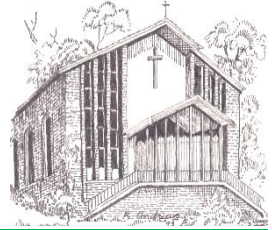




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



2 / 3 MARCH 2018
8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR C
Pancake Tuesday ... Palms ... Getting ready for Lent

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Talking the Walk


A cluster of traditional sayings exists, underscoring the insight that the character of a person shows itself most truly in deeds more than in words. “Talk is cheap,” we say, meaning that what a person actually does is far more important than the promises that person makes. “She doesn’t just talk the talk; she walks the walk,” we say, meaning that the woman lives out what she professes. These sentiments are particularly strong during political campaigns. This is true enough, and there are plenty of biblical passages to show that the insight is perennial. But the first and last of this Sunday’s readings focus on another aspect of our “talk life”—the utter importance and power of our words. Talk may well be cheap in the case of an empty promise or sly flattery. But both Sirach and Jesus give us words today that remind us that some of our most significant deeds are in fact the words we say.

For better or worse, our speech reveals who and what we are. Sirach demonstrates this in three sharp images. The act of speech is like sifting wheat through a sieve: as the sifting sorts out the husks, so our speech exposes the otherwise hidden faults of our character. And just as the hot fire of a kiln tests the craft of the potter, so the give and take of conversation tests the integrity of the interlocutors. Finally, just as the quality of a fruit tree indicates the care of its cultivator, so our speech reveals everything that has gone into our formation.



One could meditate on that imagery and draw the fatalistic conclusion, “well, you are what you are, and your speech is going to show it no matter what you try to do about it. Maybe it’s best to keep quiet.”

Jesus of Nazareth, mediated today by the evangelist Luke, puts the reality of our speech in a fuller context. “Out of the good treasure of the heart, the good person produces good, and out of evil treasure, the evil person produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45). By itself, that teaching seems to leave us with Sirach: for better or worse, your speech is going to show you up. But Jesus’ words come attached to the rest of the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-49).

Jesus’ sermon presents a bracing challenge to our “talk life.” Jesus addresses his teaching “to you who hear,” meaning those poor enough to be responsive to his words. He then proceeds to urge love of enemies, nonviolence, selfless giving, and a compassion that imitates God’s own mercy. The heart that the mouth reveals is supposed to be that kind of heart! This might sound more discouraging than Sirach, except that Jesus’ teaching 

🔗🔗 on prayer throughout the rest of the Gospel of Luke reminds us that the power to imitate Jesus in these matters is not our own. It comes from the gift of the Spirit given in prayer, which in turn enables us to become people who listen to Jesus' words and act on them.

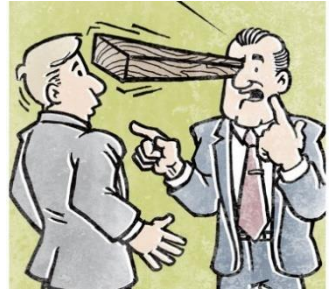
When we put all this in the larger setting of the story of Jesus and the story of the Church in Acts, we recognize that full discipleship is not only a matter of walking the talk; it also entails "talking the walk." That is, some of the most important Christian deeds will in fact be acts of speech, challenging injustice, encouraging the downhearted, asking and giving forgiveness, blessing with praise those who need to be affirmed.

As Paul reminds us, the heart that produces the goodness revealed in speech is the heart that is rooted in the risen Lord Jesus. "[Know] that in the Lord your labour is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Once more, to appreciate what Luke intends to convey in today's gospel reading, we must hear it as a continuation of the passage we have reflected upon the last two Sundays. The parables of Jesus recalled in this reading are so familiar that they have become proverbial: the blind leading the blind; the splinter in the brother's or sister's eye; a tree known by its fruits. Luke wants us to recognise that – as part of the teaching of Jesus – these parables are far more than the expression of homely truths. They certainly do express truths that are applicable to every human situation – continuing the wisdom tradition of old Israel, so wonderfully expressed in the reading from the book of Sirach. But the Good News of the Kingdom brought by Jesus (expressed in the teaching to the disciples we have already reflected upon) brings a truth far greater than has ever been expressed before. It is the promise of a new kind of existence, to be found by identifying with the ways of the living God – after the example of the One who is the revelation of the Father.

Luke invites us to find this deeper meaning that these parables had for Jesus. In the light of Jesus' teaching concerning true happiness, this deeper meaning is not difficult to grasp. The 'blindness' Jesus warns against, especially for those who are leaders and guides in the community of disciples, is the blindness of those who assume the role of leadership although they have not owned the Saviour as the Light of the world and committed themselves to the new order he has inaugurated with his Law of Love. Disciples who have not made this conversion will see living according to their old ways – placing selfish limits on their practical love for their neighbour – as no more than a tiny 'splinter' obscuring their vision. Such people do not recognise that presenting themselves as disciples of the Lord is kind of 'hypocrisy' – they make this clear by their readiness to point out the more obvious failings of their brothers and sisters. Genuine disciples will be known by their 'fruits': not in clever words or orations but in the witness of the quiet convictions that shape their lives – as, through the gift of Christ's Spirit, the disciple grows 'like his teacher'.

'The good person draws what is good from the store of goodness in their heart'. Again, when related to the central message of the teaching of Jesus, these words are more than wise advice about the conduct of our lives. Jesus is speaking of the hearts of disciples – transformed by their acceptance of the ways of God after the example of Jesus, and putting no selfish limits to the love, or practical good will, they have towards their fellow human beings. The 'examination of conscience' has long been part of the practice of a dedicated Christian life. Today's gospel helps us to find the life-giving measure against which, as the Lord's disciples, we should review our lives. Those who have found the joy of true discipleship will recognise that something of the 'victory' Paul speaks of can already be ours, even in this present life.



SIGN UP FOR LENTEN PRAYER GROUPS – *Last Chance!*



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. Last chance to sign up this weekend.**

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 Tuesday** – to the church or Parish Office. *Come and see them being burned after the 5:30pm Mass, Tuesday, 5 March.*

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 – "*Shrove*" is the past tense of the English verb "*Shrive*" 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.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Lent begins on **Ash Wednesday**, 6 March. All who have completed their 18th year and have not yet begun their 60th year are bound to **fast** on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. All who have completed their 14th year are bound to **abstain from meat** on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. There will be **two Masses on Ash Wednesday, 9:15am and 7:00pm**, during which there is the bless and distribution of ashes.



Doing penance by prayer, fasting (self-denial) and almsgiving (works of charity), is the concrete way we express our repentance and identify more closely with Jesus our Saviour. By doing penance we make satisfaction for our sins and take real steps in the renewal of our lives. To deny ourselves some legitimate pleasures can help train us to be able to say "no" to temptation and sin. Doing penance is proof of our repentance. Penance, self-denial and self-control need to be part of our lives, not only for our own sake, but also for the sake of those who have to live with us, for the common good. In nominating special times of penance (*all Fridays throughout the year and the season of Lent*), the Church encourages and promotes in all of us the habit of penance. Observing these special times of penance by all members of the Church throughout the world, emphasises "the social dimension of sin".

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Tuesday 5 Mar Return your palms from last year's Palm Sunday
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

4,282 rescues performed since 1 July 18 – last week **4,100**

SWIM SAFELY – BETWEEN THE FLAGS WHERE THE WAVES BREAK



PARISH FINANCE REPORT FOR 2018

The Parish Finance Report has been independently audited and is included with this week's Bulletin. Thanks to the members of the Parish Finance Council: Steve Jones (chair); Ray Mirabito (deputy chair); Rodney Bolton; Anne Dening; Brian Hazell; Maree Milross-Rose. If you have any questions regarding the Finance Report, please speak with one of the members of the Parish Finance Council.

PROJECT COMPASSION

This weekend *Project Compassion* boxes will be available. The theme for Project Compassion 2019 is based around **Hope** and **giving Lent 100%** in the name of hope. Hope enables us to rise above our fears and helps those in great need to shape a better future for their communities. Through your generous support of Caritas Australia you are demonstrating the power of hope. For the past 55 years, Caritas Australia has worked with our neighbours in Australia and around the world helping those most in need.



THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

1st Sunday of Lent • Year C

1st Reading Deuteronomy 26:4-10

2nd Reading Romans 10:8-13

Gospel Luke 4:1-13

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

Ash Wednesday 9:15am 7:00pm

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