



Welcome to the Parish of St Michael Thirroul and Wombarra



23 / 24 JUNE 2018
THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
Welcome to those Celebrating Baptism

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Change of Life

We honour John the Baptist as a prophet sent “to prepare for the Lord a people well-disposed, to help God’s people to walk the path of salvation.” The prophets were people who, like Isaiah, had God’s words placed in their mouths. “They investigated the times,” and through their reading of the signs of the times, they were able to declare God’s justice.

John the Baptist had the task of preparing the people immediately before the arrival of the messiah. His message was one of repentance, change of life, metanoia. His baptism was a sign of change, of turning things around, in the direction of God.



The lesson of John the Baptist is that the world will receive Jesus Christ when it turns away from its violent and oppressive ways. It must allow the prophets “to turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the rebellious to the wisdom of the just.”

“In the face of the present-day situation of the world, marked as it is by the grave sin of injustice, we recognize both our responsibility and our inability to overcome it by our own strength. Such a situation urges us to listen with a humble and open heart to the word of God, as God shows us new paths towards action in the cause of justice in the world.”

– Synod of Bishops, Justice in the World, 1971:29

Today’s readings are filled with anticipation of a remarkable life that is very familiar to us – a life looked forward to in the words Luke puts in the mouth of John’s father after his birth: ‘the Lord has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, as he promised through his prophets ... As for you, little child, you shall prepare his ways before him’.

As we become more familiar with the Scriptures, we recognise the importance of the prophets in the shaping of old Israel’s faith – opening up boundless hopes, and calling them to fulfil their role as ‘the light of the nations’. John the Baptist, the last of the prophets of old Israel, was a figure of immense significance. He was the one who pointed out the way, as the figures and shadows of the Old Testament gave way to their fulfilment, in the life, death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world. As Jesus himself declared: ‘A greater than John the Baptist has never been seen. It was toward John that all the prophecies of the prophets and the Law were leading’. However, what he adds to this remarkable praise startles us: ‘Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is’ (Matthew 11:11-14). These words refer, not to John’s personal standing before God, but to the fact that his role belongs to the old order which is now passing away. If he was a figure of the old



✠✠ dispensation, his selfless dedication and final heroism will be an inspiration to Christians of every age.

In fact, John was a figure of such influence at the time, that the gospels stress the fact that John claimed to be no more than a humble herald of this fulfilment. In a striking passage of the first chapter of John's gospel, the Baptist's witness to Jesus is dramatised. One of the devices used in this gospel, to affirm the divine identity of Jesus, is the frequent repetition in the declarations of Jesus of the phrase, 'I AM'. Jews came to question this preacher who was attracting large crowds. When asked: 'Who are you?' he declared quite openly, 'I AM NOT the Christ; I AM NOT Elijah; I AM NOT the Prophet (i.e. the New Moses)'. He was, he said, 'a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord'.

But there are less subtle indications of John's acceptance of his role as a humble herald. When large crowds came to be baptised, he brushed aside their grandiose suggestions with words that are familiar to every generation: 'I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; I baptise with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire' (Luke 3:16). Taking up the prophets' theme, referring to the Lord as the 'husband' of Israel, he applied it to the fulfilment he was announcing, calling himself 'the bridegroom's friend, who stands there and listens and is glad when he hears the bridegroom's voice'. And he makes himself an inspiring model to all disciples of Jesus, declaring, 'He must increase and I must decrease'.



If you called someone by name, at least in ancient days of the bible, it was thought that you had some power over them. This is why the Jews at certain periods of the Hebrew scriptures (the "Old Testament") would not speak the name of the Holy One, the being we today so casually refer to as "God," or, in texting and elsewhere, as OMG. Speaking his name did (and does) seem to make the speaker more powerful than the one who is above all.

God has a special name for each of us, one God calls us by in the depths of our heart.

Today's Gospel narrates a wrangle about the naming of John the Baptist. Names were important to God also. The Archangel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him the name of his son would be John. Why John? This name had a Hebrew root that meant, approximately, "God has shown favour," an indication of John's role in salvation history. The angel Gabriel appeared also to Mary, frightening her with an announcement of her holiness and the blessedness of her womb, since she would bear the holiest child of all. The name of that child would be what we know today as "Jesus"—though in the Hebrew and Aramaic, the full name was Yehoshua, or Joshua. It meant, "God is salvation."

Gabriel's appearance to the old man Zechariah was nearly identical to his one to Mary. As you know, the reactions of Mary and Zechariah were also quite similar, except for one important difference. Zechariah knew that he and his wife were both far beyond child-bearing age, and so he actually doubted the word of the Archangel and asked for proof. Mary was puzzled too, because she was not married. She needed an explanation and asked for it. The angel struck Zechariah mute, unable to speak, whereas Mary, because of her humble willingness, was found open to the Holy Spirit, and she conceived.

This gospel story of the naming of John the Baptist is a fascinating story, but what does this mean to us today? God has a special name for each of us, one God calls us by in the depths of our heart. It is a name that—if we can hear it and speak it with our lives—will make us who we are supposed to be, will make us the carriers of God's name itself – in practical ways – to others. "A Christian should be a man (or a woman) who can step aside because the Lord will grow in the heart and soul of others." – Pope Francis, 24 June 2014.

2018 SIGNIFICANT MARRIAGE ANNIVERSARY MASS

If you are celebrating 25, 40, 50 or 60 years of marriage this year and would like an invitation to the Mass to be celebrated by Bishop Brian Mascord at St John Vianney Co-Cathedral, Fairy Meadow on Sunday, 19 August 2018 at 2pm, please contact Helen Bennett 4222 2403 or email helen.bennett@dow.org.au at the Office of the Bishop by **Friday, 13 July** and an invitation will be sent to you.

LONG LIVE YOU – CATHOLICARE AGED SERVICES

The Australian Government has increased home care packages to support senior Australians remain living at home for longer. If you or someone you love needs assistance, CatholicCare can offer support with their day-to-day living or help them navigate the myagedcare portal to see what services they may be eligible to receive. For more information please call ☎ 4254 9342 or visit www.catholiccare.dow.org.au

CREATING A SAFE CHURCH FROM WITHIN – Fr Hans Zollner SJ

On **Saturday, 1 September** at the Campbelltown Catholic Club Fr Hans Zollner SJ will address the most significant issues facing the Catholic Church today with respect to harmful behaviour, including the theological and spiritual implications arising from the abuse crisis and their impact on victims and survivors, together with members of the Church. Morning tea and lunch will be provided. There is **no cost**, but you are asked to register by **17 August**: rsvp@dow.org.au Recommended seminar. ⓘ www.hanszollner.dow.org.au

2018 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SUNDAY

Next weekend the Catholic churches of Australia celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday, the theme this year being *Because of her, we can*. The ‘her’ is a reference to strong women in our lives – our mothers, daughters, aunties, grandmothers, sisters – and also to Mary, Mother of God. Special prayers will be used during the Eucharist.

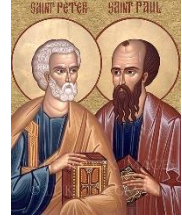
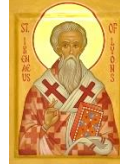


PEACE ... TEACHING OF POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis brings to Catholic teaching on poverty, peace and the planet the reintegration of nonviolence into the heart of Catholic teaching on war and peace. In the early Church, pacifism was the dominant theme of Christian theology. For most of the Church’s history, however, nonviolence has been seen as a heroic though unrealistic choice, an eccentric part of our patrimony that was displaced by St Augustine’s powerful logic of war as last resort. In his “World Day of Peace Message” in 2017, Pope Francis reclaimed the tradition of pacifism as a major theological current in the life of the Church. He reiterated the contention of the early Christian community that Christ’s call to love of neighbour and enemy alike is, in an unrelenting way, incompatible with recourse to war. Francis teaches that the time in which Jesus lived was one of great violence, and yet he preached non-resistance. Can the Church do anything less than seek to construct a powerful and realistic politics of nonviolence rooted both in reality and in the words of the Lord himself? Pope Francis’ mission in the area of peace is best seen as one of recovery. On one level, Francis has continued the trajectory of the modern popes in tightening the moral requirements under just war theory for recourse to war and the formulation of nuclear policy. The pope’s bold decision last November to proclaim the very possession of nuclear weapons morally unacceptable is a sign of that continuing trajectory. The initiatives of Pope Francis in the area of nonviolence and peace-building constitute a major shift in orientation in Catholic social teaching designed to truly empower the Church’s ancient pacifist traditions.

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Wednesday 20 June 7:00pm Confirmation Practice
 Thursday 21 June St Irenaeus, *bishop, martyr*
 7:30pm Confirmation
 Friday 22 June Sts Peter and Paul, *apostles*



AVAILABILITY ON OUR MINISTRY ROSTERS

Thank you to all who volunteer to be on one or more of our ministry rosters: **AV Operators; Leaders of Children's Liturgy; Church Cleaning; Communion to Coledale Hospital; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion; Counters; Flowers; Laundry; Morning Tea; Readers; Safety Officers.** The parishioners on these rosters and our **Adult Servers and Musicians** help keep our parish functioning and providing the best service to parishioners and visitors. The current roster period ends on 12 August and the next roster period goes from **18 August to 2 December 2018**. If you are unavailable any-time between 18 August and 2 December, **please let your roster coordinator know as soon as possible. If you would like to join any of the rosters, especially Safety Officers and Musicians, please contact the Parish Office – your parish needs you!**

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

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

There are 34 Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation this year. Bishop Brian Mascord will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Thursday, 28 June** at 7:30pm. Please remember before the Lord the 34 Candidates and their families. Next weekend of 30 June / 1 July, the newly confirmed will be presented to the parish, *and a special Sunday morning tea.*

THIS Sunday's Readings *on our website*

Birth of John the Baptist

1st Reading Isaiah 49:1-6
 2nd Reading Acts 13:22-26
 Gospel Luke 1:57-66,80

NEXT Sunday's Readings *on our website*

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B

1st Reading Wisdom 1:13-15,2:23-24
 2nd Reading 2 Corinthians 8:7,9,13-15
 Gospel Mark 5:21-43

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 Tuesday 5:30pm
 Wednesday 9:00am
 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*

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📧 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