



Augustine & Monica



Gifts Abound



*Christmas is the feast of the divine explosion,
the love of God revealed in the poverty of Christ.*

With all the materialistic pressures involved in Christmas today we can easily think of it as a period of hectic preparation, a day of celebration and a brief aftermath.

We can forget that it is more than a feast. It is a season.

And like all seasons, its essence is a cycle of preparation, achievement and then the incorporation of what has been achieved into the larger season of which it is a part, the season of our life. (John Main, *The Present Christ*)



*In preparation for Christmas,
Individual Reconciliation will be available at
St Monica's Thursday 22 December 9.30am after 9.00am Mass
St Augustine's Friday 16 December 8.30am after 8.00am Mass
St Monica's Tuesday 20 December 5.30pm after 5.00pm Mass*

Christmas Mass Times

*Christmas Eve
Saturday 24 Dec*

*St Monica's
Tugun 6.00pm
(Carols before Mass)*

*St Augustine's
Coolangatta 9.00pm
(with the feel of midnight)
(Carols before Mass)*

*Christmas Day
Sunday 25 Dec*

*St Monica's
Tugun 6.45am
(Carols before Mass)*

*St Augustine's
Coolangatta 8.00am
(Carols before Mass)*

*St Monica's
Tugun 9.30am
(Carols before Mass)*

*The Sacrament of
Reconciliation
is
available every
SATURDAY 11.00am
St Monica's*

Feedback



Fr John comments

During my annual holidays this year, I visited Western Australia for the first time. This is the only state in Australia I had not yet been to and I had long wanted to visit since my father had been there in World War II. Mum and Dad had been married in late 1942 and dad was already in the Australian Army. He was stationed at Geraldton in Western Australia and came home to marry Mum, riding in his army truck on the back of a train from Geraldton to Melbourne. After a five-day honeymoon in Port Fairy Victoria, he was then shipped off to New Guinea for the remainder of the war. So this was my motivation to see the West.

Along with two friends, I arrived at Central Station Sydney on a Wednesday in July; the train was to leave at 3pm. The Indian Pacific had 20 carriages and was just over 5,000m long. This apparently was a relatively short train as the usual length was well over 7,000m. We were to arrive in Perth at 3pm on the Saturday afternoon. The distance to Perth was 4,352 kilometres and the average speed of the train was 85 km/hr.

Our first stop was at 6am the following morning at Broken Hill. Speaking to my fellow passengers, we soon discovered that no one had slept much that first night as the train tracks through New South Wales were the roughest I've ever experienced. It was 2° when we got out at Broken Hill; we were offered a choice of places to see. I chose to visit Pro Hart's Gallery on the outskirts of Broken Hill which was a wonderful experience. Amongst his many artworks and sculptures in the gallery, outside there were four luxury cars, a Bentley and three Rolls Royces. One of the Rolls Royces had been completely painted with outback scenes.

That afternoon the train stopped north of Adelaide and we boarded a bus which took us to the Barossa Valley. We visited Seppeltsfield Winery, the oldest in the Barossa and which was established in the 1830s. Then we went on to Maggie Beer's pheasant farm where we

enjoyed a cooking demonstration and a delightful three course meal. Then on to Adelaide, and boarded the train again and left at 9:30pm.

Friday was spent crossing the Nullarbor Plain. Emus, kangaroos, rabbits, eagles and other native birds, along with the salt brush and short trees were our view for most of that day. That night we stopped at Rawlena, the largest sheep station in the country, where we dined in style by the railway tracks with entertainment provided by the singer/entertainer who travelled with us on the train. We arrived in Perth on Saturday afternoon.

The next five days were spent sightseeing around Perth, Fremantle and the Swan Valley, north of Perth. On Sunday we boarded a bus which took us down to Fremantle via Cottesloe. Fremantle reminded me of a mediaeval English town with its relatively narrow streets, street dining and the fact that pedestrians seem to have as much right as cars along the narrow streets. A visit and a tasting at the Little Creatures Brewery was a highlight. We returned to Perth with an hour-long boat trip up the Swan River. Of course, Fremantle had been the scene of the 1983 America's Cup victory and the Royal Perth yacht club was one of the features we saw.

