



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
3/4 DECEMBER 2022
2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT + YEAR A
VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The first reading is the source for the Christian tradition about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are seven of them: *pietas*, fortitude or courage, fear [awe and wonder] of the Lord, wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge. The last six are all listed in this reading (Isaiah 11:2). The first one, *pietas*, is the spiritual virtue described in the verse about taking care of the poor and afflicted.

There is a version of all these virtues that you can get all by yourself. You can practice being brave, for example, and your practice will build a kind of habit in you. There is also a kind of courage that the Lord can put into a person. The apostle Peter wasn't a particularly brave person, as you can see in his denial of the Lord, but the Lord gave him such courage when he had to face the Jewish authorities after Christ's resurrection that they marvelled at him (Acts 4:13). But the gifts of the Holy Spirit are different from both these kinds of virtues, the acquired ones and the ones God infuses. You can see the difference clearly if you look at *pietas*.

In Roman times, *pietas* was a virtue having to do with fathers and sons. A son owed his father reverence, and a father owed his son care. There is also *pietas* towards your community or country. This is still a virtue having to do with fathers. The idea is that every citizen owes reverence and care toward their homeland.

In Christian times, *pietas*, as a virtue infused by God, had to do with taking care of your own, your own parents, your own children, your own community, your own country. Paul says that if any person does not take care of their own, they are worse than an infidel. (1 Timothy 5:8)

But that *pietas* is still not the same as the *pietas* that is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Pietas that is a gift, is the love of God as our Father in heaven, and it includes the recognition that every human being who crosses our path—every one without exception—is the beloved child of our Father. And so, every human being—the sinful, the annoyingly stupid, the derelict, the afflicted—is one of our own. And this is *pietas* as a gift of the Holy Spirit.

And all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are like this. If we do not refuse them, they kindle in us the fire of love for God and for God's people.

Today's liturgy brings together readings from very different backgrounds, as it gives expression to the Advent message of hope.

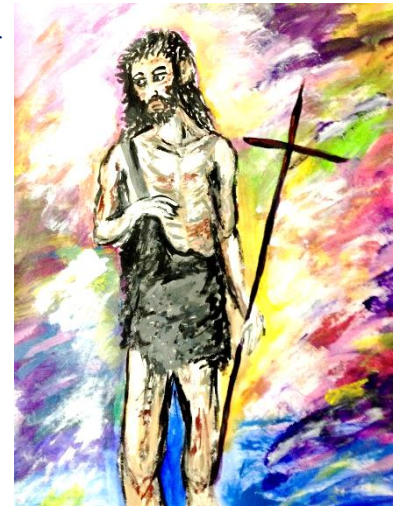
The prophetic vision of Isaiah reflects his familiarity with the king's court in a period of dramatic international developments in the region. He links the fulfillment of God's designs for the nation with the rule of a new David (Jesse is the father of David) whose rule will contrast with that of many of David's unworthy successors. He will be filled with the gifts of the 'spirit of the Lord', ruling with wisdom and integrity, and showing himself a forthright champion of the oppressed and the poor of the land. The peace established by his rule is graphically portrayed as like a new paradise – as the whole country is 'filled with the knowledge of the Lord' and lives according to God's ways. For those who know the blessings brought by the true 'Son of David', the themes of the Christmas celebration that awaits us at the end of our Advent preparation are not difficult to recognise.

The gospel reading from Matthew reminds us that our hope in the promises of God brings with it a challenge. John the Baptist was honoured by Jesus as the embodiment of the prophetic tradition of Israel. It has been pointed out that, in the cultural traditions of the world, there is no parallel to old Israel's acknowledgment of its failures before the God of the covenant. And it was the prophets who – like a conscience of the nation – challenged the people and their leaders with their unfaithfulness. Scholars tell us that Matthew's gospel – from which our readings for the coming year will come – was produced by an early Christian community in dispute with former Jewish associates who cannot accept the claims of Christian faith. This helps us to understand the sharp edge given to the words of Jesus against "the scribes and Pharisees" (see ch.23), and the strong words of the Baptist in today's gospel. Jesus was impatient with the complacent exclusivism of these groups. We know, from contemporary records, that they tended to believe that being "children of Abraham" assured them a sharing in God's promises. John too challenges this complacency: 'Do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father".' In the best prophet tradition, his language has a frightening intensity. The axe is already 'laid to the roots of the trees'; without their own 'good fruits' they will be lost.

