



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
5/6 AUGUST 2023
TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD ✦ YEAR A
ANDREW'S 50TH • BOOK FOR DINNER

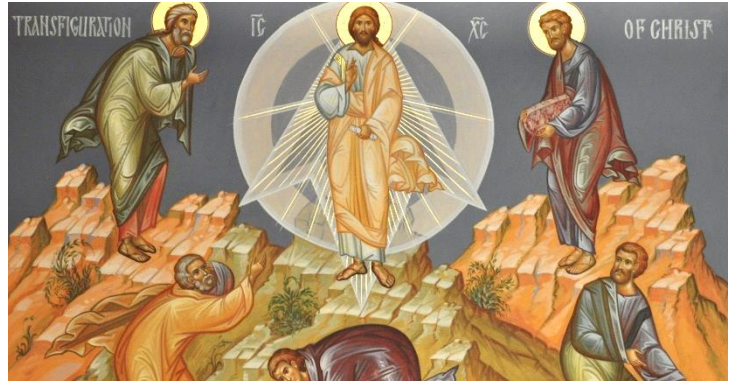
THIS WEEK'S READINGS

The Glory of Christ

On the cross, Christ is humiliated, shamed, and suffering. To ordinary people passing by, he looks more like a loser than a winner in life. And yet we treasure the crucifix because it is the symbol of God's love made manifest to us. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that we should not die but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Could anything be more glorious than this love? The glory of Christ is shown on the cross!

But in the Gospel reading for this Sunday, we see Christ glorious in a more obvious and ordinary way. Up on a mountain, Christ is transfigured. His clothes are radiant, and so is he. Moses and Elijah come to talk to him. And a voice from heaven proclaims that Jesus is God's beloved Son, in whom God is well-pleased. In this transfiguration, Christ looks both lovely and powerful, a winner rather than a loser on anybody's view. And Christ takes just Peter, James, and John up to the mountain to see his transfiguration.

Why would Christ allow himself to be transfigured in this way before his passion? And why would Christ want to show himself transfigured to his followers? Shouldn't his suffering be for us the right way to understand true glory? Maybe the reason for his transfiguration shares something with the reason for his resurrection. If Christ had not been resurrected, we might have supposed that suffering (or at least, suffering for the Lord) is all there is to glory. And then we might have gotten confused and thought that there is something especially good about suffering taken all by itself. Maybe Christ allows himself to be transfigured so that his followers will understand even before the grieving events of the crucifixion that suffering is not the end of the story, not for Christ and not for his followers either.



But then why do only Peter, James, and John witness Christ in glory in this way?

Well, these three apostles went on to suffer greatly for Christ. James and Peter were among the first martyrs, and John shepherded the church through severe persecutions. Christ helped them get ready for those trials by strengthening them with the vision of his transfiguration.

Consolation increases with affliction, the apostle Paul says (2 Corinthians 1:5). That is a consoling thought for us, isn't it?

While we were still without hope, God took us out of our emptiness and brought us into a new land, making with us a covenant of liberation.

But we remain set upon the things of this world, burdened with the original darkness that shadows our vision. Today's liturgy is about restoring our sight so that we can see the bounty of the Lord in the land of the living.

The disciples saw the bounty of the Lord on the mountaintop. They witnessed the dazzling glory of Jesus shining in the company of Moses and Elijah, the glory of the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.

Abraham had also stood in the presence of the Lord, and he had been overwhelmed by a terrifying darkness pierced by the bright light of a smoking brazier and a flaming torch.

The road from Abraham's encounter with God to the disciples' encounter with God was a long one.

We are a people who eagerly await the coming of our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We recognize that we have our citizenship in heaven, but in the meantime we exercise our citizenship on earth for the coming of the kingdom of God.

We purge ourselves of our self-absorption, our self-entitlement, our thirst for power, and our preoccupation with self-interest, sacrificing and praying that God might deliver Israel from all her distress.

Christians, on pilgrimage toward the heavenly city, should seek and think of those things which are above. This duty in no way decreases, rather it increases, the importance of their obligation to work with all men in the building of a more human world.

— Vatican II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 1965:57

In the story of the Transfiguration, Mark's gospel [the earliest of the four gospels] confronts us with the theme, **WHO IS THIS MAN?** It is a question to which we are invited to find the answer, by taking more seriously how the life and death of the Saviour is an expression of the ways of God. In all probability, Mark's original audience were the Roman Church of the beginning which was experiencing the ordeal of Nero's persecution. If their answer to this question was lacking in depth and seriousness, they were invited to meet again the One who, in Mark's account, immediately before his Transfiguration called his true followers to 'take up their cross and follow him' – 'anyone who



✠✠ loses their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, will save it'. That Mark's gospel is written for a community that has heard Peter tell the story of Jesus is given strong support by the fact that – in contrast to the other synoptic gospels – Mark's account does not omit any of the embarrassing details of the part played by Peter in the gospel story. The words of Jesus, that we have just quoted from Mark in the passage leading up to the Transfiguration, follow a remarkable sequence in which Peter replies to the question, 'Who do you say I am?' with his confession of faith, 'You are the Christ' – you are the one who will fulfil all the hopes of Israel. Jesus then 'began to teach them' what his undertaking of this role would involve. He identifies himself with the victorious 'Son of Man' spoken of in our first reading from the Book of Daniel; but his victory, 'he tells them quite openly' will be achieved through his suffering and death. When the impetuous Peter refused to accept this he was severely rebuked, and told he does not understand God's ways.

The story of the Transfiguration is puzzling in many ways. We find it hard to square with the disillusionment which was soon to overtake the apostolic group. It has been suggested that it had its origin in a witnessing by the chosen apostles of a moment of ecstatic prayer of Jesus as he communed with his Father. Luke's account states that Jesus went up the mountain to pray; and he describes the apostles as having their experience as they awoke from a 'heavy sleep'. We can imagine their privileged sharing in the prayer of Jesus leaving them confused. After his resurrection triumph, however, the story was told in dramatic terms that clearly echo the experience of Moses on Mount Sinai.

From the beginning of Matthew's gospel, we have seen that one of his main aims is to present Jesus as the fulfilment of the promises of God expressed in the Jewish Scriptures (see especially 5:17-48). That he is making the same point here [this year we read Matthew's account of the Transfiguration] becomes clear from a comparison of the magnificent scenes from the Old Testament which speak of the experience of Moses and Elijah on the mountain with the even more magnificent scene painted here by Matthew.

Moses, too, encounters God on a high mountain (Exodus 24:12, 24:15-18; 34:3). A cloud descends and overshadows the mountain (Exodus 24:15-18; 34:5). God speaks from the cloud (Exodus 24:16). Moses becomes radiant (Exodus 34:29-30,35). Those who see his radiance become afraid (Exodus 34:30). This happens after six days (Exodus 24:16).

Elijah journeyed 'forty days and forty nights' to this same mountain in the hope of seeing God. He heard God, but it was in 'sheer silence' and with his face 'wrapped in a mantle'. He was told: 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' – 1 Kings 19:11-13

On the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus is gazing on God's face and listening to God's voice. His whole being is caught up in God's glory, 'and his face shone like the sun' (see Exodus 34:29). He transcends the Law and the Prophets, for he is God's 'Son, the beloved' with whom God is 'well pleased'. The words 'with whom I am well pleased', present in this context only in Matthew, take us back to Jesus' Baptism (3:17), but also to the suffering servant of Isaiah 42:1 (see Matthew 12:18). It is to him that they are to listen (see Deuteronomy 18:15). So it is that when the three disciples looked up 'they saw no one except Jesus himself alone' ('alone' is emphatic in the Greek). Moses and the Prophets prepared the way for Jesus. Now, however, God's word is revealed fully in him.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

✠ How might powerful, political countries define "service," "ransom," and "bloodshed"? Compare and contrast these with Jesus' kingdom. List objectives of each.

✠ What things have power over you in your life? Would you like to see them lose some of their hold?

Second Reading 2 Peter 1:16-19

✠ Peter's letter suggests that his readers will "do well to be attentive to" the "prophetic message" that he, James and John received at the transfiguration. Were these three disciples able to be attentive and to listen when they were receiving that message.

✠ What are some of the "dark places" that could use "a lamp shining ... until day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart"? (Examples: immigration, water supply, environmental safety, political fairness, threats of nuclear weapons, homelessness, health care ...).

Gospel Matthew 17:1-9

✠ In the Transfiguration the disciples were invited to behold Jesus in his glory—to stop talking and listen to him. Do you ever ask yourself when you saw or heard Jesus during the day?

✠ In his Lenten discussion of the Transfiguration, what was a main way Pope Francis suggested for us to "listen to Jesus"?

God the Father says it to everyone: to me, to you, to everyone, all people! ... "Listen to Jesus"! Don't forget. But also let us listen to Jesus in his written word, in the gospel. I pose a question to you: do you read a passage of the gospel everyday? Yes, no ... yes, no ... half of the time ... some yes, some no. It is important! Do you read the gospel? It is so good; it is a good thing to have a small book of the gospel, a little one, and to carry in our pocket or in our purse and read a little passage in whatever moment presents itself during the day. In any given moment of the day I take the gospel from my pocket and I read something, a short passage. Jesus is there and he speaks to us in the gospel! Ponder this.

– Pope Francis, 16 March 2014.

TWO UPCOMING SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 26 August 17:30 Mass Special Mass for the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Andrew Granc ofm as a friar priest ... dinner for ALL to follow in the Hall.

Invitation to the Celebration of Andrew's 50th Anniversary as a Friar Priest

All – that means **you!** – are invited to celebrate this great occasion by attending the special Mass at 17:30 on Saturday, 26 August, after which **dinner and refreshments** will be provided for all. *Food [big baked hot dinner!] and drinks will be provided, but you are also welcome to BYO extra refreshments.*

However, for catering purposes, numbers for dinner are required by **Friday, 18 August.**

If you will be coming for dinner, please fill in the form at Masses, or phone or email the Parish Office with your surname and the numbers attending.



Saturday, 28 October 17:30 Mass Bishop Brian to celebrate Mass for the Centenary of our Parish ... dinner and entertainment to follow in the Hall. *Further details next month.*

PARISH CENTENARY – 28 OCTOBER 2023

100 years is a long time, and it should be celebrated in style! Bishop Brian will be the main celebrant at the 17:30 Mass on Saturday, 28 October. Afterwards there will be dinner and entertainment in the Parish Hall – the McCarthy Centre – and in the school grounds. **All are welcome.**

What other ways can we celebrate?! One suggestion so far is during November we have a Parish Centenary Lawn Bowls Night at Club Thirroul – for all ages, up to 100! There will be a **Parish Art Competition** for lower primary school, upper primary school and open age – a painting (or similar) of our parish church or Saint Molua or Saint Michael. **Do you have any other ideas as to how we can celebrate the Centenary of our Parish?** If so, please see one of the Pastoral Councillors or call/email the Parish Office.

Are you the oldest person in our Parish – if you are in your nineties, please let us know? Are you the longest resident in our Parish? Do you have the most family members living in the Parish? Are there any other significant milestones (kilometre stones) in our Parish that should be celebrated at this time? If so, please let the Parish Office know or see one of the Pastoral Councillors.

What about giving our church and grounds a spruce up for the Centenary?! Do you have a **high pressure water hose** – if you have, then it can be used (by yourself or another parishioner) to clean the concrete paths around the church! The “Peace Garden” with the statue of Saint Francis of Assisi is looked after by Pat Mirabito – is there anything you could help with around the gardens? Are there any pointing touch ups that are needed? What about a good, thorough “spring clean” of the church inside and out – would you like to lend a hand there? Any ideas you have, please contact a Pastoral Councillor – the Pastoral Council is meeting this Wednesday evening. Whatever help you can give – large or small – will help all parishioners and others celebrate our Centenary.

WHAT ARE THE COLLECTIONS FOR? THE “BAG” OR THE “BASKET”??

In each parish of our diocese, there are two collections at each Sunday Mass. The “first” collection is for the support of the clergy, and the “second” collection is for the parish.



Money for the **first collection** in our parish is placed in the “red bag” and this money pays the “stipend” for the priests and helps the priests who are retired.

Money for the **second collection** in our parish is placed in the “basket” and this money pays for the expenses of our parish – the secretary’s salary, electricity, rates, telephone, internet, insurance (a big expense!), repairs and maintenance, printing and office equipment, resources for sacramental programs and catechists, car allowance and other expenses.



The planned giving scheme using the weekly envelopes – these are placed in the second collection “basket” and this money supports the parish. A significant number of parishioners, instead of putting cash in the bag or basket each week, now donate using **direct money transfer**, often once a month. *If you would like to donate this way, please contact the parish office.*

Some parishioners or visitors use the **tap machine** to donate \$10 each time you “tap” – and this money goes to the parish, like the “second collection” does.

However, if you donate at Mass each week, please be conscious of whether you put money in the “bag” – to support the clergy, or into the “basket” to support our Parish of Saint Michael.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year I

Monday	7 Aug	Monday of Ordinary Time Week 18	Numbers 22:4-15	Matthew 14:13-21	
Tuesday	8 Aug	St Mary MacKillop, virgin	1 Kings 17:8-16	Colossians 3:12-17	Matthew 6:25-34
Wednesday	9 Aug	Wednesday of Ordinary Time Week 18	Numbers 13:1,2,25-14:35	Matthew 15:21-28	
Thursday	10 Aug	St Lawrence, deacon, martyr	2 Corinthians 9:6-10	John 12:24-26	
Friday	11 Aug	St Clare of Assisi, virgin	Deuteronomy 4:32-40	Matthew 16:24-28	
Saturday	12 Aug	Saturday of Ordinary Time Week 18	Deuteronomy 6:4-13	Matthew 17:14-20	
Sunday	13 Aug	19 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>			

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Peanut Butter Cookies *from Chef Raymond*

125g butter or margarine, at room temperature; 275g (1 cup) crunchy peanut butter; 200g brown sugar; 1 egg; 260g (1¾ cups) plain flour; ½ tsp baking powder; 110g (¾ cup) unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Beat the butter or margarine and peanut butter in a mixing bowl with electric beaters until creamy. Add the brown sugar and beat until pale. Add the egg and beat until combined. Sift the plain flour and baking powder together. Use a wooden spoon to mix the dry ingredients and peanuts into the peanut butter mixture. Lightly flour your hands then roll tablespoonfuls of the mixture into balls and place about 4cm apart on prepared baking tray. Flatten each ball to about 5cm in diameter and 1 cm thick. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes or until golden and cooked through. Stand on baking tray for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool. Repeat with the remaining mixture. *Store in an airtight jar for up to 1 week.*

MENALIVE GROWING GOOD MEN FATHER AND SON CAMP 20–22 OCTOBER 2023

Cataract Scout Camp Appin: one of the most impactful weekends we have run in recent years for families has been our Growing Good Men Camps, with incredible feedback from the dads and lads who have attended. Spots are limited to 25 fathers with their sons aged between 12 and 16. ☎ 4222 2407 Book early.

PLEASE BRING IN ...ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special plastic bins near the church entrances.

These items are currently in short supply:

biscuits, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, long life milk, tea bags, small coffee, tinned seafood, spreads

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Tuesday, 8 August	17:30	Mass for Feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop
✦ Friday, 11 August	09:30	Mary Mackillop Feast Day Mass with whole school Feast of Saint Clare of Assisi
✦ Saturday, 12 August	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after 17:30 Mass
✦ Weekend, 12/13 August		Blessing of August Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays at Masses
✦ Sunday, 13 August	09:30	Andrew returns after his sabbatical
✦ Tuesday, 15 August	17:30	Mass for the Feast of the Assumption of Mary
✦ Saturday, 26 August	17:30	Andrew's 50 th Anniversary of Ordination – Mass then Dinner

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

1 st Reading	Daniel 7:9-10,13-14
2 nd Reading	2 Peter 1:16-19
Gospel	Matthew 17:1-9

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A

1 st Reading	Kings 3:5,7-12
2 nd Reading	Romans 8:28-30
Gospel	Matthew 13:44-52

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday	17:30
Sunday	08:00
☞ 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 09:00–15:30; Fri 09:30–14:30

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Parish School of St Michael

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USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	☞ 17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday</i>	