

St Joseph's Catholic Parish

Third Sunday of Advent
Year C, 15 December, 2024

Embracing the communities of
Cherbourg, Goomeri, Murgon,
Proston and Wondai



Unity in diversity ... being one in Christ through Baptism!



Advent Wreath Prayer: Week 3

Let us pray,

Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve –
Tuesday, 24 December
4.00pm, Wondai
6.00pm, Goomeri

Christmas Day –
Wednesday, 25 December
8.00am, Murgon
10.30am, Proston

New Year's Day (Mary the Holy Mother of God) –
Wednesday, 1 January
8.00am, Murgon

The **Third Sunday of Advent** is often known as Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday, after the lines which appear in our second reading today, "Rejoice in the Lord always: I shall say it again, rejoice!" This exhortation to joy, while deeply encouraging and inspiring, can often seem to be difficult or impossible to put into

practice. Perhaps there are things in our lives or our world which we cannot rejoice over, and which weigh our hearts down. But joy is, in fact, the natural human condition. God, as a loving Creator, wants us to be happy, both in this world and the next. Let us ask ourselves, "What are the things in my life and heart which may be holding me back from happiness - pride, fear, unforgiveness, envy, ambition, resentment?" Let us open our hearts to Jesus, to come in with his winnowing fan and sweep them all away. (God's Word 2024)

Saint Francis Xavier, Pray for Us!



Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552) was one of the first generation of Jesuits, who knew Saint Ignatius Loyola. Saint Francis Xavier stands out as the "apostle of Asia".

Born in northern Spain, Saint Francis Xavier was educated in that country before he went to continue his studies in Paris, where he met Ignatius, who turned his focus to more spiritual pursuits. After finishing his studies, he spent some time as a teacher and then

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Sunday Mass Times

Murgon		
WEEK	DAY	TIME
every	Sunday	8.00am
Wondai		
every	Saturday	5.00pm
WEEK	DAY	TIME
Proston		
every	Saturday	9.00am
Goomeri		
every	Sunday	6.00pm
Gayndah		
WEEK	DAY	TIME
every	1st, 3rd, 5th Sundays	10.30am
every	2nd, 4th Sundays	9.00am
Cherbourg		
WEEK	DAY	TIME
5	Sunday	4.00pm
Weekday Mass Times		
12 noon, Wednesday, Gayndah		
9.00am, 2nd, 4th Thursdays, School/Parish Mass, Murgon		
9.00am, 1st, 3rd Thursdays, Castra		



Today's readings

Zephaniah 3: 14-18; Philippians 4: 4-7;
Luke 3: 10-18

Response:

Cry out with joy and gladness:
for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! The spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

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later attending to the sick in Venice. In 1537 he was ordained along with Saint Ignatius Loyola.

The new Jesuit order was undergoing approval in Rome in 1539-1540, but the King of Portugal was already asking for missionaries to be commissioned for the evangelisation of the East Indies. Saint Ignatius dispatched Francis Xavier.

Recall your history of the Age of Discovery. When the Turks closed the overland spice route from Asia, Portugal and Spain initially competed to find a maritime route to the Indies. Portugal did so first, inching around Africa until it eventually sailed across the Indian Ocean to India itself. Spain, under Ferdinand and Isabella, engaged a Genoese sailor named Christopher Columbus who thought he could circumnavigate the world and reach the Indies. Unfortunately, he didn't know two continents were blocking the way, which is why he initially thought the West Indies were the East Indies.)

From 1541 until his death in 1552, Saint Francis Xavier traversed huge swaths of Asia and evangelised many peoples. He can justly be called the "Saint Paul" of Asia.

He began in India, arriving in Goa in 1542. Goa became the base of Portuguese (and Francis Xavier's) operations on the Indian subcontinent, a Catholic enclave that remained Portuguese territory until 1961, when it was forcibly annexed by India.

Saint Francis Xavier travelled around the western Indian subcontinent and adjacent islands, including Sri Lanka. As new Jesuits arrived, he left them in charge of communities he established as he moved on. By 1545, he travelled eastward, spreading the Gospel in what today we call Malaysia.

In Malaysia, Saint Francis Xavier met a Japanese who interested him in that island nation and, from 1549-1552 was involved in spreading the Gospel there. The year 1552 found him back in Goa.

Saint Francis Xavier's ultimate dream proved beyond reach. In 1552 he again set sail east, destination China. He never got there. Opposition dogged him and the rigors of the past decade took their toll. As he grew sicker at

sea, his ship landed at what today is called Shangchuan Island, located off the Chinese coast and southwest of present-day Macao and Hong Kong. There, they built a simple hut for the saint, where he died. They brought his body back to Goa, where it remains to this day. He was canonised in 1622. In 1927, he was declared patron of the missions.

The saint's journeys in some ways mirrored the expansion of Portuguese influence in Asia. Unlike South America (Brazil) or Africa (Cape Verde, Guinea, Angola, Mozambique) where the Portuguese eventually established large colonies (staying in Africa into the 1970s), their exploits in Asia were more limited to smaller coastal colonial trading posts (Goa and Macao). Macao would not come under greater Portuguese control until five years after Francis' death, and would remain so until 1999.

In many ways China – whose name 'Zhongguo' means 'Middle Kingdom' – considered itself the most advanced and civilised country in East Asia, with a history going back before the time of Christ. Convinced of its cultural superiority, China in many ways remained closed to external/Western influences, an isolation that in practice lasted until the 19th century when European colonial states and Japan carved up Chinese territory, especially on the coast. Even had death not overtaken him, Saint Francis Xavier likely would have found China his toughest nut to crack: consider that his fellow Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, born the year Francis died and arriving 30 years later in Macao, found the process of getting into and then gaining trust in China long and arduous, taking almost three decades of his life.

Of all the regions of the world, the Church's presence is lightest where the human population is greatest, in south and east Asia. Without defending the current Vatican's 'Ostpolitik' with Communist China, Catholic penetration of that part of the world remains a great field of evangelisation. One can compare the Church's freedom and spread in Taiwan to the mainland, but even on that island, Catholicism has much ground to cover. The Saint Paul



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We pray for those who are sick:
Orlando Dyrit; Rodney Euler.

of Asia recognised what remains true in our day: "The harvest is great, the labourers few." *John Grondelski*



Confirmation 2024

Ashtyn Carlos Magisana

June Mary Colley

Lily-Grace Catherine Bolger

The occasion for the confirmation was a special moment of grace which delighted all who attended. We acknowledge the way the children presented themselves and their diligence with which they attended their classes. May the Gift of the Holy Spirit fortify their lives as they go forward as leaders within their sphere of influence among their families, school communities and beyond, in their future lives. Receiving the Holy Spirit is a key moment that prepares young people to face life's unexpected challenges.