We spent a day at New Norcia, the Benedictine town founded in 1847. The Josephite sisters and the Marist brothers had taught there from the early 1900s until the late 1970s. The last Josephite principal was Sister Irene McCormack who in 1991 was martyred in Peru. The hotel owned by the Benedictines, as is the entire town, looks like a building out of Downton Abbey. The local brew called Abbey Ale was 7% strength – a nice drop. The museum was rich in history and mid-afternoon we celebrated afternoon prayer with the 14 monks at the monastery. The last day we spent travelling around the Swan Valley visiting the local wineries. We had lunch at Houghton's Winery, the oldest in Western Australia, and enjoyed one of their best reds with our lunch. The next day we flew home to Brisbane with my appetite whetted to visit again!

I wish everyone the blessings of the Christmas season and safe and happy Christmas holidays.

90th Anniversary Celebrations





In Search of Bernadette - by Bernadette Duffy

Serene and beautiful, Saint Bernadette lies in her casket of glass and gold. She is dressed in the habit of her convent showing only her face and her folded hands holding the Rosary. She is still relatively protected from the multitudes who visit Lourdes. It was her wish to live a life of seclusion in the convent at Nevers. From there the wordless yet confronting eloquence of her incorrupt form calls to every heart capable of admitting the Truth. Something miraculous happened to Saint Bernadette and continues to attract our attention. She has been dead over 150 years and yet there, she lies peacefully in the bloom of her thirty-five year old youth...as if she just now fell asleep.

When Gerard and I arrived at her convent in Nevers I was both excited and afraid to see her. We had overnight accommodation there so we were shown to our room and unpacked. We came downstairs and I asked to see Saint Bernadette. A sister opened the Chapel door for us and directed us to the front and then right. Suddenly there she was, just as I'd seen her on Google! There were only one or two other people in the Chapel. I sat down on a pew in front of her and of all things to do, I cried. Not loudly of course, just very quietly and not really knowing why I would have such a reaction.

I still struggle to understand that. Maybe it was because I was in the presence of a Saint, indeed of my Saint, the one for whom my mother named me, and I was just a sinner. Maybe it was because I was in the presence of the miraculous. Maybe it was because Saint Bernadette lay there so peaceful and beautiful and so eloquent in witnessing to 'the promises of Christ'. Gerard and I sat there and prayed. I said the Rosary, that prayer my Mum loved and I thought too time-consuming. Later that night Gerard and I came down again and we said the Rosary together just Saint Bernadette, Gerard and me.

Now back here at home I find myself drawn to obey the wishes of that wonderful woman who visited Saint Bernadette so long ago and entreated us to say the Rosary. Saint Bernadette priez pour nous!



Pope Francis on families in "Amoris Laetitia" (The Joy of Love)

In our own day, dominated by stress and rapid technological advances, one of the most important tasks of families is to provide an education in hope.

This does not mean preventing children from playing with electronic devices, but rather finding ways to help them develop their critical abilities and not to think that digital speed can apply to everything in life. Postponing desires does not mean denying them but simply deferring their fulfilment. When children or adolescents are not helped to realise that some things have to be waited for, they can become obsessed with satisfying their immediate needs and develop the vice of "wanting it all now". On the other hand, when we are taught to postpone some things until the right moment, we learn self-mastery and detachment from our impulses. When children learn that they have to be responsible for themselves, their self-esteem is enriched. This in turn teaches them to respect the freedom of others.

The family is the primary setting for socialisation, since it is where we first learn to relate to others, to listen and share, to be patient and show respect, to help one another and live as one. The task of education is to make us sense that the world and society are also our home; it trains us to live together in this greater home. In the family we learn closeness,

care and respect for others. We break out of our fatal self-absorption and come to realise that we are living with and alongside others who are worthy of our concern, our kindness and our affection. There is no social bond without this primary, everyday, almost microscopic aspect of living side by side, crossing paths at different times of the day, being concerned about everything that affects us, helping one another with ordinary little things. Every day the family has to come up with new ways of appreciating and acknowledging its members.

The home must continue to be the place where we learn to appreciate the meaning and beauty of the faith, to pray and to serve our neighbour. This begins with baptism, in which, as Saint Augustine said, parents who bring their children (for baptism) "co-operate in the sacred birthing". Thus begins the journey of growth in that new life. Faith is God's gift, received in baptism, and not our own work, yet parents are the means by which God uses for it to grow and develop. Hence "it is beautiful when parents teach their little children to blow a kiss to Jesus or to Our Lady. How much love there is in that! At that moment, the child's heart becomes a place of prayer". To form a family is to be part of God's dream, to choose to dream with God, to join God in this saga of building a world where no one will feel alone. (from paras 275, 276, 287, 321)



A big thank-you to our parish knitters and those from interstate, who so generously gave of their time and talent in keeping the homeless warm through last winter. Donations of beanies, scarves, clothes, blankets and food were also gratefully received.



"Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace, rather than its facilitators.

But the Church is not a toll house: it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems."



Pinocchio: an old story about the Kingdom of God

Once upon a time, there was a kind and gentle wood-carver named Geppetto. He lived alone with his kitten, Figaro, his gold-fish, Cleo and a cricket named Jiminy. He was a lonely man. Loneliness is, at one time or another, an experience in the life of all of us. In his lonely heart, Geppetto had a dream. He longed for a son. God plants in us many dreams to lead us beyond the limits we place on ourselves. God leads us to aspire to a quality of life and peace that the world cannot give.

As the wood-carver dreamt, he also worked to cope with his loneliness and to use to the utmost the talents he had been given. He carved a puppet, which he called Pinocchio. Completing his carving in the late hours, he looked to the evening star, and, as he pondered the beauty and wonder of the Universe, he prayed for life for his puppet. "God hears us whenever we ask, and gives us whatever we need" (1 John 5:15)

Geppetto was blessed with a miracle, which came in the form of a "fairy" who appeared to give life to the puppet. Pinocchio spoke exclaiming, "I am a REAL boy!" But miracles are only beginnings. We need to live them to make them complete. The "fairy" explained that to be real, one must struggle with right and wrong, good and bad. To become real and fully alive, Pinocchio must have a conscience – a small voice to encourage him in good works and to warn him of evil. Jiminy, the cricket, volunteers to be his conscience.

Being aware of his call and the challenge offered to him, Pinocchio collects a bundle of school books, and sets out to gain an education. The path to goodness is a narrow and treacherous one. "My child, if you aspire to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for an ordeal" (Ecclesiasticus 2:1). En route to school, Pinocchio encounters two villains, a fox called Foulfellow and a cat named Gideon. They tempt the eager scholar with tales of fun to be had roaming the streets. Jiminy Cricket warns against it, but his voice is small and soft. Pinocchio gives in to temptation.

Returning at the end of his wanton day, the puppet is asked by Geppetto about his first day at school. Knowing he had disappointed his father, Pinocchio lies to cover his shame. No sooner have the lies been told, than the erring student becomes aware that his nose has grown. Each lie adds inches to his nose. Our deeds are reflected in our features. Beauty and evil are apparent in the human face.

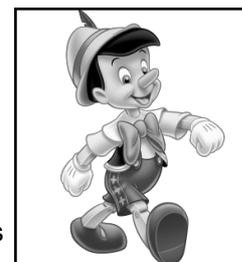
Embarrassed that his guilt is so obvious, Pinocchio runs away. He is met by Foulfellow and Gideon, who are always ready to capitalize on weakness. They offer the puppet a holiday on an island with unlimited worldly pleasures. Despite the small and urgent warning voice of Jiminy Cricket, a day at school has no appeal when compared to such an offer. Who doesn't know the attraction of unlimited worldly pleasures?

Pinocchio finds himself sold for gold but is unperturbed as, with many other boys, he indulges in the food and fun of the island. The pleas of Jiminy Cricket are treated with scorn as Pinocchio enjoys the admiration of his peers. The riches and pleasures of this world will never satisfy the hunger of everyone for good and for God. "You have made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You" (St Augustine).

As the thoughtless boys neglect to nourish their goodness, which is truly human, they become part animal. Donkeys ears and tails begin to grow from their bodies. They are now ripe to be abused by those who lured them to the island. Their captors trap the donkey boys to work in the mines. Pinocchio realises in horror the truth of his plight and he flees with the help of his inclination to good, J.C. Returning home, he realises the hurt his weakness has caused when he finds a letter from Geppetto to say he has left to search for his lost son. Pinocchio and Jiminy Cricket hurry after Geppetto, hoping that no tragedy has befallen them, and they will be forgiven. Alas! Geppetto, Figero and Cleo are trapped in the belly of Monstro, a giant whale.

