



# Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**27 / 28 NOVEMBER 2021**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR C**  
**VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL**

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

## *Getting Ready and Being Blameless*

The first reading and the gospel both talk about a time when the Lord comes—for justice, as the first reading says; and for judgment, as the gospel implies. In the gospel, Jesus warns people not to be overcome with the pleasures and anxieties of the world but to be ready for his coming. Those who are not ready will practically die of fright when they see him.

Well, then, what do we need to do to get ready?

The second reading in effect answers that question. At Christ's coming again, we are to be blameless in holiness.

And what is that?

If you are blameless under law, then no one can blame you for any violation of the law of the land. You weren't speeding, for example, or cheating on your income tax, or violating any other law of the city or country in which you are.

If you are morally blameless, then no one can blame you for any violation of the moral law. You weren't lying, for example, or cheating on your spouse, or violating any other command of the universal moral law that applies to all people no matter where they are.

But what is it to be blameless in holiness? The answer is in the second reading: in order to be ready for Christ at his coming, Christians need to increase in love and abound in it.

So, here's the thing to see.

You can keep all the laws of your land and still be a real jerk. And the same truth holds for the moral law. You can be a priggishly self-righteous jerk too. Something more than having a great record for keeping the laws is necessary to be ready for the Lord.

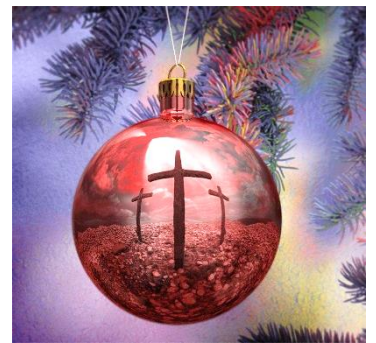
That more is love.

If you want what is bad for your neighbours, if you curse them in public or even in your heart, if you wish they would just go away, if you tell them in your thoughts or to their face to go to hell—you do not love them. And you are blameworthy with regard to holiness if you don't. It doesn't matter how moral or legal your conduct is otherwise.

To be blameless in holiness, then, takes being loving. And being loving is what makes us ready for the return of the Lord.

The Church begins its new liturgical year with a season of hope. Advent time – when we look forward to the celebration of the birth of the world's Saviour – has produced liturgies filled with joy and expectation. Advent's liturgies also look forward to Christ's 'Second Coming', to gather all things into the final Kingdom of God. The liturgy nourishes our faith in the Lord, risen and triumphant. His birth, which we look forward to celebrating, will not take place again. We remember it as the dawning of the final moment of God's eternal plan, a dawning full of promise for the whole of creation. This fundamental theme of Christian faith and hope – encouraging us to look forward to a 'new heaven and new earth' – has been obscured in recent centuries. For sincere believers, expectation of 'the end of the world' should convey far more than the uneasiness and dread it so often arouses.

The readings of today's liturgy show us something of the development of this theme in the faith of God's people. In the first reading, Jeremiah promises that the messiah – 'a virtuous branch', a ruler of 'honesty and integrity', belonging to the family of David – will realise all that old Israel hopes for. It is a reassuring message, indeed, for a people whose history had been presided over by rulers who were for the most part corrupt and selfish. We see this prophecy being fulfilled in the gospel reading from Luke. Jesus – knowing that that the final moment of God's designs for creation had come – made use in his teaching of the symbolic imagery of the prophets and the current ('apocalyptic') literature. But he also introduced a startling new dimension to these expectations by uniting them with the coming the 'Son of Man' foretold in the Book of Daniel – 'coming with power and great glory' to establish God's eternal reign. The first Christians, who recognised Jesus as the 'Son of Man' who had been foretold, and lived in wonder at what God had done in the Lord's Paschal Mystery, faced a perplexing question. They rejoiced that old Israel's hopes had been so wonderfully fulfilled in the coming of the Son of God and his victory over all evil. But what were they to make of the fact that the world seemed to go on as before? It is not surprising that they saw themselves living in brief time of waiting before the Risen Lord returned to inaugurate God's 'new heaven and new earth'. The Thessalonians to whom, in our second reading, Paul is writing a friendly letter – the earliest Christian writing we possess, written about twenty years after the Resurrection – were wrestling with this problem. They looked forward, in the near future, to 'the Lord Jesus Christ coming with all his saints'; but, as the letter makes clear, they were confused as they tried to anticipate how this will happen (see 4:13-18; 5:1-11). Paul himself was still coming to terms with the



problem we have described. His message to them, however, is reassuring and meaningful, even today: Trust in the Lord, as it becomes clear how this final moment of God's plan is to unfold; remember the gospel teaching of Jesus – be alert and prepared; above all, prepare for what lies ahead by living according to the Lord's commandment of love: 'Love one another, and the whole human race, as much as I love you'.

