

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
29 / 30 NOVEMBER 2025
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR A
VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Why do we have Advent?

You say, "I don't know, it always just comes along," or, "I don't know, no one ever told me." I have heard these answers and others a number of times. Especially this question: if Christ has already been born, what is this Advent waiting about? Are we supposed to have forgotten about his birth?

Strangely that is part of the answer.

Let yourself imagine what it might be like. Picture it scene by scene and don't worry about being exact. Just experience it.

Our hearts get drowsy and lazy, tired out by the anxieties of daily life. Maybe we distract ourselves from our troubles by working very hard, or by becoming depressed, or becoming fascinated with drink, or sex, or out-of-control emotions, or gambling, or email, or golf, or surfing the web, or pride, or, or, or (you name yours). Whatever it is for you, the very clear message of Advent is, "Settle down for a while." Open the door just a crack and let God in.

To help, the Church has a liturgical strategy. Each week's first two readings of the Advent Sundays give the carrot: usually positive, a promise of good. Then the Gospel hits you with a *big stick* to wake you up.

Take the encouraging first reading this Sunday. It reminds us of the promise God has made to God's people: righteousness and justice. Security. The day of the Lord will arrive, though long delayed. Peace in our day.

What a lovely thing it is to desire such a time. Too good to be true? Just pious thought? Read the first reading now and ask yourself those questions. Spend time with them. Pray to God for help.

The psalm will help you. It asks God to make known God's ways to us, to guide us and teach us. "With joy I heard them say, 'Let us go to God's house!' And now, Jerusalem, we stand inside your gates."

The second reading urges us to put God's promise of peace into action, even if we are not yet sure what it means. Love others and be loved.

But then comes the Gospel. It tries to wake us up, especially if the above has not helped. "But I am perfectly awake," you say. Alright then, go ahead and read the Gospel. It is the "stick."

Signs in the sun, moon and stars, nations in dismay, the roaring of the sea and the waves, people dying of fright, and the Son of Man appearing in the clouds with power and great glory.

Terrifying?

Let yourself imagine what it might be like. Picture it, scene by scene and don't worry about being exact. Just experience it.

Will such a shakeup really happen? Maybe much worse is to come, judging from the state of the world today. Do you live without fear of terrorist acts, of proliferating nuclear weapons, of a horrific climate change, of a crash of the entire world economy, or the greed that fills so many hearts to overflowing in your city, in your state, your world?

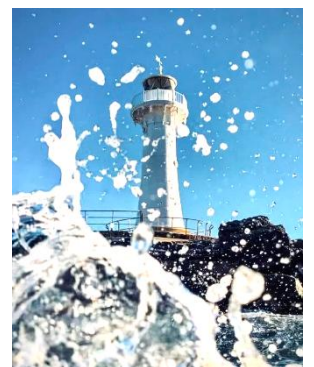
If you can say "You are right, I am afraid of these," then go back to the psalm. Beg that Christ be given birth in your soul and in so many others in this world that need it so badly.

Welcome to Advent.

Advent means "Coming". During this season the liturgies encourage us – as we look forward to the Christmas celebration – to reflect upon the mystery of God's coming among us. It is a season of expectation, reminding us that we live in time.

The irresistible march of time has puzzled philosophers since ancient times. We shall learn a great deal about ourselves, if we get in touch with the moods that shape our lives – moods that almost invariably involve the passing of time: our hopes and fears, our yearnings and disappointments, our sense of achievement, the lessons life is teaching us. Our faith should help us to situate this pattern of our lives within the designs of God. Where the march of time is leading us has only become clear, of course, because God has made known to us why the world was created. If God had remained silent, time would seem like an ever-going nowhere. Since Old Testament times, however, God's people have been given a growing awareness God's designs – through the divine gifts of faith and hope. A greater familiarity with the Scriptures – in this time of renewal – can give us a more lively awareness of the unfolding of God's generous plan, and of our place in that plan. An authentic faith is inseparable from a strong Christian hope – the certainty that God's generous and merciful designs will be fulfilled: in the whole of creation, and in the lives of each one of us.

Wake Up Call



✠✠ Today's readings remind us of this hope. The writings of the prophet Isaiah are filled with the message of hope. It is not surprising, therefore, that they will be used in the Advent liturgies of the coming Sundays. Today's reading speaks of the future God has in store for the whole human family – as the fulfilment of all our hopes. The nations of the earth will live in harmony – swords will be made into ploughshares and spears into sickles. The peoples of the whole world will come to share in the blessings of Israel, knowing the life-giving “ways of the Lord” and “walking in his paths”. But the prophet reminds those of us – who, though we claim to be God's people, are often unfaithful to our calling – that we must play our part in God's great plan: “Let us walk in the light of the Lord”.

