



Welcome to the Parish of Saint Michael Thirroul



PARISH BULLETIN
8 / 9 MARCH 2025
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT · YEAR C
PROJECT COMPASSION – WEEK ONE

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

In Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus has been swept into the wilderness by a voice that had said, "You are my Son the beloved; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22).

These were God's words.

Notice that they are nearly the same as what God had uttered eight hundred years before, as follows:

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1-4).

The voice of God still speaks again to his servant, making it quite clear that Jesus is the chosen one.

God the Father is above all.

Was Jesus surprised to hear this? In some ways, no. He already knew in his deepest soul and all the way outwards how close he was to God. Yet he was simultaneously human, and completely so. Therefore, in another way, he was shocked. He had read and re-read the Isaiah passage above since he was at his mother's knee. Now it all clicked into place.

He was the chosen one.

The human being, Jesus, needed to ponder this stunning message. He had to listen in silence and with an openness so holy that it would seem almost like emptiness.

So, he went to the wilderness.

The devil, for his part, had already known about Jesus, with a dumb and greedy knowledge. He saw that this great servant of God could be used for ulterior motives. From the moment the Jesus-child was born, all this, his strength, his God-like holiness, the fame he would acquire, could become a tool *for subjecting the world to Satan*.

"No point in being empty," the sly tempter said to the hungry Jesus. "Just give a Godly command and this stone will turn into bread." You are God, aren't you? Take whatever you want. Have a great life!

Note to reader: how do you relieve your hunger?

Jesus answered from the Scriptures. "One does not live by bread alone." These words paraphrase Moses' great second speech to the people of Israel:

"Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

The devil, rapacious, scurried on to a second temptation, this time an invitation to glory. Join me, worship me. All the kingdoms of the world will be yours, as they already are mine. (Translation: you can be bigger than this heavenly father of yours.) Jesus answered, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him alone shall you serve" (see Deuteronomy 6:13).

Note to the reader: what do you and I worship and serve—instead of God?

Two temptations had now failed. As we know, "even the devil can quote scripture," so he uses Psalm 91—the part about God commanding angels to guard the beloved one (verses 11 and 12). Just throw yourself off the heights of this temple, the devil suggests smoothly. God's angels will have no choice, they will have to come save you. Take advantage of who you are.

Note to the reader: don't you want to show off your power sometimes?

Jesus again answers from the same book of scripture (Deuteronomy 6:16). "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." The meaning: God the Father is above all. If you think you can bribe him to save you, then you might seem to yourself equal to him! But you aren't.

Note to all people: do we sometimes think we are God?

Instead, imitate the Son of God.

As we begin the journey towards our Easter celebration, today's gospel reading from Luke sets us on our way. For Luke, Jesus' temptations in the wilderness point to the terrible conflict that awaits him at the end of the public life – when 'at his appointed time' the devil returns to frustrate the Saviour's work. In Luke's account, the last temptation takes place in Jerusalem – Jesus' final conflict with the forces of evil will take place in the holy city.

A great realism runs through the biblical story. God's final purposes for the human family and for the whole of creation will only be realised through the Saviour's defeat of the forces of evil. We do not need to be

You Are My Beloved



✠✠ persuaded that evil forces are work in our world – selfish abuse of the freedom given to God’s creatures; but also, the destructiveness caused by the blindness of those who have lost their way in a darkened world. Today’s gospel presents the conflict of Jesus with the forces of evil as a very personal one. Perhaps this presentation is a summary of the teaching in which – drawing on the experience of a life shared with us — Jesus warned his disciples of the temptations that would call them away from their commitment to follow him. They will be tempted to give false gods the place the one true God should have in their lives: creature comforts and possessions; power abused for selfish advantage; a ‘religious’ complacency that presumes on God’s favours without a genuine commitment to the ways of God.



In the gospel accounts, the temptations of Jesus are closely linked with his baptism by John: ‘Filled with Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there’. In the Jordan he showed that he had thrown in his lot with struggling humanity – ‘put to the test in exactly the same way as ourselves, apart from sin’ (Hebrews 4:15). By his example, and finally through the power of his Paschal Mystery, he would make himself the ‘Way’ to the fullness of life for a lost world. Our reading from Paul to the Romans celebrates this triumphant outcome.

As we reflect upon the conversion to which the Church invites us during our Lenten journey, the Lord’s example should be our inspiration. The temptations he faced encourage us to look beyond superficial problems in our lives and characters, and to face up to the root causes of these failings – the false gods that so easily seduce our divided human hearts. Today’s liturgy brings us another valuable lesson. The Word of God is a power for good in the lives of those who know and love the Scriptures. The words of Scripture with which Jesus confounds the tempter come from the book of Deuteronomy. Paul cites this same book (30:14) as he proclaims the Church’s faith in the risen Lord. This book is one of the high points of the Old Testament. In today’s first reading it gives us a summary of Old Testament faith in the God’s faithfulness – a faithfulness that is finally expressed in the Paschal Mystery.

