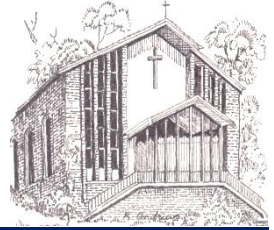




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



7 / 8 DECEMBER 2019
SECOND SUNDAY OF ANVENT ✦ YEAR A

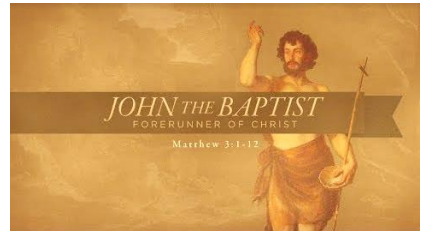
Vinnies Christmas Collection 🕯️ Hampers and Toys

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Gifts

When any of us get a smallest hint about how much God is giving to us, we are grateful. For instance, a woman named Katharine Lee Bates took a trip to the top of Pike's Peak in Colorado and then wrote *America the Beautiful*. It was gratitude for what she saw. Rust and violet colours interleaved in the sunset. A hospital patient waiting calmly for tomorrow's verdict.

Unthinking courtesy from strangers who stopped their car down the street so that someone could complete his or her jaywalk in safety! Your family. The dog. Your own life, a wonder and a mystery even with all its losses and tangles. Trees that wisely shed their leaves with the snow and cold of winter. The superb beauty of a summer sunrise.



The ability to see, if indeed we can do so. Holy darkness for those who cannot. We do very little to "deserve" the mysterious goodness around us and in us. We are not required to be worthy of it because God gives everything out of pure generosity. God gazes in wonder at the world and at each person and says, "You are worth it. I will not leave you." And a paradox: the shocking smallness of my own self. I am in no way the centre of the universe. This is good news, not bad. I can rest in God's everlasting arms and then do as much as I can to help others. Worthiness results from being loved, not just from achieving. Smallness.

Perhaps gifts are not tendered to you right now. Perhaps life simply has too many problems: even international ones, that affect you. Maybe gifts are there, but you cannot see them.

In that case, your Advent eyes will have to rest their weariness for a while and do some waiting. It will be there, God's delicate care for you and for us. You will see.

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might. (first reading)

God, who takes joy in small things, does defend us poor ones from the wrongs of life. "With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth."

Put it this way: God does not erase trouble, God loves us within it.

Wait to catch a glimpse of God's intimate love for each hair on your head. We must wait. In Advent and always. God labours to give each creature the gift of a lifetime.



✠✠ We know, with all the catastrophes in our present world, how could any of this be possible? The answer? Wait. Clean your lenses. Open your eyes. Wait, and then see.

The shoot of Jesse is sprouting fast.

As the mystic, Julian of Norwich put it, “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and every manner of thing shall be well.”

Stay around for it.

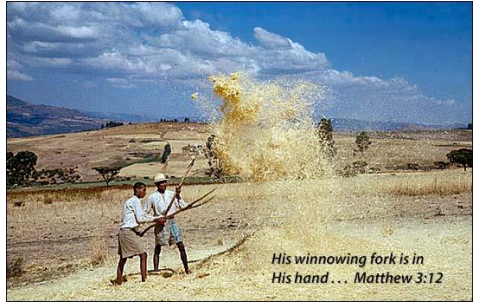
Today’s liturgy brings together readings from very different backgrounds, as it gives expression to the Advent message of hope.

The prophetic vision of Isaiah reflects his familiarity with the king’s court in a period of dramatic international developments in the region. He links the fulfillment of God’s designs for the nation with the rule of a new David (Jesse is the father of David) whose rule will contrast with that of many of David’s unworthy successors. He will be filled with the gifts of the ‘spirit of the Lord’, ruling with wisdom and integrity, and showing himself a forthright champion of the oppressed and the poor of the land. The peace established by his rule is graphically portrayed as like a new paradise – as the whole country is ‘filled with the knowledge of the Lord’ and lives according to God’s ways. For those who know the blessings brought by the true ‘Son of David’, the themes of the Christmas celebration that awaits us at the end of our Advent preparation are not difficult to recognise.

The gospel reading from Matthew reminds us that our hope in the promises of God brings with it a challenge. John the Baptist was honoured by Jesus as the embodiment of the prophetic tradition of Israel. It has been pointed out that, in the cultural traditions of the world, there is no parallel to old Israel’s acknowledgment of its failures before the God of the covenant. And it was the prophets who – like a conscience of the nation – challenged the people and their leaders with their unfaithfulness. Scholars tell us that Matthew’s gospel – from which our readings for the coming year will come – was produced by an early Christian community in dispute with former Jewish associates who cannot accept the claims of Christian faith. This helps us to understand the sharp edge given to the words of Jesus against “the scribes and Pharisees” (see ch.23), and the strong words of the Baptist in today’s gospel. Jesus was impatient with the complacent exclusivism of these groups. We know, from contemporary records, that they tended to believe that being “children of Abraham” assured them a sharing in God’s promises. John too challenges this complacency: ‘Do not presume to tell yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father”.’ In the best prophet tradition, his language has a frightening intensity. The axe is already ‘laid to the roots of the trees’; without their own ‘good fruits’ they will be lost.

