

Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
28 / 29 NOVEMBER 2026
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT • YEAR B
VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL BEGINS

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Waiting for Patience

"I want patience and I want it now," or so the joke goes.

Fine.

So remember, the purpose of Advent is to wait. Did you ever stay awake on Christmas eve as a child and sneak into a hiding place in order to see the Christmas tree being decorated? I surely did. I was impatient. We kids also had big felt stockings hung on each of the doors to our rooms and I remember during the night trying to keep an eye open to see Santa or the Good Fairy or at least someone putting the prizes into it.



Did I keep my eyes open all night? No. I woke in the morning to find a bulging stocking, mysteriously full, having arrived by magic. So, I had gone to sleep instead of patiently spying. Patience is not often a virtue of the young.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, the Jesuit poet, has a poem on patience that speaks to this first Advent Sunday.

> Patience, hard thing! the hard thing But to pray, but bid for, patience is! Patience who asks, wants war, wants wounds; weary his times, his tasks; to do without, take tosses, and obey.
>
> Rare patience roots in these and, these away, Nowhere. Natural heart's-ivy, Patience masks Our ruins of wrecked past purpose. There she basks Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves all day.
>
> We hear our hearts grate on themselves; it kills To bruise them dearer. Yet the rebellious wills Of us we do bid God bend to him even so.
>
> And where is he who more and more distils Delicious kindness? —he is patient. Patience fills his crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know.

Patience is difficult because it grows only in adversity, usually. Yet, like ivy it gradually covers the failures of our lives with quiet beauty. (The "purple eyes" are berries.) Our hearts are like stones chafing on each other, bruising themselves dearer (the word "dearer" is used in England to mean "at greater cost.") Yet even so, we ask God to bend our defiant wills to him. Hopkins ends with a comparison of God to the bees who—patiently—fill up honeycombs.

Our most beloved plans and purposes come often to wreckage, just like ancient buildings. But patience resembles beautiful ivy, Hopkins says, gradually spreading its way over the rubble, making it a picture of quiet composure. The phrase, "Purple eyes and seas of liquid leaves," doesn't just remind us of how ivy looks, it bathes us in the luxury, the peace and the relief of such a sight. Hopkins portrays patience as "delicious kindness," a honey that fills the combs of our lives. A gift to us.



God's kindness provides us with comfort and also time to prepare—an allowance of days, weeks, years, and even a lifetime—to get ready, to desire, and gradually, along the way, to receive. With patience. Even though infants demand their every wish be granted right now, our adult humanity is simply too deep to get an instant fill-up.

If there were nothing worth waiting for, then patience would indeed be silly. The birth of Christ into this world and into our hearts is well worth the wait. We know that his birth has happened already—but also, in a surprising way, it has not happened at all. We are still mean to our neighbours. We still hide truth from those who love us. We envy and lust after what is not ours., and there is horrendous evil all around us in this twenty-first century.

We need the birth of Jesus into our hearts, into the world. And so, we bask in Advent patience.

Today we begin the Advent season. 'Advent' as we know means 'The Coming'. Already, when the gospels were written, the first Christians had begun to meditate on the significance of the Saviour's birth: the dawn of the world's salvation. The early Church celebrated Christmas in the depths of Europe's winter – probably because most people had traditions of special festivals at mid-winter. And as the days were beginning to lengthen, Christians were prompted to look forward to the springtime, when they would celebrate Easter, their greatest festival.

The feasts of Easter and Christmas are complementary. At Easter, the principal festival of the Church's year, we celebrate the great act of God – making the Risen Christ the source of the life and blessings that will transform creation into God's final masterpiece. It is not surprising that the Church's meditations on the 'dawn' that was the Saviour's first 'Coming' came to be associated with his 'Second Coming' when he will inaugurate God's final kingdom. Our advent liturgies weave together the themes of these two 'Comings'.

Many of the readings of Advent are from the final chapters of the Book of Isaiah (40-66). These chapters, coming from the time of the Exile, are filled with a renewed hope and confidence in the great future God has promised. Today's magnificent text is typical: 'You are our Father, our Redeemer … tear open the heavens and come down … we are the clay, you are the potter, we are all the work of your hand'.

One of the insistent themes of the prophets of Israel was 'The Day of the Lord', when God was to come to rule the earth. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul affirms the Saviour's sharing in the fullness of divine authority, calling this final day, 'the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'. He tells his people that, in this present time of 'waiting', they should look forward to the Saviour's coming with confidence.

During the coming year, our gospel readings will be from Mark. Today's reading recalls a parable of Jesus, urging constant readiness for his return. We have no way of knowing how the end will come upon us. But the first 'Coming' of the Saviour – as truly one of us, born like us and sharing in what we all experience – makes it clear that we can look forward to the final 'Coming' with confidence.

Advent, from the Latin word '*adventus*', means coming, is a season of longing for God, of preparing our hearts and our world to receive God when he comes. Many of the Advent readings, including today's first reading and psalm, 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 among other things to his friends: 'Many longed to see what you see and never saw it, to hear what you hear and never heard it' (Luke 10:24). Other Advent readings focus on our longing for the final coming of Christ in glory. Still others focus is on the many ways in which Jesus constantly comes into our lives now, and especially through our liturgical celebrations. We are preparing for Christmas, knowing that Jesus will come to each of us and to those we love in an especially intimate way. If we are not to miss his coming we must, as Jesus himself tells us in the Gospel, 'be alert'.

Questions About This Sunday's Scripture Readings

First Reading Isaiah 63:16b-17; 64:1, 3b-8

- "O that you would tear open the heavens and come down. … No ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God but you, who works for those who wait for him." Does this sound like a cry for closeness to God? Is Advent a time for becoming more aware of how close God is to us?
- "You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in our ways!" Is there a veil that keeps you from seeing God's presence at work in your life and in your world? Can you use Advent to lift that veil, to get more in touch with God's presence in and around you"?

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

- St Paul's concern here is to make sure you are ready for life with God after death. Is there life with God before your death? If you feel sometimes that, indeed, "you are … lacking in… spiritual gifts," what could you do during Advent to restart, to recover the goals of your existence?
- St Paul also says that "in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind. … " In what areas could all of us use God's gift to us of knowledge and speech right now?

Gospel Mark 13:33-37

- "He leaves home and puts his slaves in charge." Are we the "slaves" in charge of the preservation of the earth? Do we have any responsibility regarding the climate crisis? What can you do, along with a group? Individually?
- "Keep awake; … or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly." What does Pope Francis propose as a way to rouse ourselves from the slumber of indifference?

> How do we rouse ourselves from the slumber of indifference? With the watchfulness of charity. To awaken us from that slumber of mediocrity and lukewarmness, there is the watchfulness of prayer. To rouse us from that slumber of indifference, there is the watchfulness of charity. Charity is the beating heart of the Christian: just as one cannot live without a heartbeat, so one cannot be a Christian without charity. Some people seem to think that being compassionate, helping and serving others is for losers. Yet these are the only things that win us the victory, since they are already aiming towards the future, the day of the Lord, when all else will pass away and love alone will remain. It is by works of mercy that we draw close to the Lord. This is what we asked for in today's opening prayer:
>
> Grant [us]… the resolve *to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds* at his coming.
>
> The resolve to run forth to meet Christ with good works. Jesus is coming, and the road to meet him is clearly marked: it passes through works of charity.
>
> – Pope Francis, Homily for the First Week of Advent, 29 November 2020

Christmas 2026 at the Parish of Saint Michael, Thirroul

19:30	Tuesday, 15 December	Reconciliation Rite II
18:30	Thursday, 24 December	Christmas Eve Mass in the Parish Church
20:00	Thursday, 24 December	Christmas Night Mass in the Parish Church
09:00	Friday, 25 December	Christmas Day Mass in the Parish Church

DISABLED SURFERS ASSOCIATION – THIRROUL, 5 DECEMBER

The annual Disabled Surfers Association event will take place at **Thirroul Beach South** on Saturday, 5 December, commencing at **08:30 and continuing until 13:00 – VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED**. The Disabled Surfers Association provides an environment for individuals with a disability, the opportunity to experience the freedom of surfing with friends, using up to date equipment to get individuals over the sand and into the water with dignity. The organisation on the South Coast and Illawarra has been established for over 30 Years and prides itself on their achievements and advancements in the area of disability. The organisation operates on a volunteer basis and requires volunteers to provide the necessary numbers to establish the safety requirements, that we as an organisation hold. The event is designed to ensure the safety of all individuals, be they participants or volunteers. The core role is to ensure that the participants have an exciting day on the beach. The organisation does not have any restrictions in relation to the individuals who attend and participate. We strive to ensure that all participants get the opportunity to experience the day at the beach. Age is no barrier to volunteer and there is no requirement to know how to swim – but it does help at times. **Just turn up on Saturday, 5 December at Thirroul South**. https://www.disabledsurfers.org/nsw-south-coast

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2026 – THIS WEEKEND AND NEXT

The Annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal will be held **over the next two weekends**: **28/29 November** and **5/6 December**. **Thank you for your generosity in previous years!** There are **four ways** you will be able to contribute:

(1) take a hamper notice from those displayed in the church and make up a hamper;
(2) take a toy tag from the Giving Tree (for children 0-11);
(3) make a money/cash contribution using the envelopes on the church pews;
(4) use this link to make an online donation – **click HERE** [*check parish website or emails*]

Thank you! Also needed at the moment: tinned vegetables; tinned meals; sweet biscuits; condiments.



