



# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



**25 DECEMBER 2016  
CHRISTMAS**



Greetings of peace and joy from the Franciscan Friars

## A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

## Making Christmas Come Alive

Despite the fact that many of the themes of Christian faith are fading, Luke's gospel account of the Saviour's birth resonates in the awareness of most Australians – the Child in the manger, the shepherds and the angels' song of "Peace on earth". We believers are challenged to own what the story has to tell a struggling world – beyond commercial trivialisation and the sentimental attractiveness of a new born babe.

The second readings of the liturgies of Christmas Day point beyond these superficialities, inviting us to share in the wonder and joy brought by the Saviour's birth: the dawn of salvation for the whole world! "God's grace (saving power) has been revealed" bringing "salvation for the whole human race"; "in these last days God has spoken through his Son".

For a renewed Christian faith, all things are moving towards the consummation of God's designs for creation. With the coming of this dawn, God's plan has reached its great climax. Blessed with faith in Christ, we rejoice as we hear Isaiah giving expression to the messianic expectations of old Israel, because we recognise their amazing fulfilment in the story of Jesus, the son of David, the "Prince of Peace", bringing to the human family the "good news" – "Your God is King!"

Luke's gospel narrative is so well remembered because it is a masterpiece. Christ's birth is set on the world stage, within the "Pax Romana" [Roman peace] of a mighty empire; and the nation's messianic expectations are fulfilled in Bethlehem, "the town of David". But contrasts soon emerge with these grand settings that fill this dawn of our salvation with gospel overtones, anticipating what is to take place as the Saviour's mission unfolds. The earthly pomp of the empire and the chequered history of the Davidic dynasty are far removed from this humble birth, amidst the overflow of a crowded inn – with a manger for a crib and a crowd of smelly shepherds as privileged witnesses. Rome's proud boast, that its legions have brought peace to the world, pales into insignificance for those who recognize what this birth means for the whole of creation – as the angel hosts sing "Glory to God" and "peace to all those who enjoy God's favour". The chatter of the shepherds is a foil to the response of Mary, the first of all Christian believers, looking into the future and "treasuring all these things and pondering them in her heart".

We have another very different masterpiece, in the opening passage of John's gospel. This telling of the same story is the fruit of a long meditation upon the dawning of the world's salvation: "In the beginning was the Word ... and the Word was God ... The Word was the true light that enlightens all people and he was coming into the world ... The Word was made flesh, he lived among us and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of God". May we be a light of peace in the world's darkness.

## FR VINCE WHITEMAN'S ASHES – R.I.P.

The ashes of our brother, **Vince Whiteman**, a retired priest who lived in our Parish for many years, will be placed in the Columbarium during a brief ceremony **after the 8am Mass on Sunday, 8 January 2017**. *All are welcome to attend this short ceremony and to join Vince's family and friends for morning tea afterwards*. Vince died on 6 November 2016.



## HOLIDAY BULLETIN – NEXT WEEKEND

Next weekend, 31 December and 1 January, we celebrate the feast of **Mary, Mother of God** as well as **World Day of Peace**. There will be a **HUGE** "Holiday Bulletin" which will include Pope Francis' message for the 50<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace, as well as other thought-provoking reading – **all twelve** pages! You can always read our Parish Bulletins on line [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au] or have your own **personal** copy of the Bulletin emailed to you – *to subscribe*, email our Parish Office at [thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

**Welcome** – especially to all visitors attending our Christmas Liturgies.

**Thank you** to all who have worked for and been of service to our Parish in so many, many ways over the last year. Your responsible, regular service, cheerfulness, support, hospitality, courtesy, integrity and deep faith are most appreciated. **Thank you** to all who have been so **very generous** this past year.

**COLLECTION AT CHRISTMAS MASSES:** Last year you gave **\$5,111** at the Christmas Collections – we sent **\$3,820** to Fiji to help rebuild a house used by a parish to accommodate Sisters and **\$1,291** to help with the cost of transporting clothes and other items to Fiji for cyclone relief. **Thank you** for your great generosity.

## HOLIDAY MASS TIMES

Monday, 26 December, Boxing Day – Mass at 9:30am, Feast of St Stephen

27 December onwards ... usual weekday and weekend Mass times [see below]

Mary, Mother of God and World Day of Peace 5:30pm, Saturday, 31 December ... and ... 8:00am, Sunday, 1 January

<p><b>Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra</b> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • Assistant Priests</p>	<p><b>WEEKEND MASS TIMES</b> Church of St Michael • Thirroul Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am Bulli Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm Corrimal Saturday 6pm and Sunday 9am</p>	<p><b>USUAL WEEKDAY LITURGIES</b> Wombarra no liturgies until 6 Feb Thirroul [Mass] Tuesday 5:30pm Wednesday, Thursday 9:00am Friday 9:30am</p>
---	--	---

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

Website [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

4268 1910

4268 1976

[thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

Parish School 4267 2560

**JANUARY Parish Office Hours – Tuesdays and Wednesdays – 9:30am to 12:30pm and 1:00pm to 3:30pm**