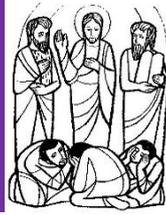


Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
28 FEB / 1 MAR 2026
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR A
PROJECT COMPASSION – WEEK TWO

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Last week we saw that Jesus was tempted just like the rest of us are. It was so human.

This week we will see him transfigured into dazzling light.

Not so human. More like a heavenly display. Which is the real Jesus? There are two Ignatian insights that shed light on this question and on Sunday's readings.

First, sometimes in the spiritual life there is a flash of the future that gets displayed in the present. Example: some years ago, a man was walking somewhat sadly along the streets of his neighbourhood, unable to sleep, but wishing that he could still believe in God in a significant way. Suddenly without warning he found his insides coming out of him, so to speak, and he said out loud, Oh God, Oh Jesus, I love you. Who knows how long this experience lasted—maybe ten seconds or ten minutes—but suddenly it was over. He was back to his ordinary state, wishing he could know and love God better!

The Transfiguration was one way for Jesus to reassure us and them that agony would not negate his divinity

If you can envision that, you might see that your author had experienced a transfiguration. His usual and in this case, dull, fearful approach to the Father and the Son was transformed, transfigured, showing what was really there, but which he was not at that point able to receive fully. Why not? I do not know. It is just that we human beings have to wait and be stretched before we are ready to see God in a more personal way. But lest we become discouraged and give up, God might give us a short vision of how things really are, at their core.

So, insight number one is: sometimes God will give a person a sneak preview of what the relationship to God is really like, but the preview is only temporary because it is more than the person can realize for long

This Sunday's feast of the Transfiguration provides a glimpse of how Jesus is unified with the God of the Trinity. Of course, the second person was always unified with the Trinity and became human at the same time. But it was for Jesus a preview because the resurrection and glorification had not taken place yet. He and we have to wait.

Second, when a graced view occurs, we want very much to hang on to the gift because it is so wonderful. We tend to forget about the giver, who is the main point. We become attached to the feel-good part. Maybe that is why Jesus says in today's reading, "do not tell this experience to anyone." He does not want the transfiguration to be a carnival attraction ("hey, look how white his clothes are! Incredible!"). It is a "prefiguring" of the risen Jesus.

Our love relationship with Jesus/God is what counts, and particular feelings act as symbols of it. "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Not "get a big kick out of it"). Look for the relation. Let everything else lead to it.

To summarize: one, sometimes God gives us glimpses of our relationship with Jesus that are too much for us, but that can encourage us. The Transfiguration may have been one of these for the two apostles. The purpose of the glimpse is to keep them or us involved in the relationship, to let those involved glimpse the real Jesus, not just to give them an individual thrill.

So, don't give up. Let us follow Lent along step by step. The encouragement this Sunday is great.

Each year on the second Sunday of Lent, the liturgy's gospel reading tells of the Transfiguration. This year we hear Matthew's account. Throughout our long Lenten observance, we are encouraged to keep in mind the triumphant glory of the Saviour that we are preparing to celebrate, and the challenge it brings to us. All three gospels link the Transfiguration with the warning of Jesus, that he was 'destined to suffer' in Jerusalem, and that those who are his true followers must 'take up their cross and follow him'.

What is the basis of this mysterious narrative, that is not easy to relate to the later attitudes displayed by the apostles as the story of the gospels unfolds? It had obvious importance for the Church of the beginnings, because it is given in all three synoptic gospels. Luke associates this experience of the three apostles – who were to witness the agony of Jesus in the garden – with a moment in which Jesus led them in prayer. Perhaps the narrative has its basis in an ecstatic prayer experience. Perhaps the more restrained presentation of Luke, the gentile convert, is significant. Luke avoids reference to a metamorphosis ('transfiguration'), a phenomenon associated with the gods of the pagan mythology. He merely states that 'the aspect of Jesus' face was changed'. No doubt, the early Church saw this narrative as an important expression of their faith in the Saviour – as sharing in the Father's greatness and glory, even in the obscurity of his earthly life.

