

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
14 / 15 NOVEMBER 2026
33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A
TENTH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Make the Most of What You Have

The Gospel story is pretty simple. A wealthy man leaves his goods for each of three servants to care for while he is gone. He doesn't give them instructions, at least none that we are told of. When he returns, he sees that two of the three servants have invested the money and got back twice the amount. He is delighted.

So, at this point the moral of the story would be: "Make the most of what you have."

But we miss the most interesting part of all if we look just at the successful servants. We miss the fascinating and puzzling story of the third servant. This poor soul did not invest the money at all. He buried it. Quite simply, he was afraid of investing it and losing it.



He was right to be afraid, given the owner's attitude. He listened to the fearful servant's story and then had the man thrown into "the darkness outside," where there would be "wailing and grinding of teeth." Quite an overreaction, it seems. The poor guy just wanted to keep the owner's money safe!

Maybe the proprietor was simply a "demanding person," as the parable says. Dark spirited.

But there is much more to it. The monetary unit "talent" in Jesus' time was not a small amount. Even one talent could be worth more than a labourer would earn in a lifetime. And the owner entrusted a lot more than just money to the servants—he left them all his possessions, everything he had. He took a great risk, and he wanted them to do the same, not leave the investment mouldering around somewhere.

Ok, now make the switch. Assume that the parable is about God. Maybe God entrusts an even greater amount to you and me! Life, abilities, the gift of love, the living breathing human beings around us, and every so often, real and open acts of unselfish love. God gives all this free of charge, gives to us our own lives with all their rewards and catastrophes, and he says to us, dive in. Have your life. Make whatever you will with it because you are my own beloved.

It is wonderful. But then an awful question arises. Does God curse those who are afraid and who bury what they are given? Jesus at least seems to say so. To everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Ouch. That hurts.

Except that, in the realm of spirituality, there is one thing I know of that will go away if it is buried, but which gets greater if you use it.

Love. If fear closes the door tightly against love, guess where the loveless one will be. In the darkness outside the door, wailing and gnashing those teeth. Without love.

Get this: We are all frightened, and God always has compassion upon us. God waits for ages to see if we will not accept just a bit of the love God offers, and if we will even find just enough courage to invest some of it in other people. God is often disappointed in this risk God takes, and I'm sure God says, "oh no, not again" when we fail.

But this is the disappointment of someone who loves us very well. Let love in. Love casts out fear.

The parable in today's gospel reading is so well known that the word, 'talent', has become part of our language. The original story of Jesus, however, had a far more serious message than the development of natural gifts. The 'talent' Jesus refers to, was an enormous quantity of precious metal (26kg of gold or silver). The immensity of the wealth entrusted to the servants was far beyond the experience of Jesus' hearers. The parable challenges them to recognise that God's immense blessings bring great responsibilities.

The sharp edge of the parable, as Matthew reports it, seems to indicate a background of controversy. It may well be that the original parable of Jesus was a challenge to the Sadducees – the conservative Temple establishment who were not open to wholesome developments that had taken place in the biblical tradition, and were opposed, therefore, to the mission of Jesus. Scholars find grounds for this in the wording of the parable. The master 'hands over' the talents; this term was associated in old Israel with the passing on of the traditions of God's people. The term 'gained' – applied to the profits made by the servants – was associated with the winning of converts. In their self-centred conservatism, the Sadducees had no concern to carry forward Israel's mission to be 'a light to the nations'. As the parable was recalled in Matthew's community, however, it may have been directed against the dangers of complacency in that community – that settled for the minimum requirements of life as the Lord's disciples, and was not ready to set out upon the great adventure of putting into practice the program of the Sermon on the Mount. The conclusion, 'To anyone who has will be given more; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away' – a saying of Jesus that appears several times in the gospels – was probably added by Matthew, to drive home the

point of the parable. Its meaning for Jesus was that one who is spiritually open will enjoy God's on-going blessings; whereas one who is closed will miss the opportunities offered them. Matthew emphasises the seriousness of the parable's lesson by concluding his narrative – as he does in other places – with reference to the 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' in store for those who have no place in the Kingdom.

The parable of Jesus points to the 'Day of the Lord' when God's people will be called to account for the responsibilities brought by the great blessings they have received. In today's reading from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, Paul continues his instruction concerning the Lord's return, echoing the imagery used by Jesus in the gospels. Life must go on; it is not given to us to know the 'times and seasons' of the final reckoning; the 'Day of the Lord' will come 'like a thief in the night'; God's people must 'stay awake and sober', living as 'children of the light'. It is not difficult to see that these themes provide the background of today's parable. The master is a long time in coming and arrives unexpectedly to "go through the servants' accounts". The servants who have administered well the wealth entrusted to them are to be entrusted with 'greater things'; they will share in 'their master's happiness' – a clear reference, for those who have ears to hear, of the blessings of the final Kingdom.

