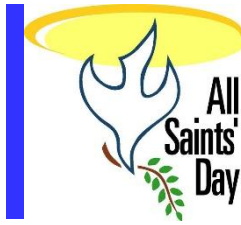


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
31 OCT / 1 NOVEMBER 2026
ALL SAINTS

ALL SOULS' DAY – MONDAY – 09:30

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

On this feast of All Saints, we hear Jesus proclaim *The Beatitudes*. This may tell us about his idea of a saint. Let us look.

First, what is a “beatitude”? It is a spoken declaration of the blessedness of a person. To be blessed, in plain words, means to be given a spiritual benefit, as for instance, “May the Lord bless you with a safe journey.” Or: “you are blest when you show mercy.” Often there is a condition involved: “*The people who keep the law will be blest*” (see Proverbs 29:18).

Jesus did not invent beatitudes: the First Testament has up to 50 examples of them. By Jesus’ time, people would have recognized one when it was spoken and would have been at home with it. Jesus gave nine of them in the Sermon on the Mount. But there is something strange about his. Have you noticed?

- (a) The first four seem to name bad things and call them good. Blessed are the poor (in spirit), the mourners, the meek, the hungry and thirsty. Jesus seems to be saying that “it is a blessing to be weak and unhappy.”

Why would he use the beatitude form in this way?

Because he is radically innovative. Radical [from the Latin *radix*, root] means that he is rooted deeply in God, who is the profound wellspring of life and love, not in some other place nearer the surface. These first four beatitudes are actually assurances to people who suffer—the displaced, the abandoned. Jesus is saying that they too are blessed and much loved by God.

- (b) The next three more resemble the ancient form: Blessed are the merciful, the clean of heart, and the peacemakers. These three sound reasonable, if a bit bland. But actually, they are a spiritual step upwards from the first four. They are encouragements to people who want to take action in the world on behalf of the Kingdom. Their blessedness consists of being at work with Jesus as a companion.
- (c) Then, come the last two, which are stunning: “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.” And: “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you. ...” These sound like curses, not blessings. Who could want them? Yet they too are an enhancement of what precedes them. They presume that you might actually want to participate in Jesus’ ultimate act of love, a love which cuts through false honour, wealth, and pride. Maybe you will be called to take up the cross with Jesus. Such radical love is blessed because it comes from being so close to God, whose very identity is love.

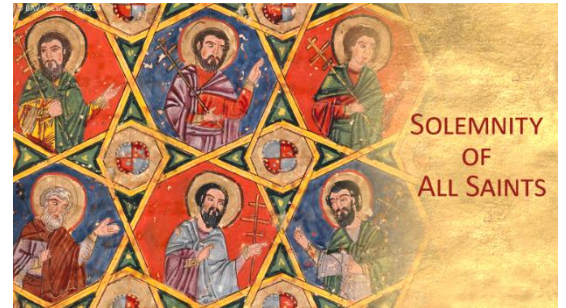
So, we find at least three stages of ascent in the following of Jesus: (1) suffering; (2) working for others; and (3) persecution endured as a result. The saints are examples in each of these areas because of their love for God and others. This is the very root of happiness, or “blessedness.”

The question for you and me is whether we even begin to be attracted in any way to such categories. We can take a review of our lives and get an idea. If we do not fit into them, we can meditate on this question: how strong is our desire for anything at all? Can we “desire to desire” regarding an openness to Jesus and to his Father? We do not have to want persecution yet, but what do we want? Maybe it is simple: the blessedness he speaks about.

A familiar feast-day, but do we understand its significance in the life of God’s Church? God’s ultimate plan was to create a family that would share in the boundless love and joy that is the life of the Trinity. The “communion of saints” that is essential to the faith we profess in the Creed each Sunday is the ongoing realisation of that plan. Today we celebrate the reality of that family. Although we have not reached the end of our journey, where we “shall see God as he really is”, we already have a genuine communion, a fraternity with the Blessed Virgin Mary and all those who have completed the journey, a fellowship that has been an encouragement in the life of the pilgrim Church since the beginning.

What the eternal life we will share with them will be like, of course, is beyond our imagining. It was inevitable, however, that believers should attempt some inadequate description. When he did so, the writer of the Book of Revelation was addressing communities threatened with a devastating persecution. In the florid style of the apocalyptic literature common at the time, he assured them that God’s promise of a “new heaven and a new earth” for his faithful ones would not be frustrated. His description – with its white robes, palms and prostrations before the throne of God – has provided the image many believers have of heaven. The prophet’s image of God’s great banquet on the holy mountain is more appealing to most people. But these are only imaginings of what “has not yet been revealed”.

The Gospel reading, the Beatitudes with which Matthew opens the Sermon on the Mount, can help us set aside the palms and haloes and think of the saints as friends and fellows who have made the journey before us. This summary of Jesus’ teaching gives expression to the heart and spirit of the life to which Jesus calls us. True happiness,



✠✠ Jesus declares, will be found by those for whom their relationship with God means more to them than earthly goods – a “poverty of spirit”, a “meekness” and “gentleness” after the example of Jesus, a “hunger for justice” that shapes what we do according to the values of the Kingdom, in sum “a pure (i.e. undivided) heart”. These are the ideals that have inspired the saints honoured by the Church, and those countless others known only to God. Today’s historical studies make it clear that the saints honoured by the Church have struggled against difficulties of temperament and character; but in the end they gave over to God, as the Holy Spirit taught them the lessons of the Beatitudes. As we make the same journey, let us recognise that we shall take into eternal life hearts that have been shaped by the quality of our response to the challenges of life. Though the hearts of all God’s family will be filled with joy, some will be narrow hearts, and some will be great and generous hearts.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

- ✠ Those who would speak the truth of the storm from inside the centre of it cannot expect to live without being tossed around by winds. Can you think of others besides Oscar Romero and Mary MacKillop who have suffered because they have spoken out for reform and who could now stand before the Lamb? Do you encounter resistance to the values of Christianity in your life?
- ✠ Do you find opposition or indifference to Catholic values of social justice? What do you do, especially when people are suffering because of this unconcern? What would you like to do?

Second Reading 1 John 3:1-3

- ✠ In Thornton Wilder’s play, *Our Town*, Emily says, “does anyone ever realize life while they live it ... every, every minute?” The stage manager responds, “No. Saints and poets maybe ... they do some.” Why might saints understand every minute of life? Can you relate it to the following line from this reading: “The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”? Do the saints and poets know God?
- ✠ If God is always present, hovering over us like a mother hen, why does God not just jump right in and save us from all the messes we get into?

Gospel Matthew 5:1-12

- ✠ Moses received the ten commandments on the mountain. Compare and contrast this with Jesus giving the beatitudes in his sermon on the mount. Jesus is defining his own life with the beatitudes, isn’t he? What part of your life do you define with beatitudes?
- ✠ Pope Francis pointed out that all the saints were different from each other, and each developed their own life of holiness according to their own personality. In what small or large way can you answer the universal call to holiness with your personality? Vote? Recycle? Donate food for the hungry? Volunteer in a shelter? Participate in a peace march? Run for political office to make change?

Dear brothers and sisters, choosing these, purity, meekness and mercy; choosing to entrust oneself to the Lord in poverty of spirit and in affliction; dedicating oneself to justice and peace—all this means going against the current in respect to this world’s mindset, in respect to the culture of possession, of meaningless fun, of arrogance against the weakest. This evangelical path was trodden by the Saints and Blesseds. Today’s solemnity that honours All Saints reminds us of the personal and universal vocation to holiness and proposes sure models for this journey that each person walks in a unique way, an unrepeatable way. It is enough to think of the inexhaustible variety of gifts and real-life stories there are among the saints: they are not all the same. ... Each one of us can do it, take this path: meekness, meekness, please, and we will head toward holiness! — Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Feast of All Saints, 1 November 2020

POPE LEO’S MESSAGE – ASSISI – 27 OCTOBER 2026 to the participants in the international meeting “Unarmed and Disarming Peace”

Dear brothers and sisters,

You are gathered in Assisi forty years after the World Day of Prayer for Peace held on 27 October 1986. That event was initiated by Saint John Paul II, who on that occasion emphasized the intrinsic bond between a genuine religious attitude and a keen sense of peace. I extend my cordial greetings to the Patriarchs and religious leaders, many of whom have actively taken part in the various days of prayer and dialogue that have been held over the years. I also warmly greet His Excellency Felice Accrocca, Bishop of Assisi, the Franciscan Families and all those in attendance. I would very much like to have been with you at the tomb of Saint Francis on this important anniversary, to see your faces and bear witness together to the fact that living as brothers and sisters is already possible! I thank the *Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue* and the Community of Sant’Egidio for their commitment to continuing along the path laid out by my predecessors. I am heartened by the long and faithful journey made over these years, which has borne much fruit. Pope Francis said of that unforgettable day in October 1986: “It should not and could not have remained an isolated event. You have continued on this path and have increased its momentum” (*Address to Participants in the International Meeting for Peace*, 30 Sep 2013).