To free them, a great act of courage is required. Pinocchio allows himself to be swallowed by the whale. Being joyfully reunited with his father, he then builds a fire, which forces the whale to sneeze and the party escapes. During the manoeuvre, Pinocchio is almost drowned. Geppetto, the father who loved and forgave his son, prays for his recovery and his prayers are answered. Not only has Pinocchio recovered, but his added joys are one-hundred fold. His donkey ears and tail have disappeared, his nose has returned to its original size and he is a REAL boy.

Though he had wavered and failed, Pinocchio has come ALIVE in his struggles to save others and in the pursuit of good.



GIVE THE FOLLOWING GIFTS:

To your enemy . . . forgiveness.	To your opponent . . . tolerance.
To a friend . . . your heart.	To a customer . . . service.
To every child . . . a good example .	To yourself . . . respect

- Author Unknown

Education

Adult Faith Education

Adult Faith Education opportunities this year have been vast and varied. In February, the *Evangelisation Brisbane* team under the leadership of Sr Kari Hatherell, presented a series of work-shops entitled 'Forming Liturgical Ministers of Gospel Joy'. These were attended by our own parishioners, as well as parishioners from every other Catholic Parish on the Gold Coast. February also saw the commencement of Lent and several Lenten discussion groups meeting weekly to reflect on and pray about the Lenten gospels. Lenten discussion groups are organised every year so please consider joining one next year.

May 5 saw the inaugural Women's Spirituality Day facilitated by Carole Danby from *Evangelisation Brisbane* and Rina Wintour from our own parish. This was attended by 45 women from Catholic parishes across the Gold Coast and Tweed areas, as well as a number of women from other Christian denominations. The day was so successful that participants requested this 'women's only' day become an annual event. It was from this group of women that a Spirituality Network (women and men) was formed and have continued to meet each month to discuss, pray and reflect on spiritual matters. Some people who have chosen to come along to these gatherings are not currently connected to any particular faith community, but are searching for some meaningful experiences to support their own spiritual journeys.

In October, the Spirituality Network invited Dr Kevin Treston, consultant, educator and author of 60 years experience to speak on 'The Spirituality of Connectedness'. Kevin challenged the 40 participants to consider ways of fostering a spirituality of connectedness, whilst overcoming disconnectedness. He quoted Aboriginal poet, Kevin Gilbert who wrote: ***I am part of every living thing, and every living thing is part of me. We are all created of this sacred earth so everything's our sacred family.***

The Spirituality Network advertises all events through the Parish bulletin and the Deanery newsletter so watch out for next year's events and come along. The final session for this year will be a presentation on the scriptures of Advent and Christmas by Pat Mullins and a ritual focussing on the Advent Wreath.



Introducing our new 'AM' Team Members

My name is **Nicola Hanzic**.

In 1961 my parents and I migrated here from England on a ten-pound passage on the liner *Fairsky*. I remember that when we left Southampton it was a bleak winter's day which was in direct contrast to the warm welcome that we experienced when we arrived in Fremantle almost a month later.

After completing my last year of schooling in Launceston, I moved to Sydney where I attended University. This is the place where I lived and worked as a primary school teacher over the next 40 years. These were good years as I met my husband there and together we raised a family of three children. We were also able to experience the magic of the Olympics, a time when people went out of their way to be friendly and helpful.

After my husband retired we decided to move to the country. Albury was the place we chose as there was so much on offer: ski fields, vineyards, beautiful countryside as well as direct links to both Sydney and Melbourne.

Unfortunately my husband died not too long after we arrived, but I decided to remain there as I had the support of many dear friends.

As the years passed I felt the need for closer family ties. The time had come for me to move yet again, but

this time it was towards the children, big and little. I am slowly settling into my new life where I hope to continue meeting people. I also enjoy travelling, reading and listening to music.

I know that I have been blessed in life and my desire is to bring joy to others in some small way.



My name is **Sharon Cabban**, nee Walker, born in Brisbane. As my grandparents owned a holiday home (still standing in much renovated form in Dutton St) next to St Augustine's from the 1930s, my family has been associated with this parish for over 80 years. After 2 years at All Hallows - all girls - with the Mercy nuns, our family moved to Darwin where I attended the convent - boys and girls - run by the Sacred Heart Missionary nuns. Culture shock! Darwin in the 1950s was a frontier town and we

enjoyed an adventure-book childhood chased by crocodiles, buffalos, snakes, spiders and anything else we happened to provoke.

