



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



1/2 APRIL 2017
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT ✦ YEAR A
Scrutiny #3 ✦ Reconciliation Rite II next week

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Victory over Death

Today's Gospel recounts one of the most dramatic stories from the life of Jesus: the raising of Lazarus from the dead. John goes to great lengths to make clear that Lazarus had been dead for some time, and he shows Jesus' power to conquer death.

We live in a world that has been caught up in death for a long time. We kill each other in acts of murder, abortion, euthanasia, execution, war, terrorist activities, ignoring the fate of refugees, drunk and reckless driving.

We kill ourselves through suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, smoking, overwork, stress, bad eating habits and physical neglect.

We watch calmly as others die from poverty, hunger and malnutrition, homelessness, unemployment, poor education, disease, lack of health coverage, child abuse, arms proliferation, discrimination, pollution, destruction of the environment, unsafe working conditions, and all the laws, policies, practices and attitudes which contribute to these conditions. We demonize refugees calling them "illegals." Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He is the God who "will put my spirit in you that you may live." Our Lenten celebration must serve to remind us that the paschal mystery represents a victory over death.

"The right to life ... is basic and inalienable. It is grievously violated in our day by abortion and euthanasia, by widespread torture, by acts of violence against innocent parties and by the scourge of war. The arms race is an insanity which burdens the world and creates the conditions for even more massive destruction of life."

– Pope Paul VI, *Message Issued in Union with the Synod of Bishops* (1974)

Our Lenten journey is drawing to a close; today's readings remind us of what lies ahead, with Ezekiel's vision of new life for a valley of bones and Paul's promise that the Spirit that will 'give life to our mortal bodies'. The gospel reading from John tells the story of the raising of Lazarus. This sequence – carefully crafted as a prelude to the Passion narrative – prepares us for what is to come; Jesus confronts death itself and emerges victorious. As the narrative opens, the Lord's coming death is called to mind, Mary the sister of Lazarus is identified as the one who, at this time, 'anoints the Lord with ointment' – for 'the day of his burial' (cf. John 12:7). The illness of Lazarus 'will not end in death, but in God's glory' and the glory of the Son of God. The death of Jesus – if he 'goes to Judea' is a real and terrifying prospect for his disciples – leading Thomas to exclaim, 'Let us go too, ... ✦



✚ and die with him'. The narrative highlights the 'friendship' of Jesus with the family of Bethany: soon to be caught up in the drama of the Saviour's rejection by the nation's leaders. Such a detail, we know, has significance in the meditative style of John's gospel. 'I call you friends, not servants' (John 15:15), Jesus will tell his disciples. And the repeated reference to 'the beloved disciple' in the narrative that follows brings out in graphic detail the implications of these words – an encouragement for all who follow the way of discipleship.



We are left in no doubt that Jesus triumphs over death in all its horror. The mortal remains of Lazarus have been in the tomb for 'four days': 'He will smell', his sister warns. Numerous mourners have now assembled, not all of them well disposed towards Jesus – an intimation of what is soon to follow. 'Could he not have prevented this man's death', some of them ask.

This confrontation with death, Jesus makes clear, is a sign. As he sets out for Bethany, after the death of Lazarus, he declares, 'I am glad for your sake, because now you will believe'. And although he knows that the Father 'always hears him', he addresses the Father publicly, 'for the sake of those who stand around, so that they may believe that it was you who sent me' – the claim of his divine mission that is many times repeated in the course of John's gospel.

In the exchanges that take place between Jesus and the sisters of Lazarus, he leads them towards the fullness of faith that will unite them with him in his final victory over death – his Paschal Mystery. Like his other disciples, Martha has already found faith in Jesus as 'the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world'; now she is led to recognise the full implications of this coming, as she affirms her faith in the truth of Jesus' words, 'I AM the resurrection and the life' – the very source of 'eternal life'.

'Lazarus, come out': the victory is complete and absolute. 'Unbind him, untie him, let him go free': words of promise for all who will believe in his coming triumph.

PROJECT COMPASSION – WEEK 5

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." – Matthew 7:12

Across Fiji, the People's Community Network (PCN) empowers people living in informal settlements around Fiji. Since 2009, Caritas Australia has supported PCN communities in advocating successfully for rights, services, and a more secure future for their children. Here we share the voices of PCN community members, whose lives have been transformed by neighbourly love.

Until recently, people living in informal settlements in Fiji have had no access to the most basic of rights – land tenure, housing, sanitation, roads, education, and a secure livelihood. As Tevita, a resident, says, *"When you don't have land tenure, you are just like a log, floating."*

But now their voices are linked in powerful chorus through a country-wide network, the People's Community Network (PCN). Supported by Caritas Australia since 2009, PCN brings together informal settlements, enabling them to advocate to improve their access to education, housing and employment.