Indeed, following that first historic meeting, Saint John Paul II called for us to “continue to live the spirit of Assisi” (*Address to Leaders of the World Religions in Assisi*, 26 October 1986). That was at the time of the Cold War, a very different situation from the one we face today. After 1989, many believed that globalization would ensure lasting peace for the world. Unfortunately, as I wrote in *Magnifica Humanitas*, “an almost blind faith was placed in the ability of the ✠✠

✚ markets to generate prosperity, democracy and stability. In reality, rather than automatically generating unity and peace, globalization has provoked fundamentalist, identity-based and nationalistic reactions” (no. 201).

Against this backdrop, there has been “troubling revival of war as an instrument of international politics” (*ibid.*, 190). As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “the accumulation of arms strikes many as a paradoxically suitable way of deterring potential adversaries from war. They see it as the most effective means of ensuring peace among nations” (no. 2315), thus betraying the memory of the twentieth century and the senseless slaughter of millions of human lives. Precisely in these times marked by a “culture of power,” there is a need to cultivate the spirit of Assisi, which entails a rejection of the religious justification of war, a spirit of mediation and dialogue, and contemplative reflection combined with creative action in the service of a future of peace. Yes, peace must once again become the common ideal of all peoples, the guiding star for all our choices, the standard that exposes injustice, and the shared horizon for all.

We must rebuild peace everywhere, not prepare for more wars. War can never be waged in the name of God. For us believers, “to fight in the name of religion means attacking religion itself” (*Magnifica Humanitas*, 223). There is no such thing as a holy war: only peace is holy.

That is why the journey begun in Assisi as a shared quest for peace is, first and foremost, the path of prayer. Prayer may seem weak in the face of the powers of the world, but it is the humble strength of believers. Let us turn to God, the giver of peace, that he may touch the hearts of those who seek war and terrorism. Let us not forget that prayer is never in vain. Indeed, prayer is a school of dialogue with God, with people and with all creatures. Let us think of Saint Francis, whose death we have commemorated on his eight-hundredth anniversary. The world needs dialogue. The path of Assisi calls religious leaders to foster a climate of dialogue amongst the faithful and within society, so that the language of arrogance may give way to the language of peace, negotiation and understanding. This will help to “gradually [lead] humanity away from the cycle of violence” (*ibid.*, 221). Brothers and sisters, may our prayers obtain from God that peace for the world’s nations for which we long. May he make us unarmed instruments of his peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (*Matthew* 5:9).

POPE LEO’S ADDRESS AT UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, 25 SEP 26 (ctd.)

(continuing from last week) The touchstone by which we can assess our commitment is the care we show for the littlest and for the poor: children in their mothers’ wombs and in the various theatres of war, persons with physical and intellectual disabilities, the elderly, migrants, refugees, and all those arrogantly excluded as unproductive. They are the true test of our claims to respect human dignity, and their protection and promotion extend also to creation. Opposed to this is a will to exploit and plunder, extracting as much as possible from every living being, consuming without safeguarding, destroying without cultivating. Thus, the present ecological crisis is an anthropological crisis; moreover, the Church is convinced that every culture bears within itself a wisdom that matures in an ecosystem of peoples. The human person’s habitat is society — not a merely physical environment, such as the desert or the ocean for animals, but a moral and relational one. Where social peace prevails, peoples flourish in justice.

Here the lofty educational and scientific missions of UNESCO find their ultimate goal: in the persevering work of peacemaking. Amid the many complex and pressing issues of the present time, our world regards international institutions with mixed feelings. On the one hand, these institutions are expected to respond to challenges that no individual State can face alone. On the other hand, these same institutions are experiencing a crisis of effectiveness, especially in situations where dialogue is seen as an obstacle to action rather than a resource for peace, a charade rather than an opportunity to seek the common good together. In this case, we see the urgent need to promote a virtue that seems as greatly desired as it is rarely found, namely the virtue of trust. Trust that differences do not necessarily constitute a threat; trust that honest dialogue can bring about a greater good than what individuals could achieve on their own. The Holy See wishes to increase this trust in UNESCO, as well as other international organizations, in the realization that every people has its own precious part to play in the pursuit of that authentic human progress which peace alone can guarantee. This is not to embrace a naive optimism that ignores difficulties, but rather to persevere in the hope that the desired good is always attainable. Every child born into this world brings new hope. Every person who devotes his or her life to the pursuit of truth is performing an act of hope. May UNESCO, for its part, bear witness to this hope by fostering understanding among nations through dialogue between their respective cultures. For we are convinced that education is the way to overcoming mutual distrust and that science can be at the service of every human being, sowing seeds today that will bear an abundant harvest in the future. This trust strengthens our hope in charity, in commitment to the good of our neighbour. For if all of us are firmly committed to the grandeur of our common humanity, peace can finally flourish.

