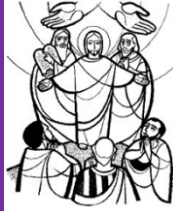




Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
15 / 16 MARCH 2025
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR C
PROJECT COMPASSION – WEEK TWO

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Such a great offer, God's covenant with human beings. It will fit into just eleven words:

I will be your God and you will be my people.

In return for God's great love would we promise to love God above all things.

Our first parents had this relationship with God in the Garden of Eden. However, God watched with anguish as their free will, the gift he had given them, suddenly rejected his love.

God toiled to re-establish the covenant throughout history, as our first reading shows. Fortunately, after many failures on our part, God singled out a paltry old nomadic individual named Abram and made a promise to him which seemed impossible:

Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so, he added, shall your descendants be;

and,

Abram put his faith in the Lord, who approved it to him as an act of righteousness [right relationship].

God was crediting Abram with having fulfilled the covenant! This meant

- *receiving the offered love ("I will be your God"), and*
- *putting his faith in the Lord ("You will be my people").*

In Sunday's first reading, there was about to be an ancient sacrificial cult. As the sun was almost ready to set, Abram fell into a trance; a deep terrifying darkness enveloped him. Fire appeared among the animals that he had slain. God spoke, promising a homeland, "the promised land," to Abram and his descendants.

This was God's half of the covenant.

The other half was up to Abram and his wife Sara. Their response was more complicated. In their extreme old age Abraham and Sara were to have a son (Genesis 18:10ff), and the son's descendants would keep the covenant. At least at times they would—but often did not. As time went by the covenant was ignored and forgotten.

Much later, when the time was right, God thought up a brilliant solution, so to speak. Instead of speaking from on high or through representatives, God himself would take shape on earth as one of the people. The second person of the trinity would become the Messiah, the Christ.

This Christ was to be the very love God had offered for so many centuries. And get this: he was also, at the same time, the people's loving response, since he was completely a human being! Think of it: as the God-man, *Jesus was able to fulfill both halves of the covenant.*

The transfiguration in Sunday's Gospel represents both the promise and its fulfillment! Jesus' clothes become dazzling as fire—a counterpart to the fire in the first reading! A terrifying darkness closed in, just as it had with Abram. And within that darkness, God's voice repeated the covenant words:

This is my chosen Son; listen to him.

In the cross and resurrection, the covenant would finally be fulfilled—on both sides, the Godly and the human. The result: you and I do not have to offer more and more sacrifices in order to achieve this fulfillment. We only have to let ourselves be joined to Jesus in his loving response to the Father.

How do we do this?

We begin it in Baptism. We continue it in each Mass, each Communion we receive. We say "Amen!" to the covenant, so many times broken, but now established forever as the "new and everlasting covenant" of love, the cross and resurrection, received in the Eucharist.

Welcome to Lent!

Each year of the three-year cycle, the gospel of the second Sunday of Lent tells of the Transfiguration. This year we have Luke's account. Luke's presents this incident as Jesus instructs his disciples – preparing them for his journey to Jerusalem to meet his fate. The liturgical tradition echoes this outlook, inviting us to learn the lessons of this mysterious incident as we begin our journey of Lent. In Luke's account, in the verses immediately preceding, Jesus has warned the apostles of what lies ahead: 'The Son of Man will be rejected and put to death'; more than that, everyone who wants to be his follower 'must take up his cross every day and follow him' (9:22-23). Luke's account clearly has these warnings in mind. It is filled with reassurance for the chosen followers Jesus has brought

An Offer You Can Refuse



⚔️ up the mountain with him. Moses and Elijah (representing the Law and the Prophets, the great bearers of old Israel's hopes) are conversing with Jesus concerning 'his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem' (the destiny of Israel was established in the original Passover and Exodus; in what lies ahead, this great destiny is to reach its final moment – as the shadows of the old order give way to the reality they prefigure, the Paschal Mystery). From the 'cloud', so often a symbol of God's presence in the first Exodus, the voice of the Father confirms what Jesus has told them of this new Passover: 'This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!'



As he tells the story of Jesus, Luke often emphasises the place of prayer in our Christian life. The Transfiguration took place in a moment of prayer; Jesus had taken the chosen apostles 'up the mountain to pray'. There he communed with the eternal Father, readying himself for the mission he was soon to accomplish for the life of the world. As we make the journey of Lent, this example of his – making himself truly our brother and companion – should inspire us to make the journey with him, eager to give ourselves more fully to that personal mission to which the eternal Father has called us – in our families, our parish community and the broader world.

Paul's exhortation to the Philippians is along these lines. The Easter celebration we look forward to reminds us of our final 'homeland'; to share in all that lies in store for us, we will be transformed by the power through which our Saviour brought the whole universe into existence. The rationale of the Liturgy's choice of Old Testament passages during Lent is different from that of the Sundays of the year – chosen because they chime in with the theme of the gospel. The Paschal Mystery is the final climax of God's saving interventions. Each Sunday in Lent, therefore, a great event of God's saving history is recalled, reminding us of the one great story told in the Scriptures. Today it is the Lord's promise to Abraham, made according to a strange old ritual whereby earthly rulers confirmed their commitment to their subjects by oath.

We are human, we are sinful, we are struggling. We are asked to look at whatever in our life fails to reveal Jesus and to pray and work that it be purified away. Let us help each other be open to grace so that we become more loving, more forgiving, more gentle, more compassionate, more humble, more transparently pure and welcoming. Let us help each other so that our heart be transformed into the Heart of Jesus, and that the face of our parish community become more and more clearly the face of Jesus. Then those who are hungry and lost and bewildered and lonely will be attracted to the communion of love for which their heart longs.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

- ⚔️ In this reading God Promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars. Will Abraham cling to this promise as he raises the knife to kill his son (Genesis 22:9)? Where do you fall on the continuum where blind trust is required of you, (1 being low and 10 high)?
- ⚔️ God asks Abraham to sacrifice a heifer, she-goat ram, turtledove and pigeon. Do you think God is preparing Abraham to offer the Son Isaac, whom he loves most, as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:1ff)? Is God the Father willing to let his own beloved son die to show how far God will go for humankind? In the end do you think Isaac is willing to be sacrificed? Is Jesus willing to give his life (in union with the Father's willingness to give everything, even his son) to show how much God loves humankind?

Second Reading Philippians 3:17-4:1

- ⚔️ In his *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, Thomas Merton says, "There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun." Discuss this idea as it relates to this statement from this reading: "He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory."
- ⚔️ Is your mind occupied with earthly things? Who or what helps you in your struggle toward your "citizenship in heaven"?

Gospel Luke 9:28-36

- ⚔️ In the blinding light did Peter know what he was saying? Think of some times that you have seen the divine, not in a transfiguration, but in the ordinary. Please share your experiences with others.
- ⚔️ Pope Francis urges us to reflect on the Transfiguration. What does he say the scars, wrinkles, smiles, tears on the faces of the people who walk beside us reveal to us?

We must see the same beauty on the faces of the people who walk beside us every day, such as family, friends, and colleagues. How many luminous faces, how many smiles, how many wrinkles, how many tears and scars reveal love around us.

Let us learn to recognize them and to fill our hearts with them. And then let us set out in order to bring the light we have received to others as well, through concrete acts of love diving into our daily occupations more generously, loving, serving, and forgiving with greater earnestness and willingness. The contemplation of God's wonders, the contemplation of God's face, of the Lord's face, must move us to the service of others.

– Pope Francis, *Look for the beauty of Jesus' transfiguration in everyday life*, 5 March 2023

PROJECT COMPASSION WEEK 2 – TOEFUATA’IGA FROM SAMOA

13-year-old Toefuata’iga (Toy-foo-ah-tah-ing-ah), a student in the Upolu region of Samoa, experienced water scarcity at her school. The absence of a reliable and hygienic water supply has not only affected students’ education but also impacted their health. Despite being surrounded by water, many Samoans struggle with consistent access to clean drinking water, and resort to relying on rainwater or neighbours who have access to a water pipeline. Climate change is leading to longer, drier periods. The Samoan Water pipeline frequently shuts down due to natural disasters and maintenance. Additionally, it is often unsafe for consumption after heavy rains.

“School would finish early, when there wasn’t any water, we wouldn’t have classes,” Toefuata’iga shared. Like many other students, her learning was frequently interrupted by school closures. The principal, Ada, explained the frequency of school closures: “about five to six times per term especially if the water stopped for quite some time particularly Terms 3 and 4, the dry months of the year.” Compounding this, students would frequently fall ill with waterborne diseases like typhoid and suffer the effects of dehydration.

“Parents would tell us that their kids are sick. It was normally things like headaches caused by heat or dehydration, or stomach aches... or typhoid or whatever,” said Ada. The resulting absence rate slowed down the curriculum for the entire school. Principal Ada explained: “Missing the curriculum for the students, if we have this issue, it’s a major concern for us teachers... We have to go back. Like if it’s two weeks, that’s a lot of lessons to miss.”

“Sometimes, if there is not enough water at our school, we would politely ask the parents at the back of our school building if they can go and bring us some water,” Toefuata’iga explained. However, when parents weren’t available, this additional pressure would fall on the teachers themselves. They would often have to drive their cars to nearby homes to fetch water using buckets. To relieve the burden on the nearby families who offered their tap water, the school would compensate them financially by withdrawing school committee funds. However, when these funds were unavailable, teachers would often resort to paying for water out of their own pockets. “Me, and the parents and teachers would gather money from our own pockets to support the water shortage on that particular day,” said Principal Ada. On top of this, collecting this water took away from the time teachers needed for teaching activities.



Access to water is about more than convenience. It is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty, and to helping students like Toefuata’iga fulfil her dreams: “I would like to become a good teacher. To teach the children so they will have a brighter future.”

Toefuata’iga also told a personal story: “If the water we drink is dirty, we get sick.” This was particularly hard on her family. “My grandmother needed water, so we went and got her some. We did not know it was dirty...” Three days later her grandmother fell ill.

According to a 2022 study (Asia Foundation, Aust Aid & Aust Water Partnership), only 30% of people across the Pacific region have access to basic drinking water. High concentrations of contaminants, such as toxic pesticides and E.coli in water have been recorded across Samoa. Like

many countries in the Pacific, Samoa is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including tropical cyclones, flooding, and prolonged droughts, which further exacerbate water scarcity.

Caritas Australia partners with Caritas Samoa through the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program. The installation of a 10,000 litre water tank at the school brought a significant change. “Now that we have the water tank, things are so much better,” said Toefuata’iga. “We can stay at school all day, and I get to spend more time learning and playing with my friends. I’m happy that we don’t have to go home early anymore.”

It is clear access to clean water, one of the most basic human needs, has a ripple effect on communities. Children can access their right to education and obtain opportunities that can help break the cycle of poverty.

With your support, Caritas Australia provides practical solutions for communities like Toefuata’iga’s, ensuring clean water and education are not just dreams but realities. Together, we are building resilient communities and creating lasting change.

This transformative story is just one example of how Caritas Australia’s Project Compassion creates waves of change around the world. Will you stand with students like Toefuata’iga this Lent?



UNITE 
AGAINST
POVERTY
this Lent

This Lent, we’re invited to *Unite Against Poverty* with Caritas Australia’s Project Compassion. This year is especially significant as we celebrate the Jubilee Year – *a time of renewal and solidarity*.

You can support Project Compassion 2025 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code on the right, **OR online at:** caritas.org.au/project-compassion **OR by calling:** 1800 024 413. Thanks for your generosity.



SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C · Weekdays Year I

Monday	17 Mar	St Patrick, bishop	Jeremiah 1:4-9	Acts 13:46-49	Luke 10:1-12,17-20
Tuesday	18 Mar	Tuesday of the 2 nd Week of Lent		Isaiah 1:10,16-20	Matthew 23:1-12
Wednesday	19 Mar	St Joseph, husband of Mary	2 Samuel 7:4-16	Romans 4:13-22	Matthew 1:16,18-22
Thursday	20 Mar	Thursday of the 2 nd Week of Lent		Jeremiah 17:5-10	Luke 16:19-31
Friday	21 Mar	Friday of the 2 nd Week of Lent		Genesis 37:3-4,12-18	Matthew 21:33-46
Saturday	22 Mar	Saturday of the 2 nd Week of Lent		Micah 7:14-15,18-20	Luke 15:1-3,11-32
Sunday	23 Mar	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT · YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>			

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Friday, 21 March **HARMONY DAY** <https://nationaltoday.com/harmony-day/>
- ✦ Saturday, 22 March 17:30 Claudia Smith's ashes will be placed in the Columbarium
- ✦ Thursday, 27 March 19:15 Baptism Preparation Information for parents
- ✦ Wednesday, 2 April **PARISH SECRETARIES' DAY AT THE DIOCESAN OFFICES**
- ✦ Tuesday, 8 April 19:30 Sacrament of Penance: Reconciliation Rite II for Lent
- ✦ SUNDAY, 13 APRIL 14:00 **RALLY FOR REFUGEES, TOWN HALL, WOLLONGONG**

PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA – THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Ham, spinach and mozzarella crinkle cake

3 tortillas; 2 eggs; 1/3 cup milk; salt & pepper; 45g spinach (frozen here); 110g ham; 55g grated mozzarella cheese; fresh parsley (to taste).

Mix eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Add spinach, ham cut into small pieces, grated mozzarella and chopped fresh parsley (to taste). Fold tortillas accordion-style. Place folded tortillas side by side in the baking dish. Pour ham mixture on top. Press the filling into the spaces between the tortillas. Bake for 20 minutes at 180°C. Cut into slices and serve.

Lent is a time for PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING. Do you have a good "Lenten Recipe" that you would be willing to share with other parishioners? Please email it to the Parish Office AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

A THOUGHT FROM POPE FRANCIS

When I hear confessions, if it is opportune, I ask the person: "Do you give alms?" "Yes, yes," they say. "And when you give alms, do you look into the person's eyes and touch their hand? Or do you just toss the coin and walk away without looking?" It's not so much the alms that matter, but the relationship with the poor person, with the poor Jesus there. Look the poor in the eye; touch their hands.

JUBILEE WEBSITE

The Diocesan Jubilee Website is continually being updated about jubilee events, and has a wealth of information, links and resources to assist pastors and the faithful to embrace this Holy Year as Pilgrims of Hope at <http://jubilee.dow.org.au> Want to know more about how you can embrace the 2025 Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope? Join one of our zoom sessions on Wednesday 9 or Thursday 10 April, 19:00 to 20:00 — a great opportunity to learn about this very special year of Hope and the grace that God wants to bestow on us. You need to register: <https://web.thankqportal.com/cdowa/embracing-the-jubilee-year-as-pilgrims-of-hope/>

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Genesis 15:5-12,17-18
2 nd Reading	Philippians 3:17-4:1
Gospel	Luke 9:28-36

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

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Exodus 3:1-8,13-15
2 nd Reading	1 Corinthians 10:1-6,10-12
Gospel	Luke 13:1-9

www.thirroulcatholic.org.au

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

PO Box 44 · Thirroul 2515

4268 1910

thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

4267 2560

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday 17:30

Sunday 08:00

Saturday Mass is recorded.

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday

Tuesday 17:30

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday