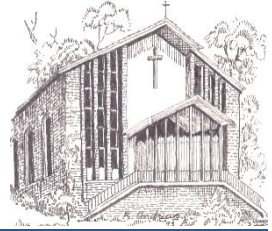




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



8 / 9 DECEMBER 2018
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR C
Vinnies Christmas Appeal 🕯️ The Bethlehem Candle

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

A Wake-Up Call

Advent is the Church's world-wide retreat in preparation for The Birth. It now begins its second week. This is the quiet time, the great contrast with our culture's turbulent consumer-bonanza.

Consumerism as a way of life is a blessing in many ways, but it shields our eyes against what needs to be prayed for.

Not just the unstoppable—open sale and use of drugs in some schools, sexual promiscuity as a “life style” aggressively marketed to every segment of the population, but also the increasing collapse of commonly shared values in favour of the “new morality,” which is really a dissolution of the ties that bind our culture together.

Under the control of confusion and sadness, can anyone just sit back and be quiet in Advent?

The First Reading says we should: “Take off the garment of your sorrow and suffering, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem [crown] of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven.”

Will you let God be born in you this year, a little more than in the past? What? Has someone quietly lost his or her mind? So, we are to be the peace of justice (righteousness, right relationships), the glory of God on earth? Sorrow and suffering are going to disappear? Maybe the bible is just irreparably cut off from the “real world,” hiding in pews and doting on this comforting and “nice” view of life?

Actually, no. We are being asked to undergo some revision, some stretching in our approach to life and in our approach to tragedy.

Jesus comes not just into our barbecues and holiday parties, our dreams of a successful careers, our happiness and cheer, but also and importantly, into the craggy mountains and deep gorges of our lives.

You know a lot about these if you are a human being. What sadness are you hiding from? What mountain is currently too high to approach? What utter failure hides in the recesses of your heart? Only one possible solution exists for these troubles, whether they be giant or small: let God's depths be a deep part of your own soul.

Christ is gestating right now in our hearts, just as we did in our mothers' wombs.



🔱🔱 Like a mum, we have to stretch! Christ's birth will not make the world pleasant and polite, but will connect it at its very roots with the mysterious profundity of God.

Will you let God-with-us be born in you this year, a little more than in the past? Are you willing to let your insides stretch wider than ever before and so make room? This is the meaning of Advent.

You do not have to be capable of such a feat all by yourself. As Paul says in the Second Reading, "that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." We are to rely on the tender care of God and of Jesus' carefully-tending mother. Allow them to help you disclose yourself, to tease open a few doors that have been shut too long. Fear has ruled us but Advent care can help.



Once upon a time, "the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Listen. "Prepare the way of the Lord" inside yourself.

Last Sunday, the liturgy invited us to see Advent as a time of preparation for the Saviour's birth, the dawn of salvation. Today we take up this theme again, in the gospel reading from Luke. John the Baptist is a prominent figure in the liturgies of Advent. After a long period in which the voice of the prophets was not heard, the Lord's Precursor – praised by Jesus as 'more than a prophet' (Matthew 11:9) – made his appearance. Luke's introducing of John is dramatic and skilful. Situating John's heralding in the midst of the real world's history, he names contemporaries who foreshadow the tragic conflict that is soon to be enacted – Pilate who will authorize Christ's death, the petty rulers of the nation under occupation, the high priests whose hostility seals the fate of Jesus. But the gloom of this introduction gives way immediately to the vision of hope and promise that inspired John's mission. The Baptist – remembered as a man of the wilderness – is presented as inaugurating a new Exodus for God's people, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Because the first Exodus from Egypt was the defining moment in the destiny of the Chosen People, it is not surprising that old Israel sometimes looked forward to the final fulfilment of God's promises as a kind of new Exodus. Our first reading, from the book of the prophet Baruch, takes up this theme – making part of today's liturgy, not only because it echoes the words of Isaiah, describing the making of a way through mountains and valleys 'so that Israel may walk in safety', but also because its message of hope is admirably suited to the mood of our Advent liturgies. Looking back on the return from the Babylonian captivity as a second Exodus, the prophet looks forward to God's final intervention on behalf of his people as a last great Exodus. It is an outstanding example of the boundless hopes of those among the Chosen People who were faithful to their Jewish faith, looking forward to the coming of the messiah, in the last years of Old Testament times. When God remembers God's promises, and Jerusalem's children are reassembled, they will discard their mourning garments and 'put on the beauty of the glory of God forever'; God will make them a sign for 'every nation under heaven'; God will give them a new name, 'Peace through integrity'. We are challenged in this time of renewal, to match this remarkable faith and hope.

