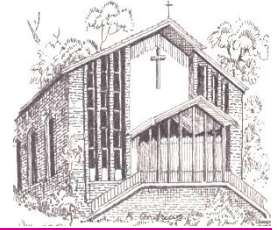




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



14 / 15 MARCH 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT ❖ YEAR A



Prayer



Fasting



Almsgiving



THIS WEEK'S READINGS

A Worthless Woman

The Gospel Reading tells the story of a woman who is worthless by the standards of Jewish society at that time.

Jesus has sent his disciples off for food, and he is sitting at a well – *by herself at noon!* – when she comes to draw water. There is every reason why he shouldn't talk to her at all.

First, she is a woman. It is only the disciples' awe of Jesus that keeps them from asking him what he thought he was doing when they return and find him talking to her without even a chaperone by her.

Secondly, she is a Samaritan. As she herself points out to him, Jews don't talk to Samaritans. Samaritans are self-made outcasts from the Jewish point of view, and self-respecting Jews stay away from them.

And, thirdly, this Samaritan has the sort of history that makes women pariahs even in their home communities. Jesus knows her status, and he lets her know he does. She has had five husbands—five husbands!—and she is currently living with a man to whom she is not married.

Even by the lax standards of our own day, this sort of history would make people look askance at her. In her village she is undoubtedly a shamed person – *she has to get water in the hottest part of the day as the other women won't associate with her.*

So, take it all and all, she's a worthless person, isn't she? What Jew or Samaritan would want to invite her to lunch?

But, you might be thinking, the saviour of the world could certainly spare a crumb even for a shamed Samaritan woman. He could preach to her that her sins are forgiven, you might be supposing, or he could offer her some other kind of pastoral help.

But he doesn't, does he? No, he asks her to help him. He opens the conversation with her by asking her to give him a drink.

And then look at how this story ends: she brings belief in Jesus to her village, and the villagers come to Jesus because of her.

She isn't worthless then, is she? No, then she takes her rightful place among the apostles. The evangelization of her village is her accomplishment.

And so when Jesus asks her to care for him, he starts a process that brings her from being worthless to being the apostle to her village.

The remedy of love for human worthlessness is modelled for us here, isn't it?



☞☞ We listen fascinated to the story of the meeting by the well of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Her history reminds us of our own frailties; her finding of faith and a new life encourages us. Thirst and hunger are such elemental experiences that they come immediately to mind, as we try to express the restless quest that shapes every human life. Though her life's searching has led her to make serious mistakes, we warm to the spirited woman from whom Jesus asks a drink. Jesus is thirsty; but what he seeks before all else is that this woman and those like her find true peace. In their memorable exchange he responds to the woman's searching. As she comes to recognise that she has found what her heart has been seeking, she 'puts down her water jar', and runs off to share the good news with the villagers she has been avoiding – by coming to the well at midday when few people are about.



This narrative has been written for a community that has meditated deeply upon basic themes of Christian faith – themes as relevant for us today as they were when the gospel was written. The Saviour is progressively presented as the one in whom humanity's long and troubled search will find what it has been looking for. He is 'greater than Jacob', the ancestor of Israel; he is not only 'a prophet'; he is 'the Christ' of Israel's hopes. In fact – as in many texts of John's gospel – he intimates a claim to the divine name itself, 'I AM he'. His coming inaugurates a new order, 'worship of the Father in Spirit and truth' – something far beyond what has been known to Jews and Samaritans. He brings 'living waters, welling up to eternal life'. John's community would have heard in these words overtones of the wonder of their baptism.

The woman's reaction to her enlightenment was a reminder to those who had found faith in Christ that they too were called to be missionaries. And this reminder has a sharp edge. It is not easy for us, today, to appreciate the bitterness of the estrangement between Jews and Samaritans – though the shocking conflicts of recent times may help us to understand the violent attitudes that divided these two groups. Of the Synoptic Gospels, Luke alone – the Gentile convert – shows any sympathy for the Samaritans. A missionary outreach to these people, therefore, must have seemed almost unthinkable to early Christians, most of whom were from a Jewish background. The attitude of Jesus, and the success he had in this chance meeting with Samaritans, was an encouragement for them to take up the Church's mission, even though the difficulties seemed insurmountable.

This lesson is hammered home for them – and for us – in the words of Jesus to his bewildered disciples: 'My food is to do the will of the one who sent me'; the harvest is 'ready' – 'grain for eternal life'. His final lesson is a call to humility – the saving plan he is inaugurating is God's work – among God's workers, 'one sows, another reaps'

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We are all witnesses to the fact that "the lowly, the exploited, the poor and underprivileged" can and do achieve a lot ... When the poor organize themselves they become genuine "social poets: creators of work, builders of housing, producers of food, above all for people left behind by the world market".

