



# Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



17 / 18 MARCH 2018  
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT ✦ YEAR B  
Prayer ✦ Fasting ✦ Almsgiving

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

## Seeing Jesus

Some Greeks came up to Philip and made this request: "Sir, we should like to see Jesus." They are to find Jesus, of course, in the grain of wheat fallen to earth and dying. They are to find Jesus in the one who is lifted up from the earth and loses his life.

If we should like to see Jesus, we need to look for the fallen grains of wheat around us, the sick and impoverished, the abused and oppressed. If we should like to see Jesus, we need to look for those who are losing their lives, refugees, the depressed, the victims of poverty, abuse, discrimination, and war.

What we need is a new covenant, a covenant of love and forgiveness. We need to have written in our hearts that we are God's people, that we aspire to be like Christ in transforming the darkness of the world's pain into the life and joy of Easter.

"Jesus who came as 'Emmanuel' (God with us, Matthew 1:23) and who promises to be with his people until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20) is hidden in those most in need; to reject them is to reject God made manifest in history."

– US Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, 1986:44

As our destination draws near, at the end of an important journey, we may well have mixed feelings. We look forward to arrival; but we may be uncertain and anxious about the outcome.

As we face the challenge of entering deeply into the climax of the Church's year of faith – the commemoration of the Saviour's Paschal Mystery – it is as if the liturgy of this last Sunday of our journey anticipates our mood and reassures us. The readings bring us some of the greatest texts of the Scriptures, texts which – as we stand among the Greek pilgrims who wanted to 'see Jesus' – help us, in the words of the gospel, to come to terms with 'the kind of death Jesus was to die'.

The horror of the Saviour's Cross is plainly stated: his 'obedience' to the Father's will, according the letter to the Hebrews, is made with 'prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and tears'. And John's gospel tells us, 'his soul was troubled', as his fateful 'hour' approached – in which he was to give all, like 'a wheat grain' which 'falls on the ground and dies'.

If he invites us to share this fate with him – 'wherever I am, my servant will be there too' – he also helps us to trust in his Father, as we face the ordeals of our personal lives. His prayer is 'heard', and through the sufferings which have been a sharing in the destructiveness and darkness of our world, he enters into a new and final existence. In the words of ✠ ✠





✠✠ the letter to the Hebrews, he is ‘made perfect’; as John’s gospel puts it, he is ‘glorified’. This is a powerful statement in biblical language – God’s ‘glory’ is the incomparable divine greatness. Having ‘emptied himself’ to become one with us, the manhood he shares with us is now filled with divine greatness – and the grain which falls to the ground ‘yields a rich harvest’, transforming the whole of creation.

The outcome is certain, therefore, and beyond all humanity’s imagining. It is the inauguration of the ‘new covenant written in our hearts’, foretold by Jeremiah, and sealed with the Saviour’s blood. The Crucified One will become ‘a source of eternal salvation’ for all who become his followers (Hebrews). Having been ‘lifted up from the earth’, he will ‘draw all people to himself’, that they may share in his new existence (John).

The Church’s liturgy prepares us well for what lies at the end of our journey. May it prove a faith-filled meeting with the generosity of our God, for each one of us.



## Fifth Sunday of Lent 17/18 March 2018



Ditosa is a young girl from Mozambique who hopes to go to university and become a police officer. Featured in Project Compassion 2013, Ditosa faced a challenging future with food scarcity, little education and few job prospects. Cared for by her grandmother and aunt, after her parents died of AIDS-related illnesses, they also lost their home and livelihoods in severe flooding.

Thanks to the support of Project Compassion, Caritas Australia and Caritas Regional Chokwe (CRC) helped Ditosa’s family to build a new house and assisted with transport fees, school materials and fees, to help Ditosa to stay at school.

Ditosa attended the Matuba Children’s Centre (set up by Caritas in 2007) which provides vulnerable children, like Ditosa, with lunch, study help, and computer and income-generating skills training. In 2018, Ditosa has graduated from school and is ambitious for the future. “Without the support of the people from Australia and Caritas I would not have been given this opportunity to continue my schooling.” Ditosa dreams of going to university to continue studying and secure an even brighter future.

**Please donate to Project Compassion 2018 and help young women like Ditosa to grow up with an education, confidence and hope, providing them with a just future. A Just Future starts with your support!**

You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, or by phoning **1800 024 413**.

## NEEDED IN PREPARATION FOR THE EASTER LITURGIES

**Palms** for Palm/Passion **next Sunday**, 24/25 March  
please bring them in by 10am on **next Friday, 23 March**

**Rosemary** for Good Friday, 30 March: please bring them in  
by **Thursday, 28 March**, cut into strips about 10cm long

**Small plastic bottles** for the Easter Water:  
please bring them in by **Friday, 23 March**



## RECONCILIATION RITE II – TUESDAY

Tuesday, 20 March at 7:30pm at Thirroul. One great way to prepare for Easter.

