



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



18/19 MARCH 2017
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT ✦ YEAR A
Presentation of the Creed

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Softening the Heart

In today's Gospel, Jesus promises the Samaritan woman "living water which shall become a fountain within her, leaping up to provide eternal life." The liturgy on this Lenten Sunday places Jesus' promise within the context of the Exodus account of water coming from the rock of Horeb (Sinai).

Psalm 95 refers both to the "Rock of our salvation" and also to hardened hearts. On the one hand, there is the Rock (God) from which the water of eternal life flows. On the other hand, there are those rocks (our hearts) which we seek in Lent to soften by "prayer, fasting and works of mercy."

We believe, with Paul, that "the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

That love of God should make us a forgiving people, one that enables the world to "be brought together in unity and peace."

Our goal is to "harden not our hearts:" to be concerned for the poor and suffering, to forgive the criminal, to welcome the stranger, to love our enemies.

"If only you recognized God's gift ..."

"By becoming for people a model of merciful love for others, Christ proclaims by his actions even more than by his words that call to mercy which is one of the essential elements of the Gospel ethos. In this instance it is not just a case of fulfilling a commandment or an obligation of an ethical nature: it is also a case of satisfying a condition of major importance for God to reveal himself in his mercy to humanity: "The merciful ... shall obtain mercy."
— Pope John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia* (1980) 3

We listen fascinated to the story of the meeting by the well of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Her history reminds us of our own frailties; her finding of faith and a new life encourages us. Thirst and hunger are such elemental experiences that they come immediately to mind, as we try to express the restless quest that shapes every human life. Though her life's searching has led her to make serious mistakes, we warm to the spirited woman from whom Jesus asks a drink. Jesus is thirsty; but what he seeks before all else is that this woman and those like her find true peace. In their memorable exchange he responds to the woman's searching. As she comes to recognize that she has found what her heart has been seeking, she 'puts down her water jar', and runs off to share the good news with the villagers she has been avoiding – by coming to the well at midday when few people are about.



✦ This narrative has been written for a community that has meditated deeply upon basic themes of Christian faith – themes as relevant for us today as they were when the Gospel was written. The Saviour is progressively presented as the one in whom humanity’s long and troubled search will find what it has been looking for. He is ‘greater than Jacob’, the ancestor of Israel; he is not only ‘a prophet’; he is ‘the Christ’ of Israel’s hopes. In fact – as in many texts of John’s Gospel – he intimates a claim to the divine name itself, ‘**I AM** he’.



His coming inaugurates a new order, ‘worship of the Father in Spirit and truth’ – something far beyond what has been known to Jews and Samaritans. He brings ‘living waters, welling up to eternal life’. John’s community would have heard in these words overtones of the wonder of their baptism.

The woman’s reaction to her enlightenment was a reminder to those who had found faith in Christ that they too were called to be missionaries. And this reminder has a sharp edge. It is not easy for us, today, to appreciate the bitterness of the estrangement between Jews and Samaritans – though the shocking conflicts of recent times may help us to understand the violent attitudes that divided these two groups. Of the Synoptic Gospels, Luke alone – the Gentile convert – shows any sympathy for the Samaritans. A missionary outreach to these people, therefore, must have seemed almost unthinkable to early Christians, most of whom were from a Jewish background. The attitude of Jesus, and the success he had in this chance meeting with Samaritans, was an encouragement for them to take up the Church’s mission, even though the difficulties seemed insurmountable.

This lesson is hammered home for them – and for us – in the words of Jesus to his bewildered disciples: ‘*My food is to do the will of the one who sent me*’; the harvest is ‘ready’ – ‘grain for eternal life’. His final lesson is a call to humility – the saving plan he is inaugurating is God’s work – among God’s workers, ‘one sows, another reaps’.

PROJECT COMPASSION – WEEK 3

“Commitment to truth opens the way to lasting reconciliation.” Pope Benedict XVI

Trauma has been part of Uncle Richard’s life from the beginning. A survivor of the Stolen Generations, he was kidnapped from his country, his community, and his family at a very young age. Determined to re-program him by making him forget who he was, the State even stole his name, giving him instead a number. As an adult, Uncle Richard has battled anger and pain, which his work as an artist has helped him overcome. Working with Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC), which is supported by Caritas Australia, has helped Uncle Richard and others like him restore their dignity and identity and heal.



Hundreds of Indigenous boys were held at the State-run Kinchela Boys Home (KBH) in Kempsey, NSW between 1924 and 1970. The Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation (KBHAC) was formed by the KBH survivors to support them, their families and communities through a peer model of support and empowerment founded on brotherhood and neighbourly love. For Uncle Richard, a Gumbaynggirr Dunghutti man, the KBH story began with sudden violence and loss: “They grabbed us ... and took us away from our people ... I was about nine, ten years old.”

Uncle Richard was denied his family, his identity and his culture: “First thing they say to you: forget your name. You are now a number. You are now 28.” All KBH boys were assigned numbers and were prohibited from using their names.

The policy of assimilation was strictly enforced. Anything connecting the boys to their Aboriginal culture was prohibited.

“They just kept saying, you’re not black, you’re white,” Uncle Richard says. Now the KBH survivors are restoring their identity, family structures and connections to community through KBHAC, which they established in 2001.

