



# Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**26/27 NOVEMBER 2022**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT + YEAR A**

**NOVEMBER: REMEMBERING THE DEAD**

## **THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

The first reading and the gospel talk about a time when the Lord comes, for justice, as the first reading says, and for judgment, as the gospel implies. In the gospel, Jesus warns people not to be overcome with the pleasures and anxieties of the world but to be ready for his coming. Those who are not ready will practically die of fright when they see him. Well, then, what do we need to do to get ready?

The second reading in effect explains it. At Christ's coming again, we are to be blameless in holiness. And what is that?

If you are blameless under law, then no one can blame you for any violation of the law of the land. You weren't speeding, for example, or cheating on your income tax, or violating any other law of the city or country in which you are. If you are morally blameless, then no one can blame you for any violation of the moral law. You weren't lying, for example, or cheating on your spouse, or violating any other command of the universal moral law that applies to all people no matter where they are.

But what is it to be blameless in holiness? The answer is in the second reading: in order to be ready for Christ at his coming, Christians need to increase in love and abound in it.

So, here's the thing to see. You can keep all the laws of your land and still be a real jerk. And the same truth holds for the moral law. You can be a priggishly righteous jerk too. Something more than having a great record for keeping the laws is necessary to be ready for the Lord. That more is love.

If you want what is bad for your neighbour, if you curse them in public or even in your heart, if you wish they would just go away, if you tell them in your thoughts or to their face to go to hell—you do not love them. And you are blameworthy with regard to holiness if you don't. It doesn't matter how moral or legal your conduct is otherwise.

To be blameless in holiness, then, takes being loving. And being loving is what makes us ready for the return of the Lord.

Advent means "Coming". During this season the liturgies encourage us – as we look forward to the Christmas celebration – to reflect upon the mystery of God's coming among us. It is a season of expectation, reminding us that we live in time.

The irresistible march of time has puzzled philosophers since ancient times. We shall learn a great deal about ourselves, if we get in touch with the moods that shape our lives – moods that almost invariably involve the passing of time: our hopes and fears, our yearnings and disappointments, our sense of achievement, the lessons life is teaching us. Our faith should help us to situate this pattern of our lives within the designs of God. Where the march of time is leading us has only become clear, of course, because God has made known to us why the world was created. If God had remained silent, time would seem like an ever-going nowhere. Since Old Testament times, however, God's people have been given a growing awareness God's designs – through the divine gifts of faith and hope. A greater familiarity with the Scriptures – in this time of renewal – can give us a more lively awareness of the unfolding of God's generous plan, and of our place in that plan. An authentic faith is inseparable from a strong Christian hope – the certainty that God's generous and merciful designs will be fulfilled: in the whole of creation, and in the lives of each one of us.

Today's readings remind us of this hope. The writings of the prophet Isaiah are filled with the message of hope. It is not surprising, therefore, that they will be used in the Advent liturgies of the coming Sundays. Today's reading speaks of the future God has in store for the whole human family – as the fulfilment of all our hopes. The nations of the earth will live in harmony – swords will be made into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks. The peoples of the whole world will come to share in the blessings of Israel, knowing the life-giving "ways of the Lord" and "walking in his paths". But the prophet reminds those of us – who, though we claim to be God's people, are often unfaithful to our calling – that we must play our part in God's great plan: "Let us walk in the light of the Lord!"

The whole message of Paul's teaching is the Good News that the intervention of God that determines the whole course of the world's history has taken place in the life, death and triumphant resurrection of the Saviour – summed up in his words, 'You know "the time" has come'. And he gives us a vivid comparison: with the coming of Christ, it is as if the darkest night has suddenly given way to the full light of day, revealing Christ as our life and our protector. In the gospel reading from Matthew, Jesus urges his disciples to situate themselves within the designs of God, because these designs are approaching their mysterious final climax. Christian hope, he teaches us, lives in constant readiness to welcome the Son of Man.

## *Being Blameless*



# QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

## First Reading      Isaiah 2:1-5

- ↪ “Peoples shall come and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord. ... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more.’” Doesn’t “going up to the mountain of the Lord together” require forgiving one another? Can this work on a smaller scale in our own neighbourhood or family?
- ↪ What words come to your mind when you think of “swords” and “spears”? or “ploughshares,” as in this wonderful reading? Do you have the equivalent of swords and spears in your office, parish, or your own life? How does, “They shall beat their swords into ploughshares” relate to you?

## Second Reading      Romans 13:11-14

- ↪ In all the places you live and work is there some dimness that you can brighten with your Christ light?
- ↪ Advent means that we look forward once more to Christ’s coming at Christmas and anticipate his next coming. Does Christ come also every day? How? When?

## Gospel      Matthew 24:37-44

- ↪ Advent is about God coming to us. How can you become more aware of the ways Christ comes to you? Did you find Christ today? Do you ask this of yourself every night?
- ↪ Facing the fight against poverty is a way of “staying awake” and “being prepared,” according to Pope Francis, and as Jesus suggests in the Gospel? How ready are we for this fight?

We cannot live without facing challenges, without responding to challenges. Whoever does not face challenges, whoever does not take up challenges, is not living. Your willingness and your abilities, combined with the power of the Holy Spirit who abides in each of us from the day of Baptism, allow you to be more than mere spectators, they allow you to be protagonists in contemporary events. Please do not watch life go by from the balcony! Mingle where the challenges are calling you to help carry life and development forward, in the struggle over human dignity, in the fight against poverty, in the battle for values and in the many battles we encounter each day.

– Pope Francis, Vespers with Atheneum Students, Saturday, 30 November 2013

## BOOK OF THE DEAD

Next to the altar, the **Book of the Dead** is displayed. **Please check if your deceased relative or friend is listed in the Book of the Dead** – 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 the Dead**, 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 the Dead**, and put the form(s) in the basket next to the baptism font, and the name(s) will be added after November. A special violet candle will be lit during every Mass in 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) *May they rest in peace.*

## FIRST COMMUNION THIS WEEKEND – CONGRATULATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS to ASHER DEVEZA, ALEX ZAMUNER, TEO TAYLOR, MIA BROWN, NOAH FURTNER, JOANNA LA PALOMBARA, JAXSON CAVANOUGH, CORAL ZAMUNER, and MAX BROWN who receive First Communion on Saturday at the 5:30pm Mass, and to OLIVER WESTON, CALLUM RUTLEDGE, ELLIOT O'BRIEN and FELIZ NATTO who receive First Communion on Sunday during the 8am Mass: **congratulations to you and your families.**



There are thirty (30) Candidates for First Communion this year. **Please remember them and their families before the Lord.** The other Candidates will receive the Body of Christ for the first time at weekend Masses as follows: **9** Candidates on

Saturday, 3 December; **4** on Sunday, 4 December; **1** on Sunday, 11 December; **1** on Saturday, 7 January; and **2** on Sunday, 5 February. On **Wednesday, 14 December**, Mass will be at **9:30am** instead of 9am, and the Candidates from our Parish School will be present, as most, by then, will have received First Communion. *All parishioners are welcome to attend that Mass and celebrate with our young parishioners.*



# VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Help families survive the cost-of-living crisis this Christmas. Your generosity can provide urgent relief for a family who is doing it tough this Christmas and give them a better future. As usual, there will be the annual **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** – for **cash donations**, for **toys**, for **hampers**. The Appeal is being launched this weekend, the **First Sunday of Advent**. The **Vinnies Christmas Appeal** involves cash donations (or credit/debit cards) along with the preparation of **hampers** and **'Giving Tree' gifts** for distribution in our local area. The **Appeal** is on this weekend and next weekend. **Hampers** and **gifts** will need to be **returned by the weekend of 10-11 December** for distribution before Christmas. Thank you in anticipation of your continuing generosity. You can make donations online up until 31 December – click on this link: <https://my.fundraise.vinniesnsw.org.au/fundraise-your-way/vinnies-thirroul-christmas-appeal-2022?tab=updates>



## YOUR GIFT COULD CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES

- ✓ **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 12 years)
- ✓ **Donation Envelopes** – available in the church as well as **online** donations
- ✓ **Donations Online** – give to our local Vinnies Conference **online** by clicking **HERE**
- ✓ **Donations of Christmas Items** – *Christmas cakes, puddings, long-life custard, tinned ham, biscuits, lollies, soft drinks, lollies, tinned vegetables, chips, jelly, baby formula, nappies* – **no cigarette or alcohol products please.**



**ONE CHRISTMAS ITEM [see above] PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass**

## BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

All-loving God, we praise you for the light of creation: the sun, the moon, the stars of night, the oceans and the land. We praise you for shepherding your people, Israel, through the Law, the prophets and the Scriptures. We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your justice and love. *[The tree lights are turned on now]*



Nurturing God, let your blessing come upon us as we light this tree. May the light and happiness it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts. May the poor, the oppressed, the rejected, and all people find delight in you, and come to the knowledge and joy of salvation. May the gifts we place under this tree be of help to the poor. All glory and praise to you, heavenly Father: we thank you for sending us your Son Jesus to be our brother. Amen.

Bless us as we gather here, and bless our Christmas Tree. Let the lights remind us of Jesus, who came to be the light of the world, and to save us from sin and slavery. Father, we love you, and we praise you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

- ✦ Weekend, 26/27 November: First Sunday of Advent **with Blessing of the Christmas Tree**  
VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL begins and continues 3/4 December
- ✦ Friday, 2 December: Anointing of the Sick during 9:30am Mass
- ✦ Weekend, 3/4 December: Vinnies Christmas Appeal continues
- ✦ Monday, 5 December: Year 6 Graduation Liturgy, 7:00pm
- ✦ Friday, 9 December: End of Year School Mass, 9:30am
- ✦ Weekend, 10/11 December: Blessing of the Christmas Crib
- ✦ Tuesday, 13 December: 7:30pm Reconciliation Rite II
- ✦ Wednesday, 14 December: 9:30am Mass with First Communion class



## CHRISTMAS EVE MASS IN OUR PARISH SCHOOL

Christmas Eve Mass will be in our **Parish School grounds** at **6:30pm** on **Saturday, 24 December**. Children are involved in the readings and “walk-on non-talking” parts, e.g., carrying up candles, the bread and wine etc. If you would like your daughter or son to be involved, please email the Parish Office [thirroul@dow.org.au](mailto:thirroul@dow.org.au) giving name, phone number and “job” they would prefer to do. Also, singers are needed to help lead the singing ... anyone from five years to 105 years are welcome! Also, adult parishioners are needed as **“Safety Officers / Ushers”** [16 years or older] at the 6:30pm Mass – you don’t have to be on the usual Safety Officers Roster. Please contact the Parish Office by **5 December** about children being involved, or about being a “Safety Officer”. Thank you.

Other Christmas Masses are: **Christmas Eve 9:30pm** at **Thirroul** and **Christmas Day 9:00am** at **Thirroul**.

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Monday	28 Nov	Monday of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 4:2-6	Matthew 8:5-11
Tuesday	29 Nov	Tuesday of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wednesday	30 Nov	St Andrew, apostle	<b>Romans 10:9-18</b>	<b>Matthew 4:18-22</b>
Thursday	1 Dec	Thursday of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent	Isaiah 26:1-6	Matthew 7:21,24-27
Friday	2 Dec	Friday of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Week of Advent 9:30am Mass with <b>Anointing of the Sick</b> ... Years 2 and 4 attending Mass	Isaiah 29:17-24	Matthew 9:27-31
Saturday	3 Dec	St Francis Xavier, priest	Isaiah 30:19-21,23-26	Matthew 9:35-10:1,6-8
Sunday	4 Dec	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, Year A - <i>Scripture Readings see below</i> Candidates receive First Communion – 9 on Saturday, 4 on Sunday		

### THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Lemon Slice ... *There's a theme starting here!*

1¼ cups plain flour; 1 tsp vanilla; 1¼ cups rolled oats; 1 tin condensed milk; ½ tsp salt; ½ tsp carb soda; 1 tbs lemon zest; ½ cup raw sugar; ⅓ cup lemon juice; ½ cup brown sugar; 2 large egg yolks.

Pre-heat the oven to 160°C. Grease a tray. Mix flour, oats, salt and bicarbonate. Stir in sugar. Melt butter, add vanilla and mix into dry ingredients. Press half mixture into tray. Bake for 15 minutes. Whisk together condensed milk, egg yolks, lemon zest and juice. Pour over cooked crumb base. Sprinkle remaining crumbs on top. Bake for 20–25 minutes. Slice into squares when slightly cooled. Enjoy! 😊

**Do you have a favourite CHRISTMAS RECIPE to share from around the world? Please email the Parish Office.**

**ONE NON-PERISHABLE ITEM PER FAMILY EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA: drop items in the special white plastic bin if you come to Mass**

*Always needed are:* **cuppa noodles; toothpaste; tooth brushes; soap; shampoo; conditioner; toilet paper.**

**MASS COUNT WEEKEND #3** A Diocesan-wide Mass count concludes this weekend – results next weekend.

### SWIM BETWEEN THE FLAGS

Already, since 1 July 2022, surf lifesavers have performed **415** rescues [*last week 338*], and **1,405** first aids [*last week, 1,245*]. Please be safe on our beaches and waterways.

### THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW by Fr Michael Fallon MSC

[continued next week]

Of all the four gospels, the gospel of Matthew was the one most used and most quoted in the early centuries of the church. While each gospel has its own beauty and its own power, there is something quite special about Matthew that may account for its early popularity. This is the way Matthew presents the teaching of Jesus. This gives us many insights into the mind and heart of Jesus, and also into what it means to be Jesus' disciple. Matthew's gospel was particularly attractive as a handbook for instruction. The focus throughout the gospel of Matthew is on Jesus, and Matthew's most persistent theme is that Jesus is the fulfilment of the hopes and the spirituality of Judaism. The most likely hypothesis is that the author was a Jewish Christian who saw being a disciple of Jesus as the only way to be faithful to his Jewish tradition. He had to face the fact that Jesus had been rejected by the religious leaders of Judaism, and that only a minority of Jews had joined the community of Jesus' disciples. We find in Matthew similar tensions to those which we find in Paul, who confronts his brother and sister Jews while passionately longing for them to accept Jesus. We also find a similar commitment to the universality of the church, reaching out to embrace all.

#### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

<b>FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT • Year A</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Isaiah 2:1-5
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Romans 13:11-14
Gospel	Matthew 24:37-44

#### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

<b>SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT • Year A</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Isaiah 11:1-10
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Romans 15:4-9
Gospel	Matthew 3:1-12

#### SUNDAY

##### MASS TIMES

Saturday	5:30pm
Sunday	8:00am
📺 Saturday Mass recorded	

#### 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*

**Lauren Faulks • Parish Secretary**  
**Tues, Wed 9am-3:30pm; Fri 9:30am-2:30pm**

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

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Parish School of St Michael

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#### WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	📺 5:30pm
Wednesday	9:00am
Thursday	9:00am
Friday	9:30am
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i>	