## CATHOLIC CARE RACE DAY

Kembla Grange, **Saturday, 24 March**. All proceeds to support our diocese's CatholicCare.

## SWIM SAFELY

So far in Australia **this season 5,201 rescues** have been made! *Last week it was 5,042!*

## HELPERS NEEDED TO PREPARE FOR EASTER

On Holy Thursday morning, **29 March**, there is no morning Mass. **At 9am that day**, we need **several volunteers** to help prepare for the Easter liturgies – no heavy lifting etc. is involved. *If you can help for an hour at most, please turn up at 9am, Thursday, 29 March.*

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

## EASTER LITURGIES 2018

The **Easter Triduum** is the highpoint of the Church's entire liturgical year. It begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, continues with the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. **Please join us if you can.**

<b>Mass of the Lord's Supper</b>	<b>Holy Thursday, 29 March</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>
Way of the Cross	Good Friday, 30 March	10:30am
<b>Celebration of the Lord's Passion</b>	<b>Good Friday, 30 March</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>
<b>Easter Vigil with adult baptisms</b>	<b>Holy Saturday, 31 March</b>	<b>7:00pm</b>
<b>Easter Sunday Mass with infant baptisms</b>	<b>Sunday, 1 April</b>	<b>8:00am</b>

## AUTUMNAL EQUINOX: 3:15AM, WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH

The "seasons" will change this Wednesday (21 March), with the Southern Hemisphere moving into autumn and the North emerging from winter into spring. The celestial event that marks this transition is called an "equinox", and it happens twice every year, around 21 March and 21 September. Just what is an equinox, and why does it occur?

The Earth moves in two different ways. First, the planet spins on its polar axis — a line through the north and south poles — once every 24 hours, causing the alternation of day and night. Secondly, it moves in its orbit around the sun once every 365.25 days, causing the annual cycle of seasons. The equinox occurs when these two motions intersect.

Twice a year, the sun crosses the celestial equator, moving from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere, or vice versa. The equinox is when the sun is over the equator.

## THE PASSION NARRATIVE IN MARK'S GOSPEL [Part 1]

The Gospel of Mark was probably the first gospel to be written. Like his gospel as a whole, Mark's passion narrative is lean and taut, moving swiftly and in a haunting fashion from the events of the Last Supper to Jesus' death and burial.

Mark begins the passion with three stories of brooding, shameful betrayal and tender fidelity. The enemies of Jesus, often the Pharisees and now the Jerusalem based priests and elders, never step out of character in which the evangelist has portrayed them from the beginning of the gospel. They had hounded Jesus during his ministry in Galilee and intensified their opposition to his teaching when he had arrived in Jerusalem. Now their implacable hostility is sealed with a plot to take his life.

A chilling new element is added, however: Judas, one of Jesus' own disciples — chosen and loved and entrusted with a share in Jesus' mission — goes to the leaders and offers to betray Jesus to them. They are pleased and pay him for his service.

In between these stories, with a dramatic touch typical of his gospel, Mark inserts a story of exquisite fidelity. While Jesus visits Simon the Leper in Bethany on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives, an anonymous woman breaks open her alabaster jar of costly perfumed oil and anoints Jesus' head. In the Bible, kings and prophets were anointed on the head and Mark plays on that memory here.

As the fragrance of the oil fills the room, those with Jesus are shocked at the woman's extravagant gesture. But Jesus defends her. She had performed an act of true fidelity and love, he tells them, "for she has anticipated anointing my body for burial" (14:8). For this, Jesus promises, she would be remembered wherever the Gospel would be preached, the only one in all of the New Testament to be so greatly honoured.

These three sharply contrasting scenes thrust the reader into the heart of Mark's message. Two major themes run through the entire passion story – one focusing on Jesus who with intense determination gives his life for others; the other, on those who surround Jesus, some withering in the crucible of suffering, some exemplifying faith and courage.

The passion exposes the terrible intent of Judas and the leaders, but it also give us a glimpse of authentic discipleship in the anonymous woman of Bethany. She, like Jesus, understands both who he is and what his destiny entails, and without hesitation acts on that intuition. And therefore she anoints him for burial and acclaim his royal dignity. For such love she would never be forgotten.

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### THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

#### Fifth Sunday of Lent • Year B

1<sup>st</sup> Reading           Jeremiah 31:31-34  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading           Hebrews 5:7-9  
Gospel                 John 12:20-33

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### NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

#### Passion [Palm] Sunday • Year B

1<sup>st</sup> Reading           Isaiah 50:4-7  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading         Philippians 2:6-11  
Gospel                Mark 14:1–15:47

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## 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*

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**Parish Office  
Hours**

**Tuesday, Wednesday  
Friday**

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

 [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au) Parish School of St Michael  4267 2560