

SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)
17TH AUGUST 2014
ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH STANTHORPE

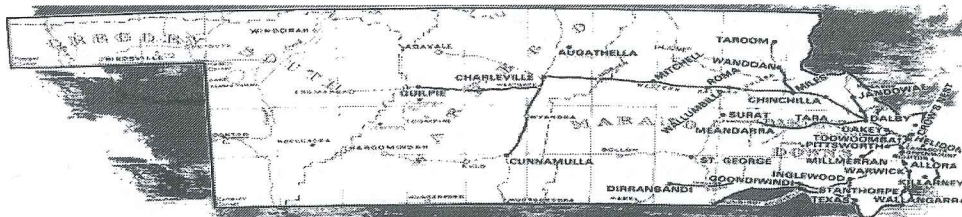
PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Brian Connolly Ph. 46812157 Fax 4681 4107
RETIRED PRIEST: Fr. Lino Valente Ph. 4681 3653
RETIRED SISTER OF MERCY: Sr. Esther Dowling Ph. 4681 2137
PARISH EMAIL: stjosephsparish@halenet.com.au
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: Mr. Michael McCarthy
TELEPHONE & FAX NUMBERS: Ph. 4681 5900 Fax 4681 5909



THE FUTURE NEEDS OF OUR DIOCESE AND PARISHES

On 8th July 2014, the Priests of the Diocese met with the Bishop at the James Byrne Centre at Highfields to discuss possible pastoral strategies for the Diocese and Parishes given the situation, which is common in most Dioceses of Australia, with the continuing decline in the number of Priests in active ministry in Parishes and the ageing of the clergy. For many years we have been aware of this and have been trying to plan for a future with fewer Priests in our Diocese, while at the same time praying for and actively encouraging vocations to the Priesthood for our Diocese.

The Diocese of Toowoomba is geographically huge – stretching from Helidon and Killarney in the east, along the New South Wales border as far west as the South Australian and Northern Territory borders in the Parishes of Cunnamulla and Quilpie and bordering the Rockhampton Diocese in the Parishes of Taroom and Wandoan, Roma and Injune, Charleville and Augathella. We now have only six Priests under the age of sixty-five and every few years more of our Priests over the age of sixty-five years and still in full time ministry are retiring. We do have



valuable assistance from Priests who are not incardinated in our Diocese, namely Fr. Thomas Areekuzhy (Parish Priest of Oakey, Pittsworth and Millmerran), who belongs to a Religious Congregation in Kerala, India and has worked in our Diocese for over twenty years; Fr. Sean Lynskey an Irish Holy Spirit Father who is the Administrator of Inglewood; Fr. Oliver Ryan, an Irish Diocesan Priest who is Hospital Chaplain in Toowoomba; and recently three Priests from the Philippines who belong to a new Association of Priests called PACEM.

It is too simplistic and unrealistic to expect that the Diocese can fly in a dozen or more foreign Priests to make up for the increasing shortfall. While some foreign Priests do adapt well to ministry in Australia, many do not. There can be many problems and challenges in finding and accepting Priests from overseas. Some of those problems are cultural, language and the difficulty of accent and being understood, a very different vision of Church, attitude to women, to say nothing of obtaining entry permits and visas to work in Australia for a limited time. The Vatican has also cautioned countries like Australia and the United

States not to poach on countries and Dioceses where they may seem to have many Priests, but the needs of those Dioceses are much greater than our own. It can be very selfish on our part just to expect Priests from another country and culture to come and work in Australia. Some might want to come for economic reasons – we are affluent compared to many of these third world and developing nations – but there are dangers if that is the main motive. All of this is just telling us what has been the experience of many Dioceses, ours included. We can and do receive limited help from Priests from other countries, but it is not a solution to the shortage of Priests.

There have been and continue to be many situations where Priests from other countries and cultures and a Church which is different to our Church in Australia have not proved “helpful” or “successful” from a practical and pastoral point of view. Our Bishop Robert McGuckin has himself had much experience in this from his many years as Vicar General of the Diocese of Parramatta. He is open to some Priests from Overseas, but is understandably very cautious to ensure that it will be beneficial for both the Priest himself and the Diocese, should he seek to increase the number of overseas Priest working in our Diocese.

All this leads to all of us, as parishioners, being realistic in our expectations of the Priests we already have who are working full time in our Parishes. Sometimes those who have little connection with their Parish can be even more demanding in their expectations than the regular parishioners. No Parish, because of its numerical or geographical situation can necessarily expect that it will always have a full time Priest.

In the years to come, it may not always be possible for a Priest to be available for a Funeral Mass and sometimes there may need to be Funerals which are led by a parishioner who has been trained for this ministry. There will need to be some groups of parishioners who provide the Ministry of Consolation (assisting families to prepare for a funeral), Baptism preparation (assisting parents to prepare for the Baptism of a child). Many Parishes already have these ministries (Funerals and Baptisms) operating with the involvement of parishioners who have been trained for these ministries. Many Parishes do not always have a Priest for Mass on Sunday, but on those Sundays the parishioners continue to faithfully gather as a community for prayer and worship with a lay led Liturgy of The Word and Holy Communion. These are all matters which we need to be aware of – they are the reality today in so many Parishes. The involvement of the laity in many of these ministries is to be welcomed and encouraged – it is a new way of being Church with fewer Priests and is to be viewed in a positive light, provided not too much is expected of the “few willing parishioners”. We are looking at a Church in the future in which there is more opportunity for formation and training of the laity to contribute to the everyday needs, practical and ministry, of each Parish.



The Parish Pastoral Councils have been requested by the Bishop to discuss the future direction of our Diocese and Parishes, given the situation of fewer Priests. We should also include in the discussion the even more challenging question – the future direction with fewer active parishioners! Fewer involved and active parishioners in a Parish could be a greater challenge than the decreasing number of Priests!

Parishioners are asked to reflect on all these matters that have been raised,

discuss them, pray about them and, if you feel inclined, respond in whatever way you wish (preferably in writing) so that your views can be considered along with those of the Parish Council. These matters will be discussed again at the next Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 9th September, and we will be making a response to Bishop McGuckin - and the Council of Priests and the Diocese by 19th September 2014.

Thank you for your interest in these important matters for the future of our Parishes and Diocese.

Fr. Brian

THIS WEEKEND:

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION

The First Communion children will receive a special blessing at Mass this weekend. Next Sunday at the 8.30AM Mass sixteen of seventeen children will receive their First Holy Communion. Families and parishioners are invited to a cuppa in the Parish Hospitality Centre after the Mass and the cutting of a First Communion Cake. This will not be a lengthy gathering as families will be returning to their homes for their own family celebrations.

PRACTICE AND PENANCE

There will be a **practice and celebration of the Sacrament of Penance** for the **First Communion Children** at **3.30PM** on **this Monday afternoon** in St. Joseph's Church.

Thank you to the parents for supporting your children, bringing them to Mass, the instruction sessions and the practice and the Sacrament of Penance this Monday. Thank you to Sandra Kay, Cherie Yates and Selina Venier for their generous efforts as the Catechists of the children.

DECEASED: George Brac (Brisbane: Son-In-Law of Maria Brandrett), Celide Bau, Silvano Zorzi, Lorraine McQualter, Ron Lawson, Andrena Gianini

TO REMEMBER: Luigi Gasparin, Lino Marini, Charlie Torrisi, Charlie Morello

FOR THE SICK: Norm Wren, Cathy Sullivan, Linda Vinciguerra, Stella Bayley, Alyssa Coxen, Debra Micallef, Margaret Ballinger, Ev Hayes, Rosemary Paget, Marie Keen, Bridey Kelly, Enid McCarthy

FR. LINO'S DIAMOND JUBILEE DVD: A non-professional DVD is available on Fr. Lino's Jubilee Mass and Luncheon. DVDs are being made in Toowoomba. Cost \$20. Please place your name and number of copies on the sheet in the foyer. Numbers to be finalised this weekend.

PREPARING CHILDREN FOR THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

There will be a **Parent Night** at **6PM tonight (Sunday)** at **St. Joseph's School Library and Administration Centre** for the parents who wish to prepare their children for the Sacrament of Penance on Monday 15th September. These children can be prepared next year for the Sacrament of Confirmation and their first Holy Communion. There are twenty families who have responded to the letters that were sent out to the parents of children in Year 3 at our St. Joseph's School and various State Schools in the Parish. Older children are also welcome. If you know of children who may be eligible, and who have not been contacted (maybe a grandchild) please inform the parents as a matter of urgency of the need to attend the Parent Night tonight (Sunday 17th August) to be included in this year's program which begins this coming week.

THIS WEEK:

MASSSES: MON: 7AM; TUES: 7AM; 9.30AM MASS & ANOINTING OF THE SICK AT VILLA CARRAMAR; WED: 11.45AM; THURS: 9:15AM; FRI: 5.30PM; SAT: 7AM; VIGIL: 6.30PM; SUN: 8.30AM

FEAST DAYS: WED: *ST. BERNARD*; THURS: *ST. PIUS X*; FRI: *THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY*

GRANITE BELT CHAPLAINCY FUNDRAISING DINNER with special guest Mayor Paul Pisasale, Ipswich, **this Wednesday 20th August at Happy Valley Retreat. 6.30PM for 7PM.** \$50 per person. Luxurious three course dinner. Luck door prizes, raffles and charity auction. Contact Happy Valley 4681 1370 or drop into Pink Poppies for bookings.

NEXT SUNDAY:

HYMNS & HARMONIES: The next Musical afternoon is at the **Stanthorpe Baptist Church on Sunday 24th August at 2PM**, followed by afternoon tea. The venue for November will be St. Joseph's.

COMING UP:

A MASS IN HONOUR OF ST. PIUS X will be celebrated by *Fr. Luigi Sabbadin* at Marian Valley on **Saturday 30th August at 11AM.** Please Note **own private transport necessary.** For further information please contact Dino Raccanello on 4683 2200.

UNA S. MESSA AD HONORE DI S. PIO X verra' celebrate dal missionario *P. Luigi Sabbadin* at Marian Valley **Sabato 30 Agosto alle ore 11AM.** **E' necessario provvedere il proprio trasporto.** Per ulteriori informazioni contattare Dino Raccanello sul numero 4683 2200.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM will be celebrated during the 8.30AM Mass on **Sunday 14th and 28th September.**

TRIP TO MARIAN VALLEY CANUNGRA for FEAST OF ST. PADRE PIO: **Sunday 28th Sept.** Cost \$32. The Bus departs from the Civic Centre at 6.15AM. Payment required when booking. Please contact Nalda Sciuto on 4681 3014. No refund after Sunday 21st September.

NOTICES: LITURGY ROSTERS: Are there any changes for the new Readers and Ministers of Communion Rosters due out 13/14 September. Please contact the Parish Office early this week of any changes.

NEW ALTAR SERVERS: The children who are receiving their first Holy Communion next Sunday are being invited to discuss with their parents the possibility of now becoming Altar Servers at St. Joseph's. Letters of invitation will be given to parents so they can encourage their child to consider becoming an Altar Server. If any child or young person who has already made their first Communion would also like to become an Altar server, their parents are invited to collect a form at the Parish Office or in the foyer. **Please return forms to the Parish Office by Friday 29th August, 2014.**

THANK YOU: **Linda Vinciguerra** wishes to thank everyone for their prayers during her recent illness. She is back home after 2½ months in hospital.