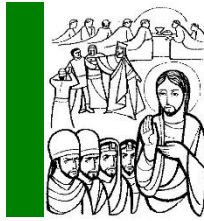


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
10 / 11 OCTOBER 2026
28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
LIFE AND LEGACY OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

All Good Gifts

In the Danish drama film, *Babette's Feast*, an impoverished fine cook makes her way into a small town where the religion of the area made people hard and cold to each other, according to the movie, afraid to enjoy or even to relate to each other. Two sisters lead a rigid life under the authority of their father, a local minister. As their father gets older, they hire a French refugee, Babette, who throws them a party. Babette had only a small stash of possessions, but she was a top chef. So, she prepared, over many days, a huge, delectable, exquisite feast, serving after serving, all for the uptight townspeople. As they began to taste and enjoy, they began also to communicate in kindness to each other. They even danced! The point of *Babette's Feast* is to show how art, grace, and generosity can break through rigid human judgment and heal broken relationships.

Some people said that the movie promoted self-indulgence, while others say that is a false opinion. There are similarities to the huge feast written about in the first reading.

It is the famous invitation from the Lord of Hosts, full of unstinting promise. "A feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear," Isaiah says. A great feast, a "groaning board" in medieval England, like the banquet in *Babette's Feast*.

Sunday's Gospel has a sumptuous feed too. The king gets his very best livestock fattened up, seasoned, readied for cooking, with invitations sent out. If you thought the people in *Babette's* town were reluctant, look what happened here. Some people refused outright to come. Others simply ignored the invitation as if it had not been given, and a number "laid hold of his servants, mistreated them, and killed them." The king punished these and then invited in street people.

Food is meant to be enjoyed, not refused.

But with so many people starving in today's world, how dare we fatten ourselves up with rich food and every other kind of riches? Shouldn't we much more becomingly abstain and deny ourselves? Isn't the "Developed World" currently fattening itself on food far more lavish than the ancient world could ever have imagined? Advertisements in western countries tell us we should luxuriate, should pamper ourselves, should not hold back. "Who says you can't have it all," they say. How are we to respond, we who try to be faithful to God and God's promises.

But remember that Jesus both fasted and feasted. He abstained from food for forty days at the beginning of his public ministry, then later on said, mockingly, "The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" (Matthew 11:19) How would he have gotten such a reputation except by enjoying times at meals?

Which is it for us, then, fasting or feasting?

The answer is simple yet difficult to grow into. We are meant to receive humbly and to give to others as well. The mistake is to adopt a stance of only receiving (getting, grabbing) or on the other hand, only giving (giving, with nothing in return). Sunday's readings invite us to come into the kingdom, to open up, eat, enjoy what is there.

To receive as Jesus did.

He went deep, accepting all things as coming from God's hand. Then, when it was time to let go of it all—life, friends, peace and possessions—he did that with love.

Receive and give. Jesus wants us to receive his life and then give it out to the world.

The parable, about the king who welcomed to his son's wedding all who could be found, when those who had been invited refused to come, has a message similar to that of the parable we heard last week (which it immediately follows in Matthew's gospel). Old Israel has not responded to God's call, and now a New Israel will include all peoples, giving expression to God's inclusive ways as it carries forward the designs of God. Again, we can recognise that the original parable of Jesus has been modified, as it was retold by the Church's early preachers. Comparing Matthew's presentation with Luke's account of the same parable (Luke 14:15-24) makes it possible to recognise the additions Matthew has made. Luke's much simpler presentation is no doubt closer to the parable as Jesus told it. Matthew's presentation is embroidered with additions that give us a valuable insight into the themes that gave expression to the faith life of that early Christian community – themes that can help enrich our faith.



