

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
24 / 25 OCTOBER 2026
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
POPE LEO TO UNESCO [CTD.]

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Kids go through grade school and high school with important questions to face. Am I “in” with the crowd? Can I hold my own against the bullies, can I get along with girls, can I get along with the boys, did I wear the right clothes, am I cool enough? These are obviously more important and more crucial than anything else in their lives.

This is the case in many of our lives, as we did not think much about the place of “love” in the overall scheme of life. Of course, who “thinks” when they are in high school?

Then as we grow, we might hear statements like this: “If you want to know what is happening in a work of literature, look what love is doing. Look at what love is doing!”

Growing up, we maybe never knew explicitly that love was such a big deal. We thought it was something parents have for you and tell you about it over and over. Could it really be the key to plays, poems, novels, short stories and literature? The key to humanity? We had better pay attention.

In school, we went through Shakespeare, Hopkins, Joyce, Keats, Milton, and we can't remember how many more. The clouds parted and we maybe began to see that characters' lives do centre around something called “love” or the lack of it. Try it out when you read your next serious novel or short story. Which character acts out of real regard for the other(s) and which does not? What happens as a result?

Oh, and what about love in our own lives?

Have you discovered that love is quite a bit more than pretence, more than an ideal, more than just a thing we crave from others, and certainly more than just pleasure? Have you seen that learning to love is the very air inhaled by such everyday importances as work, relaxation, attractions, happiness? Without love's living atmosphere none of these could breathe, nor could we.

In Sunday's Gospel Jesus says this in no uncertain terms: You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ... You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.

“What?” we might exclaim. We thought that law consisted of commands placed upon us from the outside, rules whose violation would bring punishment! What is this about law depending on love?

Well, take a look.

God does not fail at love. God waits. God says, “how wonderful that you are learning!” God says, “I love every person on earth. And you: you are my beloved. I am at your side as you learn to open to me and to others.”

You and I do not judge ourselves as succeeding in this very often, so we need laws to help us. But the root of law and of life is love of others. It is loving concern under God for human persons. Ultimately, it is an imitation of God's love for us.

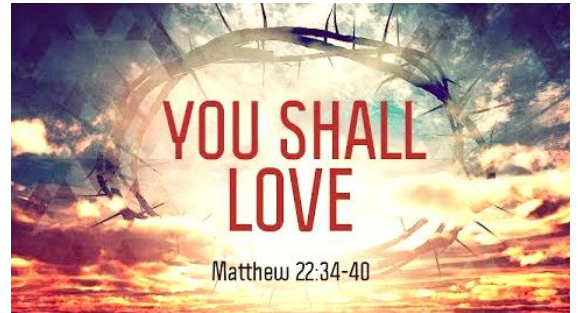
“Look what love is doing.”

Today's gospel takes us to the ideal at the heart the teaching of Jesus. In his Sermon on the Mount, as he contrasted the accepted standards of old Israel with his New Law, Jesus warned his followers that their ‘uprightness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees’. It is not surprising, therefore, that the interpretation of the ‘commandments of the Law’ was one of the issues at stake in the conflict between Jesus and his enemies.

‘Love your enemies’, these words were addressed to a people whose traditions urged them to care for their own; but saw no place for good will and generosity to foreigners in general – whom they looked upon as rivals and enemies. Old Israel had been taken into covenant with the living God, shown in the Exodus to be the champion of the poor and oppressed. Through the covenant they were called to identify with the ways of God. In fact, their traditions – as today's reading from the book of Exodus makes clear – were remarkable compared with the outlook of other peoples of their time. As they began to learn what identification with God's ways involved; they recognised that they must care for the powerless – the poor, widows and orphans, the strangers who had settled among them. But they still had much to learn – their good will was not extended to all of God's children without exception. In advocating this as the ideal as his New Law of love, Jesus was not abolishing the old Law but bringing it to ‘fulfilment’. The ideal held up by Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law was clear: ‘I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you will be children of your Father in heaven’ (Matthew 5:44).

