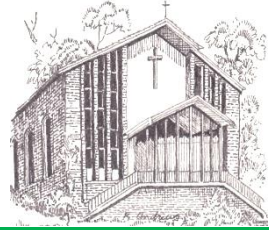




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



13/14 FEBRUARY 2021

6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ❖ YEAR B

Ash Wednesday 17 Feb ★ Project Compassion

THIS WEEK'S READINGS *Only Say the Word, and My Soul Shall Be Healed*

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus reaches out to touch a leper; and, by touching him heals him. Leprosy is a disease worth fearing. It disfigures and disables a person. The ancient world thought it could be transmitted by touch. For the sake of the health of the community, the law made lepers outcasts; but, even without the law, nobody wanted to touch a leper. The leper healed by Jesus must have lived without the touch of another human being for a long time.

How welcome the touch of Jesus must have been to that leper! And how overjoyed he must have been when he found himself healed!

Leprosy is not the only thing that severely disfigures and disables a person. Sin does so too. And the touch of Jesus that heals leprosy heals sin as well. That is why, at Mass, we pray, "Only say the word, and my soul shall be healed." Forego touch, Lord! We would be so overjoyed if you just said the word! Your healing would be so welcome to us!



But we say those words at every Mass, week after week, year after year. And still, we struggle with our sins. Somewhere Nietzsche says, unkindly, about Christians, "They don't even look like the redeemed!" That is a painful accusation, isn't it? Why aren't we healed, by word or by touch, as the leper was? Why do we have to keep asking for the Lord's healing touch at every Mass?

But think about it this way: how would Nietzsche know what the redeemed look like? For that matter, how would we? Why should we think that we are in a position to see the healing that the Lord does in our lives? Why would we think that we are in a position to judge how far we have come in conquering the sin in ourselves? The Lord tells us not to judge others (Matthew 7:1). Why should we think we are able to judge ourselves?

So, we do not have to see the effects of the healing touch of the Lord in order for it to do its work. The touch of the Word, for whose healing word we pray at every Mass, does its healing deep within. Our job is to be open to that touch.

Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom, by preaching and by the healings that signalled the Kingdom's mysterious coming in his own person.

Critical studies of the miracle narratives of the four gospels have produced important conclusions. They concern a relatively small number of events – about 30 in all. These narratives offer a distinct contrast to the characteristics of typical 'wonder stories'. Though part of the Christian message from the beginning, they are constantly associated with a

concern that they not give rise to a superficial popular enthusiasm, but be understood as signs of the coming of the Kingdom. We have already recognised the importance of this concern of Mark. His account of the healing of the leper, as Jesus begins his Galilean ministry presses home the point.



What a magnificent encounter with which to introduce the missionary journeys of Jesus. It would be hard to find a more telling symbol of the human miseries that Jesus was sent to overcome, than the plight of the leper who threw himself at the feet of Jesus – ‘If you want to you can cure me’. It was a situation produced in large part by human ignorance and fear, accentuated by traditions of ritual cleanness. Our first reading from Leviticus describes this pathetic condition in graphic detail – obliged to wear torn clothes, with hair dishevelled, and sounding the warning cry, ‘Unclean!’, that ostracised the leper from normal society. What the biblical writings called ‘leprosy’ included not only the dread Hansen’s disease, but many other skin disorders, many of which modern medicine recognises not to be contagious.

As the Saviour is moved with compassion in the presence of this human misery, we are reminded that the Servant of God of the late Isaian writings, who embodied God’s saving designs, by ‘bearing the sorrows’ of the people, is described as assuming the condition of a leper – ‘Despised, familiar with suffering, one from whom we averted our gaze’ (Isaiah 53:3). In fact, Jesus made an astounding gesture of solidarity with the man in his misery. As he healed the leper with his word of prophetic authority, he ‘stretched out his hand and touched him’. In doing so, according to the Law, he had made himself ritually unclean.

Those who claimed the power of healing were not uncommon in the world in which Jesus lived. Being seen as one of their number could seriously compromise the evangelising mission that had been so tellingly expressed in the healing of the leper. Jesus urged the man, therefore, to go off quietly, fulfilling the Law’s prescription by having the priests verify his cure. But the man who had been cured could not contain himself. So important, however was it to Jesus – that the notoriety his healing had attracted be minimised – that he was forced to keep away from the towns. Nevertheless, the people were still drawn to him – Who is this man?



Project Compassion 2021



This week the season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which also marks the beginning of the annual Caritas Australia Project Compassion Appeal. Donations to Project Compassion allows Caritas Australia, the Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development, to work with local communities around the world to alleviate poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice.