If we appreciate the greatness of the blessings brought by faith in Christ, we will be aware of the responsibilities they bring.

Questions About This Sunday's Scripture Readings

First Reading **Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31**

- "The woman who fears the Lord is to be praised, ... give her a reward for her labours." Do you see a connection between the woman in this reading with the wise servant portrayed in the Gospel? How do awe and wonder in the presence of God ("fear of the Lord") help make a person wise?
- Do you know some people like the woman in this reading? How are they "reaching out to the needy and extending their arms to the poor?" Are they feeding the hungry and caring for the sick? Are they working to end wars, fix racial justice and climate change? Are they doing something and not just talking?

Second Reading **1 Thessalonians 5:1-6**

- Apparently "the day of the Lord" can overtake you "like a thief at night." Are you always ready? Almost ready? Dozing a little?
- Where would you put yourself on a continuum that has security with dying in peace at one end and constant dread at the other?

Gospel **Matthew 25:14-30**

- Were the gifts of Puccini, Michelangelo and Van Gogh given to them for themselves alone? Do you think your gifts were given to you for yourself, to keep hidden away where no one can see them?
- Are you willing to take risks, or are you paralysed by fear? If you were a leader in the Church, what kind of risks would you take to insure the growth of the faithful? Why does Pope Francis say we were given gifts?

> We possess a great wealth that depends not on what we possess but on what we are: the life we have received, the good within us, the indelible beauty God has given us by making us in his image. … All these things make each of us precious in his eyes, each of us is priceless and unique in history! This is how God looks at us, how God feels towards us. …
>
> This brings us to the centre of the parable: the work of the servants, which is service. Service is our work too; it makes our talents bear fruit and it gives meaning to our lives. … But what kind of service are we speaking of? In the Gospel, good servants are those who take risks. They are not fearful and overcautious; they do not cling to what they possess but put it to good use. … The reason we have gifts is so that we can be gifts for others. And here, brothers and sisters, we should ask ourselves the question: do I only follow my own needs, or am I able to look to the needs of others, to whoever is in need? Are my hands open, or are they closed. – Pope Francis, *Homily*, 33rd Ordinary Sunday A, 15 November 2020

Baptisms This Sunday – Welcome to Cruz, Angus and Toby

Welcome to **Cruz Lobos** and to **Angus and Toby Raftry** baptised this Saturday: ***welcome*** *and* ***thank you*** *to parents, godparents, family and friends from our Parish.*





Baptism is the first Sacrament of Christian Initiation, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist. In most of the Eastern Catholic Churches, the three Sacraments are celebrated together as is done in the Latin Catholic Church with adults and children over the age of reason – that is 7 years or older. If you want your infant son or daughter (under 7 years) to receive Baptism, the next Baptisms to be held in our Parish will be during Masses on **Saturday, 19 December / Sunday, 20 December**. The next Baptism preparation meeting for parents will be in the presbytery on **Thursday, 26 November** at **19:15**. Call in to the Parish Office to collect the Baptism Enrolment Forms. Baptism is the first Sacrament of Christian Initiation, followed by Confirmation (Year 6) and Eucharist (7- or 8-year-olds). 8-year old and older young people who have not been baptised, **contact the Parish Office this week to enrol**.

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO FOR THE 10TH WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

1. **The Lord is a refuge for the poor** (cf. *Psalm* 14:6). The words of the Psalmist point the way forward as we prepare for the 10th World Day of the Poor. Once again, we must return to the Word of God to reaffirm the importance of the poor in the life of the Church. The words of the Psalm serve as a standard for Christian living because they reveal the face of God and acknowledge human poverty. Indeed, at a dramatic moment in history — the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem — the people felt deprived of God's presence and experienced unprecedented material and moral misery. To every generation, this Word appears in all its relevance. From the very beginning, it reveals the contradiction into which we still so often fall today. The first observation, in fact, is this: "Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good" (*Psalm* 14:1). It highlights the contrast between those who act wisely and those who, on the other hand, go through life as if there were nothing greater than themselves. Sadly, we see that even today there is widespread social injustice arising from arrogant corruption, which is as deplorable as it is discriminatory. The loss of a sense of the transcendent in daily life is no longer so much a theoretical denial of God's existence; rather, it is evident in the failure to take his goodness and mercy into account in the pursuit of personal and social justice.

The poor are the first to suffer the consequences, and it is no coincidence that their numbers are growing in many societies. The absence of God no longer places people side by side in mutual respect, but places one above the other in a relationship of domination and oppression. Thus, a desecrating logic of abuse and exclusion is laid bare, one that marginalizes and humiliates. Not only individuals but entire populations find themselves in this condition. The words of the Psalm still ring true: They "eat up my people as they eat bread" (*Psalm* 14:4).

2. Today, the poor's cry for justice is silenced by a multitude of increasingly subtle tactics, to the point of rendering voiceless their every effort to make their demands heard. The digital world exacerbates prejudice against them and reinforces the veil of indifference surrounding their plight. The poor have no choice but to cry out to God (cf. *Psalm* 34:7) and bring their lament before him, certain that they will be heard because God is faithful and rich in mercy. Even today, those who are oppressed, humiliated and defenceless grow in the certainty that they must entrust themselves to God, filled with faith and expectation. In this complete surrender, a sense of one's own dignity blossoms anew; they recognize sisters and brothers with whom to share their dreams, and hope quietly becomes reality. Taking refuge in God means finding true and lasting protection — the kind that the powerful cannot guarantee and prefer to deny.

The poor, however, are more able than others to recognize what is essential, because they live on the essentials. More like Christ than anyone else, they recognize God as their refuge even when circumstances seem to contradict this, and they are filled with hope for his justice, which will not be long in coming. In the night of abandonment and loneliness, the poor "live in the shelter of the Most High" (cf. *Psalm* 91:1). All who are afflicted, all who suffer injustice and are wronged, all who are in suffering and pain, all who are lonely and without a sense of purpose in life can find consolation and renewed motivation in the Lord.

3. That God is their refuge is not merely a promise; it becomes a reality in the person of Jesus Christ. God dwells among us through the Incarnation of the Son, who makes concrete and visible the refuge for which we hope. Jesus Christ is truly God's refuge for the poor. Through his obedience to the Father, he descends to the lowest point, where the least of these are found. He reaches out to everyone and offers each a safe refuge: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (*Matthew* 11:28). In Jesus, God not only protects but shares in human poverty all the way to the cross.

The poor of our day are the forgotten and the marginalized: robbed not only of bread, but also of a voice and a face. May they encounter the Son of God, who draws near to everyone without neglecting anyone. May they encounter him, first and foremost, in those who call themselves Christians. In the Church, his Body, it is Jesus who offers bread and friendship; he brings light and opens a horizon of hope; he calls each person by name and restores dignity to all. Jesus of Nazareth is God's gift to the poor. In him, all promises become reality. For those who lack a home, a job, education, food or good health, a new path opens: sharing as an expression of the Kingdom of God (cf. *Matthew* 5:3). The obsession of those who accumulate wealth only for themselves is opposed by God's steadfastness which, through the witness of real people, opens hearts and welcomes all into his love.

4. In Christ, therefore, we are called to become poor and to be a refuge for the poor. The Christian community cannot remain indifferent to the many who today stand at the door but remain invisible to those who are shut within their own walls. The Church, by its very nature, is called to be poor and a refuge for the poor. Let us not forget Saint Augustine's commentary on the parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus: " He has kept the name of the rich man to himself and told us the name of the poor man. The name of the rich man was on everyone's lips, but God kept it to himself; the name of the poor man was passed over in silence, but God revealed it to us. … What would you choose? To be poor like Lazarus or rich like the other man? Do not be deceived! Listen to how it ended and take note of which is the wrong choice" (*Sermon* 33A, 4).

As I recalled in the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, "God shows a preference for the poor: the Lord's words of hope and liberation are addressed first of all to them. Therefore, even in their poverty or weakness, no one should feel abandoned. And the Church, if she wants to be Christ's Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor, a place where the poor have a privileged place" (no. 21).

Certain questions inevitably arise, and on this 10th World Day of the Poor, we urgently need to let them resonate in our minds and hearts. Are we a sign of a God who is a refuge for the poor? Are we aware of our own poverty, and do we prefer it to unjust wealth? Do we go where the poor are, experiencing their marginalization? Do we listen to their thoughts and share their hopes? Do we speak their names with divine tenderness? Does our charity reawaken and sustain in them the desire for justice and redemption? These and many other questions call for a serious examination of conscience, to assess how much more we are called to do on behalf of the poor and for their liberation. Then we will see that the poor themselves become a refuge for others. The experience of poverty makes them particularly sensitive to a renewed solidarity in the face of challenges. Christ's love, in fact, makes us sharers in God's life of love. In this sense, Christians are called not only to seek refuge in God, but also to become a refuge for others in God, "not to distinguish between those who assist and those who are assisted, between those who seem to give and those who seem to receive, between those who appear poor and those who feel they offer time, skills and help. We are the Lord's Church, a Church of the poor, all precious, all individuals, each one a bearer of a unique Word of God. Each one is a gift for the others. " (*Homily*, August 17, 2025).

5. The eighth centenary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi prompts us to recall how, upon arriving in Rome as a pilgrim to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, he was moved with compassion for the beggars. To understand and experience their suffering, he took off his own clothes and exchanged them for the ragged garments of one of them, sitting down to beg and spending the entire day among the poor with a joyful spirit (cf. *Fonti Francescane*, 1405–1406). We wish to bear witness that it is possible, even today, to experience the same joy by putting ourselves in the shoes of the poor and listening to them rather than merely speaking about them. Those who have God as their refuge have the freedom to make prophetic choices, which testify to the fact that everything can be reimagined from the ground up, in the humility and fraternity that alone can heal a world wounded by arrogance.

I am confident that this 10th World Day of the Poor will serve as a significant step toward rediscovering the faces of so many brothers and sisters who seek refuge in God and long to feel at home in our communities. Let us remain faithful to the Word of God, which calls us to a conversion of heart. May the Virgin Mary, who in the crucified flesh of her Son contemplated the love of God that fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty-handed (cf. *Luke* 1:53), intercede for us.

From the Vatican, 13 June 2026, Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A · Weekdays Year II

Monday	16 Nov	Weekday, 33rd Week in Ordinary Time	Revelation 1:1-4, 2:1-5	Luke 18:35-43
Tuesday	17 Nov	St Elizabeth of Hungary, religious	Revelation 3:1-6,14-22	Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday	18 Nov	Weekday, 33rd Week in Ordinary Time	Revelation 4:1-11	Luke 19:11-28
Thursday	19 Nov	Weekday, 33rd Week in Ordinary Time	Revelation 5:1-10	Luke 19:41-44
Friday	20 Nov	Weekday, 33rd Week in Ordinary Time	Revelation 10:8-11	Luke 19:45-48
Saturday	21 Nov	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Revelation 11:4-12	Luke 20:27-40
Sunday	22 Nov	CHRIST THE KING – *Scripture Readings are listed below.*		



FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

Friday to Sunday, 13-15 November		Shaw and Partners Iron Series and Nipper Challege Thirroul Beach: https://ironseries.com.au/rounds/thirroul/
Saturday, 14 November	17:30	Three Baptisms during Mass Family Mass followed by pizza dinner
Saturday, 5 December	09:00	Disabled Surfers Association – volunteers needed No experience required: https://www.disabledsurfers.org

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: BLUEBERRY OAT SLICE *from Chef Raymond*

3 cups quick oats; 1 tsp cinnamon; 1 apple, grated; 2 eggs; 1 cup milk; ½ cup Greek yoghurt; 60g butter, melted; ½ cup raw caster sugar, plus an extra pinch for the blueberries; 2 tsp baking powder; 2–3 punnets fresh blueberries; 1 tsp cornflour; 1 tsp lemon juice; *Drizzle* … ½ icing sugar, sifted; 1 tbsp milk.



Preheat oven to 180°C and grease and line a 20cm square tin with baking paper. In a large bowl, combine the oats, sugar, cinnamon and baking powder. In another bowl, whisk together the grated apple, eggs, milk, Greek yoghurt, and melted butter. Pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until combined. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth the top. Toss the blueberries with the cornflour, lemon juice and a pinch of sugar, then scatter evenly over the oat mixture, gently pressing some into the top. Bake for 40–45 minutes or until golden around the edges and just set in the centre. Allow to cool in the tin for at least 20 minutes before slicing into squares. For the drizzle, whisk together the icing sugar and milk until smooth, then drizzle over the cooled slice, and cut into squares to serve.

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

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – CHRISTMAS RAFFLE – THANK YOU!!

Thank you to all our parishioners who supported the CWL Christmas raffle. There were five prizes and the winners were Fran Philippe, Maureen Heydon, Justus Johnson, Lyn Toohey, and Patience Hook. Lyn Toohey then donated her prize and the recipient was Raymond Cummins. Thank you for your generosity, Lyn. The total raised was **$623**. A special thanks to our small band of 20 ladies who donated all the goodies in the baskets and every month also donate toiletries for the Vinnies Christmas appeal. To the members of our Parish community, thank you for your continual love and kindness.

What's on around the Diocese? Check out upcoming Diocesan events and courses – too many to list in one place. Subscribe here and we will keep you in the loop: dow.sh/stayingconnected

THIS Sunday's Readings – *on website*

33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ♦ YEAR A

1st Reading Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31
2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Gospel Matthew 25:14-30

NEXT Sunday's Readings – *on website*

CHRIST THE KING ♦ YEAR A

1st Reading Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17
2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28
Gospel Matthew 25:31-46

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

www.thirroulcatholic.org.au
325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive
PO Box 44 · Thirroul 2515
4268 1910
thirroul@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

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday