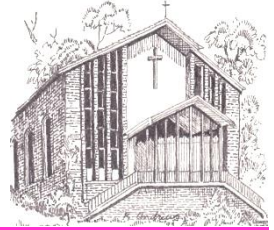




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



14 / 15 DECEMBER 2019
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR A
Blessing of the Christmas Crib 🕯️🕯️🕯️ Hampers and Gifts

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Advent: Preparing for the Sublime

A man had a new watch, an inexpensive one. The old one had worn out. This new one had something he liked very much, a second hand. He could watch the seconds tick by and could “time” anything he wanted to.

Who wants to time things? Well he did, especially when he got caught by a traffic light that changed to red just as he came within a half a block. He glanced at his wrist to see just how long the light stayed red. Some traffic lights stay red for—listen to this—a minute and fifteen seconds!



Imagine having to sit with nothing to do when you are late and, in a hurry, with a mechanical device deciding for an entire minute and a quarter the second when you are allowed to go on!

As you can see, the man needed to put on some patience. The second reading for this week says it this way: *The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.* The farmer is attentive and tolerant because crops do not come up in a day. The farmer has learned patience through many seasons.

How about those of us who are not farmers? How do we “put on” patience? There are two parts to the answer.

First, have you noticed that when people are being impatient they also fail to notice what is happening in the present time. They are stuck in the future worrying about what will occur and how to make it happen; about where they are supposed to be by now; and how the traffic light will not let them go.

And a lot of us reside in the past instead of the present. We re-hash mistakes we made and finally think of a retort that would have topped someone’s nasty remark, and so on.

The present moment is the only one we actually live in. The precious goodness of God makes everything exist right now, not tomorrow or yesterday, which are only projections or memories. We will miss the present by looking backward or forward too much.

Second, we need to recall that God makes the future safe. God has promised that, in ways we cannot understand, the crooked will be made straight. Our gnarled [knotted, twisted, contorted] lives will be filled with goodness.

Patience is really a way of remembering the constant love of God, no matter how frightening or disconcerting the future may seem or may actually be. We need to slow down, look around, and live.

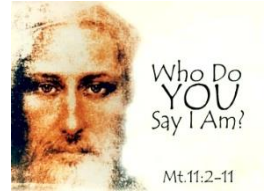
Think about Mary’s “be it done unto me,” her lifelong daily prayer, her nine months, her place at the Cross. Notice that, when the angel gave her the annunciation, she did not demand guarantees and full details. She relied on God’s love. She waited.



☞☞ And, the Second Person of the Trinity, alive to earth's ways, waited until it was time to come into the world as Jesus. Then when he sensed that he was hungry, he suckled at his mother's breast, burping only when the occasion presented itself, not before. And think of his years of being just a carpenter day after day. God's beloved, making a chair!

But that is Advent. Christ is with you. His presence needs to grow. Just open. Watch for the signs. Patience, people.

Waiting can be a time of soul-searching. Today's liturgy invites us to ask ourselves whether we are ready to hear the call of the Saviour, whose birth we are preparing to celebrate. Helpless in Herod's prison cell, John the Baptist is puzzled and discouraged, as he faced a similar question. He has generously pointed Jesus out – as the one who was to bring the realisation of Israel's hopes; why, he asks through his messengers, is God's prophet now suffering in prison at the hands of an unprincipled tyrant; why has the mission of Jesus not brought the time of justice God's people long for?



The reading from Isaiah – a typical example of the message of hope announced by the prophets – helps us to understand why John is puzzled. This magnificent proclamation describes what can be looked forward to, as a New Exodus – a time of liberation, healing and boundless joy, as those who have been banished are brought back to Zion. But this triumph of God is also described as a time of 'vengeance' and 'retribution'. Having for centuries lived in bitterness under a series of occupying powers, the nation's expectations emphasised this latter part of the prophets' message. They looked forward to a vindictive triumph that would crush their hated enemies. This heavily politicised interpretation of Israel's messianic hopes constituted one of the main obstacles to be overcome by Jesus, if he was to bring the people to enter into the inauguration of the final reign of God – about to take place in his own person.

God's triumph was not to be the imposition of divine power. The coming of God's kingdom involves collaboration on the part of our human freedom – inspired and sustained by the example of Jesus, who gave the needy and the powerless a privileged place in all that he did in the name of his Father, and lived out the 'new commandment' of love he had proclaimed. Jesus replied to John's inquiry, therefore, by pointing to the 'messianic signs' foretold by the prophets. But to those included in today's reading from Isaiah he adds another from the later Isaian writings: 'the poor have the Good News preached to them'. In a sense, the divine authenticity of his mission is summed up fully in these words – words that have echoed down the centuries in the life of the Church. In the continuation of our gospel passage, Jesus points to the gospel values so heroically embraced by John – in his courageous witness and his detachment.