Last week, we saw how – as 'the Son of Man' foretold in the prophecy of Daniel – Jesus presented himself as the fulfilment of Israel's boundless hopes. In today's second reading, from Paul's letter to the Philippians, we see how this truth has become part of the faith of the first Christian Church. One of the principal themes of the prophets of old Israel, as they warned a wayward people to amend their ways, was the 'Day of the Lord', when all must face the judgment of God. Paul now takes up this old theme – but for him it is 'the Day of Christ Jesus', when the Saviour will return as Son of Man to be our Judge. Though it is a season of hope and joy, Advent is also a time in which we are called to a deeper conversion.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This weekend we continue **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** concludes this weekend, **8-9 December**. **Hampers** and **gifts** will need to be **returned by the weekend 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! Last weekend \$5,736 was donated! Amazing result! Thank you!

FIRST COMMUNION CONTINUES

Congratulations to the 47 young parishioners who, beginning last weekend, received or 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, 15 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday. Next weekend, 1 on Saturday and 2 on Sunday.*

ADVENT – A REFLECTION

During the four weeks of Advent, we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth through prayer and reflection. We contemplate the First Coming of Jesus as Saviour, and anticipate his promised Second Coming. And amid the flurry of Christmas preparations, we look for practical ways to observe the holiness of the season in our everyday lives. Advent is steeped in themes of conversion, redemption, preparation and hope. Our culture tends to skip Advent and start celebrating Christmas. The season could be compared to the months before a child is born: there is excitement, wonder, joy and expectation. There is new life in our midst, yet there is also hope and a desire to get things in order.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Thursday	13 Dec	St Lucy, virgin, martyr
Friday	14 Dec	St John of the Cross, priest, doctor Whole School Mass 9:30am
Saturday	15 Dec	First Communion (1) & Baptism (1)
Sunday	16 Dec	First Communion (2)



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

NO FLAGS – NO SWIM ... Check out Beachsafe.org.au

658 rescues performed by surf lifesavers since 1 July 18 – last week **456**

SWIM SAFELY AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME



CHRISTMAS LITURGIES

- ❖ Reconciliation Rite II 7:30pm Tuesday 18 December
- ❖ Christmas Eve Mass 6:30pm Monday 24 December in our Parish School
- ❖ Christmas Eve Mass 9:30pm Monday 24 December at Wombarra church
- ❖ Christmas Day Mass 9:00am Tuesday 25 December at Thirroul

All are invited to bring along a bell to ring during any of the Christmas Masses. **Children** are welcome to dress as shepherds or angels for any of the Christmas Masses.

- ❖ Boxing Day Mass 9:00am Wednesday 26 December Feast of St Stephen
- ❖ Christmas Week 9:00am Thursday 27 December Feast of St John
- ❖ Christmas Week 9:30am Friday 28 December Holy Innocents
- ❖ Feast of the Holy Family 5:30pm / 8:00am 29/30 December
- ❖ New Year's Day 9:00am Tuesday 1 January 2019 World Day of Peace

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Advent • Year C

1 st Reading	Baruch 5:1-9
2 nd Reading	Philippians 1:3-6,8-11
Gospel	Luke 3:1-6

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Third Sunday of Advent • Year C

1 st Reading	Zephaniah 3:14-18
2 nd Reading	Philippians 4:4-7
Gospel	Luke 3:10-18

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
Mass with our School	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