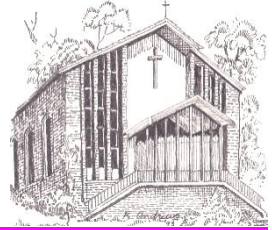




# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



**15 / 16 DECEMBER 2018**  
**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR C**  
**The Shepherds' Candle ☸☸☸ Blessing of the Crib**

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

*Advent Song: Rejoice!*

St Paul commends this in the Second Reading. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice." The word for rejoice in Latin is *gaudete*, so quite naturally this Sunday is called Gaudete Sunday.

Why all this glee? Are we finally getting a break from sombre Advent? Yes. But there is more to it than that.

Remember that Advent is like a retreat that the worldwide Church is making. In this third week we will consider our lives in the context of the great beauty God has put in us and around us.

Can we let it in?

God's gladness sings out joyfully at every instant, and his song is the earth, the galaxies and the people.

A line in the First Reading puts this in stunning terms. Zephaniah actually says that the Lord "will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival." Have you ever in your life thought that God's might break into song because of you? *Because of you!* Have you ever allowed your idea of God expand that far? Have you ever imagined God as one who sings you into existence?

In one of the books of Narnia by C S Lewis, the children are taken back to the very moment of creation. They hear the voice of Aslan (a Christ figure) singing into the wilderness. When the voice goes high, birds, clouds and blue sky appear. At a certain lengthy turn of phrase, the mountains laboriously raise their heads. And a deep vibration bestows the depths of seas.

*Creation seems to be made out of melody.*

Alright, scientists have contended about the composition of the physical universe, particles or waves. Einstein and many others tried to reconcile these, but no luck. But we might have a third contention, a "string theory", a model that some scholars actually do believe unites the two hypotheses. The supposed strings act a lot like sound does, like the vibrations that come forth from a violin string.

Instead of saying that particles or waves or uncertainty or whatever else are the basis of matter and force-fields and so on, these scientists instead postulate string-like particles: infinitesimal, ever changing, wriggling. By their dancing shapes these string circles generate (or constitute, or become, or whatever is the right way to say it) everything that is.

How about using this for an insight: God's gladness sings out joyfully at every



instant, and his song is the earth, the galaxies, the people, the plants and chemicals and soaring hawks and encircling planets, droplets of dew and heavy black holes, youthful beauties, ancient wisdoms, beaches and surf, boundless plains and everything else that exists!

In this case, we certainly are God's song.

Sunday's Gospel has people in long rows, gathering to be baptized, expecting the Saviour who is to come. Each segment (the crowd, the tax collectors, the soldiers) asks John the Baptist the question: "Teacher, what should we do?"

"Let your life sing," he seems to answer.

Let your life sing.

Let your life be what it is: God's joyous, interleaved and always consonant melody. It sounds outwards in deepest joy. Could this be your Advent?

In today's Gospel reading we continue Luke's account of the mission of John, the precursor of the Saviour. It reflects the life of a community that has come to recognize that, though the final moment of God's plan has come through the Risen Lord's Paschal Mystery, how that moment will unfold in the world's history is God's secret. They know that they must get on with their ordinary lives. Luke presents the preaching of John as 'Good News', foreshadowing important elements in the teaching of Jesus himself. It is 'tax collectors' and 'soldiers' – representing those looked down upon by respectable society in old Israel – who are open to John's message of repentance: the very ones who will respond to the message of Jesus. 'What must we do?' they ask John. It is not an easy question to ask with a humble sincerity that is open to hearing the truth. It reminds us of Advent's call to a deeper conversion and commitment. Luke's community remembers how John replied to this question, as calling them to get on with their ordinary lives, asking themselves whether they recognize Christ himself in their needy brothers and sisters, and whether they serve the Lord by the integrity with which they carry out their role in life. Traditionally, the liturgy of the Third Sunday of Advent overflows with the theme of the joy of believing. This is one of Luke's favourite themes, and the Gospel reading's reference to the 'feeling of anticipation' John's preaching aroused, and his foretelling of the Lord who 'will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire' chime in with this theme. Clearly, our liturgy's other readings have been chosen with this tradition in mind. 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice', Paul writes to the Philippians; and he recommends practical ways that lead to authentic happiness 'in the Lord': tolerance towards those whose ways are not our own, and a prayer that unites trust in the Lord for the future with thanksgiving for his many blessings in the past. No doubt, taking seriously his faith in the one who has baptized us 'with the Holy Spirit and fire' has given Paul a personal experience of the 'peace' of which he speaks, the peace that only God can give. Something has gone wrong if our faith never brings us deep joy. **Joy is the experience of what we were made for.** The faith that the Baptist heralded, the faith that is the gift of the Risen Lord, and the faith that unites Luke's community and so many other communities after them, is a personal knowledge of God's love and mercy. It brings a joy and peace 'that the world cannot give' (John 14:27). Even for old Israel, as our first reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah reminds us, joy was one of the hallmarks of authentic faith. In this astounding text, the prophet calls the people to 'rejoice' with all their hearts, because 'the Lord' of Israel's hopes is 'in their midst', victorious, 'renewing them by his love'. Their joy should mingle with the Lord's own rejoicing, as he 'dances with shouts of joy over them'. This text is doubly appropriate in these weeks of Advent – its words ('Rejoice, daughter of Zion, the Lord, your God is in your midst') may well have inspired Luke's Annunciation narrative.



# VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Thanks to you for your generosity and thanks to Vinnies for their ministry! Over the last two weekends **\$6,683** was donated! Amazing result! Thank you!

**Hampers, toys, non-perishable items and gifts** will need to be returned by **NEXT weekend of 15-16 December** for distribution before Christmas.



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.

## FIRST COMMUNION CONTINUES

Congratulations to **Elena Och, Rubina Payten and Zane Beckinsale** who will receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time this weekend. *Next weekend, on Sunday, two young parishioners will receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time.*

## BAPTISM – WELCOME TO TURIA

Welcome to **TURIA SKYE DORRINGTON** baptized in our Parish this Saturday evening. Welcome to her family and friends!

Baptism, the first sacrament of initiation, prepares us to celebrate the Eucharist. Baptisms are usually held on the third weekend of each month [except January and Lent], during either of the weekend Masses. Baptism forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.

Next baptisms in our Parish will be during the weekend Masses on either **16 or 17 February 2019**. Baptisms after that will be on **Easter Sunday, 21 April 2019**. If you want your infant daughter or son baptized on 16/17 February, at least one parent needs to attend the Baptism Preparation Class which will be held at 7:15pm on Thursday, 31 January. Enrolment forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.



## BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Blessed are you, Lord God, ruler of all creation. We thank you because you love us so much. From the dawn of creation, you have shown us your love. You sent your only Son to bring us joy, peace and eternal life. Bless ✦ this crib. Let the crib remind us of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary. Let the crib remind us of the poor and humble birth of Jesus. Father, we praise you through Christ our Lord.



## PLenary COUNCIL 2020 – WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

The closing date for Plenary Council submissions is 6 March 2019. We really want to hear from everyone! *Listen humbly to the Spirit and each other and speak boldly of what you hear!* The Thirroul Plenary Team will be available in January to host listening and dialog sessions. We are also planning a special session in January on the topic of the Church's responses to the matters revealed in the Royal Commission and the subsequent report. *If you'd like to attend a session, please add your name to the sheet in the church or email the Parish Office, with your preferred time.*

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Monday	17 Dec	Christmas Novena starts
Tuesday	18 Dec	7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II Thirroul
Wednesday	19 Dec	7:00pm Reconciliation Rite II Helensburgh
Thursday	20 Dec	7:00pm Reconciliation Rite II Corrimal
Friday	21 Dec	7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II Bulli



**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](http://Beachsafe.org.au)**

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

**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*

**Third Sunday of Advent • Year C**

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

**NEXT Sunday's Readings** *on our website*

**Fourth Sunday of Advent • Year C**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Micah 5:1-4  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Hebrews 10:5-10  
Gospel Luke 1:39-44

## 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  
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](mailto: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](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560