The message of Jesus to John is, 'Do not lose faith in me; open your generous heart to the ways of God that define Israel's faith, and you will recognise that I am truly the one who was to come'. Jesus taught, we know, that in the present era the 'coming of the kingdom' is hidden and mysterious, overturning our human expectations. Our reading from James echoes one of the parables of Jesus concerning the coming of the kingdom (Mark 4:26), as James encourages believers in his community to imitate the farmer's patience, as the hidden seed grows.

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

BAPTISM – WELCOME TO ANDRE

Welcome to **ANDRE BRUNO LENA** baptized in our Parish this Sunday morning. Welcome to Andre's family and friends!

Baptism, the first sacrament of initiation, prepares us to celebrate the Eucharist. Baptisms are usually held on the third weekend of each month [except January and Lent], during either of the weekend Masses. Baptism enrolment forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.



Next baptisms in our Parish will be during the weekend Masses on either **15 or 16 February 2020**. Baptisms after that will be on **Easter Sunday, 12 April 2020**. If you want your infant daughter or son baptized on 15/16 February, at least one parent needs to attend the Baptism Preparation Class which will be held at 7:15pm on Thursday, 30 January. Enrolment forms are obtainable from the Parish Office.

FIRST COMMUNION 2019

The final three young parishioners for this year receive the Body and Blood of Christ this weekend: Saturday, **ARABELLA DONNELLY** and **SEBASTIAN CLARK**; Sunday, **PIERCE BALLANTYNE**. **Congratulations! Thank you to the parents and catechists.**

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Blessed are you, Lord God, ruler of all creation. We thank you because you love us so much. From the dawn of creation, you have shown us your love. You sent your only Son to bring us joy, peace and eternal life. Bless ✦ this crib. Let the crib remind us of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary. Let the crib remind us of the poor and humble birth of Jesus. Father, we praise you through Christ our Lord.



VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This weekend we continue preparing for Christmas, the coming of the Christ-child. The annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** took place over the last two weekends, and you have donated **\$6,939 so far**. Last year, the total by the Fourth Sunday of Advent was **\$8,120**. On this Monday, the Vinnies members

GIVE THE BEST PRESENT EVER!



will be preparing the hampers and gifts for distribution in the local area. Thank you for your generosity – and feel free to make any further donations. YOUR GIFT COULD CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR EVER.

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.

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

SUMMER SOLSTICE: SUNDAY, 22 DECEMBER AT 15:19 [3:19PM]

and next Sunday, the Summer Solstice Day, the day lasts – **14 hours 24 mins 47 secs.**

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday 16 Dec Vinnies organizing hampers and gifts
 Tuesday 17 Dec Novena for Christmas begins
 Reconciliation Rite II 7:30pm Thirroul
 Wednesday 18 Dec Reconciliation Rite II 7pm Helensburgh



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 **962** rescues – that's **154** since last week! Please **be safe** on our beaches. **Can you spot a rip??** **FLAG SWIM FLAG**

THE CHRISTMAS NOVENA

The Christmas novena begins on 17 December. Now, the Advent focus shifts to the Christmas story and the Virgin Mary. *These days serve to prepare more directly for the Lord's birth.*

TODAY IS GAUDETE SUNDAY

One of the candles surrounding the Christ Candle in the Advent wreath is rose-coloured for *Gaudete* Sunday, the beginning of the third week in Advent, so called from the first word of the Entrance Song at Mass (*Gaudete*, i.e. Rejoice). The season of Advent originated as a fast of forty days in preparation for Christmas, commencing on the day after the feast of St Martin (12 November), whence it was often called "St Martin's Lent" – a name by which it was known as early as the 5th century. *Gaudete Sunday*, therefore, makes a break, about midway through a season which was otherwise of a penitential character, and signifies the nearness of the Lord's coming. The spirit of the Liturgy all through Advent is one of expectation and preparation for the Christmas feast as well as for the second coming of Christ. *Gaudete* Sunday symbolizes that joy and gladness in the Promised Redemption which should never be absent from the heart of the faithful.

THIS 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

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Fourth Sunday of Advent • Year **A**
 1st Reading Isaiah 7:10-14
 2nd Reading Romans 1:1-7
 Gospel Matthew 1:18-24

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