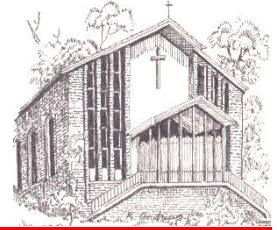




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



4 / 5 APRIL 2020

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION ❖ YEAR A



Prayer



Fasting



Almsgiving



THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The King on a Donkey

On Palm Sunday, we commemorate the occasion when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, and the crowd shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Prophets had foretold that there would be a son of David who would be a righteous king over his people. God told King David, "Your throne will be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). And Zechariah foretold that this promised king would come to his people riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9). The crowd around Jesus had seen the miracles he did, and they thought he might be that promised righteous messianic son of David. So, when they saw Jesus headed to Jerusalem on a donkey, they cried hosanna to their king.

And you can see why they did. It is a wonderful thing to live in a country governed by a righteous ruler. All those subject to his reign are blessed by living in a community where justice is in power.

But don't we need a reality check here? It has been a very long time since anyone from any family was a king of Israel, hasn't it? And in which country on earth does justice rule? So, where then is that divinely promised, everlasting righteous kingship of the Davidic line? What is there, after all, to yell "hosanna" about?

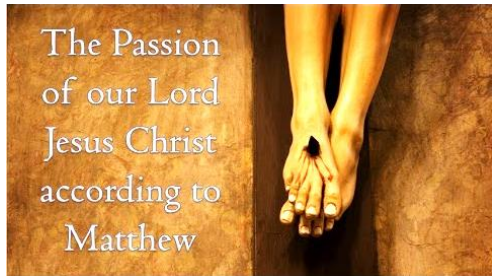
But God's promise to David is true, even so.

Christ, who is a son of David, is a righteous king; and his kingship is forever. Only, he makes his way into his kingdom riding on a donkey.

Wouldn't a king want to ride on a horse? On a stallion? A donkey is a ludicrous beast. Why would a king want to ride on a donkey?

But the donkey helps us see the point. This king is riding to the cross. His title to be king is blazoned on a sign at its top. No one needs a stallion for a journey with crucifixion at its end. For this purpose, a donkey is perfectly fine.

And so, the divine promises about the Davidic king are true. There is an everlasting kingdom of justice. But it is not of this world, as Christ explains to Pilate. In this world, the king of justice rides on a donkey, and the cross is at the heart of true and righteous kingship. Today's liturgy begins with the commemoration of the triumphant entry of Jesus into the holy city. This year we hear Matthew's account. Its messianic emphasis is clear. The Master's foreknowledge and authority are affirmed. A prophecy of Scripture ...



✠✠ (a combination of verses from Isaiah and Zechariah) is being fulfilled; but his coming is in humility and peacefulness. The people cry, 'Hosanna to the Son of David'.

The first reading from Isaiah invites us to learn from the example of the Saviour, the trust we should have in our Father in heaven, whatever trials we face. But it is something else that makes this reading appropriate on the threshold of Holy Week – with God's true Servant, we must be open to a new meeting with our God in what lies ahead – glad that the Lord 'wakes us to hear, to listen like disciples'.



In the second reading, from the letter to the Philippians – echoing a hymn used in the liturgy of the first generation of the Church – Paul summarises with majestic brevity the drama of the Paschal Mystery we are about to celebrate: Jesus 'emptied himself, sharing our human condition, even to 'accepting death on a cross'; and then, for our sake, he is 'raised high', one with the Father in the glory of the divine name.

Matthew's account of the Lord's passion has the features we have come to associate with this gospel. Faith in Jesus as the messiah has already been clearly affirmed in the description of his entry into Jerusalem; and the ultimate outcome is clearly anticipated: 'After my resurrection, I shall go before you to Galilee'. But the subtlety with which Matthew's account makes an affirmation of faith in the Saviour seems to indicate that he has his Jewish audience in mind. The refrain of fulfilment – as 'the Son of Man goes to his fate' – echoes through the narrative. The titles attributed to Jesus are few, 'the Christ', 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man'. But they are crucial for converts from a Jewish background. The first raises the great issue that confronted the Jewish people. The title, 'Son of God' (which was to become an ultimate expression of the absolute claim of Christian faith) was open-ended to the ears of old Israel, indicating one who has God's special favour. It was the title, 'Son of Man', crucial at the trial of Jesus, that removed all ambiguity. 'You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power (God)', Jesus declares (referring to Psalm 110), 'and coming on the clouds of heaven', (a reference to Daniel 7). 'What need of witnesses have we now!' exclaimed the high priest. The rending of the veil of the Temple and the apocalyptic events in the holy city, are a divine confirmation that, with the Lord's death, the old order has given way to the new. And the centurion's words, 'In truth this was a son of God', are an expression of the Church's newfound faith.

The liturgies of Holy Week will teach us, not with fine oratory, but by recounting the great events in which the generous ways of God found a final expression in our human history. Let this recognition set the tone for our participation in the liturgies of these days.