Writing to the Romans, Paul has a similar message. Jewish converts must follow 'the example of Christ Jesus', in the tolerance and generosity they show, as they recognise in the Church's embracing of 'the pagans' what God foretold in the promises of 'the Scriptures'.

Our hope is boundless in its expectations; but we must play our part in the generous designs of God.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading **Isaiah 11:1-10**

- ✚ In baptism you receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in this reading: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence and wonder and awe in the presence of God. If we used these gifts, would we be able solve problems like hunger? Homelessness? Climate change? Gun control? New directions in the Church? How could the use of the gifts end the war in Ukraine?
- ✚ “The earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord,” Von Balthasar says this is “the drenching of the entire being with the inner understanding of what God is.” Discuss this idea. How does this relate to peace in the reading?

Second Reading **Romans 15:4-9**

- ✚ John O'Malley SJ: “Pope Francis is continuously pushing us beyond the comforts of our religious boundaries to encounter the one human family.” Would St Paul be giving the same advice to the Church today that we read in this letter: “I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised ... so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”?
- ✚ There are people with whom you disagree. How easy is it to “think in harmony” with them? Why think in harmony instead of just going along with such people, or being nice, or acting like you agree with them?

Gospel **Matthew 3:1-12**

- ✚ Judging by John's appearance (clothing of camel's hair, a leather belt around his waist, eating locusts and wild honey) would you guess his cry was lukewarm, or a cry from his heart that called for life-altering change? How would you respond to him? Is the fire within you a conflagration or does it look more like the pilot light? What can you do during Advent to gather some kindling for your fire?
- ✚ Does John the Baptist fit into any spiritual leader category you know? According to Pope Francis, if we lock ourselves in the traditions of the past, what might we miss? Might there be “new paths” to solve old problems in our world and our Church?

In face of the birth of his son, Zechariah was incredulous because natural laws made it impossible; they were old; they were elderly. Consequently, the Lord left [Zechariah] dumb during the whole time of gestation. It's a sign. But God doesn't depend on our logic and our limited human capacities. It's necessary to learn to trust and be silent in face of God's mystery and to contemplate His work in humility and silence, who reveals Himself in history and who so often exceeds our imagination. ... Fight the temptation to lock oneself in ways and traditions of the past, as a possible solution to today's crisis. Rather, follow Saint Paul's teaching to go on the liberating and ever new path of Jesus crucified and resurrected.
– Pope Francis, General Audience, Wednesday, 23 June 2021

FIRST COMMUNION THIS WEEKEND – CONGRATULATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to EVERETT WILSON, MILLA BARR, JEMIMA SHEPHERD, LILLIAN CONSTABLE, SUMMER DO, CIARA MOLLOY, OLIVE BULMER, JEMIMA CRINIS, and ZOE COLQUHOUN who receive First Communion on Saturday at the 5:30pm Mass, and to VICTORIA FLEMING, CHLOE KELLY, ARIA GRILLI and LOCHLAN VARDY who receive First Communion on Sunday during the 8am Mass: **congratulations to you and your families.**



There are thirty (30) Candidates for First Communion this year. **Please remember them and their families before the Lord.** The other Candidates will receive the Body of Christ for the first time at weekend Masses as follows: on Sunday, 4 December; **1** on Sunday, 11 December; **1** on Saturday, 7 January; and **2** on Sunday, 5 February. On **Wednesday, 14 December**, Mass will be at **9:30am instead of 9am**, and the Candidates from our Parish School will be present, as most, by then, will have received First Communion. **All parishioners are welcome to attend that Mass and celebrate with our young parishioners.**

CAN YOU HELP OUR PARISH OVER CHRISTMAS?

Children and Safety Officers are needed for the 6:30pm Christmas Eve Mass. Also, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be needed – and Readers at the other two Christmas Masses will be needed. *See page 3.*

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Help families survive the cost-of-living crisis this Christmas. Your generosity can provide urgent relief for a family who is doing it tough this Christmas and give them a better future. As usual, there will be the annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** – for **cash donations**, for **toys**, for **hampers**. The Appeal is being launched this weekend, the **First Sunday of Advent**. The **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** involves cash donations (or credit/debit cards) along with the preparation of **hampers** and **'Giving Tree' gifts** for distribution in our local area. The **Appeal** continues this weekend. **THE TOTAL DONATED LAST WEEKEND WAS \$1,626**. **Hampers and gifts will need to be returned by the weekend of 17-18 December** for distribution before Christmas. **Thank you in anticipation of your continuing generosity. You can make donations online up until 31 December – click on:**



<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way/vinnies-thirroul-christmas-appeal-2022?tab=updates>

YOUR GIFT COULD CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES

- ✓ **Hampers** – 3 categories (families, single female, single male) *notices in the church*
↳ if you cannot attend church, but want to make a hamper up, contact the Parish Office
- ✓ **Giving Tree** – tags on the tree have name and gender of children (up to 12 years)
- ✓ **Donation Envelopes** – available in the church as well as **online** donations
- ✓ **Donations Online** – give to our local Vinnies Conference **online** by clicking **HERE**
- ✓ **Donations of Christmas Items** – *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, lollies, tinned vegetables, chips, jelly, baby formula, nappies* – **no cigarette or alcohol products please.**



ONE CHRISTMAS ITEM [see above] PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 3/4 December: **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** continues
- ✦ Monday, 5 December: **Year 6 Graduation Liturgy, 7:00pm**
- ✦ Friday, 9 December: **End of Year School Mass, 9:30am**
- ✦ Weekend, 10/11 December: **Blessing of the Christmas Crib**
One parishioner First Communion on Sunday
7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II
- ✦ Tuesday, 13 December: **9:30am Mass with First Communion class**
- ✦ Wednesday, 14 December: **9:30am Mass with First Communion class**



CHRISTMAS EVE MASS IN OUR PARISH SCHOOL

Christmas Eve Mass will be in our **Parish School** grounds at **6:30pm on Saturday, 24 December**. Children are involved in the readings and “walk-on non-talking” parts, e.g., carrying up candles, the bread and wine etc. If you would like your daughter or son to be involved, please email the Parish Office thirroul@dow.org.au giving name, phone number and “job” they would prefer to do. Also, singers are needed to help lead the singing ... anyone from five years to 105 years are welcome! Also, adult parishioners are needed as **“Safety Officers / Ushers”** [16 years or older] at the 6:30pm Mass – you don’t have to be on the usual Safety Officers Roster. Please contact the Parish Office by **5 December** about children being involved, or about being a “Safety Officer”. Thank you.

Other Christmas Masses are: **Christmas Eve 9:30pm at Thirroul** and **Christmas Day 9:00am at Thirroul**.



The **Emergency+** app is a free app developed by our emergency services. The app uses the GPS function built into smart phones to help a Triple Zero (000) caller provide critical location details to mobilise emergency services. It's **FREE** and highly recommended.

Mass Count results: Saturday average **91**; Sunday average **103**; overall total average: **195**. Full details will be published in next week's Bulletin.

CHRISTMAS 2022 LITURGY TIMES

CHRISTMAS EVE Saturday, 24 December
CHILDREN'S MASS



6:30pm St Michael Parish School
Station Street or Raymond Road, Thirroul
in the Parish School grounds
bring a chair or cushion
and a bell 🔔

CHRISTMAS EVE NIGHT MASS Saturday, 9:30pm
at St Michael Church, Thirroul
325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS Sunday, 9:00am
at St Michael Church, Thirroul
325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive



No evening Mass on Christmas Day
Sunday, 25 December

CHRISTMAS WEEK LITURGIES

Monday, 26 Dec	9:30am	[public holiday]
Tuesday, 27 Dec	9:30am	[public holiday]
Wednesday, 28 Dec	9:00am	
Thursday, 29 Dec	9:00am	
Friday, 30 Dec	9:30am	
Saturday, 31 Dec	5:30pm	
Sunday, 1 Jan	8:00am	

Saturday Dinner: after the 5:30pm Mass on the **second Saturday** of each month, enjoy dinner with other parishioners at Club Thirroul.