As we cooperate in this work, religious traditions have a culturally necessary and irreplaceable role to play. Religions voice our questions regarding the origin of life and its purpose. They deal with the ultimate meaning of our lives, which is reflected in our daily decisions. When men and women of good will direct their actions toward God, in his light their cultural differences do not dissipate into the chaos of Babel. Instead, they find themselves united in a shared search for meaning and directed toward a destiny which is not death. We are not journeying toward oblivion. That is why the human spirit, in its relationship with God, senses all the more keenly the call to cultivate peace through a covenant among peoples who realize that they are children of the same Father, brothers and sisters to one another.

It is my hope that our meeting today will confirm all of us in our efforts to foster a more lively, profound and effective consciousness of our membership in the one human family. In this regard, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the entire staff of UNESCO, who carry out with competence and dedication its noble mission of promoting peace through the cultivation of every human art and science.

I address these considerations to all of you, to the peoples whom you represent, and, in a special way, to young people. Indeed, it is the younger generations who observe our actions most closely. In expressing my support for their aspirations for justice, with gratitude and esteem I invoke upon all of you and upon your countries the abundant blessings of God, the almighty and merciful Creator. Thank you.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	2 Nov	ALL SOULS' DAY	Isaiah 25:6-9	Romans 6:3-4,8-9	John 6:37-40
Tuesday	3 Nov	Weekday, 31 st Week in Ordinary Time		Philippians 2:5-11	Luke 14:15-24
Wednesday	4 Nov	St Charles Borromeo, bishop		Philippians 2:12-18	Luke 14:25-33
Thursday	5 Nov	Weekday, 31 st Week in Ordinary Time		Philippians 3:3-8	Luke 15:1-10
Friday	6 Nov	Weekday, 31 st Week in Ordinary Time		Philippians 3:17-4:1	Luke 16:1-8
Saturday	7 Nov	Weekday, 31 st Week in Ordinary Time		Philippians 4:10-19	Luke 16:9-15
Sunday	8 Nov	32 ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>			

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ SATURDAY, 31 OCTOBER	HALLOWEEN – THE EVE OF "ALL HOLY" ... HALLOW'S EVE	
✦ Weekend, 31 Oct – 1 Nov	All Saints' Day Blessing of Cars after both Masses	
✦ Monday, 2 November	09:30	Mass for All Souls' Day
✦ Tuesday, 3 November	15:00	Melbourne Cup
✦ Friday, 6 November	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
✦ Wednesday, 11 November	Remembrance Day	
	10:30	Catholic Women's League Annual Mass
✦ Sunday, 15 November	10:00	Annual Memorial Mass, Holy Spirit College



Sunday 1 Nov

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

CONVERSATION WITH PAUL FIELD – ST JOSEPH'S BULLI – THURSDAY, 5 NOV

Dads, Grandads, Father Figures and Men of the Parish are invited to *In Conversation with Paul Field*, musician, producer, author, former managing director of The Wiggles. Thursday, 5 November from 18:30 at St Joseph's, Bulli, School Hall, Park Road, Bulli – All welcome!

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Our CWL ladies will be operating a Christmas Raffle this Spring. The prizes will consist of Christmas goodies. Tickets will be sold on Saturday, 31 October and Sunday, 1 November, and on 7 and 8 November 2026. Ticket costs one for \$2.00 or 3 for \$5.00. The raffle will be drawn after Mass on Sunday, 8 November. *Thanks!*

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL – INVITATION TO SERVE

Do you have a heart for our parish community and a desire to help shape its pastoral life? St Michael's Parish Pastoral Council is seeking expressions of interest for two new members, following the completion of Kerry Henessey's and Jo Pye's terms. We thank Kerry and Jo for their service and contribution. The Council helps guide and support the parish's pastoral activities, including working with our parish school. We welcome people who bring wisdom, a willingness to listen and a strong commitment to the care and wellbeing of our community. This is a meaningful opportunity to share your gifts and help our parish flourish. The Council meets every two months, with meetings lasting approximately one hour. We hope to welcome two new members through a process of discernment before our next meeting in December. *Would you help out, please?*



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

ALL SAINTS' DAY

1 st Reading	Revelation 7:2-4,9-14
2 nd Reading	1 John 3:1-3
Gospel	Matthew 5:1-12

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

32ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	Wisdom 6:12-16
2 nd Reading	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Gospel	Matthew 25:1-13

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	09:30
Tuesday	17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	