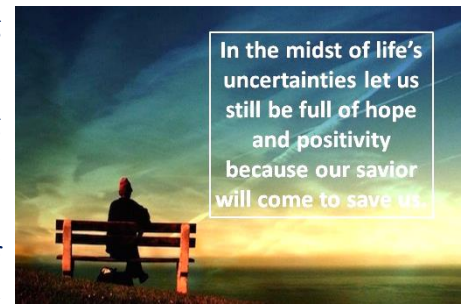
Carlo Carretto, the renowned spiritual writer, spent many years living alone as a hermit in the Sahara desert. He wrote a number of books from that place of solitude, including one entitled, *Letters from the Desert*. In that book, he has a message for those of us who live busy lives in the world. "What is God trying to say to us in our busy lives?" He suggests this: Be patient! Learn to wait—for each other, for love, for happiness, for God!

Learn to wait! That's not something we do easily and many of our problems flow from that. We often don't wait properly for things.

Annie Dillard shares this story about proper waiting: She had been watching a butterfly emerge from its cocoon and was fascinated by the process until she grew impatient with how long it was taking and, to speed things up, took a candle and heated the cocoon, albeit very gently. The experiment worked, but it was a mistake in the long run. The butterfly emerged more quickly; however, because adding heat violated something within the natural process, the butterfly was born with wings too weak to fly. Haste and prematurity had stunted and deformed a natural process. Some things can't be rushed.

Dillard understood immediately what had gone wrong. A certain chastity had been violated. Impatience had triggered an irreverence that had interfered with and damaged the natural order of things. In essence, the Christmas gift had been opened too early; the bride had been slept with before the wedding; a process that needed an allotted period of time had been short-circuited. There hadn't been enough advent.

Advent means waiting. Among other things, it celebrates the idea that the messiah must be born from a virgin. Why? Is sex something unworthy of God? If Jesus had been born in a natural way, would that somehow have given him less dignity? This is a dark underside in some spiritualities, but Jesus' birth from a virgin has nothing to do with that. Scripture and Christian tradition emphasize that Jesus was born of a virgin to underscore the fact that he had no human father and also to teach an important truth, namely, that in order for something sublime to be born there must, first, be a proper chastity, a proper time of waiting, a season of Advent. Why?



## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading      Jeremiah 33:14-16

☞ We welcome a new year of grace and the Lord's surprises. "The days are coming, says the Lord." What do the coming days of Advent awaken in you? How will you prepare?

☞ In this reading, Jeremiah reminds the people of the Lord's promise to them. How does that promise relate to hope? Why is Advent called the season of hope? Is hope a risky virtue? Is it ardent expectation? What would your life be like without hope? What can you do to bring hope to people you know?

### Second Reading      1 Thessalonians 3:12–4:2

☞ What does Pope Francis say in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* about what community helps us do together? Would St Paul's prayer, "may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all" do the same thing? Who benefits? The ones loved or the ones loving?

It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women. "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation. ... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together.

... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together." Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.

– *Fratelli Tutti*: Encyclical On Fraternity and Social Friendship, 3 October 2020

☞ St Paul said he "abounded in love" for the Thessalonians, to strengthen their hearts. How is "abounding in love" an effective method of strengthening hearts or eliciting change of a kind. Do you think great change or growth ever happens without immense love?

### Gospel      Luke 21:25-28,34-36

☞ Could much of this Gospel passage have been written today (roaring sea, drowsy hearts, dying of fright, anxieties, carousing, imminent tribulations)? Jesus tells us to pray for strength. Do you believe that if you ask for strength you will receive it? Could God send it through other people? Could you be a source of strength for others?

☞ Jesus is God's last Word to us (Christ's Incarnation). What does this truth mean for you in practical ways?

## EUTHANASIA ‘VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING’ AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Some time ago, “A Current Affair” ran a poignant piece telling the story of Gabe Watkin, a Queensland woman suffering the effects of Motor Neuron Disease. She had been pleading with Queensland Health for access to a surgical procedure that would likely extend her life. At the time of the broadcast, Queensland Health’s Ethics Committee had kept Gabe and her family waiting twelve months before declining her access to the tracheotomy she was seeking. All Gabe wanted, as she said herself, was the right to live. The Queensland Government at the same time was preparing its Right to Die Legislation. The NSW Parliament is now debating similar legislation once again.

Euthanasia, (Voluntary Assisted Dying) is a subject that raises ethical and moral questions along with much heated emotion. Its supporters, often acting out of compassion for people who are so ill that life seems to hold nothing for them anymore, argue that people should have the right to decide how and when they die. New South Wales is now the only State that has not passed such legislation. Along with the understandable heated emotion, clear thinking around this issue is terribly important, something that is often hard to come by around such matters. Many will argue on practical humanitarian grounds alone, that the quality of palliative care now available to dying and critically ill patients is such that there is no need for us to legalize euthanasia. A visit to any palliative care ward will confirm this impression. There is always a gentle lightness of touch on the part of doctors, nurses and staff and even a certain joy in the way they accompany a dying person’s final journey. They are able to provide whatever it is that is needed to make the patient comfortable and minister to the patient with great tenderness. Nature is allowed to take its course and unnecessary measures to keep a person alive or to be resuscitated need not be taken.

This is a very different decision from the one to end one’s own life. Letting go is very different from taking away. A crucial component in any debate for people of faith is the place of God in all this. If we leave God out of the debate, then the way is more easily cleared to support euthanasia and its accompanying legislation. If we allow God into the discussion, the ground shifts. The gift of life that God entrusts to us comes with a tag that says, “Not to be taken away.” The Catholic Church clearly opposes the practice of euthanasia, understanding that we do not have the right to take our own life. Even in my time of suffering and dying, I am still a person made in God’s image and have the capacity to speak through my weakness of God’s saving love. The dying Christ on the Cross speaks of this for us. In his dying, Jesus becomes a gift of life for the world, modelling for us the pattern for our own dying. We are never useless and of no value no matter how disabled and ill we become.

Love can be our gift to each other right to our last breath. Memories surface, stories are told and love is refreshed around our death-bed. Without the context of faith, we can understand the compassion and concern for loved ones that prompts people to argue for euthanasia to be legalized. With the eyes of faith we have another starting and ending point as we place God and not ourselves at the centre of our considerations. We do this not mindlessly or without making use of medical assistance. We trust that our gift of life will find its own time and place to end. Allowing God into the conversation, we pause as we reflect on the decisions facing us. May we have thoughtful, faith-filled and wise discussions with each other as this matter comes before our Parliament once again.

– Kevin Bates SM

## YEAR C – THE YEAR OF LUKE

As a first century historian, Luke’s desire was to reassure his readers of the truth of what they had learned about Jesus. Therefore, he carefully investigated everything, and then chose the most appropriate way of bringing out for his readers the significance of what he learned. As an historian, Luke is an artist who orders his material in the way he judges will best achieve his goal. Early tradition attributes this gospel to an otherwise relatively unknown person, Luke, who is described as a Syrian physician and companion of Paul. It was written probably in the 80s [~50 years after Jesus’ death] for predominantly non-Jewish Christian readers. The Spirit of God that inspired Luke to develop his rich reflections on Jesus and to express them in this gospel is the same Spirit that continues to inspire us as we contemplate the Jesus so beautifully portrayed in it.

*More to follow as we hear Luke’s gospel this year.*



## ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE ILLAWARRA AREA

YOU CAN DONATE ONLINE TO OUR LOCAL VINNIES BY CLICKING [HERE](#)

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal continues until 12 December. You can support the Appeal in any of the following ways:

- ✓ **Hampers** – 3 categories (families, single female, single male) *notices in the church*  
↳ if you cannot attend church, but want to make a hamper up, contact the Parish Office
- ✓ **Giving Tree** – tags on the tree have name and gender of children (up to 12 years)
- ✓ **Donation Envelopes** – available in the church as well as **online** donations
- ✓ **Donations Online** – give to our local Vinnies Conference **online** by clicking [HERE](#)
- ✓ **Donations of Individual Items** – *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, lollies, tinned vegetables, chips, jelly, baby formula, nappies – no cigarette or alcohol products please.*



**ONE CHRISTMAS ITEM [see above] 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**








## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

<b>Monday</b>	<b>29 Nov</b>	Monday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 2:1-5	Matthew 8:5-11
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>30 Nov</b>	<b>Saint Andrew</b> , apostle	Romans 10:9-18	Matthew 4:18-22
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>1 Dec</b>	Wednesday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent <b>World AIDS Day</b> <i>[see below]</i>	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>2 Dec</b>	Thursday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21,24-27
<b>Friday</b>	<b>3 Dec</b>	<b>Saint Francis Xavier</b> , priest	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>4 Dec</b>	Saturday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26	Matthew 9:35–10:1,6-8

## OUR GARDEN NEEDS WATER

Thanks to Pat and Genevieve for looking after our beautiful garden. With summer coming on, the plants and the “fountain” need constant watering. So, if you are passing – or would like to relax while hosing, **drop in and water** – please. **If you would like to take any herbs from our garden – you are more than welcome to do so.**

## SURFING SEASON 2021-2022

Since 1 July 2021, there have been **1,175 rescues** [1,165 last week] performed by Surf Lifesavers in Australia, and **1,637 first aids** [1,547 last week]. The key signs when you are looking for a rip are:  deeper and/or darker water;  fewer breaking waves;  sandy coloured water extending beyond the surf zone;  debris or seaweed;  significant water movement. Sometimes it can be easier to look for where the waves are breaking consistently, and then look to each side where they don't break consistently. Those areas are rip currents. **Stay safe and swim between the flags.**



## FIRST COMMUNION CANDIDATES

In 2020 (!!), **23** Candidates enrolled for the Sacraments of Penance and Communion. Because of COVID, First Communion was delayed until the middle of this year – then Covid intervened again, with one Candidate receiving First Communion the afternoon we went into lockdown! **Hopefully**, starting next Sunday, the other Candidates will be receiving First Communion: 5 Dec (2); 11 Dec (3); 12 Dec (1); 18 Dec (2); 19 Dec (2); 8 Jan (2); 16 Jan (1); 5 Feb (4); 6 Feb (4). There will also be three Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Those currently in Year 2 will receive the Sacraments of First Penance and Communion during Term 1 of 2022.

## BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

All-loving God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, the stars of night, the oceans and the land. We praise you for shepherding your people, Israel, through the Law, the prophets and the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your justice and love. Nurturing God, let your blessing come upon us as we light this tree. May the light and happiness it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May the poor, the oppressed, the rejected, and all people find delight in you, and come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. May the gifts we place under this tree be of help to the poor. All glory and praise to you, heavenly Father: we thank you for sending us your Son Jesus to be our brother.

Bless us as we gather here, and bless our Christmas tree. Let the lights remind us of Jesus, who came to be the light of the world and to save us from sin and slavery. Father, we love you, and we praise you through Christ our Lord.

**WORLD AIDS FACTS** – There were approximately 37.6 million people across the globe with HIV in 2020, and of these, 35.9 million were adults and 1.7 million were children (<15 years old). The vast majority of people with HIV are in low-income and middle-income countries. In 2020, there were 20.6 million people with HIV (55%) in eastern and southern Africa; 4.7 million (13%) in western and central Africa; 5.7 million (15%) in Asia and the Pacific; and 2.2 million (6%) in Western and Central Europe and North America.

<p><b>THIS Sunday's Readings</b> – <i>on website</i></p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent · Year C</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Reading           Jeremiah 33:14-16</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Reading       1 Thessalonians 3:12–4:2</p> <p>Gospel                Luke 21:25-28,34-36</p>	<p><b>NEXT Sunday's Readings</b> – <i>on website</i></p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent · Year C</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Reading           Baruch 5:1-9</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Reading        Philippians 1:4-6,8-11</p> <p>Gospel                Luke 3:1-6</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY</b></p> <p><b>MASS TIMES</b></p> <p><b>Saturday 5:30pm</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 8:00am</b></p> <p> Saturday Mass recorded</p>
<p><b>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</b></p> <p><i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i></p> <p><i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i></p> <p>Patrick Vaughan · <i>Parish Priest</i></p> <p>Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm · <i>Assisting</i></p> <p><b>Lauren Faulks · Parish Secretary</b></p> <p><b>Tues, Wed 9am-3:30pm; Fri 9:30am-2:30pm</b></p>	<p> <a href="http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au">www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</a></p> <p> 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive</p> <p> PO Box 44 · Thirroul 2515</p> <p> <b>4268 1910</b>    4268 1976</p> <p> <a href="mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au">thirroul@dow.org.au</a></p> <p>Parish School of St Michael</p> <p> 4267 2560</p>	<p><b>WEEKDAY MASSES</b></p> <p><b>Monday</b>           —</p> <p><b>Tuesday</b>  <b>5:30pm</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday</b>   <b>9:00am</b></p> <p><b>Thursday</b>       <b>9:00am</b></p> <p><b>Friday</b>           <b>9:30am</b></p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i></p>