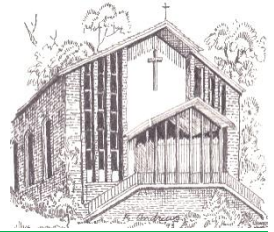


Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



23 / 24 FEBRUARY 2018
7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME + YEAR C
Spirituality in the "Pub": Tuesday, McCarthy Centre

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Open to the Spirit

While the mind of Friedrich Nietzsche was unravelling as the 19th century ended, Freud's was taut, wrapped around the mystery of unconscious human behaviour. Both thinkers are now celebrated as the great unmaskers of motivation. They spread the awful news that we humans are not as nice as we think. Under our seeming civility and tidy-mindedness lurks a raging thirst for power hunkered down around an oven of anger and lust that Freud dubbed the "*id*." Civilization, to Nietzsche's disgust and Freud's approval, supposedly tamed those feral impulses, yet both men suspected that the cooker of repression would explode. Politically, world wars and holocausts—as events in Rwanda [1994], Dafur [2003], Myanmar [2017]—seem to have confirmed their frightening visions. In academic circles Nietzsche and Freud are lionized as prophets of deconstruction. And in mean streets, will and power work their ruthless ways.

What does all this have to do with the word of God? It suggests how dissimilar God's word is to our own.

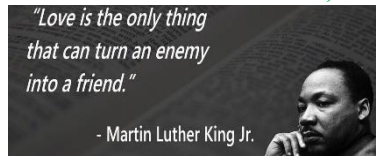
The glow of a new way sparks throughout the story of David and Saul. By most reasonable judgment, David should have finished off his enemy and predator. Saul wanted nothing more than David's defeat. Yet, at the very moment when God had delivered Saul into David's grasp, the chance to drive a final stab to the heart and end the threat, David turned away from revenge and violence. "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the Lord's anointed?"

What is only a glimmer in the book of Samuel has blinding brilliance in the Sermon on the Mount. The "anointed of God" is now no longer only the person of Saul. It is every mother's child—even one's enemy. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you. When someone slaps you on one cheek, give the other; when someone takes your coat, give your shirt as well."

Admit it. This is dumbfounding, crazy—at least to our natural attitude. It is so disconcerting to our normal frame of mind, we Christians have learned to distract ourselves with minutiae while we dismiss the revolutionary import of Christ's words.

But as Paul writes to the Corinthians: "it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, made of dust; the second man is from heaven." Dust, after all, is a thing; it-ness, matter, the it, the "*id*". And Freud fully excavated the underground of human existence if there is nothing to us but dust, if we are mere "its." He found only the cruel grind of natural processes, laws of consuming and entropy, the big eating the small, the powerful crushing the weak.

Yet Christ is the second Adam, the second David, the new Moses for this remnant of Israel which calls itself a people of the new way and covenant. And his new mountain



↪↪ of teaching can never, ever, be interpreted as a product of human pretence. Nietzsche and Freud have taken that route as far as it can go, and it leads to a trash heap of history.

Jesus Christ is flesh, yes, but the Word of God made flesh. Henceforth all human flesh is reordered and reconstituted. Something wonderfully new has been done in us, taught to us, given to us. The more we yield to it, the more we will be empowered, freed from fears of losing or disappearing, loosed from chains we thought our only security in an unsafe world. Is it too high, too difficult to aspire to the Sermon on the Mount? Will we not fail? Is not the risk too great? What shall come of us when we dare to give it all away?

However, if we believe our prophet, we need not cower before the odds. The God we worship is even more marvellous than the way offered.

Last week we heard Luke's presentation of 'The Beatitudes'. Today we continue the same passage – as Jesus spells out practical implications of a teaching that has immense importance for those who want to be his followers. We have heard many times of the 'New Commandment' and the 'Law of Love'; but have we made them our rule of life? Today's gospel can help us to do this. 'Love your enemies', Jesus tells us. David's gesture towards king Saul demonstrates a certain nobility; but it is still far removed from the ideal of selflessness Jesus sets before us. 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you ... lend without any hope of return' may well seem an impossible ideal as a way of life. The first disciples of Jesus may well have made this judgment, had it not been for the memory of the life Jesus had lived in their midst. In the New Testament, these first followers share with us how they came to recognise the central importance of the New Commandment of love – as they reflected on the selfless life of Jesus and its culmination in his tragic death. St Paul, in today's second reading, tells us that he has come to see how Jesus has inaugurated a new beginning for the whole of humanity – far greater than that of the first creation. 'Bear one another's burdens', he wrote in another place, 'and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ' (Galatians 6:2). It is the gift of the Saviour's own Spirit, he has come to see, that makes this possible: 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us' (Romans 5:5). John's interpretation of the teaching of Jesus is the same: 'I give you a new commandment ... that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 13:34; 15:12-13).

Clearly, this Law of Love – so insistently spelt out by Luke – is an ideal that none of us will ever fully realise. How can we love others as Christ himself has loved them? 'Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate'. How can our concern for the needy around us be compared with the loving mercy of the Father who 'gave his own Son', that the world may 'have eternal life' (John 3:16). Perhaps it is because this Law of Love seems an impossible ideal that Christians rarely think of it as a practical way of life. As his true disciples, however, Jesus tells us that we must never turn away from this ideal; it must be the measure of our lives. In the presence of the mystery of divine love, we will certainly be humbled, as we reflect upon our own performance. But today's gospel takes us beyond this: Jesus teaches us how we can put the Law of Love into practice – we should never set limits to the practical good will we have towards our fellow human beings: be they friend or enemy, likely to repay us or not, reasonable or unreasonable in their demands. An impossible ideal it may still seem; but through the gift of God's own spirit, the example of followers of Jesus in every age is there to encourage us, as they gave their times a glimpse of what Jesus was really like. With them, the only reward we should seek is the joy that we share with our Lord, the joy of the selfless giver. And so, Luke's presentation of the teaching of Jesus ends as it began, pointing the way to true happiness – in the gifts of God that will be ours when we identify with the generous ways of God, our joy will be 'a full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over'.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE “PUB” – AT THIRROUL!



All are invited to Wollongong “Spirituality in the Pub” to be held in the McCarthy Centre, in our Parish School, Thirroul, at 7:30pm on Tuesday, 26 February. The topic is “The Plenary Council 2020”, and the speaker is **Father Noel Connolly**, a Columban missionary priest. Noel worked in Korea (1970-74). Later he helped found the Korean Catholic Community in Sydney and was their chaplain up till 1981. He was Rector of St Columban’s College and the Pacific Mission Institute (Sydney) from 1979-1984, and Vicar General of the Columbans throughout the world (Ireland) 1988–2000 and Director of the Columbans in Australia and New Zealand from 2005-2011.

He is presently Coordinator of Mission and Culture at the Catholic Institute of Sydney and a member of Catholic Mission’s Adult Formation Team. Last year he was appointed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to the Facilitation Team for the Plenary Council 2020. He has lectured widely on Pope Francis and is the author of two books, *Pope Francis’ Inspiring Vision Parts 1 & 2*. **Come along on Tuesday, 26 February, here in our Parish.**

PLENARY COUNCIL 2020 – We Want to Hear from You

The closing date for submissions to the Plenary Council is almost here – 6 March. There is no limit to how many submissions you can make and all topics are on the table. No submission is too big or too small, whether it be about our local parish or the broader Church. The Spirit speaks to us all. We want to hear from you!

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – FRIDAY, 1 MARCH

The World Day of Prayer 2019 host country is **Slovenia** and the theme, prepared by the women, is “Come – Everything is Ready!” The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. It is run under the motto “Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action,” and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. The movement aims to bring together women of various races, cultures and traditions in a yearly common Day of Prayer, as well as in closer fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year. **All are welcome at St David’s Anglican Church, Roxburgh Ave, Thirroul, 10:00am.**

SIGN UP FOR LENTEN PRAYER GROUPS ... NOW!



Lent begins on Wednesday, 6 March. As usual, during Lent, small groups will gather throughout our Parish to follow the Diocese of Wollongong’s 2019 Lenten resource. Lenten groups are a great way to meet other parishioners and to prepare for Easter. **Now** is the time to sign up to join one of the groups meeting in the evenings or on Thursday mornings. There are SIX groups: Monday evenings; Tuesday evenings (2); Wednesday evenings; Thursday evenings; and Thursday mornings after the 9am Mass. **Sign up sheets are in the church, or contact the Parish Office for details of the groups.**

PLEASE RETURN YOUR PALMS FROM LAST YEAR’S PALM SUNDAY



Ash Wednesday is on 6 March. On Tuesday, 5 March after the 5:30pm Mass, we burn the palms from last year’s Palm Sunday to make the **ashes** for Ash Wednesday. **We need your palms**, from last year’s Palm Sunday. **Please bring them in by next weekend** – to the church or Parish Office. **Come and see them being burned after the 5:30pm Mass, Tuesday, 5 March.**

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Tuesday 26 Feb 7:30pm Spirituality in the "Pub", McCarthy Centre
 Any day anytime Return your palms from last year's Palm Sunday
 Friday 1 Mar Anointing of the Sick during 9:30am Mass
 World Day of Prayer, St David's Church, Thirroul 10:00am
 Tuesday 5 Mar Mardi Gras, Pancake Tuesday, burning of palms after 5:30pm Mass
 Wednesday 6 Mar Ash Wednesday: Masses at 9:15am and 7:00pm

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

4,100 rescues performed since 1 July 18 – last week **3,706**

SWIM SAFELY – BETWEEN THE FLAGS WHERE THE WAVES BREAK



PANCAKE TUESDAY – MARDI GRAS – Tuesday, 5 March



The day before Ash Wednesday is called *mardi gras* [literally, in French, 'fat Tuesday'], or **Pancake Tuesday**, or **Shrove Tuesday** [from the tradition of Christians repenting of their sins in preparation to begin the season of Lent – "*Sbrove*" is the past tense of the English verb "*Sbrive*" which means to obtain absolution for one's sins by way of confession and by doing penance]. The tradition of marking the start of Lent has been documented for centuries. It was traditional in many societies to eat pancakes or other foods made with the butter, eggs and fat that would be given up during the Lenten season. The specific custom of British Christians eating pancakes dates from the 16th century. **So, bring along pancakes** [maple syrup will be provided] **on Tuesday, 5 March** and, while we are burning the palms to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday – **after the 5:30pm Mass** – we can enjoy a late afternoon pancake.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C

1st Reading 1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,12-13.22-23

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Gospel Luke 6:27-38

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C

1st Reading Sirach 27:4-7

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Gospel Luke 6:39-45

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