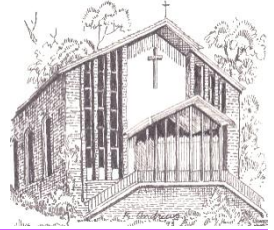




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra




16 / 17 MARCH 2018
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT + YEAR C
 + Prayer + Fasting + Almsgiving +

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

An Offer You Can Refuse

Such a great offer, God's covenant with human beings. It will fit into just eleven words: *I will be your God and you will be my people.*

In return for God's great love would we promise to love God above all things.

Our first parents had this relationship with God in the Garden of Eden. However, God watched with anguish as their free will, the gift God had given them, suddenly rejected the total love.

God toiled to re-establish the covenant throughout history, as our First Reading shows. Fortunately, after many refusals on our part, God singled out a paltry old nomadic

man named Abram and made to him what seems like an impossible promise: *Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so, God added, shall your descendants be. And, Abram put his faith in the Lord. God reckoned it to him as righteousness.* Righteousness means right relationships, or to be the person you ought to be when you are with God.

God was crediting Abram with having fulfilled the covenant! This meant:


- receiving the offered love ("I will be your God");
- putting his faith in the Lord ("you will be my people").

In Sunday's story, an ancient sacrificial cult was about to take place. As the sun was about to set, Abram fell into a trance, and a deep terrifying darkness enveloped him. Fire appeared among the animals that he had slain. God spoke, promising a homeland, the "promised land," to Abram and his descendants.

This symbolized God's half of the covenant.

The other half was up to Abram and his wife Sara. It was more complicated. Finally, in their extreme old age Abraham and Sara did have a son (Genesis 18:10ff), and the son's descendants kept the covenant—at times—but often did not. As time went by the covenant was ignored and forgotten.

Much later, when the time was right, God thought up a brilliant solution, so to speak. Instead of speaking from on high or through representatives, God's very self would take shape on earth as one of the people. The second person of the Trinity would become the Messiah, the Christ.

This Christ was to be the very love God had offered for so many centuries. And get this: he was also, at the same time, the people's loving response, since he was completely 



☞☞ a human being! Think of it: as the God-man, Jesus was able to fulfil both halves of the covenant.

The transfiguration in Sunday's Gospel represents both the promise and its fulfillment! Jesus' clothes become dazzling as fire—a counterpart to the fire in the First Reading! A terrifying darkness closes in, just as it had with Abram. And within that darkness, God's voice repeats the covenant words: *This is my chosen Son; listen to him.*

In the cross and resurrection, the covenant would finally be fulfilled—on both sides, the Godly and the human. The result: you and I do not have to offer more and more sacrifices in order to achieve this fulfilment. We only have to let ourselves be joined to Jesus in his loving response to the Father.

How do we do this? We begin it in Baptism. We continue it in each Mass, each Communion we receive. We say "**Amen**" to the covenant, so many times broken, but now established forever as the "new and everlasting covenant" of love, the cross and resurrection, received in the Eucharist.



Each year of the three-year cycle, the gospel of the second Sunday of Lent tells of the Transfiguration. This year we have Luke's account. Luke presents this incident as Jesus instructs his disciples—preparing them for his journey to Jerusalem to meet his fate. The liturgical tradition echoes this outlook, inviting us to learn the lessons of this mysterious incident as we begin our journey of Lent. In Luke's account, in the verses immediately preceding, Jesus has warned the apostles of what lies ahead: 'The Son of Man will be rejected and put to death'; more than that, everyone who wants to be his follower 'must take up his cross every day and follow him' (9:22-23). Luke's account clearly has these warnings in mind. It is filled with reassurance for the chosen followers Jesus has brought up the mountain with him. Moses and Elijah (representing the Law and the Prophets, the great bearers of old Israel's hopes) are conversing with Jesus concerning 'his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem' (the destiny of Israel was established in the original Passover and Exodus; in what lies ahead, this great destiny is to reach its final moment—as the shadows of the old order give way to the reality they prefigure, the Paschal Mystery). From the 'cloud', so often a symbol of God's presence in the first Exodus, the voice of the Father confirms what Jesus has told them of this new Passover: 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.'

As he tells the story of Jesus, Luke often emphasises the place of prayer in our Christian life. The Transfiguration took place in a moment of prayer; Jesus had taken the chosen apostles 'up the mountain to pray'. There he communed with the eternal Father, readying himself for the mission he was soon to accomplish for the life of the world. As we make the journey of Lent, this example of his – making himself truly our brother and companion – should inspire us to make the journey with him, eager to give ourselves more fully to that personal mission to which the eternal Father has called us – in our families, our parish community and the broader world.

Paul's exhortation to the Philippians is along these lines. The Easter celebration we look forward to reminds us of our final 'homeland'; to share in all that lies in store for us, we will be transformed by the power through which our Saviour brought the whole universe into existence. The rationale of the Liturgy's choice of Old Testament passages during Lent is different from that of the Sundays of the year – chosen because they chime in with the theme of the gospel. The Paschal Mystery is the final climax of God's saving interventions. Each Sunday in Lent, therefore, a great event of God's saving history is recalled, reminding us of the one great story told in the Scriptures. Today it is the Lord's promise to Abraham, made according to a strange old ritual whereby earthly rulers confirmed their commitment to their subjects by oath.

Welcome to Lent!

PROJECT COMPASSION

100% Determination Tati is a Dayak woman, living in a remote forest of West Kalimantan, Indonesia, with her husband and two of her three children.

Her two youngest children go to school nearby while her 19-year-old son lives in a rented room close to his school 60 kilometres away. The family pays for his living-away-from-home expenses, in addition to providing for school expenses.

Tati's Dayak culture is deeply linked to the rainforest and her family has relied on it for sustenance for generations.

Over the last few years, communities which depend on the native forests have seen them shrink, along with vital habitats for endangered orangutans, rhinos and tigers.

Caritas Australia, with its partners Caritas Indonesia, KARINA, and the Diocesan Caritas are working with local communities to develop alternative sustainable livelihoods, by training them in eco-tourism activities.

Before Tati joined the Caritas program, she and her husband mainly earned their income from rubber tapping and raising chickens.

Now, Tati has increased her family income ten times over by cooking for tourists and making souvenirs. Her community is also developing a strong financial base so that it can manage its own land.

Around 600 people have directly benefitted from the program so far – with hopes it can be expanded to other districts.

“I hope to continue living with fresh air, clear water, protected forest,” Tati says, “and to be able to pay for my children's education and that my grandchildren can still enjoy the forest.”

Please take home a Project Compassion box or a set of donation envelopes and support Caritas Australia this Lenten season.

Lives change when we all give 100%. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, or by phoning 1800 024 413 or visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion

SMALL PLASTIC BOTTLES NEEDED FOR EASTER WATER

At the Easter Vigil water is blessed and everyone will be given a bottle to take to bless your homes and cars. *However*, we need more small plastic bottles. If you have some, please bring them in by Sunday, 7 April.

DEATHS FROM GUNS IN THE USA

More people died from firearm injuries in the United States in 2017 than in any other year since at least 1968. There were 39,773 deaths from guns in 2017, up by more than 1,000 from the year before. Nearly two-thirds were suicides.

EASTER “JOBS” DURING THE LITURGIES

Several people will be needed for various “jobs” during the Easter Liturgies, e.g. carrying the Holy Oils, carrying the Cross on Good Friday. If you or any of your family would be available, please call or email the Parish Office by Sunday, 1 April. New rosters will be issued this week for Readers, Communion Ministers, AV Operators, Safety Officers and all others.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND



Monday 18 Mar **Feast of St Patrick**, bishop
Tuesday 19 Mar **Feast of St Joseph**, husband of Mary
Saturday 23 Mar **CatholicCare Race Day, Kembla Grange Racecourse**
Thursday 28 Mar **Baptism Preparation Meeting, 7:15pm**
Saturday 30 Mar **Plenary Council 2020 Diocesan Meeting, Campbelltown**
Tuesday 9 Apr **Reconciliation Rite II at Thirroul, 7:30pm**
Sunday 14 Apr **Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony, Cataract Dam 11am–3pm**

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

4,618 rescues performed since 1 July 18 – last week **4,399**
SWIM SAFELY – BETWEEN THE FLAGS WHERE THE WAVES BREAK



DO YOU GET THE BULLETIN BY EMAIL?

Our Parish Bulletin is emailed each week, as well as being on our Parish website. If you would like to receive it by email, please email the Parish Office: thirroul@dow.org.au

CATHOLICCARE ST PATRICK'S DAY FUNDRAISER

All are invited on **Saturday, 23 March** to **Kembla Grange Racecourse** for the annual **CatholicCare Race Day**. All monies raised will go towards supporting siblings of kids with disability. Single tickets (\$100) or tables available. Tickets include: sit down two course meal; afternoon tea; complimentary race day book; three drink vouchers; fashions in the room. For more info contact Jacqueline on 4254 9308 jacquelinem@catholiccare.dow.org.au or www.catholiccare.dow.org.au



THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Lent • Year C

1st Reading Genesis 15:5-12,17-18
2nd Reading Philippians 3:17–4:1
Gospel Luke 9:28-36

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Third Sunday of Lent • Year C

1st Reading Exodus 3:1-8,13-15
2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 10:1-6,10-12
Gospel Luke 13:1-9

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

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