



## Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**6 / 7 DECEMBER 2025**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT · YEAR A**  
**VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL**

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

When any of us get a smallest hint about how much God is giving to us, we are grateful. For instance, how many inspired poems, songs or music have been written after visiting spectacular places near the sea or in the mountains. It was gratitude for what the authors saw.

Rust and violet colours interleaved in the sunset. A hospital patient waiting calmly for tomorrow's verdict. Unthinking courtesy from strangers who stopped their car down the street so that someone could complete his or her jaywalk in safety! Your family. The dog. Your own life, a wonder and a mystery even with all its losses and tangles. Trees that wisely shed their leaves with the snow and cold to come. A spectacular sunrise or stunning waterfall.

The ability to see, if indeed we can do so. Holy darkness for those who cannot.

We all do very little to "deserve" the mysterious goodness around us and in us. We are not required to be worthy of it because God gives everything out of pure generosity. God gazes in wonder at the world and at each person and says, "You are worth it. I will not leave you."

And a paradox: the shocking smallness of our own selves. None of us are in any way the centre of the universe. This is good news, not bad. We can rest in God's everlasting arms and then do as much as we can to help others. Worthiness results from being loved, not just from achieving.

Smallness.

Perhaps gifts are not tendered to you right now. Perhaps life simply has too many problems: even international ones, that affect you. Maybe gifts are there, but you cannot see them.

In that case, your Advent eyes will have to rest their weariness for a while and do some waiting. It will be there, God's delicate care for you and for us. You will see.

A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength.

God, who takes joy in small things, does defend us poor ones from the wrongs of life. "He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted."

Put it this way: *God does not erase trouble; God loves us within it.*

Wait to catch a glimpse of God's intimate love for each hair on your head. We must wait. In Advent and in every time. God labours to give each creature the gift of a lifetime.

With all the catastrophes in our present world, it is easy to ask: how could any of this be possible? The answer? Wait. Clean your lenses. Open your eyes. Wait, and then see.

The shoot of Jesse is sprouting fast.

"A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." [From today's first reading]

As the mystic, Julian of Norwich put it, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and every manner of thing shall be well." **Stay around for it.**

Today's liturgy brings together readings from very different backgrounds, as it gives expression to the Advent message of hope.

The prophetic vision of Isaiah reflects his familiarity with the king's court in a period of dramatic international developments in the region. He links the fulfillment of God's designs for the nation with the rule of a new David (Jesse is the father of David) whose rule will contrast with that of many of David's unworthy successors. He will be filled with the gifts of the 'spirit of the Lord', ruling with wisdom and integrity, and showing himself a forthright champion of the oppressed and the poor of the land. The peace established by his rule is graphically portrayed as like a new paradise – as the whole country is 'filled with the knowledge of the Lord' and lives according to God's ways. For those who know the blessings brought by the true 'Son of David', the themes of the Christmas celebration that awaits us at the end of our Advent preparation are not difficult to recognise.

The gospel reading from Matthew reminds us that our hope in the promises of God brings with it a challenge. John the Baptist was honoured by Jesus as the embodiment of the prophetic tradition of Israel. It has been

### Wake Up Call



✠✠ pointed out that, in the cultural traditions of the world, there is no parallel to old Israel's acknowledgment of its failures before the God of the covenant. And it was the prophets who – like a conscience of the nation – challenged the people and their leaders with their unfaithfulness. Scholars tell us that Matthew's gospel – from which our readings for the coming year will come – was produced by an early Christian community in dispute with former Jewish associates who cannot accept the claims of Christian faith. This helps us to understand the sharp edge given to the words of Jesus against “the scribes and Pharisees” (see ch.23), and the strong words of the Baptiser in today's gospel. Jesus was impatient with the complacent exclusivism of these groups. We know, from contemporary records, that they tended to believe that being “children of Abraham” assured them a sharing in God's promises. John too challenges this complacency: ‘Do not presume to tell yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father”.’ In the best prophet tradition, his language has a frightening intensity. The axe is already ‘laid to the roots of the trees’; without their own ‘good fruits’ they will be lost.

Writing to the Romans, Paul has a similar message. Jewish converts must follow ‘the example of Christ Jesus’, in the tolerance and generosity they show, as they recognise in the Church's embracing of ‘the pagans’ what God foretold in the promises of ‘the Scriptures’. Our hope is boundless in its expectations; but we must play our part in the generous designs of God.

The one to whom we look for forgiveness and healing, the one to whom we look to find direction when we have lost our way, is the one whom our souls recognise. We are made for God and Jesus attracts us because in his person he fills our senses with the perfume (the ‘chrism’) of God.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading      **Isaiah 11:1-10**

✠ In baptism you receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in this reading: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence and wonder and awe in the presence of God. If we used these gifts, would we be able solve problems like hunger? Homelessness? Climate change? Gun control? New directions in the Church? How could the use of the gifts end the war in Ukraine?

✠ “The earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord,” Von Balthasar says this is “the drenching of the entire being with the inner understanding of what God is.” How does this idea relate to peace in the reading?

### Second Reading      **Romans 15:4-9**

✠ John O'Malley SJ: “Pope Francis is continuously pushing us beyond the comforts of our religious boundaries to encounter the one human family.” Would St Paul be giving the same advice to the Church today that we read in this letter: “I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised ... in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”?

✠ There are people with whom you disagree. How easy is it to “think in harmony” with them? Why think in harmony instead of just going along with such people, or being nice, or acting like you agree with them?

### Gospel      **Matthew 3:1-12**

✠ Judging by John's appearance (clothing of camel's hair, a leather belt around his waist, eating locusts and wild honey) would you guess his cry was lukewarm, or a cry from his heart that called for life-altering change? How would you respond to him? Is the fire within you a conflagration or does it look more like the pilot light? What can you do during Advent to gather some kindling for your fire?

✠ Does John the Baptist fit into any spiritual leader category you know? According to Pope Francis, if we lock ourselves in the traditions of the past, what might we miss? Might there be “new paths” to solve old problems in our world and our Church?

In face of the birth of his son, Zechariah was incredulous because natural laws made it impossible; they were old; they were elderly. Consequently, the Lord left [Zechariah] dumb during the whole time of gestation. It's a sign. But God doesn't depend on our logic and our limited human capacities. It's necessary to learn to trust and be silent in face of God's mystery and to contemplate God's work in humility and silence, who reveals Godself in history and who so often exceeds our imagination. ...

Fight the temptation to lock oneself in ways and traditions of the past, as a possible solution to today's crisis. Rather, follow Saint Paul's teaching to go on the liberating and ever new path of Jesus crucified and resurrected”.

– Pope Francis, Saturday, 23 June 2021

## POPE LEO TO TEENAGERS ON AI – 21 NOVEMBER 2025.

Pope Leo XIV to over 15,000 teenagers gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana, and invited young Catholic to grow in friendship with Jesus Christ and use technology healthily to deepen their faith.

**AI** can process information quickly, but it cannot replace human intelligence. And don't ask it to do your homework for you! It cannot offer real wisdom. It misses this very important human element. **AI** will not judge between what is truly right and wrong, and it won't stand in wonder, in authentic wonder, before the beauty, the beauty of God's creation. So, be prudent, be wise. Be careful that your use of **AI** does not limit your true human growth. Use it in such a way that if it disappeared tomorrow, you would still know how to think, how to create, how to act on your own, how to form authentic friendships. Remember, **AI** can never replace that unique gift that you are to the world.

# VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2025 – CONCLUDES THIS WEEKEND

The annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal concludes this 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.

**\$2,884 was donated last weekend – thank you!**

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.

## FIRST COMMUNION 2025

This Saturday, TEN young parishioners will receive First Communion: INEZ BENSLEY, FRANKLIN CLARK, RUBY TIENE, ENZO GRILLI, ISABEL SHARRAT, WILLA WOODS, VIVIENNE CREINIS, HARRY HOPKINS, LIVIA EMBLETON and HAMISH MAYTOM. *Congratulations to these ten Candidates.*

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**

## CAN YOU SPOT A RIP AT THE BEACH?

Rip currents are powerful, fast-moving currents that flow away from the shore, often occupying deep channels, and pose a significant hazard to swimmers. They are responsible for an average of 21 drownings a year in Australia, which is more deaths than from bushfires, floods, cyclones and sharks combined. Thousands of people get caught in rip currents each year around Australia. Research has shown rips are more complex than previously thought and there is no single piece of advice for escaping a rip that works for all conditions and people. What you may have been taught to do as a kid may not actually be the best advice.

This quiz will teach you how to spot a rip, what to do if you're caught in one and to remind you to always swim between the red and yellow flags on patrolled beaches. Good luck!

Click on this link: <https://how-to-spot-a-rip.netlify.app> A great website and instructive video of rips!

## THANKS TO THIRROUL FRUIT BARN!

**Thanks** to Thirroul Fruit Barn, 1b McCauley Street, Thirroul who donated our Christmas Tree this year. If you are passing Thirroul Fruit Barn, please drop in and thank them for their generosity. Please put Christmas Hampers, toys and other gifts on the floor around our Christmas Tree. The Tree will stay in our church until the end of the Christmas Season, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, 11 January 2026.

## HEAR FROM POPE LEO XIV

Sunday Echo is a limited-release resource the Diocese has developed that contains, using the Holy Father's most recent homily or reflection and accompanying discussion questions. **Each issue will be released the day after Pope Leo XIV gives a homily or reflection on the most recent Sunday Gospel readings.** You can access this by going to <https://www.dow.org.au/media-resources/faith-circles/> ... or ... sign up to have sent straight to you. You can also check out the Vatican Daily Bulletin: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino.html>



## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	8 Dec	The Immaculate Conception	Genesis 3:9-15,20	Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12	Luke 1:26-38
Tuesday	9 Dec	Tuesday of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 40:1-11	Matthew 18:12-14	
Wednesday	10 Dec	Wednesday of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 40:25-31	Matthew 11:28-30	
Thursday	11 Dec	Thursday of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 41:13-20	Matthew 11:11-15	
Friday	12 Dec	Friday of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 48:17-19	Matthew 11:16-19	
Saturday	13 Dec	St Lucy, virgin, martyr	Sirach 48:1-4,9-11	Matthew 17:10-13	
Sunday	14 Dec	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>			

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 6/7 December Vinnies Christmas Appeal continues  
First Communion – 10 Candidates on Saturday
- ✦ Thursday, 11 December 16:45 School Christmas Concert – **ALL WELCOME**
- ✦ Friday, 12 December 09:30 End of Year School Mass
- ✦ Saturday, 13 December Ordination of Deacons Joseph Nguyen, Sinh Le and Darren McDowell
- ✦ Weekend 13/14 December Blessing of the Christmas Crib  
Blessing of December Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
- ✦ Tuesday, 16 December 19:30 Reconciliation Rite II for Advent
- ✦ Wednesday, 17 December 09:15 Mass with New Communicants Year 2
- ✦ Weekend, 20/21 December Enrolment in the Order of Catechumens  
Baptisms – one on Saturday, one on Sunday – so far!



## RECIPE: NAN BOWERS PLUM PUDDING

2 pieces of unbleached calico (about 600mm square); 1 kg mixed fruit; 1½ cups of brown sugar; 4 cups self-raising flour; 2 cups wine (sherry or port); 6 eggs; 250g margarine; ¼ cup cocoa; 2 tsp bicarbonate of soda; ¼ to ½ tsp all spice; nutmeg; ginger; string.

Boil two pieces of unbleached calico and set aside to cool. Discard this water. Dissolve the bicarbonate soda in a little boiling water and set aside to cool. Soften margarine. Put flour, sugar, cocoa, all spice, nutmeg and ginger in a large mixing bowl. Stir dry ingredients to mix well. Stir in eggs, fruit and margarine. Add the wine to the bicarbonate soda to make up two cups. Stir into the mixture and mix well. Spread calico cloths and dust with a little flour. Pour the mixture equally on the calico cloths. Capture the four corners and four edges well and tie off tightly with string but allow a little room for expansion. Boil the puddings for three hours adding water when needed and turning occasionally. Take care to stop the pudding sitting on the bottom of the pot. Set aside to hang and dry. Boil pudding for 30 minutes prior to serving. Serve with custard, cream or ice cream. Add brandy if desired.

**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!**

## THE JOURNEY – YOUR DIOCESAN WEEKLY PODCAST

The Journey is the weekly podcast for parishioners in the Diocese of Wollongong. Each week it brings you great music, formation in faith, with an array of fantastic presenters from our Diocese and around Australia. Just go to [www.jcr.org.au](http://www.jcr.org.au) and you will be sent the podcast each week.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website	NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website	SUNDAY
<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR A</b>	<b>THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR A</b>	<b>MASS TIMES</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 11:1-10	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Isaiah 35:1-6,10	Saturday 17:30
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading Romans 15:4-9	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading James 5:7-10	Sunday 08:00
Gospel Matthew 3:1-12	Gospel Matthew 11:2-11	Saturday Mass is recorded.
<b>Parish of St Michael – Thirroul</b> <i>One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes</i> <i>Moving forward as a Parish Family</i> Patrick Vaughan • <i>Parish Priest</i> Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • <i>Assisting</i> <b>Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary</b> <b>Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00</b>	<a href="http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au">www.thirroulcatholic.org.au</a> 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515 4268 1910 <a href="mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au">thirroul@dow.org.au</a> Parish School of St Michael James Bryce Principal  4267 2560	<b>THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES</b> Monday Tuesday 17:30 Wednesday 09:00 Thursday 09:00 Friday 09:30 <i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i>