

Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



**25 DECEMBER 2018
CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY**

Peace and joy from the Franciscan Friars

Welcome - especially to all visitors attending our Christmas Liturgies. **Thank you** to all who have worked for and been of service to our Parish in so many, many ways over the last year. Your responsible, regular service, cheerfulness, support, hospitality, courtesy, integrity and deep faith are most appreciated. **Thank you** to all who have been so **very generous** this past year.

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Why do you celebrate Christmas? *Because it is a good time for festivity, especially in the Northern half of the world where winter and darkness are oppressing us. A bright holiday helps.*

Is festivity the whole reason you celebrate Christmas? *No, no, no, not at all. Christmas is a custom throughout the country. Mum or the relatives or the children—they wouldn't they like to hear that I or we or whoever have decided to just be selfish on this best of all holidays. No. It is family time.*


Good for you. In fact, great. Holiday joy thrives in the family, especially when everyone does their best at politeness. Customs differ in various cities and homes, and also maybe a lot of folks don't actually have a family that can come together. Do you ever think about that? *When there is time, of course. And now and then we take leftovers to the parish to give to street people. They have to eat too, you know.*

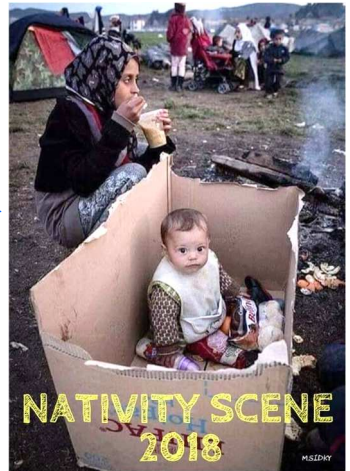
Yes they do. Some say that those folks are just too crippled or lazy or, if you will pardon the expression, too stupid to go out and get their own food. *Could be. Maybe we will talk about that at Christmas dinner.*

Is that what your family does at Christmas dinner, sit around and talk? Do you talk about God's tiny child. *Well, I don't really understand how the infinite God could become a stinky, teeny, cute li'l baby.*

Who does? But are you willing to read through the Gospel for Christmas day? Here are the first few lines. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *I don't get it.*

You already get it inside you somewhere. Do you understand love? *Oh, I don't think I do, not at all. I wish I did.* We all wish we understood it. What is "The Word" that is made flesh? All we "know" is that God and love go together. *I love to be loved.* That is the whole point!

The first people to experience the coming of the Saviour were shepherds, those lowly, uneducated ones who lived among the animals. They were not the only ones, 



of course, but they were the first to welcome the Saviour. It was no accident that such lowly people would be called in first to pay homage to the Saviour. It is to the lowly, after all, that Christ came first as Lord and Redeemer. The circumstances of his birth testify to that: his mother “wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the place where travellers lodged.”

Christmas is the great annual renewal of our being a Church, filled with wonder at the nearness of God. The nearer we are to our God, the nearer we should become to those lowly ones who are God’s special ones.

We are challenged at Christmas to do what Jesus and the angels did: bring the good news of redemption to the outcast and the lowly. The “tidings of great joy (are) to be shared by the whole people” (Luke 2:10-11), and no one is to be left out, not even the most hopeless or despicable person.

“Our holy Mother (the Church) does not neglect the care of the poor or omit to provide for their necessities; but, rather, drawing them to her with a mother’s embrace, and knowing that they bear the person of Christ himself, who regards the smallest gift to the poor as a benefit conferred on himself, holds them in great honour. She does all she can to help them; she provides homes and hospitals where they may be received, nourished, and cared for all the world over, and watches over these.” – Leo XIII, *Quod Apostolici Muneris*, 1878:9

Despite the fact that many of the themes of Christian faith are fading, Luke’s gospel account of the Saviour’s birth resonates in the awareness of most Australians – the Child in the manger, the shepherds and the angels’ song of “Peace on earth”. We believers are challenged to own what the story has to tell a struggling world – beyond commercial trivialisation and the sentimental attractiveness of a new born babe.



COLLECTION AT CHRISTMAS MASSES: At the Christmas Masses 2017, you donated a total of **\$4,680** to be used during 2018 for people in need. The Pastoral and Finance Councils resolved to use **\$3,253** of that to give to the Vinnies Drought Appeal. Our Parish gave, in total, a massive **\$10,500** to the Drought Appeal. The remaining **\$1,427** from the Christmas collection was given to **this year’s Vinnies Christmas Appeal**, bringing that total to **\$8,120!** Thank you for your great generosity.

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, 26 December, Boxing Day – Mass at 9:00am, Feast of St Stephen
27 December onwards: usual weekday and weekend Mass times [see below]
🌸🌸 **Tuesday, 1 January, Mary, Mother of God and World Day of Peace**
9:00am Mass at Thirroul

WEEKEND MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael · Thirroul
↪ Saturday 5:30pm and Sunday 8:00am
Bulli Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm
Corrimal Saturday 6pm and Sunday 9:30am

USUAL WEEKDAY LITURGIES

Thirroul [Mass] Tuesday 5:30pm
Wednesday 9:00am
Thursday 9:00am
Friday 9:30am

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

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive 📧 PO Box 44 · Thirroul 2515
☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976 📧 **thirroul@dow.org.au**

JANUARY Parish Office Hours – Tuesdays and Wednesdays – 9:30am to 12:30pm and 1:00pm to 3:30pm

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au Parish School ☎ 4267 2560