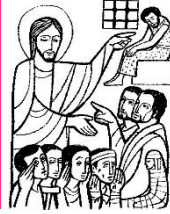


## Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**10/11 DECEMBER 2022**  
**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT + YEAR A**  
**BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB**

### **THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah predicts that when the Messiah comes, he will make the blind see, the deaf hear, the mute speak, and the lame walk and leap. In the gospel reading, when John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask Jesus whether Jesus is the one the Israelites have been waiting for, Jesus says they should tell John that Jesus has done all these things and more. Even the dead are raised!

This is, of course, a spectacular list of wonders. Anyone who can make the blind see is amazing. Anyone who can raise the dead is working great miracles. And so, a person who does what Jesus did clearly has the power of God. For that reason, he is to be admired, loved, and feared. If God is unknowable by you, then you don't have to worry about facing God on a daily basis. So why does Jesus finish his list of miraculous deeds by saying "Blessed is the one who takes no offence at me?" Offence? Offence at what?!

Well, think about it this way. What is God anyway, philosophically? Pure act? Being itself? Utterly unknowable by us? Those phrases have a lot of dignity about them, don't they? Somehow, they seem worthy of the Deity. Why would we think our puny minds could know anything about something so magnificent, so great, as God? Why wouldn't God be something totally other than any of God's creatures?

But notice that it's hard to have a personal relationship with being itself, and pure act doesn't seem like a person who can seek you first. At any rate, if God is unknowable by you, then you don't have to worry about facing God on a daily basis. You can't face what you can't know. And for how many people is that subterranean thought deeply comforting? But Christ wrecks it. Christ is not unknowable, and he is not something abstract like being itself. He is a particular person, and he has a face. True, he is God incarnate, and his face is human. But, still, his face is the face of God. If you have seen me, you have seen the Father, Jesus tells Philip (John 14:9).

So, we can know God, and we can see God's face in the face of Jesus. God is present to us as a person in the person of Christ. And God in the person of Christ is always with us (Matthew 28:20)! We can know God and face God every day. Blessed is the one who takes no offence at this.

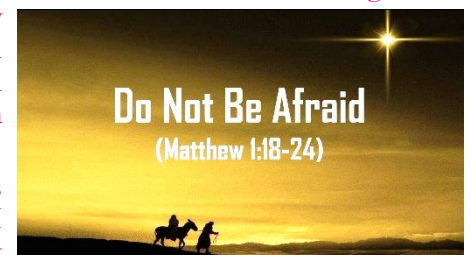
Waiting can be a time of soul-searching. Today's liturgy invites us to ask ourselves whether we are ready to hear the call of the Saviour, whose birth we are preparing to celebrate. Helpless in Herod's prison cell, John the Baptist is puzzled and discouraged, as he faced a similar question. He has generously pointed Jesus out – as the one who was to bring the realisation of Israel's hopes; why, he asks through his messengers, is God's prophet now suffering in prison at the hands of an unprincipled tyrant; why has the mission of Jesus not brought the time of justice God's people long for?

The reading from Isaiah – a typical example of the message of hope announced by the prophets – helps us to understand why John is puzzled. This magnificent proclamation describes what can be looked forward to, as a New Exodus – a time of liberation, healing and boundless joy, as those who have been banished are brought back to Zion. But this triumph of God is also described as a time of 'vengeance' and 'retribution'. Having for centuries lived in bitterness under a series of occupying powers, the nation's expectations emphasised this latter part of the prophets' message. They looked forward to a vindictive triumph that would crush their hated enemies. This heavily politicised interpretation of Israel's messianic hopes constituted one of the main obstacles to be overcome by Jesus, if he was to bring the people to enter into the inauguration of the final reign of God – about to take place in his own person.

God's triumph was not to be the imposition of divine power. The coming of God's kingdom involves collaboration on the part of our human freedom – inspired and sustained by the example of Jesus, who gave the needy and the powerless a privileged place in all that he did in the name of his Father, and lived out the 'new commandment' of love he had proclaimed. Jesus replied to John's inquiry, therefore, by pointing to the 'messianic signs' foretold by the prophets. But to those included in today's reading from Isaiah he adds another from the later Isaian writings: 'the poor have the Good News preached to them'. In a sense, the divine authenticity of his mission is summed up fully in these words – words that have echoed down the centuries in the life of the Church. In the continuation of our gospel passage, Jesus points to the gospel values so heroically embraced by John – in his courageous witness and his detachment.

The message of Jesus to John is, 'Do not lose faith in me; open your generous heart to the ways of God that define Israel's faith, and you will recognise that I am truly the one who was to come'. Jesus taught, we know, that in the present era the 'coming of the kingdom' is hidden and mysterious, overturning our human expectations. Our reading from James echoes one of the parables of Jesus concerning the coming of the kingdom (Mark 4:26), as James encourages believers in his community to imitate the farmer's patience, as the hidden seed grows.

*No Offence, but ...*



**Do Not Be Afraid**  
(Matthew 1:18-24)

# QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

## First Reading **Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10**

- ↪ Isaiah said God would give signs to tell the Israelites of their delivery from slavery. What were these signs? What similar signs of God's loving presence are there in your life? And what about in the fields of medicine, social justice and climate change?
- ↪ Who does God use to transform the world now? Is there anything you could do, small or large, in the areas of racial or ecological justice, or of ending the war in Ukraine?

## Second Reading **James 5:7-10**

- ↪ "See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth." How does this statement relate to Advent? How is patience involved in both situations?
- ↪ What are some qualities that patience brings with it? What does impatience bring? St James warns his community about complaining about one another. Is this a fault peculiar to James' community? How does it relate to patience?

## Gospel **Matthew 11:2-11**

- ↪ John asked Jesus if he was "the one who is to come." Jesus answered, "the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised." Explain this in both the literal and metaphorical senses. The people who came to John were seeking the deepest desires of their hearts. How was Jesus' response an answer to those desires?
- ↪ Does God always come into your life the way you expect? John the Baptist might have expected a mighty one and was confused by the gentle, healing Jesus. Was he called to conversion? Can Advent be a time of conversion for us to recognize new or different ways Jesus comes into our lives?

[Jesus'] description shows us that salvation envelops the whole person and regenerates him. But this new birth, with the joy that accompanies it, always presupposes a death to ourselves and to the sin within us. Hence, the call to conversion, which is the basis of the preaching of both the Baptist and Jesus; in particular, it is a question of converting our idea of God. And the time of Advent stimulates us to do this precisely with the question two that John the Baptist poses to Jesus: "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3). We think that all his life John waited for the Messiah; his lifestyle, his very body is shaped by this expectation. This is also why Jesus praises him with those words: no one is greater than him among those born of a woman. Yet he too had to convert to Jesus. Like John, we too are called to recognize the face that God chose to assume in Jesus Christ, humble and merciful.

– Pope Francis, Angelus, Sunday, 15 December 2019

## FIRST COMMUNION THIS WEEKEND – CONGRATULATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to **MAGGIE LAMBERGER** who receives First Communion on Sunday during the 8am Mass: **congratulations to you and your families**. Three more young parishioners are to receive First Communion, one on Saturday, 7 January, and two 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.**



## TODAY IS GAUDETE SUNDAY

One of the candles surrounding the Christ Candle in the Advent wreath is rose-coloured for *Gaudete* Sunday, the beginning of the third week in Advent, so called from the first word of the Entrance Song at Mass (*Gaudete*, i.e. Rejoice). The season of Advent originated as a fast of forty days in preparation for Christmas, commencing on the day after the feast of St Martin (12 November), whence it was often called "St Martin's Lent" – a name by which it was known as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century. **Gaudete Sunday**, therefore, makes a break, about midway through a season which was otherwise of a penitential character, and signifies the nearness of the Lord's coming. The spirit of the Liturgy all through Advent is one of expectation and preparation for the Christmas feast as well as for the second coming of Christ. *Gaudete* Sunday symbolizes that joy and gladness in the Promised Redemption which should never be absent from the heart of the faithful.

## Results of the Mass Count

Total Attendances			
	Saturdays	Sundays	Total
12/13 November	73	65	138
19/20 November	88	131	219
26/27 November	113	114	227
Averages	91	103	195

Total Attendances	Saturdays	Average
12 November 2022	73	91
19 November 2022	88	
26 November 2022	113	
Total Attendances	Sundays	Average
13 November 2022	65	103
20 November 2022	131	
27 November 2022	114	
Total Attendances	Weekends	Average
12/13 Nov 22	138	195
19/20 Nov 22	219	
26/27 Nov 22	227	

## 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 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. **PLEASE RETURN OR DROP IN ANY HAMPERS, TOYS OR GIFTS BY NEXT SUNDAY, 18 DECEMBER. THE TOTAL DONATED SO FAR IS \$4,500.** 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>

- ✓ **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

- ✦ Saturday, 10 December: Blessing of the Christmas Crib  
Blessing of December Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays  
Dinner at Club Thirroul after 5:30pm Mass
- ✦ Sunday, 11 December: Blessing of the Christmas Crib  
Blessing of December Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays  
One Candidate for First Communion 8:00am Mass  
7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II
- ✦ Tuesday, 13 December: 9:30am Mass with First Communion class – all welcome!
- ✦ Wednesday, 14 December: Last day of School for Students – Happy Holidays!
- ✦ Friday, 16 December: One Candidate for Confirmation on Saturday  
**LAST DAY FOR HAMPERS, TOYS, CHRISTMAS GIFTS TO BE HANDED IN**
- ✦ Weekend, 17/18 December: Vinnies delivers Christmas Hampers, Toys and Gifts
- ✦ Monday, 20 December: 9:30am Mass with First Communion class
- ✦ Wednesday, 14 December: 9:30am Mass with First Communion class

## BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Blessed are you, Lord God, ruler of all creation. We thank you because you love us so much. From the dawn of creation, you have shown us your love. You sent your only Son to bring us joy, peace and eternal life. Bless ✦ this crib. Let the crib remind us of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary. Let the crib remind us of the poor and humble birth of Jesus. Father, we praise you through Christ our Lord. Amen.



## 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](mailto: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, parishioners 16 years or older are needed as “Safety Officers / Ushers” at the 6:30pm Mass – you don’t have to be on the usual Safety Officers Roster. Please contact the Parish Office by 11 December about children being involved, or about being a “Safety Officer”. Thank you.

## SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Already, since 1 July 2022, surf lifesavers have performed **698** rescues [last week 550], and **1,990** first aids [last week, 1,585]. Please be safe on our beaches and waterways.



## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW by Fr Michael Fallon MSC

By contemplating Jesus of Nazareth and by listening to him, we can become more sensitive to the presence and inspiration of the risen Christ speaking to us now through the inspired words of Matthew. May we learn to be faithful disciples of Jesus in carrying out the commission given us to ‘make disciples of all nations’.

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Monday	12 Dec	Monday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 35:1-10	Luke 5:17-26
Tuesday	13 Dec	St Lucy, virgin, martyr 7:30pm Reconciliate Rite II	Zephaniah 3:1-2,9-13	Matthew 21:28-32
Wednesday	14 Dec	St John of the Cross, priest, doctor Mass at 09:30 with First Communion class	Isaiah 45:6-8,18,21-26	Luke 7:19-23
Thursday	15 Dec	Thursday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 54:1-10	Luke 7:24-30
Friday	16 Dec	Friday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 56:2-4,6-8	John 5:33-36
Saturday	17 Dec	Saturday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Advent Christmas Novena begins	Genesis 49:2,8-10	Matthew 1:1-17
Sunday	18 Dec	One Candidate receives Confirmation on Saturday, three Baptisms on Sunday FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Year A - Scripture Readings see below		

## THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: White Christmas and So Easy Christmas Cake

185g white vegetable shortening, melted; 2 cups coconut; 100g white chocolate cooking melts, melted; 100g red glacé cherries, halved; 1 cup sultanas; 3 cups Rice Bubbles; ¾ cup sweetened condensed milk.

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Press mixture evenly into a foil lined 18cm x 28cm lamington pan. Refrigerate overnight or until set. Cut into slices to serve. Store covered in refrigerator.

Soak overnight: 1.4kg mixed fruit; 1 teaspoon rum; 1 teaspoon vanilla; 1 teaspoon almond essence; 1 teaspoon instant coffee; 1 teaspoon mixed spice. Pour 300ml bottle of Coca-Cola over above ingredients. Mix.

Next day: 225g melted butter; 5 beaten eggs; 340g plain flour; 1 heaped teaspoon baking powder. Mix all ingredients well. Bake for 2 hours @ 130°C, then 1 hour @ 100°C. Use 23cm square tin! 😊

Thank you to those who have contributed their recipes and shared them here. Do you have a favourite recipe to share from around the world? Please email recipes to the Parish Office.

## CHRISTMAS LITURGY TIMES



emergencyplus



EMERGENCY

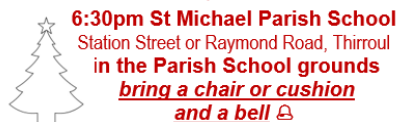


The **Emergency+** app is a free app developed by our emergency services. The app uses the GPS function built into smart phones to help a Triple Zero (000) caller provide critical location details to mobilise emergency services. It's **FREE** and highly recommended.

**Used Stamps** are always needed – please drop them in to the sacristy or to the Parish Office. They make money for needy causes.

### 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	
Sunday,	1 Jan	5:30pm 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!

### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

#### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT • Year A

1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Isaiah 35:1-6,10
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	James 5:7-10
Gospel	Matthew 11:2-11

### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

#### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT • Year A

1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Isaiah 7:10-14
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Romans 1:1-7
Gospel	Matthew 1:18-24

### 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](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

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📧 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910 📠 4268 1976

📧 [thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

Parish School of St Michael

☎ 4267 2560

### WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	📺 5:30pm
Wednesday	9:30am
Thursday	9:00am
Friday	9:30am
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i>	