



# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



## 13/14 MARCH 2021 FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT ❖ YEAR B Prayer 🌿 Fasting 🌿 Almsgiving

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

### *The Instruction Manual*

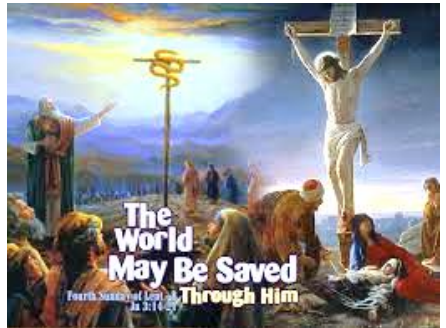
As the first Reading describes it, the enemies of the Jews smash Jerusalem. The walls of the city are torn down. The Temple of God is burned up, and all its holy things are destroyed. And the people are taken captive to Babylon. It's all lost, their country, their customs, their language, their cult, their Temple.

In the Psalm, there is a poignant picture of the people's heartbreak over this destruction of their home. The enemies who had wrecked Jerusalem wanted the Jews to sing Hebrew songs for them. "How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land," the captive people say to themselves in their grief.

The second Reading declares that God is rich in mercy and great in love. So why doesn't God protect God's people from the heartbreak that God's people had when Jerusalem was destroyed?

The answer to the question lies in the Readings.

God doesn't want to destroy people and God doesn't allow suffering for the sake of hurting people either. Instead, God is looking for a remedy, as the first Reading implies. God is willing to use desperate measures, even the heartbreak of God's people, to save them.



And not only that, but God is willing to use his own suffering too. As the Gospel Reading says, God gave God's beloved Son to save the world. Christ was betrayed by his disciples, shamed in front of his family and friends, mocked by his community, condemned by the legal authorities, publicly flogged, and put to death by crucifixion. Any one of these things is enough for heartbreak, isn't it? And so, in the incarnate Christ, God uses God's own great suffering as the final remedy to bring people from death into life, when all other remedies have been tried and failed.

Heartbreak by us, by Christ, is for life not for death.

And here is what else we need to see. Jerusalem was rebuilt and the Temple was restored, as the first Reading explains. Christ's death was followed by his resurrection. In both of these cases, heartbreak was turned into joy.

And so, heartbreak is not the last word. Elsewhere (Psalm 37:3-4) the Psalmist says, "put your trust in the Lord, ... who will give you the desires of your heart." When the story is God's, heartbreak is not the end of the story.

Joy in finding your heart's desire is.



☞☞ There is often a time in a long journey when we find the going hard. The enthusiasm with which we set out has faded, and there is still a long way to go. At this stage in our Lenten journey, we may be inclined to identify with Nicodemus of today's gospel – not daring, as a well-known Pharisee, to consult Jesus openly, he came 'by night', weighed down in his heart, no doubt, by an interior darkness of confusion and embarrassment.



In our disappointment with our lives, the darkness seems so real and overwhelming. The first Reading, telling the story of old Israel – a story of unfaithfulness, stubborn selfishness, destruction and exile – reminds us how often human history has been filled with darkness, right down to our own day. In the second Reading from the letter to the Ephesians, Paul confidently confronts this darkness: for him reliance upon false and selfish securities is to embrace 'death'.

If we are inclined to feel demoralised at this point in our Lenten journey, we are invited by today's readings to find again the source of new energy and encouragement. In the midst of the deepest darkness the true Light shines! Old Israel finds that God's designs will not be frustrated by their foolishness and selfishness – the conqueror of the Babylonians sends them back to rebuild the temple. Paul announces to those who are in danger of losing their way the astounding truth at the centre of our faith – God's free gift to a lost world of new life in Christ: our redeemed humanity is God's 'work of art', we each have our part to play in the realisation of God's great designs.

But it is especially in climax of today's readings, the words spoken to Nicodemus, by Jesus – the Light of the World – that all our darkness is dispelled! These words are perhaps the most quoted of the Gospels. Let us not take them for granted, but take them to heart and rejoice in the new life they bring: 'God loved the world so much that he gave his own Son, so that everyone who believes in him ... may have eternal life'. A world weighed down by the darkness of failure and selfishness must know, Jesus says, that he came from the Father, not 'to condemn' but to bring reconciliation and life.

As we take our bearings in the middle of a long journey, we often find new purpose and energy. Reflecting at this point in our journey of Lent, on the burdens we carry, can bring us to find again, in a more personal way, the essential truth of our Christian faith, the great truth we are celebrate at the end of our journey.