Promoting a movement of popular renewal, the Pharisees sought to formulate summary expressions of the requirements of the Law. Their discussion along these lines is echoed in the antagonistic question with which they tried to confound Jesus. In his reply, Jesus refers to two commandments – implying that, in a certain sense, 

Look What Love Is Doing



✠✠ they constitute a single commandment. He refers to two well-known texts: ‘You must love the Lord with all your heart, soul and strength’ (Deuteronomy 6:5) – a text familiar to devout Jews, as expressing the obligations of the covenant; and ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (Leviticus 19:18) – a text that declares, quite explicitly, that the neighbour referred to is a ‘member of your race’. His uniting of these texts, in such a way that neither can have its full meaning without the other, takes us to the heart of the ‘fulfilment of the Law’ announced by Jesus. He has made it clear that his followers must identify with the boundlessly generous and inclusive ways of his Father; now he makes it clear that the outlook of the ‘golden rule’ – expressed in the second text he has quoted, and found in other ancient writings – must be the expression of a good will that has no limits. The identification with God’s ways, called for in the covenant, has now found its full and final expression, as it did in the Good Samaritan parable – probably his best known – in response to the question, ‘Who is my neighbour?’

Against the background we have described, we recognise the revolutionary nature of Jesus’ New Law of love. In fact, the universal good will taught by Jesus became the ideal of New Testament communities: ‘When you did it to the least, you did it to me’ (Matthew 25:40); ‘There can be neither Jew nor Greek, you are all one in Christ’ (Galatians 3:28). Paul recognised that this identification with God’s ways is a gift of the Spirit – ‘The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit’ (Romans 5:5).

In today’s Gospel, Jesus focuses attention, in the most simple terms, on the very essence of what it means to be a human being: to be a woman or a man is to live a life of love. Whatever we might achieve in our life, if we fail in this our life has been a failure. Whatever our failures, if we learn something about how to receive and to give love, our life has certainly not been in vain. Saint John of the Cross tells us what we all know from Jesus himself: ‘At the evening of life, you will be examined in love’ (Sayings of light and love n.57). At the last supper, Jesus asked us to love one another as he loves us (John 15:12). If that is what he asks us to do, he must know that it is possible. The Hebrew Bible cannot be expected to imagine anything quite as beautiful as that, but Jesus quotes the command that we love others as we love ourselves (Leviticus 19:18 – Matthew 22:39). That’s a good start. We all know how important is this love which we have for our fellow human beings. If we fail in this, then any other love we might think we have, is phoney. This is certainly true of any love we might claim to have for God (see 1 John 4:20).

It is natural to love God who loves us and who gives us the grace to respond in love. Saint John of the Cross expresses this well as he addresses the soul: ‘O most beautiful of creatures, transcendent spirit, who long to know where your beloved is and where you may find him so as to be united with him. He dwells within you. You are yourself the tabernacle, his secret hiding place. Rejoice, exult, for all you could possibly desire, all your heart’s longing is so close, so intimate as to be within you; you cannot be without God’ (Spiritual Canticle, 1,7).

Here are the last words spoken by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: *May we so grow in love that these will be our sentiments too when our life’s journey is complete: ‘I am not sorry for handing myself over to love ... Oh, I love Him! My God, I love you.’*

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Exodus 22:20-26

- ✠ God’s love brought the Israelites out of Egypt where they had been aliens. According to this reading, how were they to repay God’s love? How do you repay God’s love for you? Do you pass it on? Do you pay it forward??
- ✠ Does God hear the cry from immigrants because of immigration laws? What about minorities, and especially the poor because of rising prices and climate change? What can we do to be part of God’s compassion toward all those suffering?

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

- ✠ Are you “receiving the word in great affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit?” Is the Holy Spirit the great forgotten one for you, or do you guard, even cherish, the gift that inspires you to “sound forth,” that gives you peace and teaches you to love?
- ✠ Every place the Thessalonians went, the “word of the Lord sounded forth.” How can you yourself “sound forth” (without preaching)? Do you know anyone in the world who does that today? in your parish? in your workplace? Can you “sound forth” with actions as well as words?

