



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



19/20 DECEMBER 2020 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ❖ YEAR B Vinnies Christmas Appeal

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Building Is God's

By the time of the first Reading (2 Samuel), David is King. He has won a lot of victories, and he is rich and prosperous too. His house is built of wood and stones. But the ark of God is housed only in a tent.

David thought about the fact that God had only a tent while he, the King, had a real house; and so, he made a decision to build a house for God too. He made it his responsibility to take care of God, you might say.

And God laughed at him. God told David, "I will build you a house!" And so, God did. The Son of God, born of David's lineage, is that house. The kingly line of David's lineage finds its everlasting fulfillment in Christ. And every Christian finds a home there, too, in the body of Christ that is the Church.



David's son, Solomon, did eventually build a house for the ark of God in Jerusalem, and it was magnificent. But any earthly building, even the great temple in Jerusalem, is puny by comparison with the house that God built for David and for all God's people in Christ the Lord.

David did well to revere the ark of God, just as we do well to revere the Church – the People of God. But it was foolish of David to feel that it was his responsibility to care for God. God wants our love, but God does not need our protection. Without our help, God is still, Godself, Lord of heaven and earth. But when God became human in the little babe in the manger, Mary, Joseph and his family had to care for God – an awesome concept.

Like David, we can love the holy things of God, and we can give our service to God's Church. But it is not our responsibility to make the Church big, strong, and successful. If we think that God's church, or anything built for God, will lose and go down without our building it up, we will be as foolish as David in the first Reading.

The building is God's.

Today, our Advent liturgy takes on a new focus. In the past Sundays, the theme of the Saviour's 'coming' has made us aware of the unfolding of God's plan for creation. Luke's gospel of the Annunciation – emphasising the fact that the coming of the Saviour depended upon Mary's consent – reminds us of the mystery that is basic to our existence as persons, that we must all play our part in the realisation of God's final plan. Our life 'in Christ' is at once gift and task. All that we do, leading to eternal life, begins with the unmerited gifts of



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☞☞ God's 'grace', but these gifts bring with them the tasks whereby we realise our true personhood, as followers of Christ.



Our first Reading from 2 Samuel is chosen because it contains the prophecy that the sovereignty of the House of David will last forever. This prophecy, the angel tells Mary, will be fulfilled in the Son she is to conceive, who will be given 'the throne of his ancestor, David', and will exercise a 'reign that will never end'.

This fascinating Old Testament text, however, reflects the ambiguities of the mystery of divine/human collaboration through which God's designs are realised. Though David became, in retrospect, a symbolic figure in the messianic expectations of old Israel, there was much in his life that does not bear close scrutiny. And many of the kings who were his descendants were oppressors of the people, for whom the Jerusalem temple was a symbol of their centralised political power. The prophecy of Nathan, in the tradition that has developed over the intervening centuries, subtly hints at these ambiguities. God will fulfil the messianic expectations that have come to be associated with David's name, but the prophecy distances itself from the selfish politics of the House of David – David will not build God's 'house'; he is reminded that he was only a shepherd boy when God made him great; when God builds up David's house, and gives it a reign that will never end, the whole world will know that it is all God's doing.

What a contrast between this history, marked by human inadequacies, and the consent of Mary, opening the way to the glorious fulfilment of old Israel's hopes. The gospel account of Mary's encounter with God's messenger, we should note, is not a visual description – as suggested by familiar paintings. Taking the form of a dialogue, it spells out the decision in which Mary – putting aside her puzzlement and the uncertainties associated with the future into which she was being invited – gave her wholehearted consent. This consent, it is clear, is possible through God's 'grace' and favour: 'Rejoice so highly favoured', is the greeting brought by God's messenger. The narrative makes it clear that this beginning owes nothing to human standing or achievement. By human standards, Mary is an insignificant slip of a girl – fourteen or fifteen was the usual age of betrothal. She comes from Nazareth, an obscure village of about 150 souls, not even mentioned in the Old Testament. But the passing of time will bring to light how great were God's gifts, and how total was Mary's heroic response – making her the mother of the Saviour, the model of discipleship – indeed the Mother of the whole family of discipleship.

The reading from St Paul, the concluding passage of Romans, calls us back to awareness of the place of Mary's response – and our personal responses – in a total plan shaped by God's gifts, and our carrying out of the tasks these gifts have brought – a 'mystery kept secret for endless ages ... the way the eternal God wants things to be', revealed in Jesus Christ, and to be made known to the whole human family.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES – YOU MUST REGISTER BEFOREHAND

CHRISTMAS MASSES:	Thursday, 24 December	6:30pm Thirroul Church
	Thursday, 24 December	9:30pm Thirroul [not at Wombarra]
	Friday, 25 December	8:00am AND 9:30am Thirroul
	Saturday, 26 December	5:30pm Thirroul
	Sunday, 27 December	8:00am Thirroul

then Masses will be at the usual times

Friday, 1 January 2021 9:30am Thirroul



**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA
drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass**

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL – a HUGE “Thank you!”