Writing to the Romans, Paul has a similar message. Jewish converts must follow ‘the example of Christ Jesus’, in the tolerance and generosity they show, as they recognise in the Church’s embracing of ‘the pagans’ what God foretold in the promises of ‘the Scriptures’.

Our hope is boundless in its expectations; but we must play our part in the generous designs of God.



CHRISTMAS LITURGY TIMES AT THIRROUL 2019

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| • Reconciliation Rite II | 7:30pm | Tuesday | 17 December |
| • Christmas Eve School Grounds | 6:30pm | Tuesday | 24 December |
| • Christmas Eve Wombarra | 9:30pm | Tuesday | 24 December |
| • Christmas Day Thirroul | 9:00am | Wednesday | 25 December |

FIRST COMMUNION 2019

Twenty-six (**26**) young parishioners have been preparing for receiving the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time. They will receive this Sacrament for the first time as follows: Saturday, 30 November – **2**; Sunday, 1 December – **12**; Saturday, 7 December – **5**; Sunday, 8 December – **4**; Saturday, 14 December – **2**; Sunday, 15 December – **1**. Please remember before the Lord these young parishioners and their families. **This weekend** the following young parishioners will receive First Communion: **EMILY DEEMING; LIAM DENNYSON; AUDREY FORAN; LARA MCENTEE; VEGAS FENECH; AOWYN BATTEN; LUCY BRUNGS; GISELLE BARR; SAMSON McDONELL.** Congratulations!

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS IN OUR PARISH SCHOOL

Christmas Eve Mass will be in our Parish School grounds at **6:30pm** on **Tuesday, 24 December**. Children are involved in the readings and “walk-on non-talking” parts, e.g. carrying up candles, the bread and wine etc. If you would like your daughter or son to be involved, **please email the Parish Office on thirroul@dow.org.au**, giving name, phone number and any “job” they would prefer to do. Also, **singers are needed** to help lead the singing ... anyone from 5 years to 105 year are welcome! Also, **adult parishioners** are needed as “**Safety Officers / Ushers**” at the 6:30pm Mass – you don’t have to be on the usual Safety Officers Roster. Please contact the Parish Office by **10 December**.

Other Christmas Masses are: **9:30pm at Wombarra** and **9:00am at Thirroul**.

THANK YOU FROM THE CATHOLIC WOMEN’S LEAGUE

All the CWL ladies who helped on the stall Saturday and Sunday also a big thank you to all the parishioners who supported us. **THANK YOU!** Raymond Cummins won our raffle.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This weekend we continue preparing for Christmas, the coming of the Christ-child. As usual, there is the annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal**, along with the preparation of **hampers and ‘Giving Tree’ gifts** for distribution in our local area. The actual **Appeal** concludes this weekend. **Hampers and gifts** will need to be **returned by the weekend of **14-15 December**** for distribution before Christmas. **Last weekend** you donated **\$3,150**. Thanks to you for your generosity and Vinnies for their ministry! **YOUR GIFT COULD CHANGE PEOPLE’S LIVES.**



YOU CAN HELP END POVERTY

VINNIES BUSHFIRE APPEAL

Last year at the Christmas Masses, you donated **\$4,632.15**. Money donated at Christmas Masses is used during the following year for any urgent assistance needed anywhere in the world. The Parish Pastoral Council has decided to donate **all** that money to the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal NSW, and to top up the amount from general Parish funds, so that **\$5,000** is being sent to the Vinnies Bushfire Appeal. You can make your own donation at <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/appeals-nsw/vinnies-nsw-bushfire-appeal-nsw>

OTHER HOLIDAY LITURGY TIMES 2019-2020

Boxing Day [Thursday, 26 December] to New Year’s Day [1 January], Mass times will be as usual, except there will be no Liturgy of the Word at Wombarra all during January. *See the schedule on the bottom of page 4.*

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday 9 Dec Immaculate Conception of Mary
 Friday 13 Dec St Lucy, virgin, martyr
 Saturday 14 Dec St John of the Cross, priest, doctor
 Weekend 14/15 Dec Blessing of the Christmas Crib
 Tuesday 17 Dec Reconciliation Rite II 7:30pm



SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Our surfing season runs until 26 April 2020! Please be safe on our beaches and waterways. So far, since 1 July, there have already been **808** rescues – that's **142** since last week! Please be safe on our beaches. Can you spot a rip?? **FLAG SWIM FLAG**

WANT TO BE BAPTISED? WANT TO BECOME A CATHOLIC?

Anyone over the age of seven (7) who has not been baptised and who wishes to become a Catholic, NOW is the time to let the Parish Office know. Preparation begins this month for the three Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. The preparation is called RCIA or RCIC, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children*. Similarly, if you have been baptised in another Christian Church and you want to become a Catholic, you won't be re-baptised, but there is a preparation period prior to you receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. If you or if you know anyone who wants to become a Catholic, please call the Parish Office THIS WEEK, to obtain the "inquiry" form and to begin the preparation. People in the RCIA and RCIC programs will receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, 11 April 2020. Welcome to anyone wishing to become a Catholic. Please call the Parish Office THIS WEEK.

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

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Advent • Year **A**

1st Reading Isaiah 11:1-10
 2nd Reading Romans 15:4-9
 Gospel Matthew 3:1-12

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Third Sunday of Advent • Year **A**

1st Reading Isaiah 35:1-6,10
 2nd Reading James 5:7-10
 Gospel Matthew 11:2-11

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
	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