

## Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**28 / 29 MARCH 2026**  
**PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION • YEAR A**  
**PROJECT COMPASSION – FINAL WEEK**

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

### Contrasts

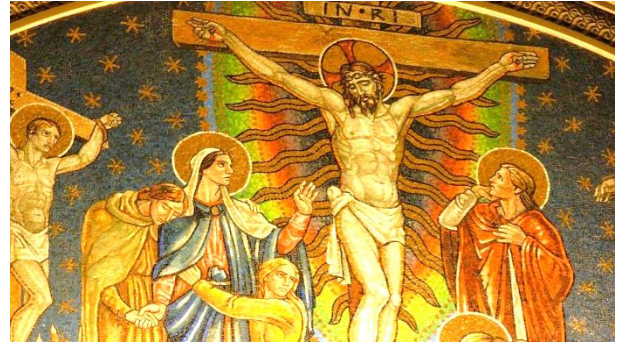
Palm Sunday contains a contrast that tells us in advance what Holy Week is all about. This is why Sunday is called both “Palm Sunday” and “Passion Sunday.”

The two Gospels set up the contrast. That is right, two Gospels. The first is read at the very beginning of the liturgy, during the procession of palms. Jesus is making a triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. The people are cheering wildly: “The whole city stirred to its depths,” Matthew tells us. Some people are asking, “Who is this?” and others in large numbers replying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee!”

They soften his pathway, laying out palm branches before him and even spreading their own coats on the road. He is their man. They treat him as a king!

What a “kingdom of God” this had turned out to be.

The Church procession reaches the front of the church, with parishioners holding actual palm branches to illustrate the story. Mass continues, and then there is the Liturgy of the Word. And now the tables are turned. In the second Gospel, we hear a reading of the passion according to Matthew. Here, Jesus the king is handed over to authorities, betrayed by one of his own disciples, and he completes his kingly entry to Jerusalem by receiving a royal robe of mockery and a crown of pain.



He did not turn away from this mockery. In fact, he “set his face like flint” toward his humiliation (as it says in the first reading of Sunday’s Mass).

This reading states the contrast beautifully. It is a passage from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah and is called the “Third Song of the Suffering Servant.” The first part of this reading says, “The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.” This he did, and was applauded for it, treated like a king.

The second part says, “I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. *I gave my back to those who struck me ....*” Jesus knew well this passage from the Prophet Isaiah.

So, Palm/Passion Sunday presents a huge contrast between the world’s view of kingship and the holy and humble meaning of it. The Church has set up Sunday’s liturgy specifically for this purpose. Jesus begins as a hero and ends as an object of ridicule.

In this contrast, Jesus shows himself as a man of great humility. Each of us, including Jesus, is designed to love and be loved, to empty ourselves of any bad habit or out-of-control urge that pushes us toward pride. We become ourselves by remaining true to the God of Love who lives within us. Neither shame nor renown can pull us away from this, if we follow Jesus in his humility.

And *then* God will highly exalt him. God will say to the crowd, you were right about throwing palms, but not if you were trying to create a worldly hero. Real glory and greatness reside in quiet, unrelenting love, no matter how other people react.

We are in the presence of great truth here.

Today’s liturgy begins with the commemoration of the triumphant entry of Jesus into the holy city. This year we hear Matthew’s account. Its messianic emphasis is clear. The Master’s foreknowledge and authority are affirmed. A prophecy of Scripture (a combination of verses from Isaiah and Zechariah) is being fulfilled; but his coming is in humility and peacefulness. The people cry, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’.

The first reading from Isaiah invites us to learn from the example of the Saviour, the trust we should have in our Father in heaven, whatever trials we face. But it is something else that makes this reading appropriate on the threshold of Holy Week – with God’s true Servant, we must be open to a new meeting with our God in what lies ahead – glad that the Lord ‘wakes us to hear, to listen like disciples’.

In the second reading, from the letter to the Philippians – echoing a hymn used in the liturgy of the first generation of the Church – Paul summarises with majestic brevity the drama of the Paschal Mystery we are about to celebrate: Jesus ‘emptied himself’, sharing our human condition, even to ‘accepting death on a cross’; and then, for our sake, he is ‘raised high’, one with the Father in the glory of the divine name.

Matthew’s account of the Lord’s passion has the features we have come to associate with this gospel. Faith in Jesus as the messiah has already been clearly affirmed in the description of his entry into Jerusalem; and the ultimate outcome is clearly anticipated: ‘After my resurrection, I shall go before you to Galilee’. But the subtlety with which Matthew’s account makes an affirmation of faith in the Saviour seems to indicate that he has his Jewish



audience in mind. The refrain of fulfilment – as ‘the Son of Man goes to his fate’ – echoes through the narrative. The titles attributed to Jesus are few, ‘the Christ’, ‘Son of God’ and ‘Son of Man’. But they are crucial for converts from a Jewish background. The first raises the great issue that confronted the Jewish people. The title, ‘Son of God’ (which was to become an ultimate expression of the absolute claim of Christian faith) was open-ended to the ears of old Israel, indicating one who has God’s special favour. It was the title, ‘Son of Man’, crucial at the trial of Jesus, that removed all ambiguity. ‘You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power (God’s very self)’, Jesus declares (referring to Psalm 110), ‘and coming on the clouds of heaven’, (a reference to Daniel 7). ‘What need of witnesses have we now!’ exclaimed the high priest. The rending of the veil of the Temple and the apocalyptic events in the holy city, are a divine confirmation that, with the Lord’s death, the old order has given way to the new. And the centurion’s words, ‘In truth this was a son of God’, are an expression of the Church’s newfound faith.



The liturgies of Holy Week will teach us, not with fine oratory, but by recounting the great events in which the generous ways of God found a final expression in our human history. Let this recognition set the tone for our participation in the liturgies of these days.

Today we celebrate Jesus, the suffering Messiah. He is the one of whom Isaiah foretold: “My face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. He is the Christ who took the form of a slave, ... obediently accepting even death, death on a cross.” He is the saviour who “suffered willingly for sinners” and whose suffering makes us pleasing to God. We all suffer in our own way. We experience physical pain and hardship. We suffer watching our friends and relatives suffer. We are often offended or abandoned by others, and we add to our suffering by our own sinfulness. The world around us is filled with suffering: the victims of war and poverty; people living in streets or in shantytowns; starving children; lonely elderly; people dying of AIDS, cancer, or some other disease.

Today’s liturgy teaches us “to welcome our suffering,” to bear witness to God by following Christ’s example of suffering. We pray that the world “united with him in his suffering on the cross may share his resurrection and new life.” Had Jesus merely said that his mission was to set people free from sin and all forms of oppression, his words would have fallen on deaf ears. He had to work at this task of liberation. He not only talked about freeing the poor and oppressed but, undeterred by criticism, actually welcomed the poor and sinners to share at his table. Like Jesus, we must be able to accompany others in their suffering and be willing to suffer with them. God’s ways are not always what we expect them to be. God chose for Jesus to make his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey—symbolizing peace and humility—rather than as a warrior king. We may sometimes find ourselves struggling with understanding God’s logic—how the outward appearance is not as important as what is in the heart. The Lord is not impressed by appearances but by the quality of the gift of the heart.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading **Isaiah 50:4-7**

- ✚ “The Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint.” We see Jesus as the subject of this reading. Who, other than Jesus might be the speaker in this reading? Explain. When you do proclaim Jesus can you be assured that he will go before you and guide you?
- ✚ “Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear.” What does the speaker of this reading hear? Is it about suffering? Are you reluctant to stand up for justice if it involves discomfort for you? Is there any small thing you could do to remedy someone’s suffering? Explain.

### Second Reading **Philippians 2:6-11**

- ✚ “Agape” love (pronounced ah’-gah-pay) is selfless and free from self-concern and self-preoccupation. It includes conversion, vulnerability, suffering and seeking for justice. Explain Jesus’ love for us in terms of agape. How does it help redeem the world?
- ✚ Discuss this thought from Javier Melloni SJ: “The will of God is the divinization of every creature; and it was to bring about this divinization that the One who was in God and who was God, emptied himself in order to participate in our human condition and transform it from within.”

### Gospel **Matthew 26:14 – 27:66**

- ✚ Jesus endured the sense of abandonment by the one he loved most, his Abba. He chose to experience all of humanity’s worst suffering. What does this tell us? Even though he couldn’t access their love, do you think the Father and the Spirit were there with Jesus on the cross?
- ✚ According to Pope Francis, where is Christ crucified today?

When we resort to violence, we show that we no longer know anything about God, who is our Father, or even about others, who are our brothers and sisters. We lose sight of why we are in the world and even end up committing senseless acts of cruelty. We see this in the folly of war, where Christ is crucified yet another time. Christ is once more nailed to the Cross in mothers who mourn the unjust death of sons and husbands. He is crucified in refugees who flee from bombs with children in their arms. He is crucified in the elderly left alone to die; in young people deprived of a future; in soldiers sent to kill their brothers and sisters. Christ is being crucified there, today.

– Pope Francis, *Palm Sunday Homily*, 10 April 2022

## COLLECTION FOR THE HOLY LAND ( *TERRA SANCTA*) ON GOOD FRIDAY

The Collection *Pro Terra Sancta* was established in response to the desire of the Popes to foster a strong bond between the faithful throughout the world and the Holy Places. It is the principal source of material support for Christian life in the Holy Land and a privileged means through which the universal Church expresses solidarity with the ecclesial communities of the Middle East. With the Apostolic Exhortation *Nobis in Animo* (25 March 1974), Pope Saint Paul VI gave renewed impetus to supporting the Holy Land, which he had visited during his historic pilgrimage in 1964.

Through the funds traditionally collected on Good Friday, the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land is able to fulfill its mission: preserving the Sacred Places—the stones of memory—and sustaining the Christian presence—the living stones—through numerous pastoral, educational, charitable, healthcare, and social works. Ordinarily, the Custody receives 65% of the Collection, while the remaining 35% is entrusted to the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches for distribution.

The territories associated with salvation history and benefiting in various ways from the Collection include Jerusalem, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. These countries face serious challenges of different kinds, and the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches intervenes to sustain local communities, with particular attention to the life and activities of the Churches. An ordinary annual subsidy is provided to all Eastern and Latin eparchies (dioceses) in these regions, except in Ethiopia, where the Latin Church falls under the Dicastery for Evangelization.

This support enables ecclesial communities to remain alive through assistance to priests, religious, institutions, families, and pastoral initiatives. The Collection thus offers concrete aid for preserving the Christian presence in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East, in societies marked by social, economic, and political hardship.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Franciscan Custody, the Eastern Catholic Churches of the Holy Land, and Religious Institutes are deeply committed to the education of young people. Together with the Secretariat of Solidarity, they receive assistance from the proceeds of the Collection. Ongoing conflict in Gaza, high unemployment, and reduced tourism have further strained the economic stability of schools in Palestine. The Dicastery pays close attention to such emergencies, ensuring that education continues without interruption and remains accessible to all. A significant centre of higher learning supported through the Collection is Bethlehem University, where nearly 3,300 Muslim and Christian students receive academic and human formation, preparing them to contribute to a society founded on mutual respect and human dignity. The dedicated service of the De La Salle Brothers in leading the University is especially worthy of praise.

Thanks to the Collection, the Dicastery provides assistance to seminaries, religious formation houses, and cultural institutions within its jurisdiction, including support—through scholarships, university fees, and other forms of aid—for seminarians, priests, religious men and women, and, when possible, lay students, even for studies undertaken in Rome.

Through prayer and the generosity of people of goodwill, it is possible to offer tangible support to those in need: helping families in difficulty, accompanying children toward a hopeful future, providing aid to refugees and displaced persons, supporting the formation of priests and religious, and contributing to the preservation of the Holy Places. May this year's Collection *Pro Terra Sancta* be for all an occasion of renewed solidarity, so that hope may shine especially in the hearts of those who need it most.

## PROJECT COMPASSION THROUGHOUT LENT

As we enter the sacred season of Easter, Project Compassion once again invites us to unite in faith, hope and love, extending our hands and hearts to those who need it most. With the support of parishes like yours, Caritas Australia and its partners help uplift communities facing poverty and hardship, uphold dignity for families navigating crisis and strengthen resilience where life's challenges are greatest.

This Lent, the stories you have encountered from Sisilia, Monoranjon, Manaini and Ahmad remind us of the difference compassion can make. Over the past financial year, our humanitarian and development programs (including through the CAN DO Consortium) reached more than two million people, supporting around one hundred projects across 30 countries.

In Africa, close to three quarters of a million people were impacted through 16 projects, including the A+ Successor Project, which expanded access to clean water in Sisilia's community.

Across Asia, more than 800,000 people benefited through 36 projects. Farmers like Monoranjon worked together to reduce the risks of climate change by growing climate resilient crops and prioritising diverse and nutritious local foods.

In the Pacific, close to 300,000 people were impacted through 15 projects, including training programs such as the one Manaini joined.

Here in Australia, close to fifty thousand First Australians were impacted through six projects. Initiatives such as homework clubs, mums and bubs sessions and secure housing helped families strengthen their wellbeing and build confidence for the future.

Your generosity also helped Caritas Australia respond to 24 humanitarian crises worldwide as part of the Caritas Internationalis network, including in Gaza, Ukraine and Myanmar, where the need for protection and care remains significant. Together with our partners, your support helps families access nutritious food, clean water, education, healthcare and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. These essentials allow communities to grow in strength and resilience and to build brighter futures for generations to come.

During Lent, we are invited to live out our faith in practical and compassionate ways. As we continue our Lenten journey, may we be guided by Christ's love and remain open to the needs of others. Together, let us work toward a world where all people can flourish and live with dignity.



**Palm Sunday**  
28–29 March 2026

As Project Compassion 2026 comes to a close, we thank you for your generous support throughout Lent. This year, we shared the stories of four inspiring people whose lives are being uplifted through your compassion.

Your support is helping them overcome challenges and build stronger futures. There is still time to donate! Together, we can continue nurturing hope and empowering communities facing poverty and injustice.



**UNITE**   
**AGAINST**  
**POVERTY**  
this Lent

**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](http://www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate)

**Or by calling:** 1800 024 413

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

## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year A • Weekdays Year II

Monday	30 Mar	Monday of Holy Week	Isaiah 42:1-7	John 12:1-11
Tuesday	31 Mar	Tuesday of Holy Week	Isaiah 49:1-6	John 13:21-33,36-38
Wednesday	1 Apr	Wednesday of Holy Week	Isaiah 50:4-9	Matthew 26:14-25
Thursday	2 Apr	Holy Thursday – the Lord’s Supper	Exodus 12:1-8,11-14	1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-15
Friday	3 Apr	Good Friday – the Lord’s Passion	Isaiah 52:13–53:12	Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9 John 18:1–19:42
Saturday	4 Apr	Holy Saturday – Easter Vigil	Genesis 1:1–2:2 ...	Romas 6:3-11 Matthew 28:1-10
Sunday	5 Apr	SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION • YEAR A – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below</i>		

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ **Weekend, 27/28/29 March** Thirroul Seaside & Arts Festival: Art Show; Kite Day; Festival in the Park
- ✦ **Tuesday, 31 March** 19:00 Chrism Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral
- ✦ **Wednesday, 1 April** 19:30 Spirituality on the Sofa – “Peace in the Holy Land”
- ✦ **Thursday, 2 April** 09:00 Working and Cleaning Bee to prepare for the Easter Triduum

- ✦ **Holy Thursday, 2 April** 📺 19:30 Mass of the Lord’s Supper – 21:50 Night Prayer of the Church
- ✦ **Good Friday, 3 April** 10:30 Way of the Cross  
15:00 Celebration of the Lord’s Passion
- ✦ **Easter Vigil, Sat, 4 April** 📺 19:00 Easter Vigil with the Baptisms of three adults and one infant
- ✦ **Easter Sunday, 5 April** 08:00 Mass of the Resurrection with one infant Baptism

## RESUMPTION OF ‘TELEVISED’ MASSES

From Holy Thursday, the Tuesday and Saturday evening Masses will be recorded and an email sent with a link to watch the Mass. If you would like to be on the list to receive the link, please email the Parish Office – [thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au)

## RESUMPTION OF COMMUNION UNDER BOTH KINDS

From the Easter Triduum, Holy Communion will be offered under both kinds (the Body and Blood of Christ) at all Masses, weekends and weekdays. Communion under both kinds more fully reflects the sign of the Eucharist because it acts as a more explicit representation of the Last Supper and the heavenly banquet. Please continue to be health conscious regarding the Blood of Christ from the chalice. Chalices are washed and cleaned after each Mass.

## PLEASE RETURN PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES OR ENVELOPES

Please return Project Compassion boxes or envelopes AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but no later than **Sunday, 12 April**. *Thank you!*

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

## SPIRITUALITY ON THE SOFA – WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL, 19:30 TO 21:00

“Peace in the Holy Land” is the topic, with the guest speaker live from Jerusalem, Sami El-Yousef, Chief Executive, Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82048350522?pwd=zhfqOuf4tbBCDlCXyHcPzZFgHh3WA.1>

## ROSEMARY NEEDED FOR GOOD FRIDAY – BY THURSDAY, 2 APRIL

On Good Friday, 3 April, during both the Way of the Cross (10:30) and the Liturgy of the Passion (15:00) small strips of rosemary are given to everyone. Please cut the rosemary into strips of about 10cm long and drop them into the church on **Holy Thursday morning, 2 April**.

### THIS Sunday’s Readings – on website

#### PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD’S PASSION ♦ YEAR A

1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Isaiah 50:4-7
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel	Matthew 26:14–27:66

### 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

#### SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION ♦ YEAR A

1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Acts 10:34,37-43
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Colossians 3:1-4
Gospel	Matthew 28:1-10

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

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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	19:30
Friday	15:00
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i>	