Matthew's recounting of this tradition, with its many references to biblical themes familiar to the Jewish converts of his community, presents the Jesus of the Transfiguration as fulfilling what was prefigured in the history of

The Giver



✠ old Israel: the ‘mountain’ reminds us of the defining moment of the Sinai covenant; ‘Moses and Elijah’, representing the Law and the Prophets, both have close links with Sinai; the ‘cloud’ recalls the ‘*shekinah*’ cloud that was an expression of God’s presence during the Exodus; the shining face of Jesus reminds us of the face of Moses when he came down from the mountain; Peter’s reference to the ‘three tents’, or booths, recalls the Jewish feast of Tabernacles, when the people lived in booths celebrating their arrival in the promised land – a celebration of the kingship of God that came to be filled with messianic expectations. Matthew adds to the words of the Father from the cloud a reference to one of the songs of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:1), bringing us back to the association of the Transfiguration with the warning of Jesus – of the ordeal that lay ahead of him in Jerusalem, and the challenge of discipleship.

The term used by Mark and Matthew for the transformation that took place in Jesus – that we are accustomed to translate, ‘transfiguration’ – is also used in the New Testament to describe the spiritual transformation brought by life ‘in Christ’. For the first Christians, it had overtones of the blessings of the final kingdom announced by Jesus. The journey begun so long ago – in the story of Abraham’s heroic response to the call of God, and the promises that accompanied it – has brought God’s people to the moment of fulfilment.

On the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus is gazing on God’s face and listening to God’s voice. His whole being is caught up in God’s glory, ‘and his face shone like the sun’(see Exodus 34:29). It is Jesus who brings the Law represented here by Moses, and the Prophets, represented here by Elijah, to their fulfilment, but he also goes beyond them, for he is God’s ‘Son, the beloved’ with whom God is ‘well pleased’.

Peter, James and John are told that it is to Jesus that they are to listen (see Deuteronomy 18:15). So it is that when the three disciples looked up ‘they saw no one except Jesus himself alone’(‘alone’ is emphatic in the original Greek text). Moses and the Prophets prepared the way for Jesus. Now, however, God’s word is revealed fully in him. We are to listen to Moses and Elijah now only as their words are reflected in the life of Jesus. We are to see them through Jesus’ eyes and listen to them with Jesus’ heart, for we need to hear all God’s words come to us now through him.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Genesis 12:1-4

- ✠ What was Abraham’s response to God’s request? Does this incident relate to your Lenten experience in any way? God called him out of his homeland to start something new. Does God sometimes call you out of your comfort zone or your favourite chair to start something new?
- ✠ God gives Abraham a unique blessing at the start of Abraham’s journey. What would be a “blessing” for you? For whom are you a “blessing”?

Second Reading 2 Timothy 1:8-10

- ✠ Are we all called to become a living Gospel in the world? Will that involve some hardship? What does Paul’s letter to Timothy say about this? Will it involve some joy?
- ✠ In this reading what is it that saves us, St Paul specifies: grace and or our own work? Could it be that both count? Notice where he says, “Bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God.”

Gospel Matthew 17:1-9

- ✠ Jesus invited three of his disciples (and us) to gaze at him in his transfiguration. Do you ask yourself every night if you saw Jesus during the day?
- ✠ The three apostles were in anguish when they heard about Jesus’ upcoming death. Jesus takes them up the mountain with him. At times because of moments of darkness do we need to go up the mountain too? According to Pope Francis, why can’t we stay there?

Thus, we need a different outlook, a light that illuminates the mystery of life in depth and helps us to move beyond our paradigms and beyond the criteria of this world. We too are called to climb up the mountain, to contemplate the beauty of the Risen One that enkindles glimmers of light in every fragment of our life and helps us to interpret history beginning with the paschal victory.

.... We cannot remain on the mountain and enjoy the bliss of this encounter on our own. Jesus himself brings us back to the valley, among our brothers and sisters and into daily life. ... Going up the mountain does not mean forgetting reality. ...

We are called to experience the encounter with Christ so that, enlightened by his light, we might take it and make it shine everywhere. Igniting little lights in people’s hearts; being little lamps of the Gospel that bear a bit of love and hope: this is the mission of a Christian.

– Pope Francis, *Angelus 2nd Sunday of Lent*, 28 February 2021

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 2026 – FRIDAY, 6 MARCH, 11:00, ST MICHAEL’S CHURCH

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women of the United States and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women’s involvement in missions at home and in other parts of the world. World Day of Prayer came to Australia in 1927. This year’s **ecumenical** World Day of Prayer has been prepared by women in **Nigeria**. All are welcome at our Parish Church, at **11:00 on Friday, 6 March**, followed by morning tea. Come along and pray for our world – and learn something about the people of Nigeria.

MESSAGE OF THE DICASTERY FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE FOR THE MONTH OF RAMADAN AND 'ID AL-FITR 1447 H. / 2026 AD – 20 FEBRUARY 2026

On the occasion of the month of Ramadan and for the feast of Id al-Fitr 1447 H. / 2026 AD, the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue has sent a message of good wishes to Muslims around the world.

The following is the text of the Message, signed by the prefect of the Dicastery, His Eminence Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad, and the secretary of the same Dicastery, the Reverend Monsignor Indunil J.K. Kodithuwakku:

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters,

It is with great joy that I address you on the occasion of the month of Ramadan, which culminates in the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast, *Id Al-Fitr*. This important annual observance offers me a welcome opportunity to express my closeness, solidarity and respect for you, believers in God, “who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to humanity” (Second Vatican Council, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, 3).

This year, through a providential convergence of calendars, Christians observe this period of fasting and devotion alongside you during the holy season of Lent, which leads the Church toward the celebration of Easter. During this spiritually intense period, we seek to follow God’s will more faithfully. This shared journey allows us to acknowledge our inherent fragility and to confront the trials that weigh upon our hearts.

When we suffer trials — whether personal, familial or institutional — we often believe that understanding their causes will reveal a clear path forward. Yet we frequently discover that the complexity of these situations exceeds our strength. In an age marked by an overload of information, narratives and competing viewpoints, our discernment can become clouded, and our suffering even more acute. At such moments, a question naturally arises: how can we find a way forward? From a purely human perspective, the answer may appear elusive, leaving us with a sense of helplessness.

It is precisely then that the temptation can emerge to yield to despair or to violence. Despair can seem like an honest response to a broken world, while violence may present itself as a shortcut to justice that bypasses the patience required by faith. Yet neither can ever be an acceptable path for believers. A true believer keeps his or her gaze fixed upon the invisible Light who is God — the Almighty, the Most Merciful, the only Just One — who “rules the peoples with fairness” (*Psalms* 96:10). Such a believer strives, with every ounce of strength, to live according to God’s commandments, for in him alone are found both the hope of the world to come and the peace so deeply desired by every human heart.

Indeed, we — Christians and Muslims, together with all people of good will — are called to imagine and to open new paths by which life may be renewed. This renewal is made possible through a creativity nourished by prayer, the discipline of fasting that clears our inner vision, and concrete acts of charity. “Do not be overcome by evil,” the Apostle Paul exhorts us, “but overcome evil with good” (*Romans* 12:21).

Dear Muslim brothers and sisters, especially those among you who struggle or suffer in body or spirit because of your thirst for justice, equality, dignity and freedom: please be assured of my spiritual closeness, and know that the Catholic Church stands in solidarity with you. We are united not only by our shared experience of trial, but also by the sacred task of restoring peace to our broken world. We are truly “all in the same boat” (Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti*, 3 October 2020, 30).

Peace — this is my fervent wish for each of you, for your families, and for the nations in which you live. It is not of an illusory or utopian peace, but as Pope Leo XIV emphasized, of one born from the “disarmament of heart, mind and life” (*Message for the 59th World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2026). Such peace is a gift received from God and nurtured by defusing hostility through dialogue, practicing justice, and cherishing forgiveness. Through this shared season of Ramadan and Lent, may our inner transformation become a catalyst for a renewed world, where the weapons of war give way to the courage of peace.

With these sentiments, I pray that the Almighty may fill each of you with his merciful love and divine consolation.

From the Vatican, 17 February 2026

Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad
Prefect

Msgr. Indunil J.K. Kodithuwakku
Secretary

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2026 – COST OF OUR LIVING

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has released the first **Social Justice Statements** for 2026 entitled **The Cost of our Living: Economic and Social Justice for the Common Good**. us to reflect deeply on the challenges facing our nation and to respond with faith, hope and love. Across Australia, many of our sisters and brothers are burdened by the rising cost of life’s necessities. For some, this means skipping meals, delaying medical care or living without secure housing. These are not just economic statistics – they are human stories of struggle and resilience. As disciples of Jesus, we cannot turn away from these realities. The Gospel calls us to see Christ in those who suffer and to walk alongside them with compassion. This statement is an invitation to listen and to act.

The International Eucharistic Congress Sydney 2028 (Eucharist28) officially launches this Sunday, 1 March 2026, marking the start of a **Year of Prayer** to encounter Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The theme of the Congress is: **“This is My Body, Given for You.”** <https://eucharist28.org/>

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	2 Mar	Monday of the 2 nd Week of Lent	Daniel 9:4-10	Luke 6:36-38
Tuesday	3 Mar	Tuesday of the 2 nd Week of Lent	Isaiah 1:10,16-20	Matthew 23:1-12
Wednesday	4 Mar	Wednesday of the 2 nd Week of Lent	Jeremiah 18:18-20	Matthew 20:17-28
Thursday	5 Mar	Thursday of the 2 nd Week of Lent	Jeremiah 17:5-10	Luke 16:19-31
Friday	6 Mar	Friday of the 2 nd Week of Lent	Genesis 37:3-4,12-13,17-28	Matthew 21:33-43,45-46
Saturday	7 Mar	Saturday of the 2 nd Week of Lent	Micah 7:14-15,18-20	Luke 15:1-3,11-32
Sunday	8 Mar	THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Friday, 6 March 09:30 Anointing of the Sick during Mass
- ✦ Friday, 6 March 11:00 World Day of Prayer – Ecumenical Service at St Michael's



Second Sunday of Lent
28 February – 1 March 2026

Sisilia is a 13-year-old girl living in remote Tanzania, who had to walk long distances to collect water every day. Thanks to Project Compassion, Sisilia's school and village now have safe clean water close by and she can spend more time studying so she can fulfil her dream of one day becoming a pilot.



Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at: www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate
Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty this Lent.*

SISILIA FROM TANZANIA

Sisilia, aged 13, lives with her mother and siblings in a remote village in northern Tanzania. Life has been difficult since her father passed away when she was a baby.

“My mother does small farming and sometimes sells vegetables to get money. She supports the family on her own. We don't have a regular income because my father passed away many years ago. Life is hard, but we try our best,” Sisilia said. She had to walk up to 30 minutes, three times a day, to fetch water from a dirty canal. The water was unsafe, causing frequent illness, and the long walks left Sisilia exhausted, fearful of wild animals and struggling to focus on her studies. “I get very tired. Carrying heavy water containers every day after walking long distances is not easy. I was also getting piercing back pains. Sometimes I get home late and tired, and it's hard to focus on my homework or revise for exams.” she said.

Lack of clean water is a major issue in Tanzania, where nearly 40% of people don't have access to basic drinking water services and 75% don't have access to basic sanitation services. (World Bank 2022). With support from the A+ Successor Project, her school and village now have clean water taps. This means it takes Sisilia just two minutes to collect water from her house, reducing the risks she faced and giving her more time for learning. Access to safe water has also improved health, hygiene and nutrition for her school community. Teachers and students can drink clean water, maintain hygiene, and grow food in the school garden. Sisilia has also joined a SWASH Club, where she learned about hygiene, sanitation, nutrition and child rights. She now confidently shares this knowledge with peers, parents and community members, even performing songs and demonstrations to promote good practices. This leadership has empowered her to advocate for children's education and

wellbeing in her community. Despite many hardships, Sisilia remains determined to succeed. You can help Sisilia.

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

Tinned fish, tinned meat dishes, tinned vegetables, spreads, sweet biscuits – Thank you!!

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT ♦ YEAR A

1 st Reading	Genesis 12:1-4
2 nd Reading	2 Timothy 1:8-10
Gospel	Matthew 17:1-9

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes

Moving for5ward 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 A

1 st Reading	Exodus 17:3-7
2 nd Reading	Romans 5:1-2,5-8
Gospel	John 4:5-42

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Parish School of St Michael

James Bryce Principal ☎ 4267 2560

SUNDAY

MASS TIMES

Saturday	17:30
Sunday	08:00

Masses not recorded at present.

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday