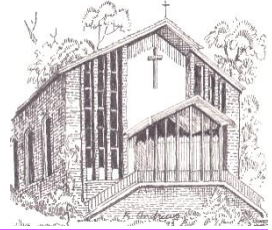




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



23 / 24 MARCH 2019
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT ✦ YEAR C

✦ Prayer ✦ Fasting ✦ Almsgiving ✦

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

An Angry Saviour?

In the Gospel for Sunday, Jesus, sounds angry and threatening and we must talk about that. “Unless you repent, you will all perish as they did.” “The tower at Siloam fell on them”; “Cut down the fig tree,” etc. Is the loving Lord we have known actually furious and offended? Let us look.

News comes to Jesus that Pilate has murdered a number of Galilean people. Still worse, Pilate has mixed their blood with that of sacrificed animals. Such a gruesome story is worthy of denunciation.

Instead Jesus draws a point from it: “Do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”



What is the logic here? It seems you don't have to murder people in order to get punished. You can qualify just by failing to repent!

So, is Jesus truly an angry saviour? Angry in the same way people think that God was in the Old Testament? Unforgiving, warlike, furious, demanding an infinite sacrifice to make up for humankind's sins against an infinite God?

But when we look at the First Reading, we do not find an irate God at all. Instead, we find a tender one, grieving over the troubles of his people. “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them.”

Lovely. God instructs Moses about how to deliver the people. Great compassion from the depths of the transcendent God.

Didn't Jesus have the same kind of compassion for his own people? Yes. He gives a parable in the second half of the Gospel that might help us understand: An orchard owner orders his gardener to chop down a sadly unproductive fig tree. The gardener advises him to leave it one more year and see if, with some tending, it will bear fruit. Give it one more chance.

Who does the heartless orchard owner represent? We always assume that it is God. We half-remember the story in Matthew's gospel (21:18-19) of Jesus actually cursing a fruitless fig tree. But here, on the contrary, Jesus is not the orchard owner at all, but the gardener, asking mercy for the disobedient fig tree!

When he warns the people that they will perish if they don't repent, he is shouting

☞☞ at all of us to turn back to God in order to avoid destruction! He is “startling the poor sheep back” from the edge of the cliff: you and I are the sheep.

There is still reason to fear God, of course, since God is infinite and infinitely more fiery than the burning bush. But the closer you come to the centre of God, the more your fear turns to gratitude. You are not scalded or consumed by the divine fire—you are warmed and gentled at its welcoming hearth: *God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.* (John 3:16)

Jesus’ tough love leads us to that hearth.

As we settle into our Lenten journey, the first two readings of today’s liturgy remind us of our destination. And the gospel reading brings us the advice of Jesus to be alert, ready to enjoy the blessings that can be ours at the end of the journey.

The reading from Exodus is one of the most significant texts of the Old Testament – a graphic summary, in fact, of old Israel’s faith. That faith derived its definitive shape under the leadership of Moses; in the name of God, he led the people out of slavery; as a prophet called by God, he made them aware that this deliverance was the work of the living God, revealed to them as the champion of the oppressed – in stark contrast to the gods of other peoples, venerated as the patrons of oppressive regimes. This break-through revelation is summed up in the divine name, **I AM WHO I AM**. The divine being affirmed in this name is an active-being-present (‘I will be with you; I will express all that I am in what I shall do for you’). The call of Moses takes place at the Mountain of Horeb (another name for Sinai), where God’s covenant with the liberated people will be solemnised – calling them to bring to the whole world the good news of God’s generous and merciful ways.

Thirteen centuries later, standing in the fullness of light brought by the Paschal Mystery, Paul writes to the Corinthians, confidently interpreting the Exodus and Covenant of old Israel as a foreshadowing – or type – of the final liberation of humanity in the Risen Lord. And he initiates a Christian tradition that finds this foreshadowing in the details of the Old Testament story: passing through the sea to freedom – a foreshadowing of Baptism; the miraculous food and drink provided in the wilderness – a foreshadowing of the Eucharist; the rock providing miraculous water – a symbol of Christ. This dramatic interpretation Paul uses, however, as the lead-up to an admonition: those whom God liberated in the first Exodus ‘failed to please God and their corpses littered the desert’. Their fate is a ‘warning’ to the Corinthian community – torn apart by disputes.

