

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
3 / 4 OCTOBER 2026
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

800 YEARS SINCE SATURDAY, 3 OCT 1226

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

More is known of St Francis than of any other medieval saint. Not only have we his own words, his Rule, his (last) Testament, letters, poems, and liturgical writings, but also the intimate accounts of several of his disciples, written down within twenty years after his death. St Francis is one saint whom both Catholics and non-Catholics have united in honouring. Certainly, no other has so appealed to Protestants and even to non-Christians. And the appeal is timeless: Francis captured the imagination of his contemporaries as well as that of people of today by his unique simplicity and a pure grace of spirit. In action he was original, in speech picturesque and poetic, yet he was a man utterly inspired by faith in and devotion to the risen Christ.

Born at Assisi, in central Italy, in 1181, into a merchant family of substantial means, Francesco ("the Frenchman" because of his father's heavy trade with France) was trained to take over his father's business. Like many a teenager today, Francis cared to learn neither the ways of business nor his lessons at school, preferring to have a good time by lavishly spending his father's money. Though not uncontrolled, he was very much a playboy. With his charming natural qualities, and his love of the French courtly poetry and love songs he would have made the ideal troubadour. When Francis began giving food and money to any beggar he encountered, his father, Peter Benardone, was far from pleased, yet did not take the boy seriously.

War broke out between the cities of Perugia and Assisi, and Francis, twenty years old and dreaming of knighthood and glory, marched into battle. But he was soon taken prisoner by the Perugians and fell ill. As he suffered, he seemed to gain spiritual strength, for afterwards he became very serious in his demeanour. A short time later, outfitted in a handsome suit of armour and seated on a fine horse (looking much more formidable than his slight frame ordinarily would indicate), he set out to join forces that were fighting for the pope against the Germans in southern Italy. But he suddenly became ashamed of his fine appearance when he saw an old warrior poorly clad, and he persuaded him to change clothes and armour. Francis never reached the front, for twice he was taken ill and dreamed strange dreams. In one, he saw his father's warehouse filled with military trappings instead of bales of cloth, and on each shield was emblazoned a Cross. In the other, a heavenly voice seemed to tell him to turn back, "to serve the master rather than the servant."

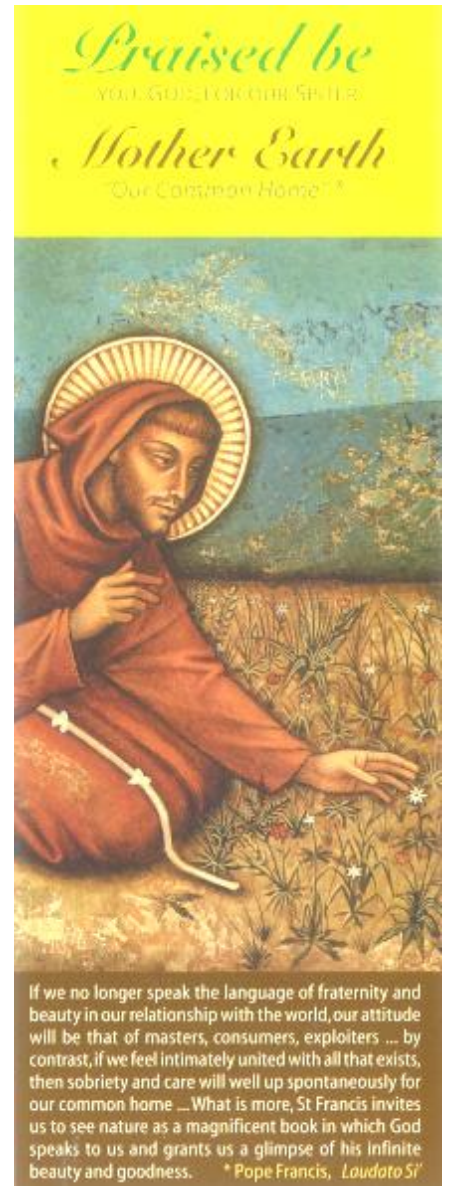
He returned to his old life but did not enjoy it. Friends, noticing his preoccupation, told him he was in love. "Yes," he said, "I am going to take a wife more beautiful and worthy than any you know." As he courted Lady Poverty, many strange things started happening that made his parents, especially his father, worry about him. Suddenly, he left on a pilgrimage to Rome, where he exchanged his expensive clothes with a beggar on the steps of Saint Peter's and spent the rest of the day asking for alms. He dropped the money he collected into the poor box at the Tomb of the Apostles and returned penniless to Assisi.

Very humanly, he loathed the sight of lepers, of whom there were many who lived like hermits in the caves among the mountains around Assisi. Riding one day, he met one who was especially hideous to look upon, but resisting the impulse to flee, he dismounted and, pressing alms into the poor creature's outstretched hand, embraced him tenderly and kissed him. When Francis looked back, the leper had disappeared, and he understood that Christ had appeared to him in the form of a leper.

Now passionate with the fever of divine love, he visited hospitals and ministered to the sick, praying long hours to learn what God willed for him. One day, while praying at Saint Damian's, an old, ruined church outside Assisi, he heard a voice from the crucifix say three times: "Francis, go and repair my house, which is falling down." Francis later came to realize that the "house" which was falling down was the Catholic Church itself, not just Saint Damian's, and that he was being called to help rebuild Christendom. But at first, he took the words very literally and, selling some of his father's goods to buy materials, set about rebuilding the old church.

Peter Bernadone was furious when he heard of this. He savagely beat the twenty-five-year-old youth, had him jailed, and then disinherited him. The bishop of Assisi required Francis to return the purchase price of the goods

Pax et Bonum – Peace and All Good



✠✠ he had taken. Francis did as he was told, adding, “The clothes I wear are also his,” and stripping himself, gave them to his father. The bishop could not help admiring the youth’s fervour; he covered him with a labourer’s cloak and, shedding tears, gave him alms. Francis thanked him, marked a cross on his garment with a piece of chalk, and went forth singing the divine praises on the highway. There he was beset by robbers who asked him who he was. “I am the herald of the great king,” replied Francis. Finding him without money, the robbers threw him headlong into a ditch piled with snow.

Francis eventually repaired Saint Damian’s with his own hands, and he went around preaching penance to the people. He begged from door to door for a few scraps of food each day. He took his way of life from the Gospel he heard on the Feast of Saint Matthias, “Freely you have received, freely give...Do not keep gold...nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staff...Behold I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves” (Matthew 10:8-10, 16).

Francis did not seek men, but men began to seek him. At first three followed him, among them Bernard de Quintavalle, a rich and influential tradesman, and Brother Giles, a very simple person who was to become one the legendary figures of the early days of the Franciscan Order.

Soon there were twelve in the little body of itinerant preachers, but there was no definite plan. They slept in barns and worked in the fields for their food. A primitive rule was drawn up, which consisted simply of the counsels of perfection: “If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, ...and come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21).

It now seemed advisable to obtain papal approval, so the group in a body submitted their Rule to Innocent III. The pope was of the opinion that there were too many religious communities already, yet he could hardly disapprove of a group whose primary aim was to carry out the evangelical counsels. So, he reluctantly consented. They were, in spite of their lack of theology (only one poorly trained priest among them), permitted to preach penance and receive minor orders, but Francis and most of the others never went on to the priesthood. Thus, early Franciscanism was essentially a lay movement.

The Franciscan ideal of poverty has undergone many alterations in its outward practice; indeed, changes began within Francis’ own lifetime. Absolute poverty, of course, was unattainable -- the brothers had to wear at least some form of clothing and had to have some kind of food for nourishment. To the end, however, Francis would not permit the order to own any property or temporal goods, though eventually the need for some kind of headquarters became apparent. The group therefore settled at a place called Portiuncula (the “little portion”), a little more than three kilometres from Assisi (late at other places), the friars paying nominal rent (an occasional basket of fish) to the Benedictines, who held the property for them. Eventually, the order became known as the Friars Minor, indicating that they should be lowly among their fellows. *Friars Minor* = *lesser brothers*.

In the spring of 1212, a young girl heard Francis preach in one of the churches in Assisi and left her home to be his follower. Francis established this girl (Saint Clare) with other maidens in a little house near the Church of Saint Damian, which became the first Franciscan convent for women.

Francis apostolic mission took him too many lands – Syria, Dalmatia, and Morocco – where he made unsuccessful attempts to convert the Moslems. Francis desired to meet the Sultan, Malik-al-Kamil, face-to-face; he wanted to tell the Sultan about Jesus and about the peaceful inner carn he had found. Francis spoke of the peace in the heart, a deep satisfaction and joy that flowed from within like a rich wine. The Sultan was moved by what Francis had poured from his heart. Francis and the Sultan spoke at length, with neither converting the other. But, at a time of great enmity between Christians and Moslems – the Fifth Crusade – Francis stayed as an honoured guest of the Sultan and the pair parted in peace, Francis being given safe passage home. It is said that Francis greeted the Sultan with the greeting, “May the Lord give you peace,” similar to the traditional Muslim greeting of, “*Assalam o alaikum*” or “Peace be upon you.” [Pope Francis commemorated the 800th anniversary of the historic 1219 meeting between St Francis and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil by visiting two Muslim-majority nations, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco]

Meanwhile, his order spread rapidly to Spain, Germany, and Hungary. He was horrified upon his return to learn that modifications had crept into the order, and he refused to enter a monastery erected by Franciscans at Bologna, Italy because it was too fine. His simplicity conflicted with the giant, sprawling movement his order had become, and consequently the Franciscan Rule has been frequently revised.

Canticle of the Creatures

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Most High, all powerful, good Lord
yours are the praises, the glory, the honour, and all blessing.
To you alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention your name.

Praised be you, my Lord
with all your creatures, especially Sir **Brother Sun**
who is the day and through whom you give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
and bears a likeness to you, Most High One.

Praised be you, my Lord
through **Sister Moon** and the stars,
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord
through **Brother Wind**
and through the air cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather,
through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord
through **Sister Water**
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord
through **Brother Fire**
through whom you light the night
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be you, my Lord
through our Sister **Mother Earth**
who sustains and governs us and who produces
various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.

Praised be you, my Lord
through those who give pardon for your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace
for by you, Most High, shall they be crowned.

Praised be you, my Lord
through our **Sister Bodily Death**
from whom no one living can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin.
Blessed are those whom death will find in your most holy will
for the second death shall do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks
and serve him with great humility.

✠✠ In 1224, on Mount La Verna, where he often went to pray, occurred the miracle of the stigmata, by which Francis was marked with the wounds of our Lord's Passion. "Nothing gives me so much consolation as to think of the life and passion of our Lord," he once said. "Were I to live to the end of the world, I should stand in need of no other books." Out of respect for the stigmata, he henceforth wore shoes and stocking and kept his hands covered.

Francis had a genuine poetic gift, and his "Canticle of the Creatures" is one of the finest Italian lyrics. He loved to refer to all creatures as brothers: Brother Sun, Brother Sky, Brother Fish; he called his body Brother Ass and idle members of his community, Brother Fly. Near the end of this life he cried, "Welcome, Sister Death!"

On 3 October 1226, at the age of forty-five, while the Passion of our Lord was being read aloud to him, he died. His memory is kept vivid in the three branches of Franciscans: Friars Minor, Friars Minor Capuchin, and Friars Minor Conventual, besides numerous branches in the sisterhood. None of his followers has ever been quite like "God's Troubadour," but they all continue his great work of love and penance and his ardent desire to be and to call others to be true followers of Christ.

In the long days and nights before Francis' Dream came true, he wondered if the Journey he had set upon would really bring him to his destination. His was a Journey of decisions as radical as the Gospel itself. At every fork in the road, there was a narrow, difficult way and a wide, easy way to travel. And Francis was continually surprised with the paradoxical joy that the harder road would bring, time after time.

Francis never took the easy roads, not because he wanted to punish himself or the brothers, but because that is the way he read the Gospel. He looked upon himself as a simple man from Umbria who expected Christ's words to mean what they said. That was all he was capable of.

And once he heard and understood the Word of God, he tried to put it into practice in his own life. For him the Word was life and not to live it was to deprive oneself of really living. That was what the Dream was all about: to dare to live radically and simply, to take a chance on Christ. And the joy was that it worked! If you tried to live it without reservation, you suddenly experienced a whole new worldview, and you felt as though you had never lived before. Living became so precious that every moment was delicious and filled with the danger of risk and challenge, and the meaning of love came clear.