PLEASE BRING IN ... ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK
TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA – THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

FIRST COMMUNION 2026 – WEEK 1

Congratulations to these Candidates who will receive First Communion **this weekend**.

This Saturday: Finn Herrero de Haro; Eli Pesa; George Roberts; Aubrey Ryder; Montgomery Ryder; Isaac Pearson; Samuel Zanetti; Oscar Sharples; Henry Stuart-Street; Scarlett Roberts.



This Sunday: Esme Morris; Sienna Davis; Margot Morris.



Congratulations to the Candidates and to their families and friends. Next weekend 5 Candidates on Saturday, 5 Dec and 1 Candidate on Sunday, 6 Dec.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE – RECOGNITION AWARDS

The Catholic Women's Legue of the Diocese of Wollongong recently presented Recognition Awards to members 85 years and over. Congratulations to Thirroul Members: **Margaret Attewell, Betty Gray, Judy McLeod, Shirley Lehane, Rose Kelly, Benice Gray**. Thank you for your dedicated service.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B · Weekdays Year I

Monday	30 Nov	St Andrew, apostle	Romans 10:9-18	Matthew 4:18-22
Tuesday	1 Dec	Tuesday of the 1st Week of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wednesday	2 Dec	Wednesday of the 1st Week of Advent	Isaiah 25:6-10	Matthew 15:29-37
Thursday	3 Dec	St Francis Xavier, priest	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21,24-27
Friday	4 Dec	Friday of the 1st Week of Advent	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
Saturday	5 Dec	Saturday of the 1st Week of Advent	Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26	Matthew 9:35–10:8
Sunday	6 Dec	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT · YEAR B – *Scripture Readings are listed below.*		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS



Friday, 4 December	09:30	Anointing of the Sick during Mass
	10:30	Year 6 Graduation Liturgy with whole school
Saturday, 5 December	09:00	Disabled Surfers Association – volunteers needed
		No experience required: https://www.disabledsurfers.org

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: GREEK LAMB SHANKS WITH WHITE BEANS



2.2 kg lamb shanks; 1.2–1.3 kg cooked white beans, drained; 2 large onions; 1 large leek; 2 carrots; 2 celery stalks; 6 garlic cloves; 500g grated tomatoes; 25g tomato paste; 180ml dry white wine; 70ml olive oil; ~800ml chicken stock; 2 bay leaves; 2 small rosemary sprigs; 5–6 fresh thyme sprigs; 1 heaped tsp dried oregano; Salt and black pepper; zest of ½ lemon.

Finely chop the onions, leek, carrots and celery. Season the lamb with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a large pot. Brown the shanks on all sides, then remove. Add the onions, leek, carrots and celery. Cook gently for 10–12 minutes until softened, without browning. Add the chopped garlic, thyme, rosemary and bay leaves. Make space in the centre, add the tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes. Pour in the wine and let it reduce. Add the tomatoes, oregano, chicken stock and a little salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer. Transfer the sauce to a casserole dish and nestle in the lamb. The liquid should reach roughly halfway up the meat. Cover and cook in a preheated oven at 160°C fan / 175°C conventional for approximately 2½–3 hours, until tender. Stir the cooked beans gently into the sauce around the lamb. Add the lemon zest and a splash of hot water if needed. Cook uncovered for another 25–35 minutes, until the beans absorb the flavour, the sauce thickens and the lamb is golden and falls off the bone. Remove the herb stalks and bay leaves. Rest for 15 minutes before serving.

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.*

THIS Sunday's Readings – *on website*

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR B

1st Reading	Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1,3-8
2nd Reading	1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Gospel	Mark 13:33-37

NEXT Sunday's Readings – *on website*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ YEAR B

1st Reading	Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11
2nd Reading	2 Peter 3:8-14
Gospel	Mark 1:1-8

SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Saturday	17:30
Sunday	08:00

Saturday Mass is recorded.

Parish of St Michael – Thirroul

One of the four Northern Illawarra Parishes
Moving forward as a Parish Family

Patrick Vaughan · *Parish Priest*
Ken Cafe ofm · *Assistant Priest*

Mary Pahulu-Falevai · Parish Secretary
Tues, Thurs 09:00–15:00; Fri 08:30–15:00

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Parish School of St Michael
James Bryce Principal 4267 2560

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

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

Anointing of the Sick 1st Friday