Semiti, the National Director of the PCN, grew up in an informal settlement. "One thing that my past taught me is to give back to the community what I have learned. And to try and lift them up from their impoverished situation. I always tell them: I was once in your shoes. I was once a squatter, like you. I was once someone who had nothing." ✚

✦ People in informal settlements have been living there for quite some time. So they start to believe that they are nobody, that they have no rights.

Our main role is to empower them so that they can believe in themselves, and move out of that situation.

SAVU (PCN's Assistant Director): "Our first work in settlements is to carry out workshops [on] community empowerment, social analysis and economic literacy. These three workshops are the big changers. They change mindset – they change relationships, and build relationships for people to become change agents in their communities."

The program develops the understanding of shared goals by community members, and empowers community members to advocate for their rights as citizens to housing, education and a secure future.

SAVU: "We journey together with the people in saying that a new world [is] possible ... where families have access to new housing, to land security, to better education."

Committees have been formed in each settlement to deal with many issues – health and hygiene; care of the elderly; activities for women, particularly those not working; education; and employment, to enhance the skills of young people.

PCN has also established Savings Groups across Fiji, with women in leadership roles. These groups encourage people in the community to make weekly savings so they can access education, healthcare and housing.

VANI: "Education is the most important thing in our life, because that is our future."

PCN offers informal settlements a well-resourced educational environment for children. Children who were working are now back at school. Unemployed young men and women can undertake training, and there are homework centres where children from surrounding settlements can use computers or get help from the teachers or other students.

Through PCN, marginalised voices are now raised in hope:

TEVITA: "PCN is not only about housing. It's not only about money. In talking about saving, they taught us to save your relationship, to save health, education, and look after your senior citizens."

PCN is like a raft that was thrown to us in the waves. They gave us hope that there was still life within if we stand together and hold each other's hand and move together forward. Caritas Australia is proud to support this network of communities as they work in solidarity and grow in resilience.

"If we work together, we'll demolish all the poverty." – Vani, community member.



PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES/ENVELOPES

You can still 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:

Thirroul	7:30pm	Tuesday	4 April
Bulli	7:00pm	Wednesday	5 April
Corrimal	7:00pm	Thursday	6 April
Helensburgh	7:00pm	Friday	7 April



THIRROUL SURF LIFESAVING CLUB

Surf Lifesaving Patrols help keep our beaches safe. Swim between the flags. So far in Australia this season **6,448+** rescues have been made! *Last week it was 6,358!*

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

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2017

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in our Parish on 1 June. Students in **Year 6 or older** need to enrol by **10 April**. *Download Enrolment Forms from our Parish website.*

PALMS AND ROSEMARY ARE NEEDED

We will need palms for Passion (Palm) Sunday, 8/9 April: please drop palms off at the church on Friday, 7 April or Saturday, 8 April. We will also need rosemary for Good Friday, 14 April and for ANZAC Day, 25 April. Please drop rosemary to Thirroul church on Wednesday/Thursday, 12/13 April.

KSC ANNUAL CHARITIES DINNER

The annual Knights of the Southern Cross Charities Dinner will be held on Saturday, 27 May 2017 from 7pm at the Thirroul Railway Institute, Railway Parade, Thirroul. The speaker will be Fr Chris Riley AM, Founder and CEO of Youth Off The Streets. Tickets are \$35 each, BYO. Bookings are essential: contact Paul Tuckerman ☎ 4267 2535. All are welcome!

AN IDEA FOR LENT: Try no eating after dinner, no TV snacks – don't forget to put the money you save to Project Compassion or to a needy cause. Another suggestion: don't eat out but try to make easy crockpot meals. Again, save the money and give.

THIS Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i>	NEXT Sunday's Readings <i>on our website</i>
5th Sunday of Lent YEAR A	Palm (Passion) Sunday YEAR A
1st Reading Ezekiel 37:12-14	1st Reading Isaiah 50:4-7
2nd Reading Romans 8:8-11	2nd Reading Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel John 11:1-45	Gospel Matthew 26:14–27:66
SUNDAY MASS TIMES	LITURGIES THIS WEEK
Church of St Michael • Thirroul	Wombarra [Liturgy] Monday 4:30pm
Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am	Thirroul Tuesday 5:30pm
Bulli Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm	Wednesday 9:00am
Corrimal Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am	Thursday 9:00am
	Friday 9:30am

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



325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

4268 1910 ☎ 4268 1976



PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

thirroul@dow.org.au

**Parish Office
Hours**

**Tuesday, Wednesday
Friday**

9:00am to 3:30pm

Magda Pires

10:00am to 3:00pm

Maureen Franciskovic



www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

Parish School of St Michael ☎ 4267 2560