Francis did not want everyone to enter the friars or to join the Lady Clare and her sisters. He only wanted people to be free, to be what they wanted to be in their own hearts. Francis wanted people to be brave enough to ask what they really wanted to do with their life.

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

As usual, the Blessing of Animals will take place on **Monday, 5 October at 09:30**. The blessing takes place in the courtyard next to the church, although the ceremony will start in the backyard of the presbytery at Bailey's grave. All animals under 800kg and their carers are welcome, though please keep the larger crocodiles on a tight leash.

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.

THREE PRESENTATIONS ON THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SAINT FRANCIS

Mark your diary: *Three Presentations on the Life and Legacy of Saint Francis* – in person or on Zoom, *Thursdays*

T 8 October: "St Francis – Crib – Cross – Creation", Andrew Granc ofm

T 15 October: "Prayer, Presence and Peace: the Pathway of Saint Francis", Paul Rout ofm

T 22 October: "Praying With Saint Francis", Ken Cafe ofm

Each of the Thursday nights from **19:30 to 21:00** with a cuppa and supper. In person at the Parish Hall, 1 Station Street, Thirroul or on Zoom <https://dowcatholic.zoom.us/j/99053445383>



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	5 Oct	Weekday, 27 th Week in Ordinary Time	Galatians 1:6-12	Luke 10:25-37
Tuesday	6 Oct	Weekday, 27 th Week in Ordinary Time	Galatians 1:13-24	Luke 10:38-42
Wednesday	7 Oct	Our Lady of the Rosary	Galatians 2:1-2,7-14	Luke 11:1-4
Thursday	8 Oct	Weekday, 27 th Week in Ordinary Time	Galatians 3:1-5	Luke 11:5-13
Friday	9 Oct	Weekday, 27 th Week in Ordinary Time	Galatians 3:7-14	Luke 11:15-26
Saturday	10 Oct	Weekday, 27 th Week in Ordinary Time	Galatians 3:22-29	Luke 11:27-28
Sunday	11 Oct	28 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Friday, 2 October	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Weekend, 3–4–5 October		Celebrations of St Francis of Assisi – with the Blessing of Animals
✦ Sunday, 4 October	02:00	Daylight Saving commences
✦ Monday, 5 October		Public Holiday – Labour Day – 09:30 ... the Blessing of Animals
✦ Thursday, 8 October	19:30	Franciscan Presentation, Andrew Granc ofm – Parish Hall/Zoom
✦ Saturday, 10 October	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Weekend, 10/11 October		Blessing of October Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Monday, 12 October	09:00	School Term 4 commences
✦ Tuesday, 13 October	19:30	Parent Meeting for First Penance and Communion

**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**

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: FRIARS' IRISH CREAM

2 tins Nestlé Condensed (Skim) milk; 600ml fresh cream; 6 eggs; 2tsp caramel essence; 2tsp coconut essence; 2tsp chocolate essence; 700ml whiskey (whatever is on special).

In a large pot add the condensed milk and cream. Beat the eggs then add them to the pot. Add the three essences, and finally, add the whiskey (after testing it!). All a full ten (10) seconds to mature. Pour over ice in a not-so-small glass, sit back and relax. It does taste better after a day or two in the fridge.

If you have a favourite recipe to share, please email it to the parish office, or write it down and hand it in (you can put it in the collection basket).



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.

CROSS+GEN TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM @ HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Delivered in partnership with CatholicCare and Catholic Education, bring your mobile phone, tablet or laptop and get help with downloading and using apps, sending messages and emails, using Google Maps and general technology questions. 09:10 to 10:30 on 22 Oct; 5 & 19 Nov; 3 Dec. To book, call Jane Hollier ☎ 0417 018 152

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

1 st Reading	Sirach 50:1,3-4,6-7
2 nd Reading	Galatians 6:14-18
Gospel	Matthew 11:25-30

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	Isaiah 25:6-10
2 nd Reading	Philippians 4:12-14
Gospel	Matthew 22:1-14

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

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>	