PRAYER AMIDST COVID-19

Gracious God, we give thanks anew for your providence and presence. We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas. We pray for those in need of healing. We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving. We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response. We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders. We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable. This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK

Don't forget, you can bring in one non-perishable item per family each week and leave items on the front verandah of the presbytery. Thank you!

PROJECT COMPASSION 2020

Dominic, forty-seven, is a father of six from Papua New Guinea. In 2016, he became involved with Caritas Australia's partner, Centre of Hope, which runs safe house and family anonymous programs and turned a difficult life and an unhappy relationship around.

Now a community trainer, he works with other men to help them to change their behaviour and build more harmonious family lives.

Domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and limited employment opportunities mean that many in PNG struggle to meet their basic family needs. Forty percent of its population live below the poverty line.

In 2016, Caritas Australia and its PNG partner, Centre of Hope, invited Dominic to join its Safe House program. It provides Gender-Based-Violence prevention training, counselling services and safe accommodation for women and children survivors of violence. It also provides support for income-generating projects and life skills for young people.

"After entering the Caritas program, I have actually changed some of my bad attitudes. It has really opened my mind and heart to see where my weaknesses are and I'm trying to improve," Dominic says.

Please help support the Safe House project and help bring greater harmony to families in Papua New Guinea. A brighter future for men, women and their families can start today. Let's Go Further, Together.

The Holy Week story highlights the struggle for communion and solidarity in the midst of great challenges, injustice and suffering. Today's gospel readings offer us great contrast. We can see ourselves in the crowds amongst those who were jubilant, crying 'Hosanna' as Jesus enters Jerusalem to then find the crowd shouting 'Crucify him' just a few days later. Like Peter, Judas and the other disciples, we too can be fickle followers of Jesus.

In the Passion we see the suffering of Jesus as he is beaten, scourged and ridiculed. He is treated unjustly as a notorious thief is chosen for release over Jesus. Jesus is deserted by his closest friends and it is only a Gentile centurion, Mary and a group of faithful women who remain at the foot of the cross. At the end, Jesus even feels deserted by his Father asking 'why have you abandoned me?'

In the Project Compassion story this week Dominic shares how he was liberated from his pattern of domestic violence. Just as Mary and the faithful women remained at the foot of the cross with Jesus, Dominic's wife and family chose to remain with him on his journey to wholeness. His participation in the Caritas Australia supported program at the Centre of Hope in Papua New Guinea bought light back to his family.

By opening himself up to the process of counselling with Christophylda, his wife, he was able to learn new ways to manage his behaviour and attitudes, bringing new life to his family where there was once fear and darkness. We can identify with much of Jesus' suffering, in our own lives and the lives of people close to us. We can take comfort and consolation in that Jesus identifies with the suffering of the human race. We now know that the story doesn't end there, that there is the resurrection yet to come. Sadness and death give way to new life.

As we journey through Holy Week, will we keep in mind our sisters and brothers who suffer? Please keep Project Compassion boxes and envelopes at home until you can safely leave your home and hand them in at the Parish Office.



DOMINIC. PAPUA NEW GUINEA

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Friday	3 Apr	Please bring in palms for Palm Sunday
Weekend	4/5 Apr	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord Year A ↳ collect blessed palms from the presbytery verandah
Sunday	5 Apr	Daylight Saving ends — <i>fall back an hour</i>
Monday	6 Apr	Holy Week begins [Liturgies televised each day this week]
Thursday	9 Apr	Holy Thursday Parish Office will be open today 10am to 3pm
Friday	10 Apr	Good Friday [the text of the Way of the Cross will be emailed]
Saturday	11 Apr	Easter Vigil
Sunday	12 Apr	Easter Sunday ↳ collect Easter Water from the presbytery verandah

NEEDED FOR EASTER

For **Good Friday**, 10 April [and also for **Anzac Day**] rosemary (cut up into small strips) will be needed. **Please put cut rosemary on the front verandah of the presbytery by Thursday, 9 April.** At the Easter Vigil, water will be blessed, and everyone will be able to collect a bottle to take to bless your homes and cars. **If you have some small plastic bottles, please put them on the presbytery verandah by Sunday, 5 April.**

WHEN DOES LENT END?

Lent lasts **40 days** beginning on Ash Wednesday – but not including the Sundays. The **fortieth day is Holy Saturday.** So, Lent ends at **midday** on Holy Saturday.

MAKING HOLY WEEK SPECIAL ... SOME IDEAS

Spend time listening to music that helps you slow down. Prepare at least one meal with special care for yourself/family; sit down together to eat. Stop at 6pm to pray together.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Passion or Palm Sunday • Year **A**
1st Reading Isaiah 50:4-7
2nd Reading Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Easter Sunday • Year **A**
1st Reading Acts 10:34,37-43
2nd Reading Colossians 3:1-4
Gospel Matthew 28:1-10

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	This week, all liturgies will be recorded and a link will be emailed
Thirroul	Tuesday	
	Wednesday	
	Thursday	
	Friday	

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