Paul’s admonition serves as an introduction to the down to earth advice the Lord himself has for us in the gospel reading. News of catastrophes leads thoughtful people to reflect upon the meaning of life. Jesus warns against the common temptation to interpret the designs of God in such events. They should be a reminder to put our lives in order: ‘Unless you repent you will all perish’.

Another Lent! How many Lenten journeys have we made – and with what profit to show? How many Lents will we see in the future? Luke – sensitive to the fullness of the Good News brought by the Saviour – links Jesus’ call to conversion with the parable of the barren fig tree. As we ponder Lent’s call to a more generous Christian commitment, we do so in the presence of the compassionate and patient God revealed to us in Jesus Christ: ‘Leave it; it may bear fruit’.



Welcome to Lent!

PROJECT COMPASSION

100% Dignity Sixteen-year-old Peter goes to a boarding school in the Solomon Islands which has experienced water shortages for 60 years. Previously, students would have to walk kilometres each day in search of clean water. This was particularly challenging for Peter who is living with a disability. Peter's mother left the family when he was little and has since passed away. His father decided to move from northern Malaita to Honiara, to better provide for his family. He arranged for Peter to stay with his aunt, then attend Aligegeo Secondary School.



Groundwater sources at the school have dried up and rainfall is unpredictable. Water in surrounding wells often made students sick or gave them rashes.

Caritas Australia and partners Caritas Solomon Islands (CASI) and the Solomon Islands Government Rural Water Sanitation and Hygiene division (RWASH), have teamed up with the school to tackle the problem.

CASI provided a 90 kilo-litre water tank, electric pump and technical advice, while the Malaita Provincial Government contributed labour. Staff and students took part in training, dug trenches and are helping with a water management plan.

The school now has a safe, reliable water system, servicing around 1,000 people. "Now we can stay at school to wash and not interrupt our official class time," Peter says. Peter hopes to focus on his education and to help others in future by working for an aid and development agency himself. However much more needs to be done to improve access to reliable water and sanitation in the Solomon Islands.

Please 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.

SOME THOUGHTS about Christianity and the Church

The devout Christian of the future will be either a 'mystic', one who has 'experienced' something, or cease to be anything at all. – Karl Rahner. In order to be true to God and to ourselves we must break with the familiar, established and secure norms and go off into the unknown. – Thomas Merton. God is Love; and God-is-Love longs to dwell within, to be in communion with 'me'. A Church preoccupied with dogma and moralism, with institution and clericalism, with power and pomp, is doomed. The essence of Christianity is not to prove the existence of God – that's a fool's errand; nor is it to prove Who or What created the universe. The essence of Christianity is to be ennobled by a Love, by a 'fondness' whose source is indescribable, unknowable: a Love that sets us free to manifest a self-emptying mercy and compassion.

The days of the Lone Ranger priest are long gone ... A leader without a parish leadership team to whom he is accountable, transparent and vulnerable is a fool and a disaster waiting to happen. – James Mallon, Divine Revelation, p.242. The mark of true leadership is not telling people what to do, but being able to bring people with you, all heading together with a common goal. And for that, one needs to be able to relate to a whole range of people, in a relaxed and confident way. – John Crothers

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday	25 March	The Annunciation of the Lord [<i>nine months until Christmas</i>]
Thursday	28 Mar	Baptism Preparation Meeting, 7:15pm
Saturday	30 Mar	Plenary Council 2020 Diocesan Meeting, Campbelltown
Saturday	6 Apr	Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival
Sunday	7 Apr	Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival
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**

4,676 rescues performed since 1 July 18 – last week **4,618**

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

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.

Our Parish will need **PALMS**, both large and small, for **Palm Sunday, 13/14 April**, and **ROSEMARY** for **Good Friday, 19 April** and **ANZAC Day**.



THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Fourth Sunday of Lent • Year C

1st Reading Joshua 5:9-12
2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Gospel Luke 15:1-3,11-32

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 [<i>Liturgy</i>]	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