You are encouraged to put your compassion into action this Lent through your prayer, fasting and almsgiving by supporting Project Compassion. You may use a Project Compassion box or a set of envelopes for your donations or you can donate online via the Caritas Australia website at: lent.caritas.org.au

Saint Oscar Romero is our inspiration for Project Compassion 2021, so in his words let’s **“Aspire not to have more, but to be more.”**

LENTEN REFLECTION GROUPS

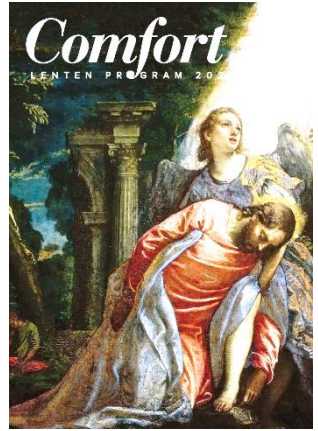
Lent begins on Wednesday, 17 February. As usual, during Lent, small groups will gather throughout our Parish to follow the Diocese of Wollongong's 2021 Lenten resource – *Comfort*.

Groups meet for approximately one hour each week to reflect on the Gospel readings of the Sundays of Lent. The *Comfort* resource includes Sunday Gospel reflections, spiritual direction, gospel readings, responsorial psalms, prayers and reflection questions.

Lenten groups are a great way to meet other parishioners and to prepare for Easter.

We are in need of more hosts to facilitate the program this year. All resources are supplied for free and the group can be held at a time that suits you in your own home or in the parish Common Room.

If you are able to host a group, please add your name as a host in the appropriate box on the sign on sheet in the church or contact Kerrie Hennessy on 0422 987 058 or hennesyk01@dow.catholic.edu.au



Pancake Tuesday, 16 February, Mass at 5:30pm followed by burning of palms.

ASH WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY: MASSES ARE AT 09:15 AND 19:00

If you know someone who cannot make it to Ash Wednesday Mass but would like to receive the ashes, bring a small container or some foil to take the Ashes to them.

LENT: 40 DAYS FROM 17 FEBRUARY

Ash Wednesday Masses will be at **9:15am** and **7:00pm**.

The **Imposition of Ashes** will take place during both Masses. If you have a family member who is homebound, you are welcome to bring along a small container to take some blessed Ashes home for them. Some of the senior students from our Parish Primary School will be attending the 9:15am Mass and they will be commissioned to take the blessed Ashes to conduct Liturgy of the Word services in each of the classrooms, and to distribute the Ashes.



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Lent is a penitential season of **prayer, self-denial and helping others**. In this way, the whole Church prepares for Easter with those who are to be baptized. The liturgy takes account of the spirit of penance: musical instruments are only used to sustain singing, and floral decorations, if any, are kept very simple. In Lent, the Alleluia is omitted at Mass, even in celebrations of solemnities and feasts. Catholics are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year – in Australia between Ash Wednesday and Trinity Sunday (30 May).

Ash Wednesday and **Good Friday** are days of fast and abstinence. The law of fasting binds those who have completed their eighteenth year, until the beginning of their sixtieth year; the law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. *These laws do not apply to those who are in hospital, sick or suffering from a chronic illness.*

BRING BACK YOUR PALMS – BY TUESDAY

The palms you were given last Palm Sunday ... we need them back, please – so that we can burn them on **“Pancake Tuesday”**, that is, **Mardi Gras**, so as to make the ashes for **Ash Wednesday**. We burn the palms after the 5:30pm Mass on Tuesday, 16 February, so please bring back your palms before then ... *come along and join in the “ashes making.”*



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Tuesday 16 Feb Pancake Tuesday – *Mardi Gras* Mass 5:30pm

Wednesday 17 Feb Ash Wednesday: Masses at 09:15 and 19:00

Friday 5 Mar 11:00am World Day of Prayer at our Parish Church



**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**

SURFING SEASON ... BE SAFE

Since 1 July 2020, there have been **3,437** rescues [*last week 3,389*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **13,123** first aid treatments [*last week 12,720*] have been performed.



ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED

A gentleman in his early seventies is looking for the long-term rent of a granny flat or similar in the northern beaches area. If you can help or know of some accommodation, please contact the Parish Office to find out more information.

BAPTISMS AT THIRROUL

If you want your infant baptized in our Parish, please contact the Parish Office to organize a time for preparation and a time for the Baptism [usually late Saturday mornings]. Until Covid-19 regulations permit, Baptisms will be celebrated this way.

COMING TO WEEKDAY/WEEKEND MASSES?

There's no need to "book in" beforehand – just turn up and sign in. If you know someone who cannot get to Mass and would like Holy Communion, let the Parish Office know.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

6th Sunday of Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1

Gospel Mark 1:40-45

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

First Sunday of Lent • Year B

1st Reading Genesis 9:8-15

2nd Reading 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel Mark 1:12-15

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul

Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

Restricted numbers apply ... to attend ...
you must register beforehand with the Parish Office

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul	Monday	—
	Tuesday	17:30
Ash Wednesday 09:15 and 19:00		
	Thursday	09:00
	Friday	09:30

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