In the 1960s, we moved to Sydney's Northern Beaches and I attended Stella Maris - all girls - at Manly which was operated by the Good Samaritan nuns. After High School, I attended Sydney University, married Dennis and we had our beautiful daughter, Nikki.

We returned to the Gold Coast in the late 1970s and have lived in Currumbin Waters since 1985 with some absences during the years up to now. We have two fantastic grandchildren, Lani and Nicholas, and two lovable great grand dogs, Trey and Axel, whom our old Samoyed, Kobe, had to lick into shape.

For 30 years, I worked at DSS/ Centrelink assisting people experiencing personal and financial crises in their lives. Dennis and I used to sail off-the-beach catamarans from Currumbin Estuary but have now progressed to a more staid 10m motor/ sailer catamaran moored at Paradise Point.

Currently, I am the secretary for our local conference of St Vincent de Paul and a new member of the AM editorial team. Who knew retirement could be so busy and such fun?

(A warm welcome to the A.M team to both these ladies, from the Editor).



Walking in the garden with God...

This Advent, in all the frenzy of preparation for Christmas, let's spend time waiting on the Holy - using our five senses.

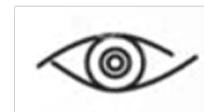


Our sight:

Remember Bartimaeus (Mark 10), of whom Jesus asked, "What do you want of me?" and his reply, which can be our reply "Lord, that I may see!" Let us look around us, use our eyes to sense the presence of God.

Meister Eckhart once said that if he spent enough time with a caterpillar he would never have to prepare a sermon, because a caterpillar is so full of God.

St. Teresa of Avila wrote that in each little thing created by God, there is more than what is understood, even if it is a little ant.



Helen Keller wrote:

'I who am blind would like to give a hint to those who can see. Use your eyes today as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind! Hear the music of voices, the song of birds, the mighty strains of an orchestra as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow. Touch each object you want, as if tomorrow you would lose your sense of touch. Smell the perfume of flowers, taste with relish each morsel, as if tomorrow you would never taste or smell again. Make the most of every sense: glory in all the facets of pleasure and beauty that God reveals to you through nature and people. Of all the senses, sight must be the most delightful!'

Our hearing:

In Mark 7:32, the disciples bring to Jesus a man who is deaf and Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears and spat and touched his tongue and said, 'Be opened' and the man heard and spoke plainly.

Let us be conscious of our ears – what we can hear – birds, insects, water, the wind, the traffic, the sounds of people – listen for new sounds.



Our sense of smell:

Remember Mark 14:3f, the woman who anointed Jesus with the perfumed oil, and incurred the anger of the disciples. Jesus said of her, '...Wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her'.

How many smells can you notice – dampness, rich earth, wet grass, scent of trees, salt of the sea – fumes of cars....Breathe in the Spirit of the Creator and feel God filling us with the Breath of love, of God.



Our sense of touch:

We are creatures of the Creator. We are one with all that is created – NOT apart from the earth, but a part of the earth –

touch the tree trunks – feel their texture – are they hot or cold?
touch the leaves – feel their softness – their toughness..
touch the red damp earth...

In Mark 5:21, the woman who haemorrhaged for 12 years (without synagogue, no marital intercourse, no public appearance, all her money spent on physicians) says, 'If I touch even his garments I will be made well' and Jesus asked, 'Who touched me?'



Our taste:

Enjoying food was important to Jesus:

In John 3 and at other times, Jesus is the bridegroom and the kingdom or realm of God is a marriage feast; Jesus supplies miraculous wine for the marriage feast at Cana in John 2:1-11; The prodigal father calls, 'Let us eat and make merry' (Luke 15:23); The friends come together to celebrate the finding of the lost coin (Luke 15:9); Jesus is described as celebrating like 'a glutton and a drunkard' (Luke 7:34). Throughout the New Testament, Jesus shares food with others, from Zaccheus to Simon, the Pharisee, with women, sinners and lepers, and in his final meal asks us to remember him as present in the breaking and sharing of bread and the sharing of the cup of wine.

Recall the tastes which you most enjoy. Savour the food you eat today.

Let us spend some time, sitting or walking with the silence,

let us hear God walking in the garden with us.



The Son of God became a man to enable men to become the sons of God.

- C.S.Lewis (Mere Christianity)