



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
11 / 12 DECEMBER 2021
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR C
BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The readings for this Sunday are about rejoicing.

The first reading tells God's people to shout for joy, and the second reading exhorts Christians to rejoice always. The gospel reading says that John the Baptist preached good news to the people.

So, what did John the Baptist say? What is there to rejoice about?

It helps in thinking about this question to have some sense of what the bad news is.

The second reading follows the call to rejoice with an exhortation to have no anxieties. The bad news is everything that raises those anxieties. The first reading spells out some of it. There are enemies; there are misfortune—sickness, poverty, unemployment, natural disaster, and all the rest.

It is possible to find some peace about all these things by bringing them to God in prayer and putting your trust in him. At any rate, that is the antidote to these anxieties recommended by this reading.

But a person can have anxieties that are harder to bring to God. There are the relationships you have broken, the wreckage you have made of things at home, the failures you are culpable for at work. Sin can paralyse any effort at joy, in loving relationship with God and others. You can put your trust in God; but what happens when you know that God can put no trust in you? What happens to joy in the face of this thought?

That is the bad news.

But this is also where the good news comes in. The first reading promises that God will rejoice over you. And why? The answer is also in the first reading: God will renew you; and when God does, you will be so lovely that God will make songs about you and for you, and God will sing them to you.

That is amazingly good – great – news, isn't it? But how can it be?

This is where the good news of John the Baptist comes in. Christ will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will then dwell in you. Christ is Emmanuel, God with us, and he brings God the Holy Spirit into us. When God is with you and in you, how can you keep from singing for joy?

In today's gospel reading we continue Luke's account of the mission of John, the precursor of the Saviour. It reflects the life of a community that has come to recognize that, though the final moment of God's plan has come through the Risen Lord's Paschal Mystery, how that moment will unfold in the world's history is God's secret. They know that they must get on with their ordinary lives. Luke presents the preaching of John as 'Good News', foreshadowing important elements in the teaching of Jesus himself. It is 'tax collectors' and 'soldiers' – representing those looked down upon by respectable society in old Israel – who are open to John's message of repentance: the very ones who will respond to the message of Jesus. 'What must we do?' they ask John. It is not an easy question to ask with a humble sincerity that is open to hearing the truth. It reminds us of Advent's call to a deeper conversion and commitment. Luke's community remembers how John replied to this question, as calling them to get on with their ordinary lives, asking themselves whether they recognize Christ himself in their needy brothers and sisters, and whether they serve the Lord by the integrity with which they carry out their role in life. Traditionally, the liturgy of the Third Sunday of Advent overflows with the theme of the joy of believing. This is one of Luke's favourite themes, and the gospel reading's reference to the 'feeling of anticipation' John's preaching aroused, and his foretelling of the Lord who 'will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire' chime in with this theme. Clearly, our liturgy's other readings have been chosen with this tradition in mind. 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice', Paul writes to the Philippians; and he recommends practical ways that lead to authentic happiness 'in the Lord': tolerance towards those whose ways are not our own, and a prayer that unites trust in the Lord for the future with thanksgiving for his many blessings in the past. No doubt, taking seriously his faith in the one who has baptized us 'with the Holy Spirit and fire' has given Paul a personal experience of the 'peace' of which he speaks, the peace that only God can give. Something has gone wrong if our faith never brings us deep joy. Joy is the experience of what we were made for. The faith that the Baptist heralded, the faith that is the gift of the Risen Lord, and the faith that unites Luke's community and so many other communities after them, is a personal knowledge of God's love and mercy. It brings a joy and peace 'that the world cannot give' (John 14:27).

Even for old Israel, as our first reading from the prophet Zephaniah reminds us, joy was one of the hallmarks of authentic faith. In this astounding text, the prophet calls the people to 'rejoice' with all their hearts, because 'the Lord' of Israel's hopes is 'in their midst', victorious, 'renewing them by his love'. Their joy should mingle with the Lord's own rejoicing, as he 'dances with shouts of joy over them'. This text is doubly appropriate in these weeks of Advent – its words ('Rejoice, daughter of Zion, the Lord, your God is in your midst') may well have inspired Luke's Annunciation narrative.

The Good News



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading **Zephaniah 3:14-18a**

- ☞ “The Lord, your God, will exult over you with loud singing.” What are some examples in the world about which you might say, “Listen! God is singing!”??
- ☞ This reading says it twice. “Be not discouraged [Do not let your hands grow weak]! The Lord, your God, is in your midst.” Have you ever remembered the presence of God in the middle of a crisis? What effect did it have on you?

Second Reading **Philippians 4:4-7**

- ☞ St Paul says we must: $\hat{\sigma}$ rejoice in the Lord always; $\hat{\sigma}$ be kind to all; $\hat{\sigma}$ lose anxiety; $\hat{\sigma}$ make all our requests known to God; and $\hat{\sigma}$ thank God as though he has already granted the requests. This is a long list. Are you better at some than others? Which ones could you improve on?
- ☞ Maybe you rejoice when you are singing at Mass on Sunday – when we were allowed to! Are there other times during the week that you experience the same kind of joy? What makes you happy in the Lord?

Gospel **Luke 3:10-18**

- ☞ What kind of people went to hear John the Baptist and then repented? Would you show up to hear someone like John today? What would you want to see and hear? What are today's prophets talking about? Anti-racial problems? Starving immigrants? Climate crisis? What ...?
- ☞ “The crowds asked John the Baptist, ‘what should we do?’” What should I do today? What is my “minimal step forward”? Will the Lord do the remainder?

To those who asked: “What must we do to convert?” he simply replied: “he who has food, share it with the one who has none. Whoever has two cloaks should share with the one who has none.” In other words, he began with the least, he behaved like a true shepherd, a great pastor and prophet.

To baptize all these sinners, in return, he only asked for a minimal step forward, because he knew that with this step, the Lord would do the rest. And they would convert. This great prophet was a shepherd who understood the situation of the people and helped them to move forward with the Lord.

– Pope Francis, *The Great and the Least*, 15 December 2016

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES FOR 2022

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

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  **[Recorded and emailed]**
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

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR CHRISTMAS VOLUNTEER DUTIES ASAP

GAUDETE SUNDAY

The third Sunday of Advent, so called from the first word of the Introit at Mass (*Gaudete*, i.e. Rejoice). The season of Advent originated as a fast of forty days in preparation for Christmas, commencing on the day after the feast of St Martin (12 November), whence it was often called “St Martin’s Lent” – a name by which it was known as early as the fifth century. The spirit of the Liturgy all through Advent is one of expectation and preparation for the Christmas feast as well as for the second coming of Christ.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Blessed are you, Lord God, ruler of all creation. We thank you because you love us so much. From the dawn of creation, you have shown us your love. You sent your only Son to bring us joy, peace and eternal life. Bless ✦ this crib. Let the crib remind us of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary. Let the crib remind us of the poor and humble birth of Jesus. Grant that we may always serve you in faith as did the angels; may we praise you for your saving deeds as did the shepherds; may we surround you with the warmth of our love as did the animals. Father, we praise you through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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 **THIS SUNDAY**. 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

YEAR C – THE YEAR OF LUKE

The fact that Luke’s gospel was treasured by the Christian community gives us confidence that Luke’s fellow Christians judged that he did express valid insights into the person and ministry of Jesus, and into the life of the early Christian communities. We can be confident that, when complemented by the gospels of Mark, Matthew and John, and by the letters and other works of the New Testament, the gospel of Luke preserves for us an authentic portrait of Jesus, which the Church came to treasure as a fruit of divine inspiration and so as a gift of God. 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 investigating 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.

