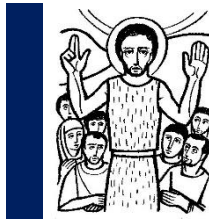


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
4 / 5 DECEMBER 2021
2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR C
VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The End of the Story

Each person has a life story. It begins when a person is born, helpless and naked, infinitely valuable to their mother maybe but not of much account in the world at large.

From that beginning on, each person is trying to get somewhere, to be something. At every stage, they are hoping that if they could only—only what? Well, only learn to ride the bike, win the boy/girl, finish the degree, land the job, buy the house, get the raise—then, oh, then, they would have gotten what they wanted to have. They would be what they wanted to be.

But what is it we really want to have and to be? What is the point of anything we strive for in our lives? When all is said and done, none of us is getting out of this world alive. And when we face that fact, what difference does anything make? Each chapter of a person's life leads inexorably to the next, until it leads to death. As we face death, will we care at all anymore about all those things that we struggled to have and to be during any of the earlier chapters of our lives?

It can be that we will. A person can write the story of their life in such a way that the main theme is the Lord and the things of the Lord. Those things last through death, into the world that is the ever-lasting last chapter for the lives of the Lord's people.

The psalm illuminates that last chapter brilliantly. In that world, on the other side of death, all the failures, all the sins, all the pains—everything that caused tears in earthly life will be redeemed into joy. Even if a person ended the earthly story of their life with only seeds of faith, hope, and love, they will reap the fruit of those seeds with rejoicing in the world to come.

At that time, each of the Lord's people will look at what they have gotten and think they must be dreaming. They will look at what they have become and find it so hard to believe and so good that they burst into laughter of joy.

This end of the story is what is worth living for.

Last Sunday, the liturgy invited us to see Advent as a time of preparation for the Saviour's birth, the dawn of salvation. Today we take up this theme again, in the gospel reading from Luke. John the Baptist is a prominent figure in the liturgies of Advent. After a long period in which the voice of the prophets was not heard, the Lord's Precursor – praised by Jesus as 'more than a prophet' (Matthew 11:9) – made his appearance. Luke's introducing of John is dramatic and skilful. Situating John's heralding in the midst of the real world's history, he names contemporaries who foreshadow the tragic conflict that is soon to be enacted – Pilate who will authorize Christ's death, the petty rulers of the nation under occupation, the high priests whose hostility seals the fate of Jesus. But the gloom of this introduction gives way immediately to the vision of hope and promise that inspired John's mission. The Baptist – remembered as a man of the desert – is presented as inaugurating a new Exodus for God's people, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah.

Because the first Exodus from Egypt was the defining moment in the destiny of the Chosen People, it is not surprising that old Israel sometimes looked forward to the final fulfilment of God's promises as a kind of new Exodus. Our first reading, from the prophet Baruch, takes up this theme – making part of today's liturgy, not only because it echoes the words of Isaiah, describing the making of a way through mountains and valleys 'so that Israel may walk in safety', but also because its message of hope is admirably suited to the mood of our Advent liturgies. Looking back on the return from the Babylonian captivity as a second Exodus, the prophet looks forward to God's final intervention on behalf of his people as a last great Exodus. It is an outstanding example of the boundless hopes of those among the Chosen People who were faithful to their Jewish faith, looking forward to the coming of the messiah, in the last years of Old Testament times. When God remembers his promises, and Jerusalem's children are reassembled, they will discard their mourning garments and 'put on the beauty of the glory of God forever'; God will make them a sign for 'every nation under heaven'; God will give them a new name, 'Peace through integrity'. We are challenged in this time of renewal, to match this remarkable faith and hope.

Last week, we saw how – as 'the Son of Man' foretold in the prophecy of Daniel – Jesus presented himself as the fulfilment of Israel's boundless hopes. In today's second reading, from Paul's letter to the Philippians, we see how this truth has become part of the faith of the first Christian Church. One of the principal themes of the prophets of old Israel, as they warned a wayward people to amend their ways, was the 'Day of the Lord', when all must face the judgment of God. Paul now takes up this old theme – but for him it is 'the Day of Christ Jesus', when the Saviour will return as Son of Man to be our Judge. Though it is a season of hope and joy, Advent is also a time in which we are called to a deeper conversion.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Baruch 5:1-9

- ✚ “Led away on foot by their enemies ...” Led or chased are we experiencing this today as well as in the time of Baruch? Where is the hope for the refugee suffering in exile today? Can you help God lower “the lofty mountains” or “fill the depths and gorges” for them in any way? How?
- ✚ God gave Jerusalem the name “the peace of justice, the glory of God’s worship.” How does this name fit the Church today? If poorly, what would you do to make it fit? What would you like God to name your parish, your community, you?