The kingdom of heaven
may be likened to a king
who gave a wedding feast*
for his son. – Jesus
(Matthew 22:2)

✠✠ In Luke's account, Jesus responds to the remark of someone at table with him ('Happy those who will share the meal in the kingdom of God') beginning his parable, 'There was a man who gave a great banquet'. Matthew takes up and develops the theme of joy and celebration essential to Christian faith implied in this beginning, and opens the parable, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding'. The espousal theme was fundamental to the biblical tradition. The prophets compared God's relationship with the chosen people with that of a loving and faithful husband. For the first Christians, the Saviour was 'the Bridegroom' (Mark 2:20), and the life they shared in the Church was described as joining in 'the wedding feast of the Lamb' (Revelation 19:9). A banquet – especially that which celebrates a wedding – is an outstanding moment of fellowship. In the traditions of Israel, familiar to Matthew's community, the blessings promised by God to those who have been faithful were likened to sharing in a banquet at the Lord's table – as we hear in the reading from Isaiah in today's liturgy. As they heard this reading, and rejoiced in its fulfilment in Christ, this community would have given thanks for the universality of God's generous designs: 'all peoples and nations' will share in God's blessings 'everywhere on earth', the prophet declares. Already, they knew, the faith was beginning to spread. Long familiar with the biblical themes, they would have seen the prophet's associating of the messianic blessings with, 'this mountain' as a reference to the old temple. But if, as is likely, the old temple had already been destroyed by the Romans (70CE) when Matthew's gospel was written, they would have been reminded that the shared life of Old Testament faith was only a foreshadowing of the eternal realities brought by Christ.

Matthew's account includes the note of urgency characteristic of the outlook of the first Christians – three times, the king declares that all is 'ready'. The final age has come: all must be ready to respond to the Lord's call. And so, along the same lines, Matthew concludes his presentation by adding the short parable about 'the man without a wedding garment' – that would originally have been quite independent of the original story. Again, the lesson is clear: although, in the present age, Matthew's Church receives 'the good and bad alike' to rejoice at the wedding feast of the Lamb, let them know that their presence must be more than nominal adherence – they must be converted and live a life worthy of their calling.

The marriage feast in today's Gospel is that of Jesus, for he is the king's son, the bridegroom who is in love with the human race and who invites everyone to the banquet prepared by his Father. Jesus refers to himself as a bridegroom quite early in Matthew's Gospel (9:15) and returns to this same image in his parable of the bridesmaids, half of whom were well prepared, with oil in their lamps ready to burn at the appropriate time, but the other half did nothing, only to find that they were too late to attend the wedding (Matthew 25:1-13). The image of the wedding feast is a daring one, highlighting the intimacy of love into which Jesus calls us.

Seventy years after Jesus' death, Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, explained why Christians come together on the Lord's day: 'We have seen how former adherents of the ancient customs have since attained to a new hope; so that they have given up keeping the Sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord's day instead, the day when life first dawned for us, thanks to him and his death. That death, though some deny it, is the very mystery which has moved us to become believers, and endure tribulation to prove ourselves pupils of Jesus Christ, our sole teacher'.

Jesus is making the point that it is not enough just to turn up at the Marriage Feast. It is an invitation to love. When we come we are committing ourselves to respond to his love and to bear the fruits of love in our lives.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Isaiah 25:6-10

- ✠ Does banquet imagery describe well the fullness of life in the presence of God? How can a feast—juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines—be a sacramental vision of the universe?
- ✠ "He will destroy ... the shroud that is cast over all peoples." What are the "shrouds" over all nations today that God will destroy? And in doing so will God wipe tears from every face? Do the pandemic, racial injustice, genocide, wars and the climate crisis qualify as shrouds over all nations?"?

Second Reading Philippians 4:12-14,19-20

- ✠ Will the Lord ever test you beyond your capacity? Will he always be with you? When you face daily life, when difficulties arise, do you remember Paul's words, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me"?
- ✠ The readings show God bestowing gifts on us without measure. Do you "measure" when you give? How could you be a little freer?

Gospel Matthew 22:1-14

- ✠ Besides answering God's invitation to the feast, what is expected of us? Are we the guests or are we also the ones doing the inviting? How does this banquet not only sustain life but also transfigure it?
- ✠ When Pope Francis, then Cardinal Bergoglio, gave his three-minute speech below, the Cardinals at the Conclave started thinking seriously about electing him. How does his speech relate to today's Gospel, "Go out therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find." Which "existential peripheries ... of injustice, ignorance, all misery" that the Pope mentions, would you like to see the Church travel in, or travel yourself and invite people? "The Church is called to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only in the geographical sense but also to go to the existential peripheries: those of the mysteries of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and of religious indifference, of thought, of all misery."

TWO MORE PRESENTATIONS ON THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SAINT FRANCIS

Mark your diary: *Two More Presentations on the Life and Legacy of Saint Francis* – in person or on Zoom on these **Thursdays –15 October** [*“Prayer, Presence and Peace: the Pathway of Saint Francis”* – Paul Rout ofm] and **22 October** [*“Praying with Saint Francis”* – Ken Cafe ofm]. Each evening is from **19:30 to 21:00** with a cuppa and supper. In person at the Parish Hall, *or on Zoom* – click on this link <https://dowcatholic.zoom.us/j/99053445383>

POPE LEO’S ADDRESS AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF UNESCO, PARIS, 25 SEP 26

I am pleased to be with you today in this international assembly, where languages and cultures come together to cooperate in an undertaking of great importance for the entire human family: “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for... human rights and fundamental freedoms” (*UNESCO Constitution*, art. 1, par. 1). The effort to build a just world is in fact the basis of international cooperation. We share our experiences, skills and expertise in order to create an environment in which all feel at home and each individual may flourish, so that peoples everywhere may be at peace and prosper.

It is precisely as a witness to peace that I greet each of you, the Representatives of Member and Observer States, International Organizations, and the worlds of academia and civil society. I thank Mr Khaled El-Enany, Director-General of this Organization, for his gracious invitation [and for his kind words]. I have come as a Pastor, to speak to you on behalf of the Church, which continually seeks to enter into dialogue and has a message to share with every people, with all women and men of good will (cf. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam Suam*, 65).

The commitment to building a just world is part of a mission we have learned to share in the course of history. In our time, UNESCO represents both an objective and a means for pursuing that commitment with greater determination, in accordance with our diverse fields of activity. The year 2027 will mark the 75th anniversary of the Holy See’s presence at UNESCO, a presence grounded in the conviction that the future depends first and foremost on the need to respect and promote the inalienable dignity inherent in every man and woman created in God’s image. Consequently, we look upon this Organization as a privileged partner in the service of the common good, which is the “social expression of the dignity” shared by all of us from the very beginning and in equal measure (cf. Encyclical Letter *Magnifica Humanitas*, 59). Since 1952, the Holy See’s Permanent Observer Mission has examined and accompanied UNESCO’s initiatives from this standpoint, offering its specific contribution to the dialogue among nations. It has done so with the aim of favouring authentic human development, which is such only when it is directed to fostering “the development of each man and of the whole man” (Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 14).

Speaking to this assembly, my venerable predecessor Saint John Paul II observed that “*genus humanum arte et ratione vivit*.” Consequently, “man lives a truly human life thanks to culture.” The word itself — culture — implies the process by which humanity bestows meaning upon all its activities. Now, forty-six years later, as I renew, in your presence, the Holy See’s commitment to cooperation, I encourage you to see UNESCO not only as a distinguished international organization, but also as a place where humanity can reflect on itself, on its history and on its future. Indeed, promoting education, science and culture is impossible without at the same time improving the lives of men and women who are engaged in these activities.

In the field of education, the Catholic Church is heir to an ancient tradition. For centuries, her communities have founded schools and universities, taught people to read and write, and have been present even in the poorest and most remote places. With the *Global Compact on Education*, my predecessor Pope Francis sought to make this experience part of a broader educational covenant, open to the contribution of all. What I would like to speak about with you, however, is not primarily the efforts that are made, but rather the conviction from which they spring. No education can be considered complete if it fails to address the question of life’s meaning. In the same address mentioned above, Saint John Paul II noted that to educate means to help people to “be” more and not merely to “have” more, and to acknowledge in them that transcendence of the person which is part of the fullness of their humanity (cf. *ibid.*, 10–11).

In this assembly, then, a fundamental question deserves to be explored, one that urgently calls for a response: *What does it mean to be human?* Every culture is challenged by this question, which lies at the heart of every form of knowledge, every art and every religion. Even in the twenty-first century, after all, we cannot take for granted that we know who the human person is or what it means to live as a human being. Indeed, every generation is called to grapple with this question, especially in the face of tragedies that, regrettably, occur even today.

Before all else, the human person is *someone who is conceived and born*. Thus, first of all, to be human means to be a child. None of us chose to be so. None of us decided from whom, when or where to be born. This evident truth sheds light on something that is not merely biological but ethical: as children, we are all brothers and sisters. From the outset, our humanity is a gift and a trial, a promise and a responsibility. For every human being, birth establishes a primordial bond — a communion of life that has its source, and its first educational setting, in the family.

