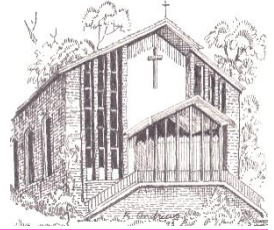




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



Prayer



Fasting



Almsgiving



30 / 31 MARCH 2019

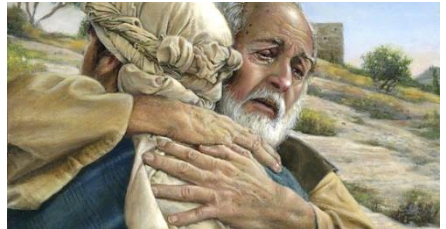
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT + YEAR C

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Cowering

Watch the dog hang its head when it is scolded. It grovels. It tries to wheedle its way back into good graces. To us humans it looks as if it is saying, "I'm really, really, really sorry for what I did and please, please, please, please forgive me. I will do any base thing you want!" Poor dog.

And the poor, wayward, younger son in this week's Gospel. Happy as an animal sitting up on your Easter table, he spent his father's money on riotous living in a faraway country. Obviously, he would run out of wealth, but he was having too much fun to notice. Finally, terrible famine hit the country and this once pampered youth now fell to simply feeding with somebody's – a foreigner's – herd of pigs. At this point he would have been happy just to gobble up some swine husks.



It took a while for the truth to get through to him—what he had done to himself and to his family. First, he noticed that he was starving. Then he made a forced and slightly humble decision to go back to his father and ask for mercy. He hung his head just like dogs do. "Please, please, please forgive me!"

Imagine dragging yourself down the jagged road to your father's estate, practicing your speech over and over: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

You and I have fear also. Often we are terrified that anyone might know our faults. Especially God. We think God will respond with rage if God finds out. So, we make a Lenten "firm purpose of amendment," or a New Year's promise or whatever else. We want to be "worthy" before God, with our sins hidden.

But pay very close attention to the young man's father in the parable. He spots his wayward, younger son far down the road, the boy still memorizing his lines. Did his father fold his arms and put on an angry face? Not at all. He sets out running. See them meet, enveloped by the thirsty road-dust. He embraces and kisses his son. The boy tries to blunder out his lines. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son ..."

prodigal

His (= reckless, extravagant) father drowns him out, calling for the finest robe in the house, plus a ring for the young man's finger, sandals for his feet, and a huge banquet for celebration. He understands. He is ecstatic that his son came home.

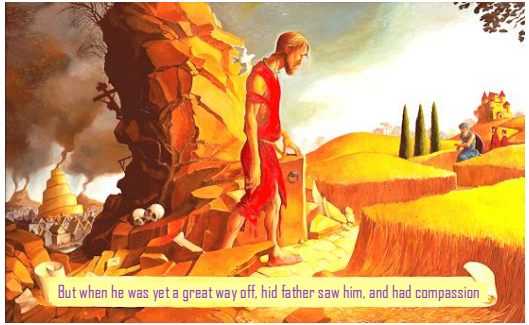
Apply that now to you and me. Watch as our own shame says to God, "Father,



✠✠ I am a no good. I am totally unworthy. You must be very angry.”

“I know what you have done, child,” says God. “You needn’t cower. You are precious to me, and not because you never sin. Come, come, have back your brothers, sisters, neighbours and, most of all, your Father. Let me hug you.”

Because God holds us so close to God’s heart, God is most willing to absorb the losses we inflict. Even if we were to join forces with evil in the world, God would arms. This is God’s Lenten message. By the way, notice that Jesus’ arms are wide open on the Cross.



Traditionally, the liturgy of the fourth Sunday of Lent has sounded a joyous note – encouraging us as we reach the mid-point of our Lenten journey; inviting us to recognize the joy that will be ours if we are wholehearted in our turning to God. The joy to be found in our faith is a theme running through Luke’s gospel. In one passage, he puts together three parables of Jesus describing the joy of finding what was lost – the lost sheep, the lost coin, the son who was lost – as the response of Jesus to the criticism that he sat down with sinners. Though we have listened to it countless times, the story of the father whose loving reception of his wayward son gave him a new life moves us deeply every time we hear it. It is not surprising that it is chosen as today’s gospel reading.