If you are wondering what resolution to take for Lent, take a hint from Jesus and get in touch with your deepest hunger. Make an appointment each day with God and keep that tie, not for saying prayers, but for being in God’s presence. Our greatest Australian lyric poet, James McAuley prays: “‘Incarnate Word, in whom all nature lives, cast flame upon the earth: raise up contemplatives among us, who walk within the fire of ceaseless prayer, impetuous desire. Set pools of silence in this thirsty land: distracted men that sow their hopes in sand will sometimes feel an evanescent sense of questioning, they do not know from whence. Prayer has an influence we cannot mark, it works unseen like radium in the dark’” (from *A Letter to John Dryden*).

QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS SUNDAY’S SCRIPTURE READINGS

First Reading Deuteronomy 26:4-10

- ✠ “We cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and he heard our cry.” In your own faith story do you ever cry out to the Lord?
- ✠ What good things came out of the Israelites’ desert sojourn? Metaphorically speaking, is the wilderness a place to fear or do you find its mysteries compelling?

Second Reading Romans 10:8-13

- ✠ In the small places in which you live your daily life (in the parish, at work, with family or friends), do you ever proclaim the Lord? Would such a proclamation require words? How can the Church or your parish proclaim itself an “island of mercy” in a sea of indifference?
- ✠ Are your actions coloured by the love you have for a person? The word who is “near you, in your mouth and in your heart” is Christ. How often do you remember this? Always? Sometimes? Not often? Would it impact the way you treat everyone if you remembered it often?

Gospel Luke 4:1-13

- ✠ When an athlete starts to get flabby or lethargic, he or she exercises to get back in shape. Is there an analogy here for your spiritual life? How would you use exercise to get in shape spiritually? What would a “flabby” or a lethargic spiritual life look like? How does yours look now?
- ✠ Pope Francis says going to the wilderness helps us hear the voice of God whispering words of love to our hearts. What are some of the “risks” we need to be ready to take as we listen?

To the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: “Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. ...” For faith and charity take hope, which is a small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward. I bless all of you and your Lenten journey.

– Pope Francis, *Through the Desert, God Leads Us to Freedom*, 1 February 2024

PROJECT COMPASSION

This Lent, we're invited to *Unite Against Poverty* with Caritas Australia's Project Compassion. This year is especially significant as we celebrate the Jubilee Year – *a time of renewal and solidarity*.

Project Compassion 2025 shares three stories from around the world. We'll meet **Toefuata'iga** - (*Toy-foo-ab-tab-ing-ab*) a young student from Samoa who faced severe water shortages at her school. Thanks to Caritas Australia and the generosity of supporters like you, her school now has a 10,000 litre water tank, improving access to clean water and allowing teachers to prioritise education



We'll get to know **Lam** from Vietnam. Born with short stature, Lam faced social exclusion and limited employment opportunities. Through the I-SHINE program, Lam completed a course and is now a freelance graphic designer.

And we'll meet **Irene** from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) who faced immense challenges after losing her father to war and raising her children in poverty. With support from Caritas Australia, Irene received vocational training in sewing and farming and can now support her whole family.

Toefuata'iga, a 13-year-old student in Samoa, faced severe challenges and disruptions to her learning due to water scarcity. After Caritas Australia's partner Caritas Samoa installed a 10,000 litre water tank at her school, Toefuata'iga and her classmates saw improved health and more consistent class attendance. Toefuata'iga and her classmates faced frequent early school dismissals and missed lessons due to a lack of clean water. Teachers often had to leave the school to fetch water from nearby homes, adding strain to the staff and local community. The absence of a reliable water source also led to compromised hygiene, increasing the risk of dehydration and waterborne diseases, which affected students' health. Despite being surrounded by water, many Samoans struggle with consistent access to clean drinking water, and resort to relying on rainwater or neighbours who have access to a water pipeline.

Climate change is leading to longer, drier periods. The Samoan Water Authority pipeline frequently needs to be shut down due to natural disasters and maintenance. This new water source enabled the school to maintain regular class schedules, improving both educational outcomes and student health. Attendance and enrolment numbers surged, as parents no longer worried about sending their children to a school without access to clean water. "When we opened our water tank, the parents were really happy, they were over the moon... And now they don't have any problems," shared Principal Ada. "Now we don't need to send the children home early, and we can keep up with our lessons. It's made such a difference." The tank also alleviated financial and logistical burdens on teachers and nearby families, allowing the school community to focus on education rather than the constant struggle for water.

Access to water is about more than convenience. It is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty, and to helping students like Toefuata'iga fulfil her dreams. "I would like to become a good teacher. To teach the children so they will have a brighter future," Toefuata'iga said. Toefuata'iga's school is now in a better position to provide a stable learning environment. However, with the burgeoning impacts of climate change-induced drought, Toefuata'iga and her peers still have concerns about the future of their water supply. With your ongoing support, Caritas Australia continues to provide practical solutions for communities like Toefuata'iga's, ensuring that clean water and education are not just dreams but realities.



PROJECT COMPASSION BOXES OR ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE CHURCH

You can support Project Compassion 2025 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code ... or online at: caritas.org.au/project-compassion ... or by calling: 1800 024 413

LENTEN LITANY OF FASTING AND FEASTING

Fast from judging others;
feast on the Christ indwelling in them.

Fast from emphasis on differences;
feast on the unity of all life.

Fast from apparent darkness;
feast on the reality of light.

Fast from thoughts of illness;
feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute;
feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent;
feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger;
feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism;
feast on optimism.

Fast from worry;
feast on divine order.

Fast from complaining;
feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives;
feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures;
feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility;
feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness;
feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern;
feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety;
feast on eternal Truth.

Fast from discouragement;
feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress;
feast on truths that uplift.

Fast from lethargy;
feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion;
feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken;
feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from shadows of sorrow;
feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossip;
feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm;
feast on prayer that undergirds.

SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS WEEK

Sundays Year C • Weekdays Year I

Monday	10 Mar	Monday of the 1 st Week of Lent	Leviticus 19:1-2,11-18	Matthew 25:31-46
Tuesday	11 Mar	Tuesday of the 1 st Week of Lent 8	Isaiah 55:10-11	Matthew 6:7-15
Wednesday	12 Mar	Wednesday of the 1 st Week of Lent	Jonah 3:1-10	Luke 11:29-32
Thursday	13 Mar	Thursday of the 1 st Week of Lent	Esther 4:17	Matthew 7:7-12
Friday	14 Mar	Friday of the 1 st Week of Lent	Ezekiel 18:21-28	Matthew 5:20-26
Saturday	15 Mar	Saturday of the 1 st Week of Lent	Deuteronomy 26:16-19	Matthew 5:43-48
Sunday	16 Mar	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT • YEAR C – <i>Scripture Readings are listed below.</i>		

FORTHCOMING PARISH EVENTS

✦ Saturday, 9 March	18:30	dinner with other parishioners at Club Thirroul
✦ Wednesday, 12 March	11:00	Catholic Women's League Meeting
✦ Friday, 14 March	09:30	School Opening Mass – all welcome
✦ Friday, 21 March	HARMONY DAY https://nationaltoday.com/harmony-day/	
✦ Saturday, 22 March	17:30	Claudia Smith's ashes will be placed in the Columbarium
✦ Thursday, 27 March	19:15	Baptism Preparation Information for parents

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

THIS WEEK'S RECIPE: Mushroom and Spinach mini Handpies

1 knob of butter; 1 drizzle of olive oil; 1 shallot; 250g mushrooms, sliced; 60g spinach (fresh or frozen); 2 cups cream; salt & pepper; rosemary; 1 pinch of nutmeg; 2 puff pastries; 1 egg.

Melt butter with olive oil in a hot pan. Add chopped shallot, sliced mushrooms and stir for 5 to 10 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, nutmeg and rosemary. Add spinach and stir until cooked. Pour in the cream and reduce for 10 minutes. Refrigerate this preparation for 2 hours. Cut some discs in the puff pastry with a bowl. Put some filling on one side, leaving a border. Fold the disc to form the mini pie. Press the borders to close the pie. Put the pies on a parchment paper on a baking tray. Make some slashes (vents) with a knife on top of the mini pies and brush with a beaten egg. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes at 180°C. Could add cooked chicken, ham or other meat to mixture.

Lent is a time for PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING. Do you have a good "Lenten Recipe" that you would be willing to share with other parishioners? Please email it to the Parish Office AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTION FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH

We all dream about a beautiful, perfect family. But there's no such thing as a perfect family. Every family has its own problems, as well as its tremendous joys. Every member of the family is important because each member is different than the others, each person is unique. But these differences can also cause conflict and painful wounds. And the best medicine to heal the pain of a wounded family is forgiveness. Forgiveness means giving another chance. God does this with us all the time. God's patience is infinite. He forgives us, lifts us up, gives us a new start. Forgiveness always renews the family, making it look forward with hope. Even when there's no possibility of the "happy ending" we'd like, God's grace gives us the strength to forgive, and it brings peace, because it frees us from sadness, and, above all, from resentment. Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

THIS Sunday's Readings – on website

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Deuteronomy 26:4-10
2 nd Reading	Romans 10:8-13
Gospel	Luke 4:1-13

NEXT Sunday's Readings – on website

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT ♦ YEAR C

1 st Reading	Genesis 15:5-12,17-18
2 nd Reading	Philippians 3:17-4:1
Gospel	Luke 9:28-36

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

325 Lawrence Hargrave Drive

PO Box 44 • Thirroul 2515

4268 1910

thirroul@dow.org.au

Parish School of St Michael

4267 2560

THIS WEEK'S LITURGIES

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