Secondly, we are all born naked and in need. We are poor by birth, in need of bread and words, of care and affection — that is, of all that nourishes body and spirit. We know this well, and yet, as we become adults, we risk forgetting it. It is precisely those in need who suffer the greatest consequences of this forgetfulness, whenever their humanity is betrayed or cast aside, exploited or deceived. Forgetting the circumstances of our birth obscures the very idea of human life, because it detaches life from the history common to us all. Thus, life is no longer understood as a gift, but as a commodity. It is no longer viewed as a summons to care and responsibility, but as a product to be exploited. Indeed, this tragic alternative reminds us that to be human is to be free by nature. Since all of us have been children, our freedom begins with our response to the freedom of the one who first turns to us — whether with gestures of affection or rejection, of loving welcome or neglect and cruelty.

(continued next week ...)

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	12 Oct	Weekday, 28 ^h Week in Ordinary Time
Tuesday	13 Oct	Weekday, 28 ^h Week in Ordinary Time
Wednesday	14 Oct	Weekday, 28 ^h Week in Ordinary Time
Thursday	15 Oct	St Teresa of Jesus, virgin, doctor
Friday	16 Oct	Weekday, 28 ^h Week in Ordinary Time
Saturday	17 Oct	St Ignatius of Antioch, bishop, martyr
Sunday	18 Oct	29 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>

Galatians 4:22-24,26-27,31-5:1	Luke 11:29-32
Galatians 5:1-6	John 11:37-41
Galatians 5:18-25	Luke 11:42-46
Ephesians 1:1-10	Luke 11:47-54
Ephesians 1:11-14	Luke 12:1-7
Ephesians 1:15-23	Luke 12:8-12

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Weekend, 10/11 October	Blessing of October Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Saturday, 10 October	18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
✦ Monday, 12 October	09:00 School Term 4 commences
✦ Tuesday, 13 October	19:30 Parent Meeting for First Penance and First Communion
✦ Wednesday, 14 October	10:30 CWL Monthly Meeting in the Parish Hall, BYO Lunch
✦ Thursday, 15 October	19:30 Presentation on St Francis of Assisi – Parish Hall or Zoom
✦ Weekend, 17/18 October	World Mission Day and Annual Mission Appeal
✦ Sunday, 18 October	08:00 Two baptisms during Mass
✦ Tuesday, 20 October	15:45 First Penance Class #1 in the Parish Hall



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: RASPBERRY CHIA JAM DROPS *from Chef Raymond*

Jam – 250g raspberries; 2 tbsp chia seeds; 2 tbsp honey.

Cookie dough – 250g desiccated coconut; 1 tbsp vanilla bean paste; zest of 1 lemon; 395g condensed milk.

Place raspberries in a bowl and mash with a fork. Stir in the chia seeds and honey. Let it sit for 1 hour to thicken the jam naturally. This can be made in advance and stored in an airtight jar in the fridge for up to 1 week. Preheat the oven to 170°C. Combine the coconut, vanilla bean paste, lemon zest and condensed milk in a large bowl until it resembles cookie dough. Roll dough into tablespoon-sized balls and place on the tray, leaving space between. Use your thumb or the back of a teaspoon to make a small well in each ball. Fill each well with a small teaspoon of raspberry chia jam. Bake for 10–15 minutes or until lightly golden on the edges. Cool on a wire rack before serving. Note: This makes more jam than you need, but it's delicious on porridge or muesli in the morning.

CROSS+GEN TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM @ HOLY SPIRIT COLLEGE

Delivered in partnership with CatholicCare and Wollongong Catholic Education to promote community engagement and wellbeing, 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. **Who can attend?** Grandparents, parishioners and older members of the wider school community. Session dates and times: Thursdays 09:10 to 10:30 on 22 October; 5 & 19 November; 3 December. **Location:** Holy Spirit College, Bellambi, Cawley Road entrance. **To book your place,** call Jane Hollier at CatholicCare ☎ 0417 018 152, janeh@catholiccare.dw.org.au Cross+Gen brings students and seniors together to build confidence and connection through practical technology support.



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

28 th 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

29 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 45:1,4-6
2 nd Reading	1 Thessalonians 1:1-5
Gospel	Matthew 22:15-21

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>	