– *More on Luke’s gospel during the year.*

THIS WEEK’S RECIPE ... FROM THIRROUL – LEMON SLICE

Thank you, **Barbara Bosley** for this week’s recipe: 1¼ cups plain flour; 1 tsp vanilla; 1¼ cups rolled oats; 1 tin condensed milk; ½ tsp salt; ½ tsp carb soda; 1 tbs lemon zest; ½ cup raw sugar; ⅓ cup lemon juice; ½ cup brown sugar; 2 large egg yolks. Preheat oven to 16°C. Grease slice tray. Mix flour, oats, salt & bicarbonate. Stir in sugar. Melt butter, add vanilla and mix into dry ingredients. Press ½ mixture into tray. Bake for 15 minutes. Whisk together condensed milk, egg yolks, lemon zest & juice. Pour over cooked crumb base. Sprinkle remaining crumbs on top. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Slice into squares when slightly cooled. Enjoy! 😊 Thanks, Barbara.

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 – HELP 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.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK – AND BEYOND

Monday	13 Dec	Saint Lucy , virgin, martyr	Numbers 24:2-7,15-17	Matthew 21:23-27
Tuesday	14 Dec	Saint John of the Cross , priest, doctor 7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II	Zephaniah 3:1-2,9-13	Matthew 21:28-32
Wednesday	15 Dec	Wednesday of 3 rd Week of Advent	Isaiah 45:6-8,18,21-25	Luke 7:19-23
Thursday	16 Dec	Thursday of 3 rd Week of Advent	Isaiah 54:1-10	Luke 7:24-30
Friday	17 Dec	Mass of 17 December	Genesis 49:2,8-10	Matthew 1:1-17
Saturday	18 Dec	Mass of 18 December	Jeremiah 23:5-8	Matthew 1:18-24

SURFING SEASON 2021-2022

Since 1 July 2021, there have been **835 rescues** [795 last week] performed by Surf Lifesavers in Australia, and **2,016 first aids** [1,775 last week]. Rock fishing one of Australia's most popular sports that can be enjoyed by everybody, but it can also be dangerous, with an average of eight people losing their lives rock fishing in NSW every year. A lot of these incidents can be avoided by being properly prepared. **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, 11 December, **welcome to SIDNEY DEACON** who will be baptised, and on Sunday, 12 December, **welcome to HARRIET VAUGHAN**. *Congratulations and welcome to our Parish community.*



FIRST COMMUNION CANDIDATES

This Saturday, **GEORGIA CLARK**, **ELIJAH MUSCAT** and **MAHLI DUFFIN** receive First Communion. This Sunday, **JACK BLAND** and **HARRISON COURT** receive First Communion. **Congratulations!**



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

BEATITUDES TO BE GOOD SHEPHERDS – What do You Think They Are?

Pope Francis invited Italy's bishops to live the "beatitudes of a bishop," an adaptation of the traditional Eight Beatitudes to provide guiding principles for being a "good shepherd" of a diocese.

- "Blessed is the bishop who makes poverty and sharing his way of life, so that by his witness he is building up the kingdom of heaven.
- "Blessed is the bishop who is not afraid of tears streaming down his face, so that in them may be mirrored the pains of the people, the hard work of priests, finding God's consolation in the embrace with those who suffer.
- "Blessed is the bishop who considers his ministry a service and not power, making meekness his strength ...

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

3rd Sunday of Advent · Year C
1st Reading Zephaniah 3:14-18
2nd Reading Philippians 4:4-7
Gospel Luke 3:10-18

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

4th Sunday of Advent · Year C
1st Reading Micah 5:1-4
2nd Reading Hebrews 10:5-10
Gospel Luke 1:39-44

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 5:30pm
Sunday 8:00am
 ☞ Saturday Mass is 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

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WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday —
Tuesday ☞ 5:30pm
Wednesday 9:00am
Thursday 9:00am
Friday 9:30am
Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday