



# Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**2 / 3 DECEMBER 2023**  
**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ✦ YEAR B**  
**BLESSING OF CHRISTMAS TREE**

## THIS WEEK'S READINGS

## Waiting for Patience

“I want patience and I want it now,” or so the joke goes.

Fine.

So remember, the purpose of Advent is to wait. Did you ever stay awake on Christmas eve as a child and sneak into a hiding place in order to see the Christmas tree being decorated? I surely did. I was impatient. We kids also had big felt stockings hung on each of the doors to our rooms and I remember during the night trying to keep an eye open to see Santa or the Good Fairy or at least someone putting the prizes into it.

Did I keep my eyes open all night? No. I woke in the morning to find a bulging stocking, mysteriously full, having arrived by magic. So, I had gone to sleep instead of patiently spying. Patience is not often a virtue of the young.



Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Jesuit poet, has a poem on patience that speaks to this first Advent Sunday.

Patience, hard thing! the hard thing But to pray, but bid for, patience is! Patience who asks, wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks; To do without, take tosses, and obey.

Rare patience roots in these and, these away, Nowhere. Natural heart's-ivy, Patience masks Our ruins of wrecked past purpose. There she basks Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day.

We hear our hearts grate on themselves; it kills To bruise them dearer. Yet the rebellious wills Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.

And where is he who more and more distils Delicious kindness?—he is patient. Patience fills his crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know.

*Patience is difficult because it grows only in adversity, usually. Yet, like ivy it gradually covers the failures of our lives with quiet beauty. (The “purple eyes” are berries.) Our hearts are like stones chafing on each other, bruising themselves dearer (the word “dearer” is used in England to mean “at greater cost.”) Yet even so, we ask God to bend our defiant wills to him. Hopkins ends with a comparison of God to the bees who—patiently—fill up honeycombs.*

Our most beloved plans and purposes come often to wreckage, just like ancient buildings. But patience resembles beautiful ivy, Hopkins says, gradually spreading its way over the rubble, making it a picture of quiet composure. The phrase, “Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves,” doesn’t just remind us of how ivy looks, it bathes us in the luxury, the peace and the relief of such a sight. Hopkins portrays patience as “delicious kindness,” a honey that fills the combs of our lives. A gift to us.

God’s kindness provides us with comfort and also time to prepare—an allowance of days, weeks, years, and even a lifetime—to get ready, to desire, and gradually, along the way, to receive. With patience. Even though infants demand their every wish be granted right now, our adult humanity is simply too deep to get an instant fill-up.

If there were nothing worth waiting for, then patience would indeed be silly. The birth of Christ into this world and into our hearts is well worth the wait. We know that his birth has happened already—but also, in a surprising way, it has not happened at all. We are still mean to our neighbours. We still hide truth from those who love us. We envy and lust after what is not ours., and there is horrendous evil all around us in this twenty-first century.

We need the birth of Jesus into our hearts, into the world. And so, we bask in Advent patience.

Today we begin the Advent season. ‘Advent’ as we know means ‘The Coming’. Already, when the gospels were written, the first Christians had begun to meditate on the significance of the Saviour’s birth: the dawn of the world’s salvation. The early Church celebrated Christmas in the depths of Europe’s winter – probably because most people had traditions of special festivals at mid-winter. And as the days were beginning to lengthen, Christians were prompted to look forward to the springtime, when they would celebrate Easter, their greatest festival.

The feasts of Easter and Christmas are complementary. At Easter, the principal festival of the Church’s year, we celebrate the great act of God – making the Risen Christ the source of the life and blessings that will transform creation into God’s final masterpiece. It is not surprising that the Church’s meditations on the ‘dawn’ that was the Saviour’s first ‘Coming’ came to be associated with his ‘Second Coming’ when he will inaugurate God’s final kingdom. Our advent liturgies weave together the themes of these two ‘Comings’.



✠✠ Many of the readings of Advent are from the final chapters of the Book of Isaiah (40-66). These chapters, coming from the time of the Exile, are filled with a renewed hope and confidence in the great future God has promised. Today's magnificent text is typical: 'You are our Father, our Redeemer ... tear open the heavens and come down ... we are the clay, you are the potter, we are all the work of your hand'.

One of the insistent themes of the prophets of Israel was 'The Day of the Lord', when God was to come to rule the earth. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul affirms the Saviour's sharing in the fullness of divine authority, calling this final day, 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'. He tells his people that, in this present time of 'waiting', they should look forward to the Saviour's coming with confidence.

During the coming year, our gospel readings will be from Mark. Today's reading recalls a parable of Jesus, urging constant readiness for his return. We have no way of knowing how the end will come upon us. But the first 'Coming' of the Saviour – as truly one of us, born like us and sharing in what we all experience – makes it clear that we can look forward to the final 'Coming' with confidence.

Advent, from the Latin word '*adventus*', means coming, is a season of longing for God, of preparing our hearts and our world to receive God when he comes. Many of the Advent readings, including today's first reading and psalm, recall the longing of generation after generation of the people of ancient Israel, who experienced a special covenant with God and who longed for the Messiah whom they believed God would send them. We Christians believe that God fulfilled that promise in the person of Mary's child who said among other things to his friends: 'Many longed to see what you see and never saw it, to hear what you hear and never heard it' (Luke 10:24). Other Advent readings focus on our longing for the final coming of Christ in glory. Still others focus is on the many ways in which Jesus constantly comes into our lives now, and especially through our liturgical celebrations. We are preparing for Christmas, knowing that Jesus will come to each of us and to those we love in an especially intimate way. If we are not to miss his coming we must, as Jesus himself tells us in the Gospel, 'be alert'.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading **Isaiah 63:16b-17; 64:1, 3b-8**

✠ "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down. ... No ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God but you, who works for those who wait for him." Does this sound like a cry for closeness to God? Is Advent a time for becoming more aware of how close God is to us?

✠ "You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in our ways!" Is there a veil that keeps you from seeing God's presence at work in your life and in your world? Can you use Advent to lift that veil, to get more in touch with God's presence in and around you?"

### Second Reading **1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

✠ St Paul's concern here is to make sure you are ready for life with God after death. Is there life with God before your death? If you feel sometimes that, indeed, "you are ... lacking in ... spiritual gifts," what could you do during Advent to restart, to recover the goals of your existence?

✠ St Paul also says that "in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind. ... " In what areas could all of us use God's gift to us of knowledge and speech right now?

### Gospel **Mark 13:33-37**

✠ "He leaves home and puts his slaves in charge." Are we the "slaves" in charge of the preservation of the earth? Do we have any responsibility regarding the climate crisis? What can you do, along with a group? Individually?

✠ "Keep awake; ... or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly." What does Pope Francis propose as a way to rouse ourselves from the slumber of indifference?

How do we rouse ourselves from the slumber of indifference? With the watchfulness of charity. To awaken us from that slumber of mediocrity and lukewarmness, there is the watchfulness of prayer. To rouse us from that slumber of indifference, there is the watchfulness of charity. Charity is the beating heart of the Christian: just as one cannot live without a heartbeat, so one cannot be a Christian without charity. Some people seem to think that being compassionate, helping and serving others is for losers. Yet these are the only things that win us the victory, since they are already aiming towards the future, the day of the Lord, when all else will pass away and love alone will remain. It is by works of mercy that we draw close to the Lord. This is what we asked for in today's opening prayer:

Grant [us]... the resolve *to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds* at his coming.

The resolve to run forth to meet Christ with good works. Jesus is coming, and the road to meet him is clearly marked: it passes through works of charity.

– Pope Francis, Homily for the First Week of Advent, 29 November 2020

## CHRISTMAS 2023 AT THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL, THIRROUL

- |         |                      |                                           |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| ❖ 19:30 | Tuesday, 12 December | Reconciliation Rite II                    |
| ❖ 18:30 | Sunday, 24 December  | Christmas Eve Mass in the Parish School   |
| ❖ 21:30 | Sunday, 24 December  | Christmas Night Mass in the Parish Church |
| ❖ 09:30 | Monday, 25 December  | Christmas Day Mass in the Parish Church   |

# VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL – THIS WEEKEND AND NEXT

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal will be held over the weekends, 2/3 and 9/10 December.

You can support the Appeal in any of the following ways:

- ✓ **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 11 years)
- ✓ **Donation Envelopes** – available in the church for cash or credit card donations, as well as online donations

You can also bring in **CHRISTMAS ITEMS** – *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, tinned veggies, chips, jelly – no cigarette or alcohol products please.*

You can donate online to the Thirroul Vinnies Christmas Appeal:

<https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way-conference/vinnies-thirroul-2023-christmas-appeal-page/donate>

**Vinnies Christmas Cards** are available this weekend – only \$5 for a pack of 10, and you are supporting Vinnies.

Thank you for your anticipated and continuing generosity to the needy of our local communities.

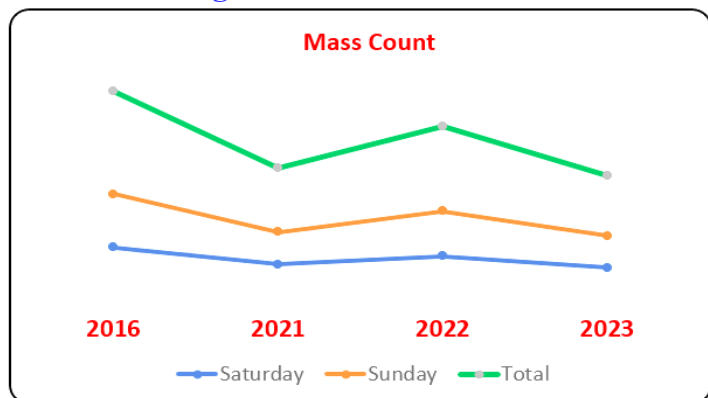


**PLEASE BRING IN ... ANY CHRISTMAS ITEMS EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special plastic bins near the church entrances.**

## MASS COUNT 2023 RESULTS

The detailed results of the recent Mass count during November are shown at the right.

Previous results	2022	2021	2016
Saturday average	91	72	111
Sunday average	103	74	122
Total average	195	146	233



Total Attendances	Saturdays	Average
4 November 2023	56	<b>65</b>
11 November 2023	71	
18 November 2023	53	
25 November 2023	78	
Total Attendances	Sundays	Average
5 November 2023	63	<b>72</b>
12 November 2023	60	
19 November 2023	100	
26 November 2023	64	
Total Attendances	Weekends	Average
4/5 Nov 23	119	<b>136</b>
11/12 Nov 23	131	
18/19 Nov 23	153	
25/26 Nov 23	142	

## FIRST COMMUNION 2023

**Congratulations to these 30 Candidates** who will receive First Communion over the next few weeks. The Candidates will begin receiving First Communion from this weekend: **8** on Saturday, 2 December; **5** on Sunday, 3 December; **11** on Saturday, 9 December; **2** on Sunday, 10 December; **1** on Saturday, 16 December; and **1** on Sunday, 17 December. Please remember before the Lord these Candidates and their families.

**Ruby Stuart-Street; Julia Marciano; Matilda Gully; Willow Bulmer; Leila Matts; Theodore Bland ; Ella Embleton; Blake McEntee; Piper Dale; Cody Wilson ; Ethan MacFarlane; Ruby Kelley; Molly Horan; Poppy Elliott; Finn Duggan; Liam Elias; Reuben Cooper; Willow Beattie; Clare Deeming; Daisy Deacon; Annabel Constable; Charlotte Paduch; Isobel Paduch; Anna Hopkins; Isaac Muscat; Macy Maytom; Oliver Zondag; Ivy Amber; Florence Mayers; Clancy Mayers.**

**Congratulations to the Candidates and to their families and friends.**



## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	4 Dec	Monday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 2:1-5	Matthew 8:5-11	
Tuesday	5 Dec	Tuesday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24	
Wednesday	6 Dec	Wednesday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37	
Thursday	7 Dec	Saint Ambrose, bishop, doctor	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21,24-27	
Friday	8 Dec	Immaculate Conception of Mary	Genesis 3:9-15,20	Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12	Luke 1:26-38
Saturday	9 Dec	Saturday of 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 30:19-21	Matthew 9:35-10:1,6-8	
Sunday	10 Dec	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>			

## THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Pavlova Rocky Road – Beyond Epic!

It takes five minutes to prepare and is gluten free!

360 white chocolate melts; 2 tbsp melted coconut oil; 75g dried mango, finely chopped; ½ cup macadamia halves, toasted; 1 cup white marshmallows, chopped; 50g mini meringues, roughly crushed; 1 passionfruit; zest of lime.

Line a square brownie tin with baking paper. Melt the white chocolate with the coconut oil. Add all the remaining ingredients except the passionfruit and lime zest. Fold with a spatula until combined. Pour into the prepared pan and press firmly down. Drizzle over the passionfruit pulp. Place in the fridge for 1-2 hours or until solid. Grate over the lime zest, cut into squares and serve. Store in an airtight container in the fridge. Exquisite!

**Please send in your favourite recipe so it can be shared in the Bulletin – we need more recipes!**

## ADVENT TRIVIA

This year, Christmas falls on a Monday, so that makes this year the **shortest** of Advent times. When Christmas falls on a Sunday, that would make Advent the **longest**. There are still some **Advent Daily Reflection Books**, *The Sign*, still available from the church or the Parish Office – these are **FREE**.

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Thursday, 30 November 19:15 Baptism Preparation Meeting for December Baptisms
- ✦ Friday, 1 December 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ Weekend, 2/3 December Advent begins – Year B – The Year of Mark  
Vinnies Christmas Appeal – Week 1  
Blessing of the Christmas Tree  
First Communion – Week 1
- ✦ Monday, 4 December 14:00 Year 6 Graduation Liturgy
- ✦ Wednesday, 6 December Ken travels to New Zealand, returns Saturday, 9 December
- ✦ Weekend, 9/10 December Vinnies Christmas Appeal – Week 2  
First Communion – Week 2  
Blessing of December Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
- 18:30 Dinner at Club Thirroul
- ✦ Tuesday, 12 December 19:30 Reconciliation Rite II
- ✦ Wednesday, 13 December 09:15 Year 2 attending Mass  
17:30 Parish Pastoral Council meeting
- ✦ Friday, 15 December 09:30 End of Year School Mass
- ✦ Weekend, 16/17 December Blessing of the Christmas Crib



### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR B  
 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1,3-8  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
 Gospel Mark 13:33-37

### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR B  
 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading 2 Peter 3:8-14  
 Gospel Mark 1:1-8

### 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

Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00

### www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

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Parish School of St Michael

4267 2560

### USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

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