21 March is Australia's Harmony Day, which celebrates our country's cultural diversity. It coincides with the United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Harmony Week, 15–21 March, celebrates Australia's cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. Why not try some new recipe for Harmony Week: <https://www.harmony.gov.au/a-taste-of-harmony>



On **National Close the Gap Day** – 18 March – we have an opportunity to send our governments a clear message that Australians value health equality as a fundamental right for all. National Close the Gap Day is a national day of action to pledge support for achieving Indigenous health equality by 2030. Find out the facts and get involved in our

community: <https://antar.org.au/campaigns/national-close-gap-day>

## A TOILET IN INDONESIA

Arsad, an Indonesian farmer, had no toilet in his home. He and his family had to walk into the forest to the open defecation area, even overnight or in the rain.

Around 17 percent of Indonesia's rural population practice open defecation, with many unaware that it contributes to spreading diseases.

Arsad's family was often sick and open defecation caused neighbourhood disputes. With the support of Caritas Australia and its partner, Laz Harfa, he took part in hygiene, sanitation and financial management training. He decided to fund the building of a toilet in his house and help others in his neighbourhood save up for toilets.

Now Arsad and his family are healthier and have reduced their medical expenses. Their community no longer practices open defecation and is more harmonious. A community event called 'Declaration of Open Defecation-Free' was even held to acknowledge their achievements.

Improved hygiene practices also helped Arsad's community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Caritas Australia through Laz Harfa shared prevention measures and distributed soap and masks.

Arsad has inspired his neighbourhood to 'Be More'.

*"We help each other, the 'togetherness' is growing. Our solidarity had increased,"* Arsad says.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2021 and help improve health and wellbeing of communities in Indonesia so they can work towards eradicating poverty, providing a better future for all. *Thank you for your generosity.***

You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by phoning 1800 024 413 or by visiting [www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion](http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion)

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

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## RECONCILIATION RITE II

Tuesday, 23 March at 7:30pm at Thirroul. One great way to prepare for Easter.

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## SMALL PLASTIC BOTTLES NEEDED FOR EASTER WATER

At the Easter Vigil, water is blessed and **everyone** will be given a bottle to take to bless your homes and cars. *However*, we need more small plastic bottles. **If you have some or can acquire some small plastic bottles, please bring them in by Sunday, 28 March.**

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## EASTER "JOBS" DURING THE EASTER LITURGIES

Several people will be needed for various "jobs" during the Easter Liturgies. If you or any of your family would be available, **please email or phone the Parish Office this week.**

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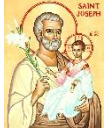
## PALMS NEEDED FOR PALM SUNDAY

If you have any palms that could be used for Palm Sunday, please drop them on the lawn outside the sacristy by **Friday, 26 March**. Thanks for your help!



# WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

**Wednesday 17 Mar Saint Patrick**, bishop  
**Friday 19 Mar Saint Joseph**, husband of Mary  
**Tuesday 23 Mar 19:30 (7:30pm) Reconciliation Rite II**



**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 **4,068** rescues [*last week 3,898*] completed by surf lifesavers, and **15,213** first aid treatments [*last week 14,743*] have been performed. Swim safely.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WOMBARRA?

Following discussions last year with the Catholic Youth Ministry Team of our Diocese, and consultation with several parishioners as well as the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, it was resolved that our Parish would lease Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Wombarra – which the Parish owns – to the Diocese for use by the Youth Ministry Team. Subsequently, it became clear that several items in the church would not be needed by the Youth Ministry Team, and so, again after further consultation, the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils resolved that several items would be donated for other Church ministries and community use: the pews have been given to Holy Spirit College, Bellambi, for their chapel, as well as some to other churches or for community use; the tabernacle, crucifix and some other liturgical items have been donated to a diocesan religious institute in Tasmania, of which Anne and Bob Bower's granddaughter is a member.

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

**Fourth Sunday of Lent • Year B**

**1st Reading** 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23  
**2nd Reading** Ephesians 2:4-10  
**Gospel** John 3:14-21

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

**Fifth Sunday of Lent • Year B**

**1st Reading** Jeremiah 31:31-34  
**2nd Reading** Hebrews 5:7-9  
**Gospel** John 12:20-33

### 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

<b>Thirroul</b>	Monday	—
	Tuesday	<b>17:30</b>
	Wednesday	<b>09:00</b>
	Thursday	<b>09:00</b>
	Friday	<b>09:30</b>

## 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