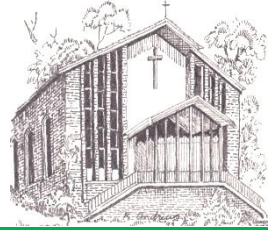




Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



10 / 11 FEBRUARY 2018
SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME ✦ YEAR B
Ash Wednesday 14 Feb ✦ Project Compassion

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Open to New Life

On the one hand, there are suffering human beings like Job, slaves longing for the shade. On the other hand, there is God who cares about us, who heals the broken-hearted. Leprosy was a terrible disease in biblical times. Highly contagious, it was fatal, since there was no cure for it. The law could do nothing other than exclude lepers from participation in the life of the community.

There was more to it than that. The Responsorial Psalm 32 is a reminder that in biblical times people often regarded sin as the cause of disease. Lepers were therefore sinners, and the community excluded them from its worship. In a theocracy such as Israel, exclusion from the temple was a fate worse than death.



Jesus enters the scene as the healer of lepers. Those, for whom the law offers no hope, find in Jesus their saviour, their key to re-entry into the human community.

We have our own 'lepers' today. They are the wretched people of the world's slums, the one's dying of AIDS, the ones sitting on death row, the refugees in horrid detention centres. The law of society has nothing of hope to offer them. Their only hope is in the "great prophet [who] has appeared among us," and in those followers of Jesus like Paul, "seeking not my own advantage, but that of the many."

"The mystery of the human condition is such that, in one way or another, all will face pain, reversal, and, ultimately, the mystery of death itself. Seen through the eyes of faith, however, this mystery is not closed in upon itself. Through sharing in the cross of Christ, human suffering and pain have a redemptive meaning and goal. They have the potential of opening a person to new life. They also present an opportunity and a challenge to all, calling us to respond to suffering just as Jesus did—with love and care."

– US Bishops, 1987, *The Many Faces of AIDS: A Gospel Response*

Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom, by preaching and by the healings that signalled the Kingdom's mysterious coming in his own person.

Critical studies of the miracle narratives of the four gospels have produced important conclusions. They concern a relatively small number of events – about 30 in all. These narratives offer a distinct contrast to the characteristics of typical 'wonder stories'. Though part of the Christian message from the beginning, they are constantly associated with a concern that they not give rise to a superficial popular enthusiasm, but be understood as signs of the coming of the Kingdom. We have already recognised the importance of this



☞☞ concern of Mark. His account of the healing of the leper, as Jesus begins his Galilean ministry presses home the point.



What a magnificent encounter with which to introduce the missionary journeys of Jesus. It would be hard to find a more telling symbol of the human miseries that Jesus was sent to overcome, than the plight of the leper who threw himself at the feet of Jesus – ‘If you want to you can cure me’. It was a situation produced in large part by human ignorance and fear, accentuated by traditions of ritual cleanness. Our first reading from Leviticus describes this pathetic condition in graphic detail – obliged to wear torn clothes, with hair dishevelled, and sounding the warning cry, ‘Unclean!’, that ostracised the leper from normal society. What the biblical writings called ‘leprosy’ included not only the dread Hansen’s disease, but many other skin disorders, many of which modern medicine recognises not to be contagious.

As the Saviour is moved with compassion in the presence of this human misery, we are reminded that the Servant of God of the late Isaian writings, who embodied God’s saving designs, by ‘bearing the sorrows’ of the people, is described as assuming the condition of a leper – ‘Despised, familiar with suffering, one from whom we averted our gaze’ (Isaiah 53:3). In fact, Jesus made an astounding gesture of solidarity with the man in his misery. As he healed the leper with his word of prophetic authority, he ‘stretched out his hand and touched him’. In doing so, according to the Law, he had made himself ritually unclean.

Those who claimed the power of healing were not uncommon in the world in which Jesus lived. Being seen as one of their number could seriously compromise the evangelising mission that had been so tellingly expressed in the healing of the leper. Jesus urged the man, therefore, to go off quietly, fulfilling the Law’s prescription by having the priests verify his cure. But the man who had been cured could not contain himself. So important, however was it to Jesus – that the notoriety his healing had attracted be minimised – that he was forced to keep away from the towns. Nevertheless, the people were still drawn to him – Who is this man?



Project Compassion Sunday 11 February 2018



Please take home a Project Compassion box and/or a set of donation envelopes and support Caritas Australia this Lenten season themed “A Just Future”, celebrating the Year of Youth.

As Pope Francis said, “Cultivate with love the seeds of goodness, beauty and truth that God sows in every new generation.”

Through your generosity during Project Compassion this year, you are empowering young people to build a just future for themselves, their families and their communities.

A Just Future starts with your support!

You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, or phoning **1800 024 413**, or by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion

Pancake Tuesday, 13 February, Mass at 5:30pm followed by burning of palms.

ASH WEDNESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY, MASSES AT 9:15AM AND 7PM

If you know someone who cannot make it to Ash Wednesday Mass but would like to receive the ashes, bring a small container or some foil to take the Ashes to them.

