



# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



## 27/28 FEBRUARY 2021 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT ❖ YEAR B

Prayer  Fasting  Almsgiving

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

### *Sacrifice*

In the First Reading, Abraham offers his beloved son as a sacrifice to God. The Gospel Reading identifies Jesus as God's beloved Son. The two readings together remind us that God offers God's beloved Son as our sacrifice to God. Christ, our Passover lamb, is sacrificed for us. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

And so, the First Reading and the Gospel invite us to reflect on sacrifice. What is a sacrifice? And why would God want one, from Abraham or from us through Christ?

The first thing to see is that a sacrifice is a peculiar kind of gift.

In the case of ordinary gifts, which aren't sacrifices, the person who gets the gift is the one who benefits from the gift-giving. That person has the thing given; and if that thing was good enough to give, it is a good thing to get too. So, the gift-receiver is the primary beneficiary of ordinary gift-giving.

But a sacrifice is a different kind of gift. When one person gives something as a sacrifice, however great the gift is, in the giving of it that person themselves receives something of very great value. In sacrifice the gift-giver is the primary beneficiary of gift-giving.

To see this point, consider Maximilian Kolbe, who sacrificed his life for Franciszek Gajowniczek at Auschwitz.

The Nazis had randomly selected 10 prisoners to die, and Franciszek Gajowniczek was one of them. When he was picked, he cried out, "Oh, my poor wife! My poor children! I will never see them again!" But Maximilian Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take Franciszek's place. Kolbe knew that the selected prisoners would be slowly starved to death in a dark and airless bunker. But Kolbe offered his life for that of his fellow prisoner anyway. Witnesses reported afterwards that Kolbe prayed and sang hymns until the end when his voice failed.

In his sacrifice, Kolbe became a person in whom the beauty of love shone so brightly that his story now illumines all who hear about it. He gave his life to give life to Franciszek, but he himself received far more than he gave. Who would not want to be as lovely a soul as Kolbe was?

And so, God, who lacks for nothing, is glad to have the gift of our sacrifices, not because God gets something great from them, but because we do.





The destination of our Lenten journey is clearly to be seen in today’s readings: the mystery of the Cross, in which the father ‘did not spare his own Son’, and the glory which was to be the Risen Christ’s in his final triumph, glimpsed on the mountain.



The testing of Abraham is one of the masterpieces of the Old Testament.

The story echoes a brutal age in which the sacrifice of children was not uncommon – in fact, the people of the old Israel were taught to sacrifice an animal in place of their offspring, to turn them away from this horrendous temptation.

But the real point of the story, made so wonderfully, is the absolute trust that is asked of Abraham, making him the model of all true believers. To the people of Abraham’s world there was nothing more important in life than descendants who would remember and honour them. Long after the age when he could expect a child, God gave Abraham a son. If he gives up Isaac, he has nothing left but his trust in God. That trust is rewarded – those who will call him their father will be countless; all the peoples of the earth will be blessed in his name – through the salvation brought by the Cross of Christ.

This heart-rending story of the testing of a father’s love is linked in today’s liturgy with the basic truth of our Christian faith, proclaimed by St Paul, in the second reading. The eternal Father, who for our sake ‘did not spare his own Son’, will not refuse anything to his people in their need.

The promise made to Abraham was to be fulfilled in the victory of the Saviour’s resurrection. As he undertakes the journey towards the Cross and its glorious aftermath, he gives the chosen three among his followers a glimpse of the triumph in which he would fulfil the promise of the Law (Moses) and realise all the hopes of the prophets (Elijah). Again, the Father’s love shines through: ‘This is my beloved Son – listen to him!’

It was a long journey from Abraham’s testing to the final fulfilment of God’s promises. We are privileged that the route our journey must take is so clearly marked out for us.



## Second Sunday of Lent 27/28 February 2021



Margret, 39, is a teacher at a vocational school for deaf students in the Solomon Islands. She was born deaf, so she knows the challenges it poses to education and employment.

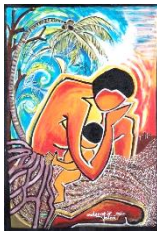
The school faced water shortages that often left staff and students without safe water for drinking, cooking, washing and growing vegetables.

Then Tropical Cyclone Harold damaged the school and its vegetable garden as the threat of Covid-19 loomed. With Caritas Australia’s support, the school installed water tanks, provided cyclone-proof building materials, and helped to implement Covid-19 prevention measures.

Margret’s school now has enough water for its students and the capacity to cater for more, and is now planning to boost food security through increased agricultural production.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 and help people living with disabilities in the Solomon Islands gain access to education and clean water, empowering them with skills to protect our common home. *Thank you for your generosity.***

## 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 SOLOMON ISLANDS SCHOOL

Margret, 39, is a teacher at a vocational school for deaf students in the Solomon Islands. She was born deaf, so she knows the challenges it poses to education and employment.

The school faced water shortages for about half the year. Staff and students would walk for up to half an hour to collect water for drinking, cooking, washing and growing vegetables. Then in April 2020, Tropical Cyclone Harold struck, damaging school buildings and its vegetable garden as the threat of Covid-19 loomed. With Caritas Australia's support, Margret's school installed eight large water tanks and provided cyclone-proof materials to repair the damage. It also helped the school implement Covid-19 prevention measures, and provided fabric for students to make face masks.

Margret's school now has enough safe water to supply the school's population of 150 and the capacity to cater for more students. It plans to boost food security by increasing its agricultural production, which will improve nutrition, boost the school's income, and build resilience to future disasters. Margret hopes that the school can aspire to 'Be More'.

"I am proud that our school community works together with Caritas Australia as our partner in ensuring that we live in a healthier environment," Margret says.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 and help people living with disabilities in the Solomon Islands gain access to education and clean water, empowering them with skills to protect our common home. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion) or ☎ 1800 024 413.**

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



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The first people who observed **Lent** were **non-Christians** – actually, Catechumens who were preparing to receive baptism – which, of course, included what we call today 'Confirmation' and receiving the Eucharist. Christians soon joined this preparation as a renewal of their baptismal commitment. There was a "three-week" preparation period for Easter, and by the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Rome it had developed into a fast of forty days. This fast (and the wearing of sackcloth as ashes) also developed into a penitential fast for the purposes of reconciling penitents or for spiritual health. This forty-day fast originally finished on the Friday prior to the feast of Palms [Palm Sunday]. Following the feast of Palms, there was a six day fast leading up to the Easter Vigil – notice there was no fasting on Sundays!

# WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Friday

5 Mar Anointing of the Sick after 9:30am Mass

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 **3,762** rescues [*last week 3,572*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **14,165** first aid treatments [*last week 13,513*] have been performed. Swim between the flags.



## 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](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

## 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.

### THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Second Sunday of Lent - Year **B**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Genesis 22:1-2,9-13,15-18

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Romans 8:31-34

Gospel Mark 9:2-10

### NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Third Sunday of Lent - Year **B**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Exodus 20:1-17

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

Gospel John 2:13-25

### 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 World Day of Prayer 11am

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560