Second Reading Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

- ✚ As you remain on the path or The Way, St. Paul says, “then the one who began a good work in you will complete it.” Who is the instigator of the good work in you? Whom do you trust, yourself or God to complete your good works?
- ✚ “And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value.” How might the synod Pope Francis called help the Church discern what is of value? Can the synod be God “beginning a good work” in the whole Church right now?

[God’s] word summons us to discernment, and it brings light to that process. It guides the Synod, preventing it from becoming a Church convention, a study group or a political gathering, a parliament, but rather a grace-filled event, a process of healing guided by the Spirit. In these days, Jesus calls us, as he did the rich man in the Gospel, to empty ourselves, to free ourselves from all that is worldly, including our inward-looking and outworn pastoral models; and to ask ourselves what it is that God wants to say to us in this time. And the direction in which he wants to lead us.

– *Opening of the Synodal Path*, 10 October 2021

Gospel Luke 3:1-6

- ✚ Why does Luke name the historical references in the beginning of this Gospel reading? Does it help you to locate John the Baptist in history books?
- ✚ “All flesh shall see the salvation of God”? What are the implications for humanity in this saying? Is the entire world included in this plan? What are the implications for you? Do you watch all year round for God’s coming? What are some of the ways God comes to you everyday?

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES FOR 2022

Christmas Eve Friday 24 December 4:00pm Setting up for Mass in School Grounds

Christmas Eve Friday 24 December 6:30pm Parish School Grounds
Bring a chair and a bell

Christmas Eve Friday 24 December 9:30pm Parish Church
Carols and Mass during the Night

Christmas Day Saturday 25 December 9:00am Parish Church
Mass of Christmas Day

There will be NO 5:30pm Mass on Christmas Day, Saturday, 25 December

Boxing Day Sunday 26 December 8:00am Mass of the Feast of the Holy Family

Public Holiday Monday 27 December 9:30am Mass for the Feast of Saint John

Public Holiday Tuesday 28 December 9:30am Mass for the Feast of the Holy Innocents

Weekday Wednesday 29 December 9:00am Mass for the 5th day in the Christmas Octave

Weekday Thursday 30 December 9:00am Mass for the 6th day in the Christmas Octave

Weekday Friday 31 December 9:30am Mass for the 7th day in the Christmas Octave

**New Year’s Day Saturday 1 January 22 9:30am Mass for the Feast of Mary, Mother of God
World Day of Peace**

Saturday 1 January 22 5:30pm Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany

Sunday 2 January 22 8:00am Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany

The usual schedule of Masses now resumes – see page 4.

Reconciliation Rite II will be celebrated at 7:30pm on Tuesday, 14 December

YEAR C – THE YEAR OF LUKE

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 for predominantly non-Jewish Christian readers. The 'Theophilus' (1:3) to whom Luke addresses his work may be a Gentile patron. However, since it means 'lover of God', Luke may be using it to address anyone interested in reading his work. The oldest extant manuscript, from around the year 200AD, states that the gospel is 'according to Luke'. 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. We can have every confidence, therefore, that the purpose for which the Gospel was written will be as effective for us as it was for its first readers: that we, too, 'may know the truth concerning the things about which [we] have been instructed' (1:4). *– More on Luke's gospel during the 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** – please return hampers by Sunday, 12 December
- ✓ **Giving Tree** – please return toys by Sunday, 12 December
- ✓ **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

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE ... FROM MALTA – BAKED RICE

When you're cooking & the recipe says "chill in the fridge for one hour"



Thank you, Joe Scerri for this week's recipe: 250g rice; 250g mince meat (beef, pork or chicken); 1 tablespoon cooking oil; 1 onion sliced; 50g tomato paste; 100g peeled tomatoes; 300g beef stock; salt and pepper to taste; 4 beaten eggs; 25g grated cheese; 1 tablespoon basil (optional). In a frypan, heat oil and fry meat and onion until the meat is browned. Then add the chopped tomatoes and tomato paste. Add the stock and simmer for 30 minutes. Boil the rice in salted water, and when half cooked, strain and cool under running water. Mix the rice well with the sauce, then add the beaten eggs and other ingredients. Put the mixture into a greased baking dish and cook in a moderate oven for 45 minutes or until the top is brown. Enjoy a delightful, tasty dish! Thanks, Joe.

If you have a favourite recipe you are willing to share, please deliver or email it to the Parish Office or hand it in at Mass one day.

CATECHIST TEACHERS AND ASSISTANTS – NEEDED FOR 2022

Catechists and their assistants once each week go to the four State Primary Schools in our Parish, to share the faith with those students whose parents have chosen Catholic Special Religious Education. Classes last 30 minutes. Thank you to our team of Catechists who have provided this ministry in 2021 – and for many years previously. There will be a need for new Catechists or assistants in 2022. **Lisa Metcalfe** is unavailable next year, and a couple of other Catechists will be unavailable for part of the year. **Please consider helping in this ministry**, either as a Catechist or an assistant. Training and resources are provided for you. Classes are at: Coledale (Tuesdays 9–9:30am); Austinmer (Tuesdays 9:45–10:15–10:45–11:15); Scarborough (Tuesdays 2–2:30pm); Thirroul (Fridays 9:30–10–10:30). **Please contact the Parish Office for more information – WE NEED YOUR HELP. Thanks very much to LISA METCALFE** for her ministry as Catechist and Coordinator over a number of years now.

