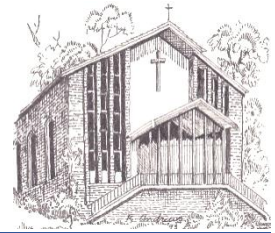




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



1 / 2 DECEMBER 2018
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR C
Vinnies Christmas Appeal ✦ Blessing Christmas Tree

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Why do we have Advent? You say, "I don't know, it always just comes along," or, "I don't know, no one ever told me" or, "if Christ has already been born, what is this Advent 'waiting' about?" Have we forgotten that he is already born, and a long time ago?

Strangely that is part of the answer. It does have to do with his birth long ago, but also into our hearts today. And our forgetfulness as well.

The day of the Lord will arrive, though long delayed. Our hearts get drowsy and lazy, tired out by the anxieties of daily life. Maybe we distract ourselves from our troubles by working very hard, or becoming depressed, or becoming fascinated with drink, or sex, or out-of-control emotions, or gambling, or email, or golf, or surfing the web, or pride, or, or, or ... Whatever it is for you, the very clear message of Advent is, "Settle down for a while." Open the door just a crack to let God in. Jesus is to be born again.

Something you may not have noticed. The Church has a liturgical strategy in the Advent Sunday readings. Each week's First Reading is the carrot: usually positive, a promise of good. Then the Gospel hits you like a clap of thunder to wake you up.

Take the encouraging First Reading this Sunday. It reminds us of the promise God has made to God's people: rightness and justice will come to the earth. Security. The day of the Lord will arrive, though long delayed. Peace in our day.

What a lovely thing it is to think of such a time. Too good to be true? Just a pious thought? Read the First Reading now and ask yourself those questions. Spend time with them. Pray to God for help. The Responsorial Psalm will help you. It asks God to make known God's ways to us, to guide us and to teach us.

The Second Reading urges us to put God's promise of peace into action, even if we are not yet sure what it means. Love others and be loved.

Ah, and then the Gospel. It tries to wake us up, especially if the above has not helped. "But I am perfectly awake," you say. Ok then, go ahead and read the Gospel. It is the "*thunder*."

Signs in the sun, moon and stars, nations in dismay, the roaring of the sea and the waves, people dying of fright, and the Son of Man appearing in the clouds with power and great glory. Terrifying?

So you are all ready for it? Let yourself imagine what it might be like. Picture it scene by scene and don't worry about being exact. Just experience it.

Why Do We Have Advent?



✚✚ Will such a shakeup really happen literally? We do not know. Maybe much worse is to come, judging from the state of the world today. Do you live without fear of terrorist acts, of proliferating nuclear weapons, of a horrific climate change, of a crash of the entire world economy, of amateur leadership at the top, or the greed that fills so many hearts to overflowing in your city, in your state, your world – in our Church?



If you can say “You are right, I am afraid of these,” then go back to the Responsorial Psalm and pray. Beg that Christ be given birth in your soul and in so many others in this world that need it so badly.

Welcome to Advent.

The Church begins its new liturgical year with a season of hope. Advent time – when we look forward to the celebration of the birth of the world’s Saviour – has produced liturgies filled with joy and expectation. Advent’s liturgies also look forward to Christ’s ‘Second Coming’, to gather all things into the final Kingdom of God. The liturgy nourishes our faith in the Lord, risen and triumphant. His birth, which we look forward to celebrating, will not take place again. We remember it as the dawning of the final moment of God’s eternal plan, a dawning full of promise for the whole of creation. This fundamental theme of Christian faith and hope – encouraging us to look forward to a ‘new heaven and new earth’ – has been obscured in recent centuries. For sincere believers, expectation of ‘the end of the world’ should convey far more than the uneasiness and dread it so often arouses.

The readings of today’s liturgy show us something of the development of this theme in the faith of God’s people. In the first reading, Jeremiah promises that the messiah – ‘a virtuous branch’, a ruler of ‘honesty and integrity’, belonging to the family of David – will realise all that old Israel hopes for. It is a reassuring message, indeed, for a people whose history had been presided over by rulers who were for the most part corrupt and selfish. We see this prophecy being fulfilled in the gospel reading from Luke. Jesus – knowing that that the final moment of God’s designs for creation had come – made use in his teaching of the symbolic imagery of the prophets and the current (‘apocalyptic’) literature. But he also introduced a startling new dimension to these expectations by uniting them with the coming the ‘Son of Man’ foretold in the Book of Daniel – ‘coming with power and great glory’ to establish God’s eternal reign. The first Christians, who recognised Jesus as the ‘Son of Man’ who had been foretold, and lived in wonder at what God had done in the Lord’s Paschal Mystery, faced a perplexing question. They rejoiced that old Israel’s hopes had been so wonderfully fulfilled in the coming of the Son of God and his victory over all evil. But what were they to make of the fact that the world seemed to go on as before? It is not surprising that they saw themselves living in a brief time of waiting before the Risen Lord returned to inaugurate God’s ‘new heaven and new earth’. The Thessalonians to whom, in our second reading, Paul is writing a friendly letter – the earliest Christian writing we possess, written about twenty years after the Resurrection – were wrestling with this problem. They looked forward, in the near future, to ‘the Lord Jesus Christ coming with all his saints’; but, as the letter makes clear, they were confused as they tried to anticipate how this will happen (see 4:13-18; 5:1-11). Paul himself was still coming to terms with the problem we have described. His message to them, however, is reassuring and meaningful, even today: ‘Trust in the Lord, as it becomes clear how this final moment of God’s plan is to unfold; remember the gospel teaching of Jesus – be alert and prepared; above all, prepare for what lies ahead by living according to the Lord’s commandment of love: ‘Love one another, and the whole human race, as much as I love you’.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE at Masses this weekend.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This weekend we begin **Advent**, preparing for Christmas, the coming of the Christ-child. As usual, there is the annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal**, along with the preparation of **hampers** and **'Giving Tree' gifts** for distribution in our local area. The actual **Appeal** is over two weekends, **1-2 December** and **8-9 December**. **Hampers** and **gifts** will need to be **returned by the week-end of 15-16 December** for distribution before Christmas.