– Pope Francis 7 November 2019

ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK

Don't forget, **please bring in one non-perishable item per family each week.** Your weekly items provide regular support to the needy in the Illawarra. **Thank you!**

PROJECT COMPASSION 2020

Father of four, Barry, embodies resilience and strength. Growing up in a tough environment, he had to look inside himself to make the right choices for himself and his family.

Barry, a Gamilaroi man originally from western NSW, remembers his early years as a time of enormous hardship. He didn't have a stable home or support network and was mostly brought up by his grandparents.

He became a father in his late teens and was suddenly faced with responsibilities for which he wasn't ready. He started drinking heavily, behaviour that he'd witnessed previously.

Barry, and others like him, were able to take part in Red Dust Healing – a cultural healing program, which encourages participants to examine their own personal hurt and allows them to heal from within. The program addresses family and personal relationships, and what may have been lifelong patterns of violence, abuse and neglect.

Red Dust Healing Founder, Tom Powell, is humbled that the program has won numerous awards and helped over 16,000 people like Barry across Australia.

Today, thanks to the Red Dust Healing program, Barry is an inspirational father to his four girls and a respected leader in his community. He now facilitates Red Dust Healing workshops and helps others through their healing process. A brighter future for men, women and their families can start today. Let's Go Further, Together.

In today's gospel we hear about the woman of Samaria who was engaged in a very truthful encounter with Jesus. The Jews despised the Samaritans as having no claim on their God. This nameless woman, an outcast from her own community, chose to visit the well at a time to avoid those who judged her harshly.

It's important to acknowledge how radical this encounter was. Jesus reaches out to her as he did to outcasts demonstrating that all people are valuable to God. In this way we too are called to be radical, to uphold the dignity of all people.

The exchange was so profound, bringing about a change of heart for the Samaritan woman. She then became a witness for Jesus, influencing those around her.

Just as the Samaritan woman went on to share her revelation with others, Barry also shares the richness of his experience. His community is striving forward, facing the challenges of intergenerational trauma, past oppression and colonisation together.

How can we manifest the radical love of Christ in order to break down barriers of injustice?

TRIBUNAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Marriage breakdown is a traumatic experience for all those concerned. The Church reaches out in support of those who are divorced, while upholding the permanence of a true Christian marriage. The Wollongong Office of the Tribunal extends an invitation to any divorced person who would like to talk about the annulment process. You can be assured that your privacy will be respected. Should you choose to apply for an annulment, you will be guided and supported through the process. For further information please phone the Wollongong Office of the Tribunal on 4222 2409 or email tribunal@dow.org.au

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 or can acquire some small plastic bottles, please bring them in by Sunday, 5 April.**



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Weekend	14/15 Mar	Third Sunday of Lent Year A John's Gospel: Jesus with the Samaritan Woman at the Well
Saturday	14 Mar	6:30pm Social Dinner at Thirroul Bowling Club
Sunday to Friday		Ken is in Queensland for Canon Law work
Tuesday	17 Mar	St Patrick, bishop ... Mass at 5:30pm
Thursday	19 Mar	St Joseph, husband of Mary ... Mass at 9:00am
Friday	20 Mar	2:48pm [14:48] Autumnal Equinox [Winter is on the way!]
Weekend	21/22 Mar	Fourth Sunday of Lent Year A John's Gospel: Jesus with the Man Born Blind
Tuesday	24 Mar	7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II for Lent

SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Please be safe on our beaches and waterways. So far, since 1 July 2019, there have already been **4,185** rescues – that's **134** since last week!
Please *be safe* on our beaches. **FLAG SWIM FLAG**



EASTER "JOBS" DURING THE EASTER LITURGIES

Several people will be needed for various "jobs" during the Easter Liturgies, e.g. carrying the Holy Oils, handing out rosemary on Good Friday. If you or any of your family would be available, please email or phone the Parish Office this week.

OUR CLEANERS RECEIVE AWARDS

Two International Women's Day scholarship winners 2020 are founders of the company that does the cleaning in the presbytery and Parish Office. Beatrice Kabahire and Anastazia Niyitunga are originally from Burundi, but are refugees. In 2017 they started **MAB Cleaning Services** providing work for eight women, seven of whom are from a refugee background.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Third Sunday of Lent • Year A

1st Reading	Exodus 17:3-7
2nd Reading	Romans 5:1-2,5-8
Gospel	John 4:5-42

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Fourth Sunday of Lent • Year A

1st Reading	1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13
2nd Reading	Ephesians 5:8-14
Gospel	John 9:1-41

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