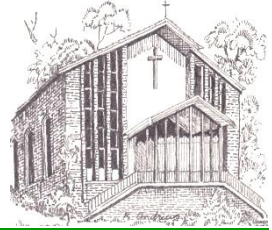




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



22–23 FEBRUARY 2020
7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR A
Last 'Ordinary' Sunday prior to Lent

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Turning the Other Cheek

In the Gospel reading, Christ commands us to turn the other cheek. How are we to make sense of this command?

If a schoolyard bully beats up your child, are you supposed to instruct him/her to turn the other cheek and let him/her do it again? Or should you alert the principal of the school and get the bully stopped? Christ's command to turn the other cheek seems to insist on that first alternative. And so, it looks as if Christ is commanding us to help people do bad things with impunity.

But to think this is way is to be focused only on yourself and what you take to be your virtue. It is to forget entirely about the wellbeing of the bully or of any person engaged in evil.

Think about the matter this way. In the Gospel reading for last Sunday, Christ says that anyone who hates his brother or sister is shut out of heaven. If mere hatred is enough to get a person excluded from heaven, how about hatred in action, like physical attack? A schoolyard or cyber bully has hate in their heart and hate in action, too. If you enable them to keep attacking, you are helping them to hell.

But in the Gospel reading for this week Christ is asking us to love those who hurt us. How is love shown to a person by helping them towards hell?

So, in exhorting us to turn the other cheek Christ is not commanding us to be an enabler of people doing bad things. He is exhorting us to love even our enemies as ourselves. If we love our enemies in this way, we will want to help them be what we ourselves want to be: people trying to love and obey Christ. Turning the other cheek challenges people.

So, think of Christ's command to turn the other cheek this way.

Ordinarily, a person given to evil will become worse and worse if they think they can hurt others with impunity. That is why to threaten them with reprisal is to tug them back from their own moral destruction. But sometimes a person is so sunk in evil that no threat of punishment would deter them. And then your best bet is to challenge them to hit you again – this time as an equal – for if they are to hit you with the “other cheek” they need to use the palm of their hand, and not the back of their hand, which is the way a “superior” [bully] person would hit. You challenge them to understand the evil in themselves and hate it.

So, “turning the other cheek” as understood in this attitude of turning the other cheek, expressed in large-scale non-violent resistance, does and can help.

Christ's command, then, is to do whatever it takes to love our enemies.

The teachings of Jesus in this gospel are those most people remember from the



🔱🔱 ‘Sermon on the Mount’. Understanding them can help us better appreciate Jesus’ charter of the Kingdom. Jesus quotes the law of retribution common in ancient societies: ‘an eye for an eye’. This law of commensurate retribution was a distinct advance on the endless feuding of barbarian societies.



The New Law of Jesus does not do away with the human laws which are essential to human society; it adds a new dimension to the enactment of their provisions – a dimension that will foster a society that is more life-giving. Jesus teaches that the provisions of strict justice are not enough to foster the healthy human community of God’s designs for the human family. We see this verified when those in authority rely on more and more legislation to create a good society – without good will such laws only bring resentment. When Jesus says, ‘Do not resist an evildoer’, he is not saying that we should never defend ourselves and seek justice when we are wronged. Matthew is applying these words to persecutions suffered by the Jewish converts of his community; but they have far wider implications. If hatred is contagious, so too is good will. Jesus forgave his enemies; Stephen, the first martyr, followed his example; the attitudes of the early Christian martyrs embarrassed and challenged the imperial authorities. The selfless response of the followers of Jesus has released a new force in the world’s history. It was the teaching of Jesus that inspired Ghandi’s program of non-violent resistance, and the heroic leadership of Martin Luther King.

However, it must be understood that Jesus does not outlaw organised resistance to injustice; he is pointing to what will often prove a better way. It has been suggested that the examples provided by Jesus, bringing us back to our common experience, were recommendations concerning the attitude God’s people should have under the Roman occupation – they should give up their hopes of an earthly triumph; and if they put aside their resentment and antagonism and witnessed to the ways to God by showing good will and cooperation to the occupying power, they would fulfil their call to be ‘a light to the nations’. Certainly, as the last section of today’s gospel shows, the charter of Jesus is a call to learn and identify with the generous and merciful ways of God, the Father in Heaven who cares for ‘the evil and for the good’.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB – TUESDAY, 25 FEB

Spirituality in the Pub Wollongong invites you to a discussion on: *The Diocese of Wollongong – Then and Now*. Speaker: Bishop Brian G Mascord. Venue: Woonona Bulli RSL Club, Tuesday, 25 February 2020, 7:30pm–9:00pm. **All welcome.** Please come and join in the conversation!