Thank you to all who contributed in any way to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal. The total



amount *so far*
this year
\$4,700.



Thank you to all who have donated hampers, food, other items and ‘Giving Tree’ gifts. Vinnies have packed up and delivered to the needy in our area: **32** hampers, **48** children’s toys and **13** baskets of food items from our Parish School. Thank you for your generosity! And thank you to members of our local Vinnies Conference members for their sterling

ministry, making, as Saint Paul said, hospitality our special care. (Romans 12:13) Why not join these wonderful Vinnies members and become a member yourself? There’s always room for more helpers! See one of the Vinnies members at Mass, *or contact the Parish Office.*

REGISTER FOR SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND CHRISTMAS MASSES

**Now is the time to register for any Saturday or Sunday Mass
up until February 2021**

Phone or email the Parish Office or <http://thirroulcatholic.eventbrite.com.au>

SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER AFTER 5:30PM MASS

As there is no longer a requirement to book at **Club Thirroul, Station Street**, resumption of dinner of a Saturday evening on the **second Saturday of each month**: dates proposed are ... **9 January**, 13 February, 13 March, 10 April (*Easter is the first weekend in April*), 8 May, 12 June, 10 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October, 13 November and 11 December. Please come along and enjoy good times with fellow parishioners.

ADVENT / CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Christmas is a very tender time. It is true that Jesus reveals who God really is – and we are constantly amazed to see God in the vulnerable, welcoming and needy baby gazing up at us from the crib, inviting us to hold him in our arms and take him to our hearts. We may well ask with astonishment: ‘Can this be what God is really like?’ But for all that wonder, we must never lose sight of the fact that Jesus is also revealing to us who we really are. As human he showed us what we are called to be, in his simplicity, in his ordinariness, in his courageous embracing of all it means to be human, and especially in his trust in God and love of others in all the circumstances of his life.

The most hardened heart can melt before the simple acceptance of love given by a newborn baby. A baby is totally needy, but it already has the potential to become a unique, creative, free and wonderfully loving human being. Life will direct the baby’s life force. Life will curb the baby’s life force. Life will wound the baby’s life force. But nothing can destroy the God-given grace that every child is, and, as Jesus showed us, nothing can separate any of us from the love of God shown us in the Heart of Jesus. Christmas is a call back to the heart – the heart of what it is to be human.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday 21 Dec Summer Solstice 21:02 (9:02pm) ... the longest day [nearly]
 Saturday 26 Dec Saint Stephen, the first martyr
 Friday 1 Jan 9:30am Mass: Mary, Mother of God, World Day of Peace

SURFING SEASON ... BE SAFE

So far this season, there have been **879** rescues [*last week 795*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **2,828** first aid treatments [*last week 2,058*] have been performed.



SUMMER SOLSTICE

A solstice is an event that occurs when the Sun appears to reach its most northerly or southerly excursion relative to the celestial equator on the celestial sphere. Two solstices occur annually, around 21 June and 21 December. The day of a solstice in either hemisphere has either the most sunlight of the year (summer solstice) or the least sunlight of the year (winter solstice) for any place other than the Equator. The word solstice is derived from the Latin *sol* (“sun”) and *sistere* (“to stand still”), because at the solstices, the Sun’s declination appears to “stand still”; that is, the seasonal movement of the Sun’s daily path (as seen from Earth) pauses at a northern or southern limit before reversing direction. In 2021, in Sydney, the summer solstice is on **Monday, 21 December at 21:02 – 9:02pm**.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL – Make Christmas come alive!

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal has been a great success – thank you! You can support the Appeal financially:

- ✓ **Donation Envelopes** – are still available in the church
- ✓ **Online Donations** – go to this website to make your donation:
<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way/vinnies-thirroul-christmas-appeal>

<p>THIS Sunday’s Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p>Fourth Sunday of Advent • Year B</p> <p>1st Reading 2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14-16 2nd Reading Romans 16:25-27 Gospel Luke 1:26-38</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday’s Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p>The Holy Family • Year B</p> <p>1st Reading Sirach 3:2-6,12-14 2nd Reading Colossians 3:12-21 Gospel Luke 2:22-40</p>
<p>SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p>Church of St Michael • Thirroul Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am</p> <div style="border: 1px solid pink; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Restricted numbers apply ... to attend ... you must register beforehand with the Parish Office</p> </div>	<p>LITURGIES THIS WEEK</p> <p>Thirroul Monday — Tuesday 17:30 Wednesday 09:00</p> <p>Thursday 09:00 18:30 and 21:30 Friday Christmas Day 08:00 and 09:30</p>

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

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📧 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