Gospel Matthew 22:34-40

- ✠ You were made in God’s image and likeness, and every good thing you have comes from God. What does God ask in return? Is it always easy? Discuss whether “love you neighbour” includes your arrogant neighbour or just your kind one.
- ✠ Pope Francis made remarks about love and one of the first steps toward that love. In overcoming anger or rivalry, etc., he suggests praying for the other person. Would that help you accept the other as brother or sister?

What is the law of the People of God? It is the law of love, love for God and love for neighbour according to the new commandment that the Lord left to us (cf. John 13:34). It is a love, however, that is not sterile sentimentality or something vague, but the acknowledgment of God as the one Lord of life and, at the same time, the acceptance of the other as my true brother, overcoming division, rivalry, misunderstanding, selfishness; these two things go together. ... We must ask the Lord to make us correctly understand this law of love. How beautiful it is to love one another as true brothers and sisters. How beautiful!

– Pope Francis, *General Audience*, 12 June 2013

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

(continued from last week) Ladies and Gentlemen, as men and women of science, you are called to cooperate unremittingly in the name of our common history, so that, from a diversity of perspectives, a convergence of vision may emerge, and from this convergence, a harmony of action. This harmony is expressed in the work of UNESCO when it gives a symphonic voice to the highest aspirations for the good and the care of humanity. Where there is harmony, different voices find agreement, and the nations you represent are thus brought together in concord.

In this regard, I would like to appeal to two images from the Bible, the great cultural treasury of humanity. They are the tower of Babel and the public square of Pentecost. I offer them as ways of representing the unity of the human family, which, even today, is continually called to discern its proper direction and the meaning of the history in which it is immersed. These biblical narratives portray two forms of life in society that invite us to reflect upon the circumstances of our own time.

The tower of Babel represents a unity imposed through domination (cf. Genesis 11:4). At the same time, this edifice reveals that the more power seeks to oppress, the more it weakens itself, exposing its inhumane face. We see this in the suffering and injustice caused by despotism, as well as in forms of exploitation that damage both society and the environment. As history teaches us, many empires have revelled in their power before being consumed by it and collapsing like a tower. The outcome of this pride, exalted and then brought low, is dispersion. The presumption of making oneself like God and subjecting peoples to a single yoke leads to a confusion of languages and a failure to understand one another. Instead of reaching heaven, as it presumed to do, the tower of Babel collapsed, with a twofold negative result. Since the unity it imposed was forced, the diversity that followed its collapse turned into a source of conflict. Today, the temptation of Babel reappears in a globalization pursued without fraternity, in rapacious forms of neocolonialism, in ideological impositions and in all those “contacts without bonds” that reduce human life to commerce (cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Quo Vadis, Humanitas?*, 42). Science itself, when reduced to a technique of power, no longer serves to elevate the human person, but instead risks degrading the fruits of human endeavour.

Today, in particular, we possess the means to connect people and continents instantaneously, yet, at the same time, we are witnessing new forms of isolation, material and spiritual poverty, and abandonment. Communication has become much faster, but not necessarily more truthful. Information is abundant, but it is not synonymous with wisdom. Without a shared ethical foundation, the many channels of communication risk multiplying false information and giving currency to words devoid of meaning, thereby hindering dialogue rather than fostering it.

Artificial intelligence amplifies this problem. Although such systems can correlate data, they cannot answer questions that concern the meaning of human life, which is rooted in lived experience. Yet human beings cannot live without meaning. Meaning is the oxygen of the mind. For this reason, the challenges of communication, which are always challenges of education as well, make the search for truth a matter of social justice and historical equity. That is why education in this area is essential, and I welcome UNESCO's initiative through its Media and Information Literacy (MIL) program, which promotes the responsible use of media and digital tools.

