



Welcome to  
the Parish of  
St Michael  
Thirroul

**25 DECEMBER 2025**  
**CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY**  
Peace and Joy from the Franciscan Friars

*Welcome ❖ especially to visitors attending our Christmas Liturgies.*

**“There is room for everyone”.** Yes, around the Lord, who became human to save us, there is room for everyone! He makes room for every person, every child, young person, and elderly person. When the Son of God comes into the world, he finds no room in a house, but knocks on our hearts just as he opens his own to welcome everyone with love.

Therefore, when you pray before the Nativity scene, ask to be like those angels who proclaim God’s glory and peace to humankind. This peace is the commitment of every person of good will, and especially of us Christians, who are called not only to be good, but to become better every day. To become saints, like so many of the saints, from Francis of Assisi who gave us the tradition of the Christmas Crib, to one of our latest saints, the young Carlo Acutis: imitate their passion for the Gospel and their works, always animated by charity. By acting like them, your proclamation of peace will be luminous, because in the company of Jesus you will be truly free and happy, ready to reach out to your neighbour, especially those in difficulty.

The birth of the Prince of peace reveals to us the authentic meaning of this word, *peace*, which is not merely an absence of war, but a friendship between peoples based on justice. We all desire this peace for nations wounded by conflicts, but let us remember that harmony and respect start with our everyday relationships, the gestures and words we exchange at home, in the parish, with schoolmates, in sport, at the shopping centre. Therefore, before the holy night of Christmas, think of someone with whom you would like to make peace: it will be a more precious gift than those you can buy in the shops, because peace is a gift that is found, truly, only in the heart. To make peace is the quintessential “Catholic action”, because it is the gesture that makes us witnesses of Jesus, the Redeemer of the world.

Peace is not an irrelevant utopian dream. Peace cannot be imposed, nor can it be fabricated. Peace is not simply a matter of policy, nor is it an equilibrium of terror and fear. In Lebanon, Pope Leo said: “The path of mutual hostility and destruction in the horror of war has been travelled too long, with the deplorable results that are before everyone’s eyes.”

The primary home of peace is in the human heart. But our heart is not only peace-loving; it is also aggressive within itself and against others. We are tempted to wield “power over others” and to weaponize “thoughts and words”. If one does not undertake the disarmament of each one’s own heart, despite the temptation, faced with the horror of our own belligerence, this is to discard the desire for peace altogether. This results in a distorted or even lost “sense of realism”. Many today call ‘realistic’ those narratives devoid of hope, blind to the beauty of others and forgetful of God’s grace, which is always at work in human hearts, even though wounded by sin.

What is realistic, rather, is each one taking responsibility for peace. “Australians all let us rejoice, for we are one and free.” Let nothing extinguish the desire for peace.

## SAINT FRANCIS AND THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

Christmas was 15 days away. Saint Francis was staying at a hermitage at Fonte Colombo. He had just come from Rome—the last time, for he would die in three years—where the pope had approved his Rule. The brief future would be filled with pain, even the pain of the wounds of Christ.

How to celebrate Christmas? He remembered his visit to the Holy Land, to Bethlehem. Why not? A kind of replica of the manger there. There was a cave in Greccio.... He had a good friend, Giovanni (John) Vellita, whom he had met on one of his preaching tours. John was a military man, lord of Greccio, just three kilometres away. John had fallen under the spell of Francis, had renounced all worldly honours and was trying to live a life imitating that of Francis as well as he could.

Francis, with the assurance of friendship, sent word: “If you want to celebrate the Feast of the Lord at Greccio, hurry and diligently prepare what I tell you. For I wish to recall to memory the little child who was born in Bethlehem. I want to set before our bodily eyes the hardships of his infant needs, how he lay in the manger, how with an ox and ass standing by he lay upon the hay.”

John began immediately. People prepared torches and candles to light up the night. The manger was prepared in the cave, and the ox and ass brought in. When Francis came to the friars’ hermitage, he was delighted.

The great evening arrived. People began to come in procession, carrying their torches and candles. The woods rang with their song. They were rediscovering the joy of childhood.

Today, in Greccio, one can still see the stone—perhaps a metre high and sixty centimetres wide—on which the hay was placed. It has a brownish grey top and bottom, with a band of grey in the centre. The top has a rough, shallow, V-shaped indentation. Here the carved image of the baby was laid. There were no figures of Joseph and Mary, just the two animals.

As the villagers and friars crowded around, a priest began the Mass. Francis gave the homily. The saint of God stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love and filled with a wonderful happiness....He sang the Gospel in a sonorous voice, a clear and sonorous voice, inviting all to the highest rewards. Then he preached to the people standing about and spoke charming words concerning the birth of the poor King, and the little town of Bethlehem. Thus, the tradition of the Crib was born.

### WEEKEND MASS TIMES

**Church of St Michael • Thirroul**

↪ Saturday 17:30 📖 and Sunday 08:00

**Bulli** Sunday 08:30 and Sunday 17:30

**Corrimal** Saturday 18:00 and Sunday 09:30



### WEEKDAY LITURGIES

📖 **Tuesday 17:30**

Wednesday 09:00

Thursday 09:00

Friday 09:30

Patrick Vaughan, *Parish Priest*

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm, *Assisting*

📍 325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

📮 PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

☎ 4268 1910

💻 [thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

Parish Office Hours – **Tuesdays** and **Wednesdays 09:00 to 12:30** and **13:00 to 15:00** – **Fridays 08:30 to 15:00**

*The Parish Office is closed from 25 December to 12 January — reopens Tuesday, 13 January*

💻 [www.thirroulcatholic.org.au](http://www.thirroulcatholic.org.au)

Parish School ☎ 4267 2560



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