AV OPERATORS/ASSISTANTS NEEDED

Operation of our AV/computer is an **essential** part of our liturgy, and enables people to enter more prayerfully into the liturgy. There is an **urgent** need for people to learn the simple system, especially on **Saturday evenings**. Please consider volunteering for this essential ministry – you would be rostered on less than once a month. Make yourself known to an AV Operator and sit with them and you'll see it is straight forward. Please help out.

ADVENT RESOURCE

Families are invited to use this wonderful advent resource in preparing primary aged children for Christmas. It is full of games, activities, stories, and music. To use this free Catholic resource please click on

https://issuu.com/ccressnsw/docs/2021_adventchristmas_sre_family_resource_wollongong

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday	6 Dec	Monday of 2 nd Week of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-10	Luke 5:17-26
Tuesday	7 Dec	Saint Ambrose , bishop, doctor	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 18:12-14
Wednesday	8 Dec	Immaculate Conception of Mary Mass at 10:30am [no 9am Mass]	Genesis 3:9-15,20	Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12 Luke 1:26-38
Thursday	9 Dec	Thursday of 2 nd Week of Advent	Isaiah 41:13-20	Matthew 11:11-15
Friday	10 Dec	Friday of 2 nd Week of Advent	Isaiah 48:17-19	Matthew 11:16-19
Saturday	11 Dec	Saturday of 2 nd Week of Advent	Sirach 48:1-4,9-11	Matthew 17:10-13

OUR GARDEN NEEDS WATER

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 **1,195 rescues** [1,175 last week] performed by Surf Lifesavers in Australia, and **1,775 first aids** [1,637 last week]. Australia's waters are home to many interesting and fascinating creatures, including bluebottles, some of which can be the cause of painful stings! The bluebottle (*physalia*) is probably the most well-known jellyfish around the Australian coastline. Their blue, balloon like sail sits above the water and is attached to a long tentacle extending below it. This tentacle is covered in stinging cells called nematocysts. When this touches the skin, it reacts by injecting a small amount of a toxin which causes irritation and can be quite painful. **How to treat a bluebottle sting:**



- ✓ Wash off any remaining tentacles with seawater (not freshwater);
- ✓ Immerse the patient's sting in **hot water** – no hotter than can be easily tolerated for 20 minutes;
- ✓ If the pain is unrelieved by heat, or if hot water is not available, apply cold packs or ice in a dry plastic bag;
- ✓ Refer to medical aid for further treatment if condition deteriorates.

Stay safe and swim between the flags.

BAPTISMS AT THIRROUL

Because of the pandemic, Baptisms have been curtailed, except in emergencies. Some Baptisms have taken place on Saturdays instead of during Masses on the third Sunday of the month. This arrangement will continue until the end of the year. Hopefully, in 2022, the usual schedule will resume. If you want your child (under 7 years) baptised, then please contact the Parish Office to arrange to collect the necessary paperwork and to book a time for the Baptism. On this Saturday, 4 December, **welcome to ZADIE BLANCHETTE** who will be baptised. Congratulations to her parents and family, and welcome to our Parish community.



FIRST COMMUNION CANDIDATES

This Sunday, **MONTE HASHAM** and **ELIZA DOUGLAS** receive First Communion. Also, **JASPER HASHAM** receives Confirmation. Last Saturday, **BADEN BALDING** received Confirmation. **Congratulations!**

Next weekend, three candidates will receive First Communion on Saturday, and two on Sunday.



THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

2nd Sunday of Advent · Year C

1 st Reading	Baruch 5:1-9
2 nd Reading	Philippians 1:4-6,8-11
Gospel	Luke 3:1-6

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

3rd Sunday of Advent · Year C

1 st Reading	Zephaniah 3:14-18
2 nd Reading	Philippians 4:4-7
Gospel	Luke 3:10-18

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday	5:30pm
Sunday	8:00am
☑ Saturday Mass recorded	

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

*One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes
Moving forward as a Parish Family*

Patrick Vaughan · *Parish Priest*

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm · *Assisting*

Lauren Faulks · **Parish Secretary**

Tues, Wed 9am-3:30pm; Fri 9:30am-2:30pm

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

📧 PO Box 44 · Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

💻 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

☎ 4267 2560

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	☑ 5:30pm
Wednesday	10:30am
Thursday	9:00am
Friday	9:30am
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	