Indeed, without truth, language becomes subject to the logic of violence and to the arbitrary will of the powerful. Others are then excluded in the name of profit, and the innocent are killed in the name of freedom. Instead of respecting the law, those in power invoke it when it serves their interests and disregard it when it restrains them, treating even justice itself as though it were a commodity to be bought and sold. If we realize that the corruption of the law begins with the corruption of the heart, we can recognize how every science risks losing its proper meaning when pursued without ethics, and thus ceasing to serve and reflect human dignity. In this regard, I encourage the international community as a whole to devote particular attention to the protection of children and young people. In the digital age, their vulnerability must never become an opportunity for exploitation. May these technologies support their growth, education and relationships, safeguarding their freedom to think and discern, and always remaining at the service of the dignity of the human person.

The corruption of culture which we are considering finds its redemption in the public square of Pentecost. There, a message of peace is received as good news by people of every nation. This message proclaims the resurrection of Jesus, that is, the victory of life over death and the salvation that gives hope to the world. On the day of Pentecost, the public square becomes a place where the peace that heals every offence against the human person is celebrated. Each one present heard the message “in his own native language” (cf. Acts 2:8). Communion in no way suppresses diversity. Rather, it enables diversity to flourish in the harmony of voices and faces. In the proclamation of peace, the richness of cultures becomes a bearer of a universal truth. Biblical teaching thus shows us the way to achieve what we all seek: “that unity which does not cancel out differences but values the personal history of each person and the social and religious culture of every people” (Homily at the Mass for the Beginning of the Pontificate, 18 May 2025). It is not the domination of Babel, but the peace of Pentecost, that makes such communion among all peoples possible. Every culture, therefore, realizes its highest wisdom when it seeks peace and the good of all, bearing witness to the authentic meaning of our humanity.

Those engaged in education know that only the truth sets us free. Those who teach and those who conduct research know that error enslaves us to ignorance and superstition. Whenever we encounter obstacles to our mission, let us remember that there is one earth for all and a common human nature. The human being cannot be understood by separating what belongs together: body and soul, personal life and relationships, our relationship with others and with the environment. All form part of the unity of our existence. For this reason, cultivating the earth also means cultivating the humanity that inhabits it. Education and science are called to this task. Indeed, it is no coincidence that every culture, according to the very etymology of the word, is an act of cultivation. I therefore renew the appeal of my predecessors to care together for the human person and for creation: Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the need for an ecology of the human person, while Pope Francis developed the perspective of integral ecology (cf. Benedict XVI, Address to the Bundestag, 22 September 2011; Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 137–162).

(concludes next week ...)

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	26 Oct	Weekday, 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	Ephesians 4:32-5:8	Luke 13:10-17
Tuesday	27 Oct	Weekday, 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	Ephesians 5:21-33	Luke 13:18-21
Wednesday	28 Oct	Saints Simon and Jude, apostles	Ephesians 2:19-22	Luke 6:12-19
Thursday	29 Oct	Weekday, 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	Ephesians 6:10-20	Luke 13:31-35
Friday	30 Oct	Weekday, 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	Philippians 1:1-11	Luke 14:1-6
Saturday	31 Oct	Weekday, 30 th Week in Ordinary Time	Philippians 1:18-26	Luke 14:1,7-11
Sunday	1 Nov	ALL SAINTS' DAY – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		



FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Wednesday, 28 October 19:00 Sacrament of First Penance
- ✦ 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
- ✦ Friday, 6 November 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ Wednesday, 11 November Remembrance Day
10:30 Catholic Women's League Annual Mass



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: STRAWBERRY AND OLIVE OIL CAKE *from Chef Raymond*

3 eggs; 200g raw caster sugar; 180ml light olive oil; 180ml yoghurt, ideally strained overnight; zest of 1 lemon; 250g self-raising flour; pinch of salt; 1 punnet of strawberries, quartered; 1 large handful of almond flakes.

Preheat the oven to 160°C and line a slice tin with baking paper. Whisk the eggs and sugar until thick and pale. Slowly whisk in the olive oil, followed by the yoghurt and lemon zest. Fold in flour and salt, and then half of the berries. Sprinkle over the almonds and remaining berries, then bake for 45-50 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.

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. *Thank you for your support!*

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. *Could you help out?*



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A
1st Reading Exodus 22:20-26
2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10
Gospel Matthew 22: 34-40

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

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

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
Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday