



## Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



**PARISH BULLETIN**  
**2 / 3 MARCH 2024**  
**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT + YEAR B**  
**PRAYER - FASTING - ALMS GIVING**

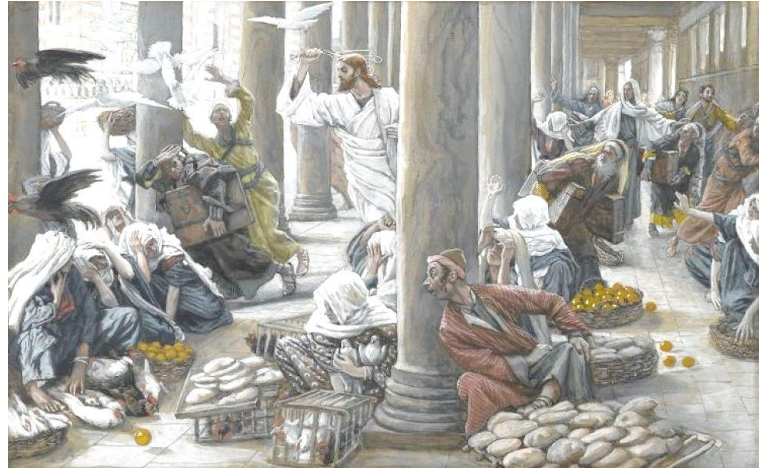
### **THIS WEEK'S READINGS**

### *Why So Upset?*

The Gospel for this Third Sunday of Lent gives us a shocking picture of Jesus. Our gentle saviour has turned violent. He erupts as he sees merchants vend oxen, sheep and doves in the temple, sees moneychangers doing base commerce in God's house.

Not only is this unlike the Jesus we know, but doesn't his reaction itself violate the holy temple? These tradespeople were selling animals because living creatures were needed for burnt offerings. People had to buy them somewhere. And they had to get their money changed, since so many of them came from lands with different currencies. Sounds quite reasonable doesn't it?

Not to Jesus. He yells, "you are desecrating my Father's house!" He grabs some cords, yanking them into a knot, and whips the vendors. Whips them! Quite a terrible sight. He heaves the carefully sorted coins into an unholy mess on the floor and finishes up by hurtling the tables into this chaos he has created.



How in the world does such fury coincide with the quiet, humble Jesus we will see in Holy Week? There he will barely say a word, even though his enemies will be violating the Father's holiest temple of all, Jesus' very self.

What is going on here?

Some external reasons for his vehemence are evident.

Vendors were allowed only in the courtyard of the temple, not inside where they now had established themselves. And perhaps the dishonest practices of outdoor marketplaces had stolen their way into the temple. The thumb on the scale, the inflated prices, all of that.

There is another, internal reason which is much more important. Jesus knew with blessed certainty what human beings were created to be. We are made to be filled with God's presence, to be beloved by God personally and to love God in return. We are most ourselves when we are not entrapped by riches honour and pride. We are designed to "let go and let God." Jesus must have been overwhelmed when he saw merchants winking at these Godly values, preferring cold cash and cheating for it at the dead centre of sacred space. Everything was upside down.

Why did he react so very differently during Holy Week? Why was he silent then? Because by then Jesus had come to understand the depths of his mission: not just to do social action—that's what the temple scene was—not just to cure the people miraculously, not to preach from the hillsides. He saw that he must become one with our death as well as our life, must unite with us in the terrible hurts we get from each other. Only then could he show how very close God is.

Wrath for sure can be an understandable and just reaction to selfishness and greed. The merchants were seeking short-term profit at the expense of freedom, holiness, truth, and completion of the human spirit. Worse, they were foisting all this upon the people Jesus had come to save. No wonder he hurled himself against these blind money grubbers. His emotion was real and quite impressive. But by contrast, on the cross he would empty himself out. He would surrender everything, including his fury, a surrender that would cancel out the grubbing of the money changers.

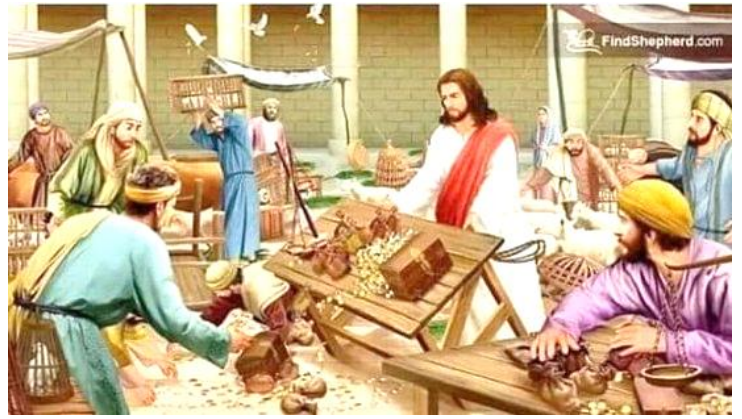
The dramatic intervention, whereby Jesus drove the merchants and money changers from the Temple, may well have triggered the events which led to his death. As the gospel of Luke puts it, Jesus – knowing that his end was drawing near – 'resolutely looked toward Jerusalem' (9:51). It is in the holy city that he must meet the fate that was becoming inevitable. For all faithful Israelites, the journey to Jerusalem was a journey to the Temple. How old Israel loved the Temple! It was the place of God's presence. Their faith in that presence was so vivid, that to take part in the Temple worship was 'to see the face of God', as the Psalms put it.

The prophets of Israel sometimes performed gestures that had a lesson for the people. What Jesus did – disrupting the normal proceedings of the Temple precincts – was more than a lesson in reverence. It pointed to the new order of things he was to inaugurate. True worship was only darkly foreshadowed in the old Temple's ceremonial. In John's gospel, we remember, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that true worship will not be tied to some particular sanctuary; it will be worship 'in spirit and truth' (4:24). Now he promises a 'sign' to confirm his prophetic gesture: 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up'. When he had risen from the dead, his disciples recognised that 'he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body'.



✠✠ The first reading from Exodus, proclaiming the commandments which were an essential part of the covenant God made with his people in the desert, matches the gospel in today's liturgy, because it calls us to a worship that is authentic – through the renunciation of the false securities we are tempted to put in the place of God.

With Jesus leading us, we look towards what lies at the end of our journey. The reading from the letter to the Corinthians points to the Cross, the astounding inauguration of the new order of things which will take place at the end of the Saviour's journey to the Holy City. In this new order of things, we can all worship the Father 'in spirit and in truth': through the Paschal Mystery – our sharing in the life and worship of the Risen Lord. We are able to share in his gift of himself to the Father, as he becomes for us 'the power and the wisdom of God'. In the drama of the Cross, 'God's foolishness' is to prove 'wiser than human wisdom'; and 'God's weakness' is shown to be 'stronger than human strength'.



The word religion comes from the Latin '*ligo*' meaning to bind, and '*re*' meaning again. When things are falling apart, religion is that which binds everything back together again. Religion is meant to bring all our feelings, all our hopes, all our memories, all our longings, and bind them all together, making sense of them and directing them to the deepest purpose of our life. We are made to live in communion with God 'in whom we live and move and have our being'. We are made by love to experience love, to receive it and give it. We lose our bearings, we sin, we wander, and religion is there to get us back on track, back in touch with our hearts. True religion is not about conformity to some rigid set of rules imposed on us from the outside. No. True religion respects our unique mystery, while putting us in touch with reality at its most profound. It calls on our depths and binds them to the mysterious depths of God.

Religion, for Jesus, was not about the correct weights and measures, and tithes and sizes of goats and lambs and doves – the clutter of the temple. True religion is about love. More than that God wants to celebrate an unconditional and life-long commitment of love with us. In the Hebrew and Christian tradition, to love is to honour a commitment faithfully. Love is something you do. *'I was hungry and you gave me to eat'. 'This is my body which is given for you'.*

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

### First Reading Exodus 20:1-17

- ✠ If there were ten commandments, why would Jesus say that there were only two? Why is love—love God and love your neighbour—the basis of all the others?
- ✠ Why do you think the Ten Commandments have survived all the way from the time of Moses? Is there more in each one than we ordinarily see? For instance, could respect for life be extrapolated from "Thou shalt not kill." Try some others.

### Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

- ✠ After Jesus drives out the money changers in the Gospel, the people ask: "What sign can you show us for doing this?" What did Paul proclaim as the sign and the wisdom for those who are called? Without faith would you recognize a vulnerable, rejected Christ as the wisdom of God?
- ✠ To what do the "foolishness" and "weakness" of God refer? St Paul says the Jews had a problem accepting Christ crucified. What about you: how do you accept him? And what about the crosses in your own life? Are they "stumbling blocks" or stepping stones for you?

### Gospel John 2:13-25

- ✠ "And to those who sold doves he said, take these out of here." If we take the "marketplace" out of our Church, what could we put in its place? Classes and homilies that help us love God? Activities that spread that love to others? Feed the hungry, pass living wage bills, fix climate change, end racial bias?
- ✠ Jesus doesn't want our hearts to be places of turmoil, disorder and confusion. What does Pope Francis say needs to be cleansed from them? With the help of Jesus, how do we do that?

In the Gospel reading we have just heard (John 2:13-25), we see how Jesus drove out from the Temple in Jerusalem the moneychangers and all the buyers and sellers. Why did Jesus do something this forceful and provocative? He did it because the Father sent him to cleanse the temple: not only the Temple of stone, but above all the temple of our heart. Jesus could not tolerate his Father's house becoming a marketplace (cf. John 2:13-25). ....

Our heart must be cleansed, put in order and purified. Of what? Of the falsehoods that stain it, from hypocritical duplicity. ... We need the baneful temptations of power and money to be swept from our hearts and from the Church. To cleanse our hearts, we need to dirty our hands, to feel accountable and not to simply look on while our brothers and sisters are suffering. How do we purify our hearts? By our own efforts, we cannot; we need Jesus. He has the power to conquer our evils, to heal our diseases, to rebuild the temple of our heart.

– Pope Francis, *in Iraq*, Third Sunday of Lent, Year B, 7 March 2021



Samoa may be a country surrounded by water, but access to clean drinking water is scarce in some areas, with many families facing extreme hardship as a result.

**Leaia** lives with her five children, husband, brother and sister-in-law on the island of Upolu in Samoa. Not having access to a reliable source of clean water caused Leaia a lot of worry.

Their home is not connected to a piped water system, so they had to rely solely on rainwater collected in old fridges. When their water ran out, Leaia had to walk with her young children to collect water in buckets and containers from a neighbour down the street.

With the support of Caritas Australia's local partner, Caritas Samoa, a water tank was installed at Leaia's home. She and her family now have a steady supply of clean drinking water at home. Next year, they will also have a toilet built, with the support of Caritas Samoa, which will further improve their health and living conditions.

"We are very thankful and grateful for the water tank. It has helped us so much and made our daily life easier," Leaia said.

### **Please donate to Project Compassion.**

Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow *for all future generations*.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your parish, by visiting [caritas.org.au/project-compassion](https://caritas.org.au/project-compassion) or by calling 1800 024 413.



**Scan this with your phone to donate to Project Compassion**

## FIRST LENTEN SERMON: JESUS IS BOTH WORD AND SACRAMENT

Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, the Preacher of the Papal Household, delivers his first Lenten homily to the Roman Curia. "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." In his first sermon for Lent 2024, Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa meditated on these words of Jesus from John's Gospel. The Cardinal, a Capuchin Franciscan friar, delivered his homily on Friday, 23 February to the Papal Household. Although he normally attends Cantalamessa's homilies, Pope Francis - who is currently taking his Lenten retreat - was not present.

"I am the bread of life". Where, Cardinal Cantalamessa asked, can we find this bread? The Italian friar identified two places: the Eucharist and Holy Scripture. In ancient times, he said, the Church recognised Jesus' presence in both the Sacrament and the Word. It was only later, in the West, that Christians became divided: "On the Catholic side, the Eucharistic interpretation had ended up becoming preponderant ... Luther, in reaction, stated the opposite, that is, that the bread of life is the word of God." What is needed, therefore, Cardinal Cantalamessa suggested, is a return "to the original synthesis between Word and Sacrament". This, he said, might be facilitated by the "ecumenical climate" that has flourished in recent decades. Cardinal Cantalamessa also noted that, although Scripture and Sacrament are sometimes held in contrast in theology, they have always coexisted "peacefully" in the liturgy; since the very early days of the Church, the Mass has included both the Word and the Eucharist.

The grain of wheat. We must, however, Cardinal Cantalamessa said, ask ourselves "a simple question: How did he, Jesus, become the bread of life for us?" The answer, the Cardinal said, is found in Jesus' words later on in the Book of John: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." Thus, he explained, it is not enough to receive the bread of life; we must also allow ourselves to be transformed by it. This means accepting suffering, embracing it as "a means of sanctification and not of hardening of the heart, hatred, and complaint."

Embracing suffering. Cardinal Cantalamessa then went on to offer two concrete ways that we might live this attitude out. "One opportunity," he said, "is to accept being contradicted, to give up justifying oneself, and to always want to be right." When we do so, he said, we become sanctified in that our "self-love and pride" diminish. Embracing suffering, Cardinal Cantalamessa said, is also important because it leads to communion. He quoted from Saint Augustine, who says that, just as wheat must be threshed, winnowed, ground and baked before it can become a loaf of bread, so too Christians must endure fasting, repentance, and exposure to the fire of the Holy Spirit before they can become united in one body.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year B • Weekdays Year II

Monday	4 Mar	Monday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent	2 Kings 5:1-15	Luke 4:24-30
Tuesday	5 Mar	Tuesday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent	Daniel 3:25,34-43	Matthew 18:21-35
Wednesday	6 Mar	Wednesday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent	Deuteronomy 4:1,5-9	Matthew 5:17-19
Thursday	7 Mar	Thursday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent	Jeremiah 7:23-28	Luke 11:14-23
Friday	8 Mar	Friday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent	Hosea 14:2-10	Mark 12:28-34
Saturday	9 Mar	Saturday of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of Lent	Hosea 5:15-6:6	Luke 18:9-14
Sunday	10 Mar	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR B – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		



## FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 9 March	18:30	Dinner at Club Thirroul after the 17:30 Mass
✦ Weekend, 9/10 March		Blessing of March Wedding Anniversaries and Birthdays
✦ Tuesday, 19 March		Feast of Saint Joseph
	19:30	Reconciliation Rite II for Lent
✦ Tuesday, 26 March	19:00	Chrism Mass at the Cathedral
✦ Thursday, 28 March	19:30	Holy Thursday – Mass of the Lord's Supper
✦ Friday, 29 March	10:30	Good Friday – Way of the Cross
	15:00	Good Friday – Liturgy of the Passion
✦ Saturday, 30 March	19:00	Easter Vigil
✦ Sunday, 31 March	08:00	Easter Sunday – Mass of the Resurrection with Baptism

## SPIRITUALITY ON THE SOFA – 19:30 TO 21:00, WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH

The topic for the next Spirituality on the Sofa is “Let’s talk about the Power of Leadership”. The leaders in conversation will be Ms Paulina Skerman (principal of Santa Sabina College, Sydney) and Bishop Michael Morrissey (Bishop of Geraldton, Western Australia) who will share with us some of their innovative life stories about how they continue to share their wonderful gifts of leadership with members of their respective communities – making such a difference. You can join by **Zoom** <https://catalystforrenewal.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=359ebaf88e3056e765efb6011&id=a59691c4058e-b06e41d5f0>

## CATHOLIC CARE COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKERS

CatholicCare are currently looking for Community Support Workers. Becoming a CatholicCare Community Support Worker will give you a career that you love, whilst providing a valuable connection to people living with a disability or the aged in our Diocese. If you want to find out more about becoming a Community Support Worker go to <https://www.catholiccare.dow.org.au/get-involved/careers/> or call 4227 1122.

## FORMED

❖ ‘Formed’ is FREE for parishioners in the Diocese of Wollongong

Join hundreds of other families around the Diocese of Wollongong in nurturing your faith at home, in your own time and at your own pace? **FORMED.org** is a large Faith Formation Resource library website containing thousands of faith formation documentaries, courses, movies, audio, and books covering all aspects of our Catholic faith. Materials for both adults and children. To register for FORMED, go to [www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org) and sign up as a parishioner.

**PLEASE BRING IN ... ANY NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS EACH WEEK TO HELP THE NEEDY IN THE LOCAL ILLAWARRA AREA.**

### THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR B

1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Exodus 20:1-17
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	1 Corinthians 1:22-25
Gospel	John 2:13-25

### NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR B

1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Ephesians 2:4-10
Gospel	John 3:14-21

### 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

Andrew Granc ofm, Ken Cafe ofm • Assisting

Kerry Fabon • Parish Secretary

Tues, Wed 09:00-15:00; Fri 08:30-15:00

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

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### USUAL WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday	_____
Tuesday	17:30
Wednesday	09:00
Thursday	09:00
Friday	09:30
<i>Anointing of the Sick 1<sup>st</sup> Friday</i>	

