

St Joseph's Catholic Parish

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



Third Sunday of Advent
Year B, 13 December, 2020

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

A Swim by Moonlight

One of the onerous jobs I have had to do was minefield breaching. It is slow and laborious. Laying on your stomach in full combat array, one slowly probes and tests the ground for land mines. We worked in teams of five sappers. Two forward prodding. Then the commander behind, followed by two sappers; one with a mine detector and an assistant to mark the mine if one was found. The pace is slow – about a metre every ten – fifteen minutes.

You lay there flat on your stomach and concentrate on the dirt/rocks immediately in front of you. First, you scan for signs of mines or booby traps. Then with your master you gently feel the ground. Once this is complete, with a prodder you poke the ground slowly and at an angle. Working methodically from left to right.

If something is found, it is marked. Then you slowly check it out for bobby traps, wires or anti-lifting devices. Once the mine is neutralised you continue scanning. If the area is clear you lift yourself on your elbows and pull yourself forward to the edge of the scanned area. To your open side you mark the lane you are clearing. It was not unknown for the mine detector crew to fall asleep as they waited.

Most tactical minefield breaching was conducted at night. This is because mines are considered an obstacle and obstacles are usually covered by fire (machineguns). So one tends to do it at night to minimise being shot while you are trying not to get blown up. In a tactical situation, you don't want the enemy to know that you are clearing the mine field for an attack to establish surprise. So we might spend a week moving through the mines each night so that the infantry could attack through the minefield without blowing up.

We conducted a minefield breach of a 1 RAR position in Shoalwater Bay. The night was miserable. It was the middle of winter and was freezing. Laying on the ground does not engender warmth

and we couldn't wear cold weather gear because we need full movement of our arms. Add to this was a concept which is very foreign to our parish – it was raining. After five hours into the breach six men had been tactically withdrawn because of hypothermia and exposure. The minefield was a bowl and we were almost swimming through the mines. But we continued. It was a good night to breach. It was cold and wet. This meant the sentry watching the minefield would be distracted and miserable – less likely to detect us.

After nine hours of breaching and more evacuations for hypothermia, white light illuminated the whole field. We put our heads down so as not to be seen and to preserve our night vision, but the light was coming from behind us. Our troop commander and the staff sergeant had driven a Landrover up to the minefield and turned their lights on. We were then ordered to stand and walk/swim out of the minefield. So moving down the cleared lanes we evacuated the minefield and jumped on non-tactical trucks and drove away.

Twenty minutes later the trucks stopped. We were drenched and because we had been breaching we had nothing warm to wear and wet weather clothes. But jumping off the trucks with all our equipment we were greeted by our staff-sergeant and a huge non-tactical bonfire. We moved to the fire to dry off and get warm. Quickly tin mugs were passed around with a brew of ten per cent hot coffee and ninety per cent rum. After regaining our senses, we got back on the trucks and returned to the field of rain.

In today's Gospel John proclaims the coming of a light into the world. A light that saves and sustains us on our life's journey. When we accept that light into our world we know that we are saved and loved. Christmas is the time of light and life. This is why we have a midnight Mass. A sense that even in the darkest night there is a light that illuminates our lives and leads us to safety.

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve (Thursday 24 Dec)	Durong, 4.00pm Wondai, 6.00pm Goomeri, 7.00pm Murgon, midnight
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Christmas Day (Friday 25 Dec)	Proston, 9.00am Murgon, 9.00am
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Boxing Day	No Masses
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27 December (Sunday)	Wondai, 8.00am Murgon, 10.00am Goomeri, 6.00pm
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Masses 16 to 20 December

Wondai, Wednesday, 6.00pm
Murgon, Thursday, 6.00pm
Castra, Friday, 9.00am
Proston, Saturday, 8.00am
Wondai, Saturday, 6.00pm
Murgon, Sunday, 8.00am
Durong, Sunday, 10.30am
Goomeri, Sunday, 6.00pm



Today's readings

Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8,19-28

Response:

My souls rejoices in my God.

Gospel Acclamation:

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

Next week: 2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14-16;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Fr Bryan Pipins SJ

Reconciliation

I endeavour to be at the church 30min before Mass. If you speak with me we can arrange another time to suit. The first rite is always available.

A second rite of Reconciliation will be conducted on

13 December, Durong, during Mass
13 December, Goomeri, during Mass
14 December, Proston, 4.00pm
16 December, Wondai, 6.00pm (No Mass)
17 December, Murgon, 6.00pm (No Mass)

Simbang Gabi

Simbang Gabi (Filipino for 'Night Mass') is a devotional nine-day series of Masses – a Christmas novena. The Simbáng Gabi Masses in the Philippines are held daily from December 16-24 and occur at different times ranging from as early as 3.00am to 5.00am. On the last day of the Simbang Gabi, which is Christmas Eve, the service is instead called Misa de Gallo (Spanish for 'Rooster's Mass').

All are welcome and encouraged to celebrate with us. Our Simbang Gabi will begin on **16 December at 6.00am** in Saint Joseph's Murgon. The timing is for safety; we don't want to invite the local kangaroos. After Mass we will have a shared breakfast.

Saint Flannan – 18th December

Ireland and Scotland both honour Saint Flannan. He was educated by monks, stayed close to nature, made a pilgrimage to Rome, was appointed bishop, wandered about preaching, and worked miracles. All that makes him a classic Celtic saint.

The son of Turlough, a Celtic chieftain, Flannan was educated by a monk who also taught him farming. His biographer says he learned how to "till, sow, harvest, grind, winnow, and bake for the monks." Against the advice of relatives, Flannan decided to undertake a pilgrimage by sea to Rome. Following the lore of other saints in Celtic literature, legend says that he floated miraculously to Rome on a stone. There the pope consecrated him as the first bishop of Killaloe.

Flannan led his diocese by travelling about teaching and preaching. His charismatic eloquence even persuaded his elderly father to become a monk under Saint Colman. When Turlough asked Colman to bless his family, the abbot predicted that seven of his descendants would be kings. Fearing that kingship might fall on him, Flannan prayed for a physical deformity that might prevent it. His biography says that his face became disfigured with scars and rashes.

As bishop, Flannan sometimes forcefully intervened to pacify petty clan wars. Once he had negotiated a truce between two chiefs, which one of them broke a year later by invading and destroying the other's land. Flannan addressed the robber chief in the following no-nonsense fashion: "What, falsest of men, do you intend to do? Why have you deceitfully broken faith? Turn back! Repent!"

The faithless chief bent obstinately on plunder replied: "If the fleetness of my horse enables me to outstrip you I will neither wait for you nor obey you." So Flannan cursed the horse and it died. Then he said: "Most perfidious prince, because you have violated your promise and have trampled on all laws, human and divine, none of your family shall survive you".

The saint's curse terrified the robber-prince, who flung himself at the feet of Saint Flannan and begged pardon. The saint did not deny to the robber-chief the pardon he always extended to expressed sorrow for an offense and promise of amendment. But this pardon given to himself personally did not satisfy him. He was uneasy because of the utterance of the saint against his posterity. Weeping and bowed down, he addressed Saint Flannan thus: "My father, you have often preached that all crimes are forgiven through repentance. I beg you not to have my family become extinct with me. Take back the prophecy pronounced against my children and descendants. And I promise to pay you a yearly tribute and to devote myself and mine to your service and that of your successors for ever".

In the spirit of forgiveness and mercy, the saint blessed the children so that they should not suffer for their father's sins. But he did so on condition that they should observe the promise of their father. The exact date of Flannan's death is not known, but it probably fell in the last quarter of the seventh century.



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DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

Norm Walker, 12
Br Tim Beencke fms, 13
Matthew Guteridge, 15
Rosemary Braithwaite, 21
Judith McGreevy, 22
Earl Pratt, 23
Helen Leyland, 24
Br Mick Hanley, 26
Shirley Hickey, 27
Joan Cooley, 28
Nell Guteridge, 29
Ronan Sullivan, 29

Wedding Anniversaries

Margaret and Denis Hobbs, 14

Ordination Anniversaries

Fr Michael Carroll, 13

Death Anniversaries

Brian Kemp, 6
Wilma Mooney, 14
James English, 24
Jim English, 24
Nora Reilly, 25
Anne Duff, 30

Collection for 6/12/2020

Loose..... \$266.00
Planned Giving..... \$318.20
Total..... \$584.20

We pray for those who are sick:

Cathy Carter; Gaye Hobbs;
Dianne Pour; Earl Pratt; Lee Seargent.