; 125g dark chocolate, chopped; 337.5g (1½ cups) castor sugar; 112.5g (¾ cup) all-purpose flour; 30g (¼ cup) Dutch cocoa powder; ½ tsp salt; 3 eggs, lightly whisked; 1 tsp vanilla extract; 123g (¾ cup) blueberries (fresh or frozen); sea salt flakes for serving.

Preheat oven to 180°C (160 fan forced). Line a 9×9 inch brownie pan with baking paper. In a bowl, add butter and chocolate. Microwave at intervals of 30 seconds for approximately two minutes, stirring in between. Mixture should be smooth, shiny and silky. Allow to cool slightly. In a large bowl, add sugar, flour, cocoa powder and salt and stir to combine. Add melted chocolate and butter, eggs and vanilla and mix gently to form a batter. Stir through blueberries. Pour batter into prepared tin and bake for 25-30 minutes. The centre should be soft but not jiggling. Allow to cool completely before slicing. Sprinkle with sea salt flakes to serve.

FATHER'S DAY – BLESSING FOR ALL FATHERS, GRANDFATHERS AND OLDER!

At both Masses this weekend, there will be a special blessing for fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers! Thank you for your love and care for your families, for the inspiration, joy and example you give to the young.

FIRST PENANCE AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

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		NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
23 RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A		24 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A	MASS TIMES
1 st Reading	Ezekiel 33:7-9	1 st Reading	Sirach 27:30–28:7
2 nd Reading	Romans 13:8-10	2 nd Reading	Romans 14:7-9
Gospel	Matthew 18:15-20	Gospel	Matthew 18:21-35
Parish of St Michael – Thirrourl <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i> Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i> Mary Pahulu-Falevai • Parish Secretary Tues, Thurs 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00		 www.thirrourlcatholic.org.au  325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive  PO Box 44 • Thirrourl 2515  4268 1910  thirrourl@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>	
		Saturday  17:30 Sunday 08:00  Saturday Mass is recorded.	