PALMS NEEDED FOR BURNING FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

Please bring in your palms from last year’s Palm Sunday. They are needed by **THIS** weekend. If you have forgotten them, please drop them in by **Tuesday, 5:30pm**. Drop them into the church [box in front of the altar] or to the Parish Office. They will be burned after 5:30pm Mass on Pancake Tuesday, 25 February. **Come along to the 5:30pm Mass on Tuesday, 25 February, bring some pancakes, and help afterwards with the burning of the palms from last year.**



USED STAMPS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Please bring in any used stamps and put them in the small box just inside the sacristy.

SIGN UP FOR LENTEN PRAYER GROUPS

Lent begins on Wednesday, 26 February. As usual, during Lent, small groups will gather throughout our Parish to follow the Diocese of Wollongong's 2020 Lenten resource. Lenten groups are a great way to meet other parishioners and to prepare for Easter. **Now** is the time to sign up to join one of the groups meeting in the evenings or on Thursday mornings. There are **FOUR** groups: Monday evenings; Tuesday evenings; Thursday mornings after 9am Mass; and Thursday evenings. **Sign-up sheets are in the church, or contact the Parish Office for details of the groups. LAST CHANCE this weekend.**



VINNIES NO INTEREST LOAN SCHEME

Vinnies no interest loans provide individuals and families on low incomes access to safe, fair and affordable lending. Eligible applicants can apply for loans up to \$1,500 to get essential goods and services. Once a loan application is approved, affordable repayments are set up over the course of 12 to 18 months. There are no credit checks; Vinnies No Interest Loans are based on trust and respect. Some of the things Vinnies No Interest Loans cover are: household items, e.g. fridges, washing machines; furniture, e.g. beds, tables, lounges; outdoor furniture and equipment; televisions, computers and printers; educational needs; baby items; some medical aids and dental services; green slips and vehicle registrations; car repairs and tyres; bicycles and canoes. Some of the things Vinnies No Interest Loans do **not** cover are: bonds or rent; living expenses, like groceries; cash or debt repayments; fines; removal costs; second-hand electrical goods; second-hand baby items. To qualify for a Vinnies No Interest Loan, people must meet the following criteria: show a willingness and a capacity to repay the loan; have a Health Care Card, a Pension Card, or be on a low income; be earning less than \$45,000 after tax if single; be earning less than \$60,000 after tax in a couple or have dependents; reside at the current address for more than three months. These criteria can be waived under special circumstances. If you or someone you know would like to make an enquiry about a Vinnies No Interest Loan, please contact the Corrimal Vinnies Centre: 4283 3730 or Corrimalcentre@svdpgwong.org.au



2020 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICE

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women in the USA and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women's involvement in mission, at home and abroad. It is from such roots as these that WDP has taken its present shape – a **worldwide ecumenical movement of Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action**. The World Day of Prayer Service is held on the First Friday of March. This year's service has been prepared by the women of **Zimbabwe**, and will be held in our area at **10am on Friday, 6 March at the Austinmer Uniting Church, 48 Moore Street, Austinmer**. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Weekend	22/23 Feb	7th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A Bring in your palms from last year's Palm Sunday Collect your Project Compassion boxes or envelopes
Tuesday	25 Feb	Pancake Tuesday 5:30pm Mass followed by the burning of the palms 7:30pm Spirituality in the Pub with Bishop Brian Mascord
Wednesday	26 Feb	Ash Wednesday – the start of Lent 9:15am Mass and 7:00pm Mass
Thursday	27 Feb	7:15pm Baptism Preparation Meeting
Friday	28 Feb	9:30am Opening Mass for the School Year
Weekend	29 F/1 M	First Sunday of Lent Year A
Friday	6 Mar	9:30am Anointing of the Sick 10:00am World Day of Prayer Service, Austinmer Uniting
Saturday	14 Mar	6:30pm Social Dinner at Thirroul Bowling Club

SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Please be safe on our beaches and waterways. So far, since 1 July 2019, there have already been **3,645** rescues – that's **2,554** since 20 Dec 19! *Please be safe on our beaches.* Dangerous surf at the moment. **FLAG SWIM FLAG**



ASH WEDNESDAY: 26 FEBRUARY

There will be two Masses on Ash Wednesday, **9:15am** and **7:00pm**. At both Masses there will be the blessing and imposition of the Ashes. All are welcome. *If you know of anyone who is not able to be at the Masses on Ash Wednesday, and if they would like the Ashes, please bring a small container or foil to take some Ashes to them.*

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

1st Reading Leviticus 19:1-2,17-18

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

Gospel Matthew 5:38-48

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

First Sunday of Lent • Year A

1st Reading Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7

2nd Reading Romans 5:12-19

Gospel Matthew 4:1-11

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

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

PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

4268 1910 4268 1976

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