LENT ... 40 DAYS FROM 14 FEBRUARY



Ash Wednesday Masses will be at **9:15am** and **7:00pm**. The **Distribution of Ashes** will take place during both Masses. If you have a family member who is homebound, you are welcome to bring along a small container to take some blessed Ashes home for them. Some of the senior students from our Parish Primary School will be attending the 9:15am Mass and they will be commissioned to take the blessed Ashes to conduct Liturgy of the Word services in each of the classrooms, and to distribute the Ashes.

Lent is a penitential season of **prayer, self-denial** and **helping others**. In this way, the whole Church prepares for Easter with those who are to be baptized. The liturgy takes account of the spirit of penance: musical instruments are only used to sustain singing, and floral decorations, if any, are kept very simple. In Lent, the Alleluia is omitted at Mass, even in celebrations of solemnities and feasts. Catholics are obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year – in Australia between Ash Wednesday and Trinity Sunday (27 May).

Ash Wednesday and **Good Friday** are days of fast and abstinence. The law of fasting binds those who have completed their eighteenth year, until the beginning of their sixtieth year; the law of abstinence binds those who have completed their fourteenth year. *These laws do not apply to those who are in hospital, sick or suffering from a chronic illness.*

FASTING AND REPARATION 14, 15, 16 and 17 FEBRUARY

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has proclaimed the days from Ash Wednesday until the Saturday after Ash Wednesday in 2018 as days of fasting and reparation **in sorrow for child sexual abuse and for the healing of victims**.



The kernel of the prayers used at this time is the Biblical notion of **Lament**. Lament and lament language have a unique place in the theological expression of Israel. It is an expression of suffering, and through lament we voice grief to our suffering, and in lamenting before God we acknowledge and dignify the suffering. Lament does not simply dwell on that “which we have done or have failed to do”, but rather moves us also to consider the *mirabilia Dei* [the “miracles of God”] thus shifting the focus onto God, our ultimate joy, and shifts the mode into one of hope.

If we remain, as indeed at times we must, on that which needs to be lamented, we risk placing the focus solely upon ourselves. Lament implies also cataloguing and expressing our hope which springs from recalling “all that the Lord has done for us in his goodness.” (e.g. Psalm 126). Jesus’ command given to the Gerasene Demoniac is instructive here, “... ‘Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’” (Mark 5:19).

A PRAYER FOR REPARATION

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just: You gave your only Son to save us by the blood of his cross. Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them. Hear our cries as we agonise over the harm done to our sisters and brothers. Breathe wisdom into our prayers, soothe restless hearts with hope, steady shaken spirits with faith.

Show us the way to justice and wholeness, enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy. Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people’s wounds and transform our brokenness. Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace, so that we may act with justice and find peace in you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

BRING BACK YOUR PALMS – BY TUESDAY

The palms you were given last Palm Sunday ... we need them back, please – so that we can burn them on “**Pancake Tuesday**”, that is, **Mardi Gras**, so as to make the ashes for **Ash Wednesday**. We burn the palms after the 5:30pm Mass on Tuesday, 13 February, so please bring back your palms before then ... *come along and join in the “ashes making.”*



SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB: TUESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY

The SIP theme this year is “**WHERE WILL THE CHURCH BE IN 2050?**” Over the year there will be four speakers from different Christian denominations/traditions. The first of the four SIP evenings will be on **Tuesday, 27 February** at the **Woonona-Bulli RSL Club, 7:30pm to 9:00pm**. The presenter that night will be Ken Cafe ofm. All are welcome.



WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Tuesday 13 Feb 5:30pm Mass followed by burning of the Palms
Wednesday 14 Feb 9:15am Ash Wednesday morning Mass
7:00pm Ash Wednesday evening Mass
St Valentine's Day – Roman martyr

CATECHUMENS preparing for Baptism: Samara Jirsa & Daniele Roque da Silva Woods

2017-2018 SURF SEASON ... SWIM SAFELY

Swim between the flags. No flags – no swim. Rescues so far since 1 July **3,623**.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – our first meeting for 2018 will be held **next Tuesday, 13 February**, in the McCarthy Centre at **11:30am for luncheon at 12noon**. All welcome! Monthly meeting 1:30pm.

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

4th Sunday of Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1

Gospel Mark 1:40-45

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

First Sunday of Lent • Year B

1st Reading Genesis 9:8-15

2nd Reading 1 Peter 3:18-22

Gospel Mark 1:12-15

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Church of St Michael • Thirroul

Saturday – 5:30pm • Sunday – 8:00am

Bulli – Sunday 8:30am and 5:30pm

Corrimal – Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am

LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Wombarra [*Liturgy*] Monday 4:30pm

Thirroul **Pancake Tuesday 5:30pm**

Ash Wednesday 9:15am and 7pm

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* ❖ Andrew Granc ofm, Geoff Allen, Ken Cafe ofm • *Assisting*

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

10:00am to 3:00pm

Magda Pires

Maureen Franciskovic

www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

Parish School of St Michael 4267 2560