After he left KBH, Uncle Richard initially struggled with anger and pain, but his creative talents helped him: “I had a lot of anger before I came to KBHAC, but I used to take it out on my canvases, talking about being in the boys’ home through my artwork.”

He gained a degree in Fine Arts and now teaches art, mentoring young Aboriginal artists. “A lot of my artwork is based on spirituality,” he says – both Dreamtime, and Christian.

About three ago, Uncle Richard joined KBHAC, reuniting with other KBH survivors. “Joining KBHAC changed my life,” he notes. “It lifted me a lot more compared with my artwork. It helps me ... especially listening to the other men’s stories. We’ve still got a lot of anger but we’re controlling it now, coming together.”

“What we’re doing now, besides helping [each other], we’re helping communities, going out to actually talk about what happened to us in schools, institutions, businesses. We tell our stories, and we can hopefully show the way for other people to learn from our pain. And we’re trying to be the leader, a role model for our kids.”

KBHAC plays a vital role in reconciliation, says Uncle Michael, a KBHAC Board member and KBH survivor. “We can only do ourselves what needs to be done, to build self-esteem. Without the corporation and the understanding of each other there isn’t any future.” The KBH survivors and their families have identified the need for a healing centre. Uncle Michael says, “This place will help the men heal their own minds and bodies so that they can go out in society and function and be a positive asset to the community.”

Uncle Richard hopes that KBHAC will be able to develop a shared understanding with the wider community. “Our door is open. We’re the neighbours, knock on the door, say, can you teach me? Can we talk about Indigenous issues? Can we talk in a proper way?”

Caritas Australia is proud to be a partner of KBHAC. Please join us in hearing the KBHAC stories of suffering and survival. Please join us in supporting KBHAC, our neighbour from whom we have much to learn, and whose members’ identity, dignity and wellbeing we can all help to restore.

PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES/ENVELOPES

Please take home a Project Compassion box and/or a set of donation envelopes and support Caritas Australia this Lenten season themed “**Love your neighbour**”. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by phoning ☎ **1800 024 413** or by visiting 🌐 www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion.



NEWS IN BRIEFS

Rite II Reconciliation during Lent will take place at **7:30pm on Tuesday, 4 April**.

Easter Liturgies – we will need extra ministers and helpers ... if you will be around, please sign up or volunteer your services – *email the Parish Office or sign up at church.*

THIRROUL SURF LIFESAVING CLUB

Surf Lifesaving Patrols help keep our beaches safe. Swim between the flags. So far in Australia **this season 6,104 rescues** have been made! *Last week it was 5,886!*

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

ARE YOU AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT 2 ROSTER PERIODS?

The next ministry roster periods run from **27 May** until **10 Sep**, then from **16 Sep** until **31 Dec**. School holidays during that time are: 7–22 July and 29 Sep to 14 Oct. If you are unavailable anytime between **27 May** and **31 December**, please let your roster coordinator know by **20 March**. *Please contact your Roster Coordinator, not the Parish Office.*

2017 EARTH HOUR – SATURDAY, 25 MARCH, 8:30–9:30PM

Our actions on climate change will shape the future for our children. They know more about climate change than any other generation. And they have extraordinary views on what they want for their planet. In 2017, WWF [World Wide Fund for Nature] is celebrating 10 years of Earth Hour and 10 years of progress on changing climate change. What started as an Aussie grassroots movement has grown into the world's biggest movement for climate change. *On Saturday, 25 March, switch off to support progress for the next generation.*

AUTUMNAL EQUINOX

The time when the sun is directly over the equator is called the equinox – this happens twice a year, in Autumn and in Spring. During Equinoxes the tilt of the Earth (with respect to the Sun) is 0° and because of it duration of the day and the night are almost equal on Equinox day i.e. 12 hours. This year, for us, the Autumnal Equinox is at precisely **21:28:06** [9:28pm and 6 seconds!]. **Easter** is the Sunday after the first full moon after the Autumnal Equinox.



AN IDEA FOR LENT: Make a list of 40 people who have touched your life in one way or another, and each day, write a letter or email of thanks to them; pray for them.

<p>THIS Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">3rd Sunday of Lent YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading Exodus 17:3-7</p> <p>2nd Reading Romans 5:1-2,5-8</p> <p>Gospel John 4:5-42</p>	<p>NEXT Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">4th Sunday of Lent YEAR A</p> <p>1st Reading 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13</p> <p>2nd Reading Ephesians 5:8-14</p> <p>Gospel John 9:1-41</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SUNDAY MASS TIMES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Church of St Michael • Thirroul</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bulli Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Corrimal Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LITURGIES THIS WEEK</p> <p>Wombarra [<i>Liturgy</i>] Monday 4:30pm</p> <p>Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm</p> <p style="background-color: #000080; color: white; padding: 2px;">Monday, 20 Mar Wednesday 9:00am</p> <p style="background-color: #000080; color: white; padding: 2px;">St Joseph Thursday 9:00am</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Friday 9:30am</p>

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul and Wombarra

Moving forward as a Parish Family ✦ one of the Northern Illawarra Parishes

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest ❖ Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • Assistant Priests

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**Parish Office
Hours**

**Tuesday, Wednesday
Friday**

9:00am to 3:30pm Magda Pires
10:00am to 3:00pm Maureen Franciskovic

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