Individuals and families who are unemployed or dependent on Federal Government income support payments experience the highest rates of poverty and disadvantage (63.2%) in Australia. By family type, single parents experience the highest poverty rates at 33.2%.



People seeking asylum are especially vulnerable as they are at the mercy of **unfair** Federal Government policies. Recent government changes to support services have left hundreds of people seeking asylum at risk of destitution and homelessness as they struggle to find employment.

A Christmas without family after fleeing domestic violence. A Christmas without comfort and peace of mind, after bills have mounted up. Or a Christmas without a roof over your head, after losing your home. This year more people than ever will experience homelessness over Christmas. There are **116,000** people across Australia either sleeping on the streets, in temporary or inadequate dwellings, or in halfway-solutions like boarding houses or crisis accommodation. A Christmas without a home is no Christmas at all.

Thanks to you for your generosity and thanks to Vinnies for their ministry!

FIRST COMMUNION BEGINS

Congratulations to the **47** young parishioners who, beginning this weekend, will receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time. They are: **Rubina Payten; Keita Shipton; Jem Hudson; Alexa Emery; Elyza Ryan; Tomas McCarthy; Tori Gearside; Evie Taylor; Amelia McNamara; Ruby Nichol; Isla O'Connor; Orlando Hunt; Sophia Lamberger; Harper Pingnam; Molly Milham; Ryan Floyd; Ari Colley; Noah Henderson; Aiden Ganassin; Emily Spiers; Mitchell Fisher; Alice Tkac; Cameron Sheldrick; Zane Beckinsale; Ava Stone; Logan Stone; Darius Hamod; Elijah White; Eliana Trasler; Evie Zubovic; John Stuart; Riley Saville; Hamish McLeod; Jesse Miklas; Sebastian Nedeski; Callum Dennyson; Ruby Witten; Owen Allen; Isadora Lourenco; Finn Molloy; Leon Do; Isabelle Phelan; Lucas Floyd; Elena Och; Bridget Howell; Oliver Gregorio; Jake Floyd.** Congratulations! *This weekend's candidates: 18 on Saturday, 5 on Sunday. Next weekend, 15 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday.*

TWILIGHT CHRISTMAS MARKETS: 7 DECEMBER

This year again, our Parish and School are joining together to hold the Twilight Christmas Markets. **Friday, 7 December, 4:30pm to 8:30pm** in the grounds of our Parish Primary School. **All are welcome, so please come along and enjoy yourself: Artisan Market; Local Makers; Gourmet Food and Produce; Live Music – FREE entry!** Free Jumping Castle. It's a great chance to look for that special gift for a special person. This is a fun event for **all the family**.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

- Monday 3 Dec St Francis Xavier, priest
7:00pm Year 6 Graduation Mass
- Friday 7 Dec St Ambrose, bishop, doctor
- Saturday 8 Dec Immaculate Conception of Mary
First Communion (15)
- Sunday 9 Dec First Communion (3)



ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA

No FLAGS – NO SWIM ... Sharks don't swim between the flags
456 rescues performed by surf lifesavers since 1 July 18 – last week **356**



SWIM SAFELY AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME

YEAR C – THE YEAR OF LUKE

As a first century historian, Luke's desire was to reassure his readers of the truth of what they had learned about Jesus. Therefore, he carefully investigated everything, and then chose the most appropriate way of bringing out for his readers the significance of what he learned. As an historian, Luke is an artist who orders his material in the way he judges will best achieve his goal. Early tradition attributes this gospel to an otherwise relatively unknown person, Luke, who is described as a Syrian physician and companion of Paul. It was written probably in the 80's for predominantly non-Jewish Christian readers. The Spirit of God that inspired Luke to develop his rich reflections on Jesus and to express them in this gospel is the same Spirit that continues to inspire us as we contemplate the Jesus so beautifully portrayed in it. *More to follow as we hear Luke's gospel this year.*



THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

First Sunday of Advent • Year C
 1st Reading Jeremiah 33:14-16
 2nd Reading 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
 Gospel Luke 21:25-28,34-36

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Advent • Year C
 1st Reading Baruch 5:1-9
 2nd Reading Philippians 1:3-6,8-11
 Gospel Luke 3:1-6

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
 Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am
 Bulli • Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm
 Corrimal • Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Wombarra [Liturgy] Monday 4:30pm
 Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm
 Wednesday 9:00am
 Thursday 9:00am
Anointing of the Sick Friday 9:30am

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family + one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive
 ☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Friday

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires
10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School of St Michael 📞 4267 2560