The whole message of Paul's teaching is the Good News that the intervention of God that determines the whole course of the world's history has taken place in the life, death and triumphant resurrection of the Saviour – summed up in his words, ‘You know “the time” has come’. And he gives us a vivid comparison: with the coming of Christ, it is as if the darkest night has suddenly given way to the full light of day, revealing Christ as our life and our protector. In the gospel reading from Matthew, Jesus urges his disciples to situate themselves within the designs of God, because these designs are approaching their mysterious final climax. Christian hope, he teaches us, lives in constant readiness to welcome the Son of Man.

Many of the Advent readings 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 to his friends: ‘Many have longed to see what you see and never saw it, to hear what you hear and never heard it’ (Luke 10:24). Whatever else we might do in preparation for Christmas, let us not forget Jesus' coming. Let us renew our resolve not to be distracted from it by all the razzmatazz that surrounds what has become largely a secular holiday with little or no reference to Jesus.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Isaiah 2:1-5

✠ “Peoples shall come and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the Lord's mountain. ... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.’” Doesn't “going up to the Lord's mountain together” require forgiving one another? Can this work on a smaller scale in our own neighbourhood or family?

✠ What words come to your mind when you think of “swords” and “spears”? or “ploughshares,” as in this wonderful reading? Do you have the equivalent of swords and spears in your office, parish, or your own life? How does, “They shall beat their swords into ploughshares” relate to you?

Second Reading Romans 13:11-14

✠ In all the places you live and work is there some dimness that you can brighten with your Christ light?

✠ Advent means that we look forward once more to Christ's coming at Christmas and anticipate his next coming. Does Christ come also everyday? How? When?

Gospel Matthew 24:37-44

✠ Advent is about God coming to us. How can you become more aware of the ways Christ comes to you? Did you find Christ today? Do you ask this of yourself every night?

✠ Facing the fight against poverty is a way of “staying awake” and “being prepared,” according to Pope Francis, and as Jesus suggests in the Gospel? How ready are we for this fight?

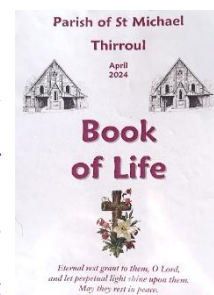
We cannot live without facing challenges, without responding to challenges. Whoever does not face challenges, whoever does not take up challenges, is not living. Your willingness and your abilities, combined with the power of the Holy Spirit who abides in each of us from the day of Baptism, allow you to be more than mere spectators, they allow you to be protagonists in contemporary events.

Please do not watch life go by from the balcony! Mingle where the challenges are calling you to help carry life and development forward, in the struggle over human dignity, in the fight against poverty, in the battle for values and in the many battles we encounter each day”.

– Pope Francis, Vespers with Atheneum Students, Saturday, 30 November 2013

BOOK OF LIFE

All during November we remember especially those who have died, our relatives, friends and those who have no one to pray for them. Next to the altar, the **Book of Life** will be displayed, and each day a new month will be open – as well as those pages listing names for whom no date of death is known. **Please check if your deceased relative or friend is listed in the Book of Life** – either on the date of their death, or towards the end of the Book, if their date has not been listed in the Parish records. If you would like the name of someone who has died placed in the **Book of Life**, there are special forms available next to the baptism font in the church all during November. Please complete a form for each deceased person whose name is not already in the **Book of Life**, and put the form(s) in the basket next to the baptism font, and the name(s) will be added after November. If you are unable to attend Mass, 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) A special violet candle will be lit during every Mass in November. *May they rest in peace.*



VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025 – THIS WEEKEND AND NEXT

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal will be held over this weekend and next weekend. 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)
- ✓ **ONLINE** – use the QR Code → → →
- ✓ **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.

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.

Due to the unprecedented calls on our food supplies in recent weeks Vinnies are very short of tinned fish, tinned meat dishes, tinned vegetables as well as spreads and sweet biscuits.

There are ample supplies of breakfast cereals at the moment.

Thirroul's Vinnies Conference is very grateful for your long term support.

HOW WAS SCHOOL TODAY?

Maybe it's time to stop asking kids, "How was school today?" There are seven much more powerful questions that flip the script and spark real conversation, not to mention build character in the child. So, what are they?

1. **What was the best part of your day?** *You help your child brain scan for positives, training them toward gratitude and optimism. On the other hand, we don't want to sweep problems under the rug, so ...*
2. **What mistake did you learn from today?** *Then you help normalize failure. You teach them that mistakes aren't shameful – they're teachers in disguise.*
3. **Who were you proud of today?** *Suddenly, your child starts to look for what's good in others. You grow empathy by the question alone.*
4. **What's one thing you could have made better today?** *Not a complaint, an opening. You give them space to problem solve, to name what's missing without spiralling into negativity.*
5. **Who did you help today?** *This one rewires their focus. When you ask this regularly, kindness becomes a reflex.*
6. **What was the most interesting thing you learned today?** *Grades aside, you fuel curiosity. The moment they see your eyes light up, they learn that learning itself is cool.*
7. **What's something new you want to try?** *The courage question. It pushes them toward creativity, bravery and growth. No perfection required.*

So, if you see what's happening here, you shift from interrogating to inviting. You move from report card talk to soul talk. And in doing so, you build a bridge not just to your child's day, but to their world. We are reminded that real parenting isn't about control. It's about connection. When you start asking these questions, you're helping your child develop emotional awareness, empathy and resilience, all while deepening your bond. The secret isn't fancy psychology. It's curiosity. Your curiosity.

So, maybe next time, skip the how was school, and try one of these. Watch your child pause, think, and maybe even smile. That's when you start raising a child who's not just successful, but mentally strong.

FIRST COMMUNION 2025

This Saturday, three young parishioners will receive **First Communion**: **HAZEL DEACON, AIDAN WESTON** and **CONNOR HERRERO DE HARO**. *Congratulations to these three Candidates.*

Next Saturday, 6 December, ten Candidates will receive First Communion. And on Saturday, 17 January 2026, the last of the fourteen Candidates will receive First Communion. Please keep the Candidates and their families in your prayers.



First Communion Candidates

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	1 Dec	Monday of the 1 st Week of Advent	Isaiah 4:2-6	Matthew 8:5-11
Tuesday	2 Dec	Tuesday of the 1 st Week of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wednesday	3 Dec	St Francis Xavier, priest	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37
Thursday	4 Dec	Thursday of the 1 st Week of Advent	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 21:24-27
Friday	5 Dec	Friday of the 1 st Week of Advent	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
Saturday	6 Dec	Saturday of the 1 st Week of Advent	Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26	Matthew 9:35-10:8
Sunday	7 Dec	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 29/30 November Vinnies Christmas Appeal commences
Christmas Tree Blessing
First Communion begins – 3 Candidates on Saturday
- ✦ Friday, 5 December 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
13:45 Year 6 Graduation Liturgy
- ✦ Weekend, 6/7 December Vinnies Christmas Appeal continues
First Communion continues – 10 Candidates on Saturday
- ✦ Thursday, 11 December 16:45 School Christmas Concert – all welcome



RECIPE: RAISIN, DATE AND WALNUT MUFFINS

2 cups flour; 1 cups old fashioned oats; 1 tbsp baking powder; 1 tsp cinnamon; ½ tsp salt; ½ tsp baking soda; 1 cup milk; ¼ cup maple syrup; 1 egg, lightly beaten; ½ cup coconut oil, melted; ½ cup chopped walnuts; ½ cup raisins; ½ cup chopped dates; Demera sugar for topping (optional).

Preheat the oven to 190°C. In a medium-sized mixing bowl, combine the dry ingredients (flour through baking soda). Whisk together to combine. In a large measuring cup or small mixing bowl, stir together the milk, maple syrup, egg, and coconut oil. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir until just combined and no streaks of flour remain. Add in walnuts, raisins, and dates and stir. Grease a muffin pan and evenly distribute the batter into the twelve wells. (Optional) Sprinkle the tops of the muffins with brown sugar. Bake in preheated oven for approximately 15-20 minutes or until the tops are browned and spring back when lightly pressed. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes before trying to remove them. Transfer to a wire rack to continue to cool. (Or, better yet, throw on some butter and eat them warm!).

PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA – FOOD ITEMS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED

Think about some items for Christmas 🎄 Thank you for your great generosity!

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY – 3 DECEMBER

IDPwD is a United Nations (UN) day observed internationally. It aims to promote community awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability. Each year the UN announces a theme to observe for International Day of People with Disability. The annual theme provides an overarching focus on how society can strive for inclusivity through the removal of physical, technological and attitudinal barriers for people with disability. This has been occurring since 1992 when the General Assembly announced **3 December** as the International Day of Disabled Persons. This year's theme: **Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress.**

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	Isaiah 2:1-5
2 nd Reading	Romans 13:11-14
Gospel	Matthew 24:37-44

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	Isaiah 11:1-10
2 nd Reading	Romans 15:4-9
Gospel	Matthew 3:1-12

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Parish School of St Michael

James Bryce Principal ☎ 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