This parable has different levels of meaning. Jesus made it clear that his first concern was to call old Israel to its true role in the generous designs of God. Against this background, the parable can be seen as referring to the whole drama of Old Testament history. The lost son stands for the covenanted people who have lost their way. The father in the story stands for the God of the covenant. The people’s failure to find new life – by entering into the divine love that inspired the covenant – has meant that their history has been filled with failure and frustration, even exile among foreigners. Not having learned the ways of God’s generous love, they are like mercenaries – like the younger son, who thinks that he has lost his father’s love and can only hope to live with the household slaves; like the elder brother (standing for those who should have been guides for the people) who thinks he can earn the love of his father by ‘never disobeying his orders’. Like all genuine love, the love that inspires the God of the covenant is a mysterious gift; it can never be earned in the first place, and, having been given, will never be taken back: ‘*You are always with me and all that is mine is yours*’. As it concludes, the parable invites us to see the life of the wayward son as being changed for ever: as he comes, for the first time, to know the love that is in his father’s heart, and begins to share in all that that love inspires. At the personal level, the story told by Jesus invites us to take up our Lenten journey with renewed eagerness, reflecting that the selfless divine love that shapes God’s dealings with us is the ultimate mystery of our human existence: expressed already in the old covenant; shaping the whole story of creation; and finding its ultimate revelation in the Passover Mystery the Church is soon to celebrate.

One of the most memorable passages of Paul’s letters provides our second reading. The parable of Jesus called God’s people to be reconciled. Paul announces the final ‘reconciliation’ achieved by God in Christ. And he reminds us who have been united to God in Christ that we have a great responsibility towards our troubled world, to bring to it the Good News of this reconciliation: ‘We are ambassadors for Christ.’ Today’s first reading, continuing the story of Old Testament events, tells of the entry into the Promised Land: described as a new Passover – a reminder of the Paschal Mystery’s centrality to the whole story of the Scriptures.

PROJECT COMPASSION

100% Community Twenty-one year-old **Michaela** is helping to build a social enterprise for people with chronic illnesses at The Purple House in Alice Springs. Featured in Project Compassion 2014, the First Australian-run Well-being Project, uses its profits to connect and care for dialysis patients who are far from home.

As a Purple House trainee, Michaela completed a Certificate IV in business management. She was also recently promoted from administration trainee to permanent employee, working on The Wellbeing Project.



The young Alywarr woman cares for patients as they receive dialysis and helps them to feel at home and remain hopeful during treatment. Patients in turn pass on traditional knowledge to Michaela.

The program is run by the Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation, with support from Caritas Australia. First Australians are twice as likely to experience chronic kidney disease, and four times more likely to die from it than other Australians.

With the help of staff like Michaela, the Aboriginal-controlled service gives patients the opportunity to stay connected with their culture. They do this through traditional healing practices and income-generating activities, such as making bush balms and soaps.

Profits are invested back into supporting patients receiving remote care and as well as helping to get people on dialysis back on country.

In addition to completing her studies, Michaela has obtained a driver's licence, and is building her leadership skills running workshops solo.

“Hope means having something to look forward to,” Michaela says. “I enjoy building relationships with the patients and learning from them. If we keep our culture alive, we can feel strong.”

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.

LÆTARE – REJOICING SUNDAY

Lætare Sunday is the fourth or middle Sunday in the season of Lent, in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. Traditionally, this Sunday has been a day of celebration, within the austere period of Lent. This Sunday gets its name from the first few words of the traditional Latin entrance for the Mass of the day. “*Lætare Jerusalem*” (“Rejoice, O Jerusalem”) is Latin from Isaiah 66:10. Strictly speaking, the Thursday before *Lætare* Sunday is the middle day of Lent; special signs of joy were permitted on this day, intended to encourage the faithful through the season of penance; later, the “joy” was transferred to the Sunday following.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Friday	5 Apr	Anointing of the Sick – 9:30am
Saturday	6 Apr	Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival
Sunday	7 Apr	Daylight Saving ends!
	7 Apr	Thirroul Seaside and Arts Festival
Tuesday	9 Apr	Reconciliation Rite II – 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

4,732 rescues performed since 1 July 18 – last week **4,676**
SWIM SAFELY – BETWEEN THE FLAGS WHERE THE WAVES BREAK



CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

We have very much in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers murdered in Christ-church by an “alt-right” white supremacist. Terror knows no bounds: the Christian persecution we read about in Scripture and history books is not a thing of the past. It still exists. Today, in the 21st century, we are living in a time when persecution against Christian believers is the highest in modern history. According to *Open Doors’ 2019 World Watch List*—an in-depth investigative report focusing on global Christian persecution—persecution is increasing at an alarming rate. Research for the *List* indicates that **each day, a staggering 11 Christians are killed for their faith**. We pray for all persecuted for their faith.

NEEDED FOR Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Anzac Day

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*

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

NEXT Sunday’s Readings *on our website*

Fifth Sunday of Lent • Year **C**

1st Reading Isaiah 43:16-21
 2nd Reading Philippians 3:8-14
 Gospel John 8:1-11

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