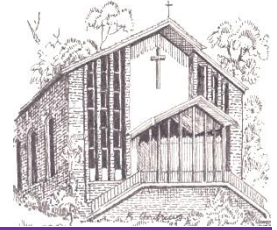




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



20 / 21 FEBRUARY 2021
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT ❖ YEAR B
Prayer  **Fasting**  **Almsgiving**

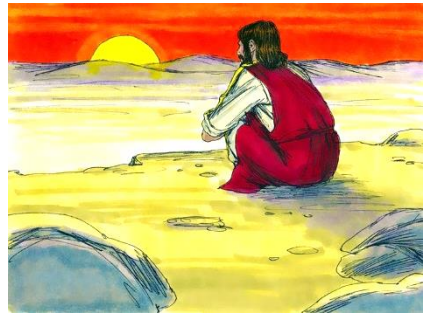
THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Rainbow and the Goodness of God

In the First Reading, God gives Noah the rainbow as a reassuring sign of God's goodness: God will never again do what God has just done. God will never again destroy everything with a flood.

But why isn't it bad enough that God did it once? God brought it about that every human being, except for Noah and his small family, died by drowning in one great natural catastrophe. Where is the goodness of God in the story of the flood?

Well, here is one way to think about God's action. Consider the medical treatment for certain fatal cancers. For those deadly diseases, doctors can try to save the patient with an autologous bone marrow transplant. The doctor takes bone marrow from the patient and hunts for any cells that are not cancerous. He saves those healthy cells, but he kills the cancerous ones. Then he clones the healthy cells and puts them back into the patient. By this painful measure, there is a chance that the doctor can save the life of his patient.



In the story of the flood, God tries the analogue of this same procedure on the human race, doomed to die because of sin. God takes a few morally healthy human beings and puts them into a new world, to reproduce there. The morally sick and destructive population of the old world dies in God's flood.

But, you might think, what dies in the treatment for cancer is only cells. What died in the story of the flood is human beings!

True, but notice this other difference between the medical treatment and the flood. In the flood, the selection between the sick and the healthy people is made by the people themselves. Those who aren't on Noah's boat don't want to be on it. To get on the boat, they would have to acknowledge their sins and accept God's means to safety. If they repented, they would be among the healthy, the righteous invited on the boat. But this is what they refuse to do.

The boat is there for those who don't refuse it. And, as the Gospel reading makes plain, that boat is always there, in Christ, who saves all those who do not reject him.

And so the rainbow is a sign of the goodness of God, who calls everyone to salvation.

Undertaking an important journey, we must be well prepared. As we set out on our journey to Easter, we must be clear about the destination that gives meaning to this journey. ☩☩

🔗🔗 Today's gospel reading invites us to prepare ourselves in the company of Jesus. As he set out on the journey that was to lead to Easter, he prepared himself by withdrawing to some desert place, and confronting the temptation to avoid the great task that lay ahead of him. This is an astounding moment in the life of Jesus. Have we taken seriously the fact that, in sharing our human experience, Jesus knew the weight of human decisions and the temptations involved – though, of course, he was without sin in the response he made? This testing brought Jesus new strength, and he began to proclaim the Good News of the coming reign of God. In his company, during the coming days, let us recognise the nature of our temptations, and the bonds of selfishness from which we want to be freed as we make our journey to Easter.



Jesus found strength in the certainty with which he looked to the end of his journey. Though what lay ahead would not be easy, he knew that God's goodness and mercy would be victorious in the end – through his generous response to the call of his Father.

The first reading from the Book of Genesis invites us to share in this hope and expectation as we set out on our journey. It is the conclusion of the story of Noah and the ark which saved him from The Flood – one of the old stories in the introductory pages of the Bible, describing a wayward humanity, in need of the salvation God was to give. The story ends on a note of hope and promise – the rainbow will be a sign of the covenant God makes with humanity, promising that he will always be merciful.

What a magnificent symbol – reminding us of the trust we can place in God, whatever our difficulties and failings! Whenever we see the rainbow and know its promise of fine, clear weather after a storm, we should remember God's promise, and renew our trust in God's mercy, and the final triumph of God's goodness.

The second reading interprets the story of the flood and Noah's being saved as a kind of foretelling of the wonder of baptism – the destination of our journey to Easter, because it is through our baptism that we share in the risen life of Christ.

The beginning of our journey is a time for personal reflection for each of us. Perhaps, however, we need to ponder more deeply the astonishing fact that Jesus knew temptation, though he was without sin in his response to its challenge.



**First Sunday of Lent
20/21 February 2021**



Jamila, 22, is a Rohingya woman living in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh. She was forced to flee the armed conflict in Myanmar to save herself, her elderly mother and her eight-month-old baby.

With the support of Caritas Australia, through Caritas Bangladesh, Jamila was able to access emergency food and shelter. She also received counselling, emotional support, and learnt sewing skills to help her earn an income.

Jamila now feels less alone, with a sense of community around her. She is able to 'Be More' to her little family. "Thank you, and thanks Caritas Australia," Jamila says.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 to help mothers like Jamila be more for her family and her community. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

"Aspire not to have more, but to be more." – Saint Oscar Romero

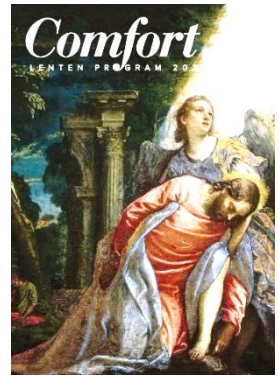
LENTEN REFLECTION GROUPS

Lent Reflection Groups are underway and you are welcome to join a group ... call the Parish Office for details:

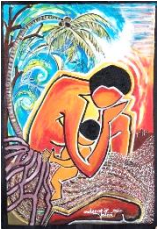
- ✚ Tuesday evenings, 7:30pm, Central Thirroul
- ✚ Wednesday mornings after 9am Mass in the Presbytery
- ✚ Thursday evenings, 7:30pm, Austinmer
- ✚ Friday afternoons, 2:00pm, Central Thirroul

Lenten groups are a great way to meet other parishioners and to prepare for Easter. A daily reflection book is provided – if you haven't received a copy, please call the Parish Office.

Lent lasts 40 days from Ash Wednesday – not counting Sundays.



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – FRIDAY, 5 MARCH



The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action", and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March. The movement aims to bring together women of various races, cultures and traditions in a yearly common Day of Prayer, as well as in closer fraternity, understanding and action throughout the year.



The World Day of Prayer 2021 host country is **Vanuatu** and the theme, prepared by the women, is "**Build on a Strong Foundation**". The Bible study text is Matthew 7:24-27.

Our local World Day of Prayer service will be held at our Parish Church of Saint Michael on **Friday, 5 March at 11am. All are welcome – please come along.**

A REFUGEE CAMP IN BANGLADESH

Twenty-two-year-old Jamila is a single mother, living in the world's largest refugee camp in Bangladesh. A Rohingya woman, she fled the armed conflict in Myanmar's Rakhine State to save herself, her elderly mother and eight-month-old baby daughter. Having been abandoned by her husband, she faced life in the camp on her own.

Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people have crossed into Bangladesh since August 2017. Over 1.3 million people remain in the densely populated camps in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

Thanks to the generosity of Caritas Australia's supporters and through our partnership with Caritas Bangladesh, Jamila had access to emergency food and shelter. Then, as her stay in the camp stretched on, Jamila joined the Women Friendly Spaces project where she received counselling and emotional support. She learnt about health and hygiene, participated in a parenting program and learnt sewing skills to help her to earn an income.

Jamila now has a sense of community around her, and feels less alone and more supported – and she is able to "Be More" to her family.

"I want to offer my thankful greetings to those who are kindly thinking of us from overseas," Jamila says. "Thank you, and thanks Caritas Australia." Thank you for your donations to Project Compassion 2021: boxes are available in the church or Parish Office.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday 22 Feb **The Chair of Saint Peter**, apostle
3rd Anniversary of the Ordination of Bishop Brian

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 **3,572** rescues [*last week 3,437*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **13,513** first aid treatments [*last week 13,123*] have been performed.



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.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2021

The Sacrament of Confirmation, for Year 6 students or older, will be celebrated at our Parish on Tuesday and Wednesday, 22 and 23 June. Enrolment Forms are now available on our Parish website, and enrolments close on 11 May: www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

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*

First Sunday of Lent • Year B

1st Reading Genesis 9:8-15
2nd Reading 1 Peter 3:18-22
Gospel Mark 1:12-15

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Lent • Year B

1st Reading Genesis 22:1-2,9-13,15-18
2nd Reading Romans 8:31-34
Gospel Mark 9:2-10

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul
Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

**Restricted numbers apply ... however, there is
no need to register beforehand with the Parish Office**

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Thirroul	Monday	—
	Tuesday	17:30
	Wednesday	09:00
	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