

St Joseph's Catholic Parish

The Nativity of the Lord
Year B, 24/25 December, 2020

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



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

Queensland Flu

Twelve months ago on Christmas Eve we had to delay the beginning of the Mass at Durong, because the rain was so heavy we couldn't hear ourselves. The rain didn't last and there was nothing in it. Since then we had rain in February, October and now in December again. The rain wasn't drought breaking, but has given us a promise for the future. With luck the wet in SE Queensland and the North will filter some rain to us. We can only hope and pray for the blessing of life-giving rain.

When we gathered last Christmas we had never heard of COVID-19 and could never have guessed at the impact of this disease has had on us. The lockdown denied us our faith gathering at the most important time of the year – Easter. Speak with our parishioners (especially the elderly) the loss of Holy Week was a significant blow to our morale and gave us a deep sense of loss. From reading the government statements for China, who would have thought that cattle from the South Burnett would have inflicted such a blow on the people of China and then the world. We were supremely lucky that the People's Republic acted so quickly to prevent an even larger outbreak. Maybe after the WHO report and the support of the Chinese government, it will be called the 'Queensland Flu'. I think early reports that the outbreak was caused by coal from the Bowen Basin or Moreton Bay Bugs have been dismissed after a full scientific government enquiry in China.

The rain over the last few weeks has eased the uncertainty we were facing for 2021. As we enjoy this gift of life from the heavens, our thoughts and prayers can turn back to where they should be over Christmas. This is the time to celebrate family and the love which nurtures us. In the Holy Family, a baby was born and nurtured that would change the whole of creation. The Creator entering into creation as one of us. In the birth of Jesus, we see the promise that He will return to complete the fulfilment of God's love.

I pray that each member of our parish may have a joyful and loving Christmas.

May your families be kept safe and embraced by the Love of God.

Fr Bryan Pipins SJ

Saint Thomas Becket – 29th December

Patron Saint of Roman Catholic Secular Clergy

A strong man who wavered for a moment, but then learned one cannot come to terms with evil, and so became a strong churchman, a martyr, and a saint—that was Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, murdered in his cathedral on December 29, 1170.

His career had been a stormy one. While archdeacon of Canterbury, he was made chancellor of England at the age of 36 by his friend King Henry II. When Henry felt it advantageous to make his chancellor the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas gave him fair warning: he might not accept all of Henry's intrusions into Church affairs. Nevertheless, in 1162 he was made archbishop, resigned his chancellorship, and reformed his whole way of life!

Troubles began. Henry insisted upon usurping Church rights. At one time, supposing some conciliatory action possible, Thomas came close to compromise. He momentarily approved the Constitutions of Clarendon, which would have denied the clergy the right of trial by a Church court and prevented them from making direct appeal to Rome. But Thomas rejected the Constitutions, fled to France for safety, and remained in exile for seven years. When he returned to England he suspected it would mean certain death. Because Thomas refused to remit censures he had placed upon bishops favoured by the king, Henry cried out in a rage, "Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest!" Four knights, taking his words as his wish, slew Thomas in the Canterbury cathedral.

Thomas Becket remains a hero-saint down to our own times.

A Visitor is God's Presence Amongst Us

We welcome and thank Fr Damien Ellis for his time with us. Damien is a priest from the Wollongong diocese. For the last ten years, he has served as a chaplain to the Australian Army. He has just completed his service to the Army and is returning to his diocese to take up a new parish. With his last military posting being in Townsville, he is transiting through our parish. Damien has graciously offered to celebrate some of our Christmas Masses. This has allowed us to adjust the Mass times so they are more convenient for you.

Masses Times – this week

Sunday, 27 December

Wondai, Sunday, 8.00am
Murgon, Sunday, 10.00am
Goomeri, Sunday, 6.00pm

Saturday, 2 January

Proston, Saturday, 9.00am
Wondai, Saturday, 5.00pm

Sunday, 3 January

Murgon, Sunday, 8.00am
Goomeri, Sunday, 6.00pm

Today's readings

Isaiah 52: 7-10; Hebrews 1: 1-6;
John 1: 1-18

Response:

All the ends of the earth have seen
the saving power of God.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! A holy day has dawned
upon us. Come, you nations and adore
the Lord. Today a great light has come
upon the earth. Alleluia!

Next Sunday: Isaiah, 60:1-6;
Paul 3: 2-3, 5-6; Matthew 2: 1-12

St Joseph's Catholic Parish

The Epiphany of the Lord
Year B, 3 January, 2021

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



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

Timings are a Changing

When I was a kid there was a constant in our lives. This was my sister's cat, Cocoa. This ginger cat arrived at our home as a kitten, a week after my sister came home from the hospital. Living to the age of 21, in all the turmoil of our family life, this cat was a constant.

My parents distrusted insurance sales men. My father was stung in a credit squeeze early in my parents marriage. So instead of a life insurance policy my parents bought a block of land at Waratah Bay. This beach block became our holiday destination of choice. Each Boxing Day we would visit my mother's family and then on the 27 December, we would take off to the 'Block' for three weeks. While we were away our neighbours would check the house and fed the pets.

My sister's cat quickly identified the pattern. We would put the Christmas tree up and then a few days later disappear. This meant the cat had to sleep outside. It also meant only being fed once a day, no scraps to eat and no cuddles. Being a fiendish cat (or is this a tautology? Aren't all cats fiendish?), the cat came to the conclusion the key to his desertion was the tree. If there was no Christmas tree we couldn't go away. Hence each year he would attack the tree trying to bring it down and prevent his desertion.

But change is part of life and just as he had to put up with change, so do we. It is sad that after so many years we are losing Sandy and Ted Pederson. On medical advice, they are moving to Toowoomba and away from our parish. Our parish will be the less with their moving out of the South Burnett. Both of them have been active in the parish for more years that many can remember. From their time with us the parish has been enriched by their gifts and loving kindness. We will miss them and wish them the best as they journey south.

Please join us after the 8.00am Mass at Murgon on the 10 January 2021 to farewell them with a morning tea.

Fr Bryan Pipins SJ

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys – 12th January

Marguerite had survived many threats in the 26 years she had been in the wilderness of Canada. She had lived through Iroquois attacks, a fire that destroyed her small village, plagues on the ships that she took back and forth to France, but nothing threatened her dreams and hopes more than what her own bishop said to her in 1679. He told her that she and the teaching sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame had to join with a cloistered religious order of Ursulines. This was not the first time she'd heard this command. Whether from a misplaced desire to protect her Sisters or from discomfort in dealing with an active religious order of women, bishops had long wanted to fit her into the usual mould of cloistered orders. But Marguerite had overcome many challenges to get to this day and was not deterred. In her own native France, she had belonged to a sodality of women who cared for the sick.

The stories of hardships and dangers in Montreal that made other people shiver had awakened a call from God in her to serve the Native Americans and settlers who endured this adversity. She met with the governor of what was then called Ville Marie and convinced him she was the person he was looking for to help start a school for the children of Montreal.

When she arrived in Ville Marie, as it was called then, she found that few children survived to school age. She helped the remarkable Jeanne Mance, who ran the hospital, to change this tragedy. When she finally had children to teach, she had to set up school in a stable.

So she was not ready to surrender to the bishop. There was too much at stake. She reminded him that the Ursulines because they were cloistered could not go out and teach, as her Sisters had done. The poor and uneducated would not and could not travel to a Quebec cloister over miles of frontier at the risk of their lives.

But her Sisters were more than willing to live in huts in order to fulfil their call from God. She had set up schools all over the territory, not just for children. When the king, in well-meaning ignorance, had sent untrained orphans over to be colonists she had set up a school for the women to teach them how to survive and thrive in Canada.

How could they do the work for God that they had done so well, in a cloister?

The bishop replied, "I cannot doubt, Mother Bourgeoys, that you will succeed in moving heaven and earth as you have moved me!" The Congregation remained an active teaching order, one of the very first of its kind for women. Their rule had to go through one more attempt at turning them into a cloister but Marguerite lived to see the triumph when their Rule was made official in 1698. She was canonized in 1982 by Pope John Paul II.

We pray for the recently deceased:
Trevor Hoult.

Masses Times – this week

Saturday, 9 January

Proston, 9.00am
Wondai, 5.00pm

Sunday, 10 January

Murgon, 8.00am
Durong, 10.30am
Goomeri, 6.00pm

Today's readings

Isaiah, 60:1-6; Paul 3: 2-3, 5-6;
Matthew 2: 1-12

Response:

Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

Next Sunday: Isaiah 55:1-11;
Saint John 5:1-9; Mark 1: 7-11