Morning Tea is served after 8am Mass on the first and third Sundays of each month. Delicious!

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Monday	5 Dec	Monday of the 2 nd Week of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-10	Luke 5:17-26
Tuesday	6 Dec	Tuesday of the 2 nd Week of Advent	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 18:12-14
Wednesday	7 Dec	St Ambrose, bishop, doctor	Isaiah 40:25-31	Matthew 11:28-30
Thursday	8 Dec	Immaculate Conception	Genesis 3:9-15,20 Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12	Luke 1:26-38
Friday	9 Dec	Friday of the 2 nd Week of Advent	Isaiah 48:17-19	Matthew 11:16-19
Saturday	10 Dec	Saturday of the 2 nd Week of Advent	Sirach 48:1-4,9-11	Matthew 17:10-13
Sunday	11 Dec	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Year A - Scripture Readings see below One Candidate receives First Communion on Sunday		

BOOK OF LIFE

On Friday, 25 November, the first reading was from the Book of Revelation (20:1-4, 11–21:2). The reading speaks of the dead whose names are written in the **Book of Life**. So, the name of our book has now been changed from the **Book of the Dead** to the **Book of Life**. If you would like the name of someone who has died placed in the **Book of Life**, email or phone the Parish Office with details you wish placed in the Book of the Dead (name of the deceased and date of death). May they rest in peace.

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Apricot Oat Slice – recommended by Chef Raymond

1 cup (90g) rolled oats (or quick oats); 1 cup (125g) plain flour; $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (135g) brown sugar; $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (65g) desiccated coconut; 125g butter chopped; 2 tbs golden syrup; 2 tbs water; $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp bicarbonate of soda; 100g dried apricots chopped; 100g white chocolate chips optional.

Pre-heat the oven to 160°C. Grease and line a 17cm x 28cm rectangular baking tray with baking paper and set aside. Combine the rolled oats, plain flour, brown sugar and coconut in a bowl. Place the butter, golden syrup and water in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave in 30 second bursts, stirring each time, until melted. Stir through the bicarb-soda. Stir the butter mixture through the oat mixture. Allow to cool slightly. Fold through the chopped dried apricots and chocolate chips. Place the mixture into the tray and press down firmly. Bake for approximately 25 minutes or until lightly golden brown. Leave in the baking tray to cool for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. When the slice has cooled completely, cut into slices. Enjoy! 😊

Do you have a favourite **CHRISTMAS RECIPE** to share from around the world? Please email the Parish Office.

ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass

Always needed are: cuppa noodles; toothpaste; tooth brushes; soap; shampoo; conditioner; toilet paper.

SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Already, since 1 July 2022, surf lifesavers have performed **550** rescues [*last week 415*], and **1,585** first aids [*last week, 1,405*]. Please be safe on our beaches and waterways.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

by Fr Michael Fallon MSC

[continued next week]

The focus throughout the gospel of Matthew is on Jesus, and Matthew's most persistent theme is that Jesus is the fulfilment of the hopes and the spirituality of Judaism. The most likely hypothesis is that the author was a Jewish Christian who saw being a disciple of Jesus as the only way to be faithful to his Jewish tradition.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • Year A	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 11:1-10
2 nd Reading	Romans 15:4-9
Gospel	Matthew 3:1-12

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • Year A	
1 st Reading	Isaiah 35:1-6,10
2 nd Reading	James 5:7-10
Gospel	Matthew 11:2-11

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 5:30pm

Sunday 8:00am

📺 Saturday Mass recorded

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes

Moving forward as a Parish Family

Patrick Vaughan • Parish Priest

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

Lauren Faulks • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 9am–3:30pm; Fri 9:30am–2:30pm

🌐 www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📧 thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

☎ 4267 2560

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday _____

Tuesday 📺 5:30pm

Wednesday 9:00am

Thursday 9:00am

Friday 9:30am

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday