

St Joseph's Catholic Parish

The Baptism of the Lord
Year A, 11 January, 2026

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



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



Matthew 3: 13-17

Spiritual writers interpret Jesus' incursion in the water for John's baptism as his way of being in solidarity with sinners. Pope Francis comments, "The Messiah asks to be baptised so that all righteousness be fulfilled, that God's design which passes through filial obedience and solidarity with fragile and sinful mankind, be fulfilled. It is the path of humility and of God's complete closeness to his children".

It is not the waters of the Jordan that cleanse Jesus; it is Jesus who makes the waters holy by immersing himself in it.

At the Jordan River, Jesus stands shoulder to shoulder with people who greatly desire to be cleansed interiorly. He is in their midst to present them to the heavenly Father as his brothers and sisters who sincerely want to obey and love God, yet at the same time disappoint God by falling back into sin.

A voice from heaven is then heard: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased". To whom is this addressed?

If to John the Baptist – and through him, to the people – then it is God's proclamation, a divine assurance that indeed Jesus is the sinless one, God's own beloved Son. If to Jesus as in the version in Mark (1:11), it serves as God's approval of Jesus' choice to be in solidarity with sinners. After all, he has come among people, not to call those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent (Luke 5:32).

(God's Word 2026)

Listening to Country

It is important to spend the time discerning the motives behind decisions.

I was reflecting on the notion of sliding door moments in my own life as I sat at a small table in the garden, enjoying my coffee and looking out across the farm, absorbing the brief snatches of sunshine on what had been a mostly cloudy day. I was in the company of the family's two faithful collies, who were curled up in a sunny spot at my feet. The air was filled with the delightful sounds of the crows, corellas and magpies. As my mind wandered, my eyes following the shapeshifting clouds tracking across the sky, this theme of sliding door moments kept rising and receding. As I was sitting there, smiling with delight as I caught sight of two eagles soaring high on the thermals, a favourite memory drifted into view, reminding me that sometimes these sliding door moments bring enormous blessings.

The simple joy of the moment affirmed that this memory was most certainly the story I would share.

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Weekend Mass schedule

3rd Sunday of Month - 17/18 January

Thursday, 9.00am, Castra, Murgon
Saturday, 9.00am, Proston
Saturday, 5.00pm, Wondai
Sunday, 8.00am, Murgon
Sunday, 10.30am, Gayndah

4th Sunday of Month - 24/25 January

Saturday, 9.00am, Proston
(Liturgy of the Word)
Saturday, 5.00pm, Wondai
Sunday, 8.00am, Murgon
Sunday, 10.30am, Gayndah
Sunday, 2.30pm, Mundubbera
Sunday, 6.00pm, Goomeri

1st Sunday of Month - 31 Jan / 1 February

Thursday, 9.00am, Castra, Murgon
Saturday, 9.00am, Proston
Saturday, 5.00pm, Wondai
Sunday, 8.00am, Murgon
Sunday, 10.30am, Gayndah

2nd Sunday of Month - 7/8 February

Saturday, 9.00am, Proston
(Liturgy of the Word)
Saturday, 5.00pm, Wondai
Sunday, 8.00am, Murgon
Sunday, 10.30am, Cherbourg
Sunday, 2.30pm, Mundubbera
Sunday, 6.00pm, Goomeri

Christmas readings

Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7; Acts 10: 34-38;
Matthew 3: 13-17

Response:

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Alleluia!

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Almost eight years ago, I had responded to a 'call into service' to join a not-for-profit board. This was a volunteer role for an early childhood early intervention service. The invitation came via a local Indigenous organisation, seeking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members interested in supporting their service and working in the local Aboriginal early childhood services. As a former early childhood service director with a passion for additional needs, this piqued my interest, so I sent an email which was followed by several phone conversations. The service sounded amazing, and the people were all passionate about what they were part of; I was keen to join this team.

From obstacles to stepping stones . . .

Of course, there were the usual checks before this could happen and then a meeting with everyone in person – easy, right? But it turned out that a rather significant piece of my identification documentation had gone missing. After an extensive but unsuccessful search, days and then weeks passed and still nothing. Even our favourite saint seemed to be struggling with this task. I missed the deadline for attending the next meeting and I experienced a sinking feeling this was not going to happen; I accepted that perhaps it was not meant to be.

However, as suddenly as things can disappear, they can reappear: the documents had been safely in the custody of another family member all along, and I was left deciding if there was something more to this. Should I go through with the application? Was I genuinely listening to Spirit and Country or my own ego in my desire to take up this invitation? Was I doing this in service to others or self-service? The questions were piling up and I was feeling thoroughly conflicted when the words of my former spiritual director caught me by surprise, with a call for deep reflection and discernment.

Fork in the road

At this point my decision could have gone either way; if I had decided to walk away, I would have been none the wiser to the depth of my loss.

In the end I accepted the opportunity to attend a meeting and see where it led. If I'm honest, I initially felt well out of my depth. However, the people who sat around the table, along with the issues being discussed, affirmed I had made the right decision.

Sitting at the first few meetings, I could never have imagined the great joy and struggles this role would bring and the friendships that would be forged through playgroup visits and the adversity of a pandemic and funding cuts. For me, the role has always been about service, to serve other's needs, community and Mob. I reflect too that this ethos of service was influenced by my parents, who both volunteered for roles within our schools, parishes and communities. It was a gift to be shared.

For seven years I had the pleasure of serving on the board, as a committee member, then vice chair and finally as the chair. My decision to finish up also saw a time of discernment to make sure it was the right time and for the right reason, which was even harder than the first.

Joy of chocolates

One of the simple joys I incorporated into my role was to regularly deliver a bag full of chocolates for the team to share when COVID-19 hit. I did so to ensure that the staff knew how much they were valued and supported. This became a favourite activity of mine, and it wasn't long before I realised that all the staff knew Jenn as the board member who delivered chocolates. By the time I took on the role of chair, it seemed all the staff knew me by name – such is the power of chocolate.

Fittingly when I left, I was presented with the most delightful selection of chocolates from the staff along with a volunteer award. My time had been given in the service of these great people doing such an amazing job working within the restrictions of



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We pray for those who are sick:

Graham Burgess; Mary Davitt; Rodney Euler; Colin Heit; Nerla Knight; John Kruger; Dr Graham McAllister; Carmel McKeering; Bob Ricketts; Joshua Smith; Kai Vera.

the NDIS scheme, creating the best possible outcomes for our Indigenous children and families, and I genuinely felt I had fulfilled my desire to serve others. I was overwhelmed when I opened the thank you card and saw page after page filled with messages of thanks and love. A friend had noted that I had 'made my mark', yet for me this was never my desire. I had simply joined the board to serve others.

Ironically since my departure new doors have opened for me because of relationships that were established over those years. My time of service has become an ongoing gift that continues to bring change within community. So sometimes we do get to see the ripples of such moments of decision.

Dr Jenn is a Gamilaraay woman with a passion for empowering Aboriginal people and communities through Indigenous ways of knowing and being. She holds a bachelor of theology and a PhD in Aboriginal studies.

(Australian Catholics)

Collections Christmas/New Year

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| 12 December | \$1,014.75 |
| 25 December | \$729.05 |
| 28 December | \$555.00 |
| 4 January | \$829.35 |
| Total: | \$3,128.15 |