

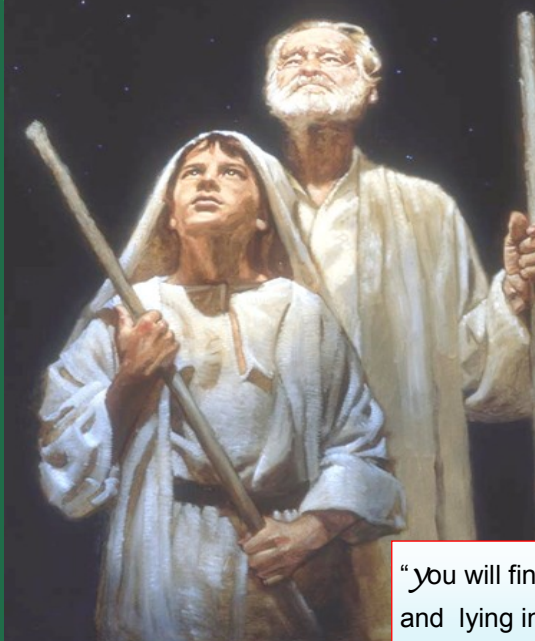


# Augustine & Monica

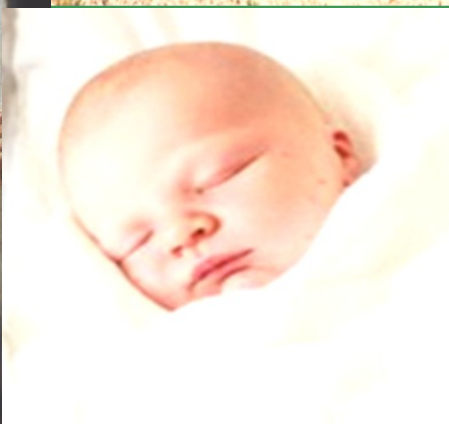


## Cherish Peace

Angel to shepherds: "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people". (Luke 2:8-10)



"you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger (Luke 2-12)



The star went ahead of the wise men.....

and they were overwhelmed with joy. (Matt 2:9-10)



In preparation for Christmas,  
individual Reconciliation  
will be available at:

St Monica's Thursday 17 December 9.30am after 9.00am Mass

St Augustine's Friday 18 December 7.30am after 7.00am Mass

St Monica's Tuesday 22 December 5.30pm after 5.00pm Mass

## Christmas Mass Times

### Christmas Eve

Thursday 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

Friday 25 Dec.

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

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

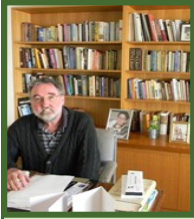
St Monica's Tugun - 9.30am  
(Carols before Mass)

### Individual Reconciliation

The Sacrament of  
Reconciliation is  
available every

Saturday

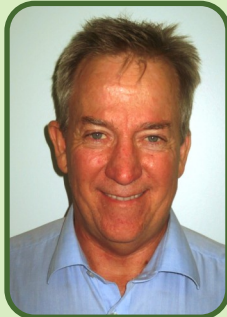
11.00am - St Monica's



### Fr John comments

As we approach the end of another year, we recognise the changes that are always upon us. The Synod on the Family has just concluded in Rome and we await the final statement by Pope Francis.

Our own Parish family has had significant changes during the year, with some of our forebears going to God particularly Betty Dolan who was 95 and one of the great contributors to our parish. St Augustine's School will have both a new Principal and a new APRE next year. I welcome Mr Warren Fields as Principal and Mrs Di Anderson as APRE. I am sure they will find they are very welcome in our Parish Community.



I wish our present principal Mr Stephen Montgomery God's blessings as he begins a new challenge as Principal of Guardian Angels Primary School at Ashmore. Stephen will not be lost to us really as he remains a parishioner. Stephen has been an asset to our parish community in his role as Principal but also as an energetic and involved Parish Pastoral Councillor and as a valued member of our Parish Finance Council.

Stephen has been a kind and empathetic leader of our School community. He is caring and compassionate with our school families and is always ready to go out of his way to help and support families in need. He has a wonderful sense of humour and the children are always his prime concern. His sense of fun is engaging and catching. He will be a great loss to our community.

Mrs Jane Marrison has been a teacher at our school for the past 20 years. For the past 15, she has been the APRE (Assistant Principal Religious Education). Jane is an amazing individual with boundless energy, enthusiasm and a 'joy de-vivre'. She is truly engaged with God in everything she does. Jane has demonstrated this during her work in the School and in everything in which she became involved. She has that wonderful childlike enthusiasm that Jesus spoke of when he said 'that unless you welcome the kingdom of God like a little child, you will never enter God's kingdom'.



Jane has been a marvellous contributor to our parish community over many years as a reader and a trainer of our altar servers. She now enters that wonderful time of retirement, although I cannot see her just rusting away. Thank you Jane!

## Pope Francis at the Angelus in St Peter's Square 11 August 2013

**I would like to ask you two questions: First**, do you all have a desiring heart? Think about it and respond silently in your hearts. I ask you: Is your heart filled with desire, or is it a closed heart, a sleeping heart, a heart numb to the things of life? Or do you have a heart that desires to go forward to encounter Jesus?

**The second question:** Where is your treasure? What are you longing for? Jesus told us where your treasure is, there will be your heart. What is the most important reality for you, the most precious reality, the one that attracts your heart like a magnet? May I say that it is God's love? Do you wish to do good to others, to live for the Lord and for your brothers and sisters? Each one answer in his or her own heart.

But someone could tell me: "Father, I am someone who works, who has a family. For me, the most important reality is to keep my family and work going". Certainly, this is true, it is important. But what is the power that unites the family? It is indeed love and the One who sows love in our hearts is God, God's love. It is precisely God's love that gives meaning to our small daily tasks and helps us face the great trials. This is the true treasure of humankind: going forward in life with love, with that love which the Lord has sown in our hearts, with God's love. This is the true treasure. But what is God's love? It is not something vague, some generic feeling. God's love has a name and a face: Jesus Christ. Love for God is made manifest in Jesus. For we cannot love air. Do we love things? No, no we cannot. We love people, and the person we love is Jesus, the gift of the Father among us. It is love that gives value and beauty to everything else, a love that gives strength to the family, to work, to study, to friendship, to art, to all human activity. It even gives meaning to negative experiences, because this love allows us to move beyond these experiences, not to remain prisoners of evil, it moves us beyond - always opening us to hope, that's it! Love of God in Jesus always opens us to hope, to that final horizon. In this way our labours and failures find meaning. Even our sin finds meaning in the love of God because this love of God in Jesus always forgives us.

To you all and to everyone, I wish a happy Sunday and a good lunch!

(from Don Bosco's *Madonna* Vol 16 August 2014..... With thanks to Brian Wych)



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Dear Parishioners of Coolangatta-Tugun Catholic Parish,

I feel privileged to be joining the Catholic community of Coolangatta-Tugun and journeying with the St Augustine's Parish Primary School Community from 2016. I have received such a warm welcome from Students, Staff, Parents and Parishioners to date. In particular the regular pastoral contact from Fr John and Mr Stephen Montgomery has been overwhelmingly supportive.

For those I am yet to meet, my name is Warren Fields. I am married to Lauren (also a teacher). We have 3 beautiful children: Maddison (6 years), Olivia (4 years) and Thomas (5 weeks). Both Maddy and Olivia will be students at St Augustine's from 2016. Although we have spent the last 3 years in Brisbane, our previous 10 were based on the Gold Coast (worshipping at Sacred Heart Church, Clear Island Waters). I am passionate about education, family, music, sport and building quality relationships between the Parish, School and Family units.

Warren Fields

## The Way

by Steve Montgomery

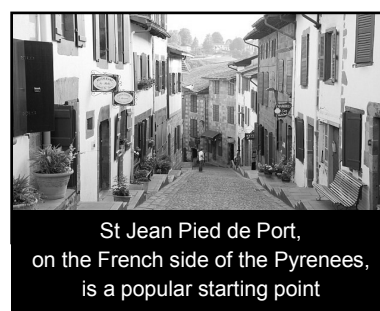


On May 4 last year I began the 780km walk, called **El Camino Frances**, starting in the tiny French village of St Jean Pied de Port and ending in the Spanish cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, some 30 days later. The Camino, which retraces the steps of St James, is very popular and attracts people from all over the world – I met and walked daily with new friends from places such as Australia, Canada, Slovakia, Germany, New Zealand, France and England – who were doing the walk for a variety of reasons. I travelled to the starting point of the Camino by train from Toulouse the day before and spent the afternoon locating my accommodation, registering for my 'passport' and finding a nice hearty meal to eat. It would be fair to say that I had a lot of mixed emotions in the lead up to the walk, as it was something I had been preparing for over the previous 8 months.

The first day over the Pyrenees Mountains was the most arduous of the entire trek, as I knew it would be, and was what I had been most focussed on throughout my preparation. The difficulty was compounded by the fact that visibility was virtually zero and the track was ankle deep mud for the entire day. Carrying a 7.5 kg pack which was soaked through by the end of the day, without the aid of hiking sticks also added to the challenge and set the tone for the rest of the walk.

Arriving at the first albergue (hostel) was educational to say the least – a bit like school camps. Exhausted, I lined up with 300 other pilgrims to get booked in – showing my passport and paying 10

Euro for a bunk, then lining up for a timed shower and then to access a laundry tub to wash the clothes I had walked in that day. This was to become the routine each day for the next month.

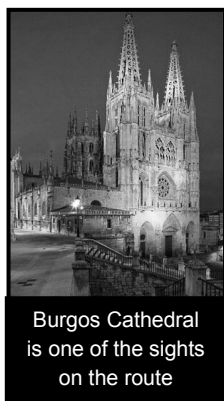


St Jean Pied de Port, on the French side of the Pyrenees, is a popular starting point

Every pilgrim seems to adopt a daily routine – mine was to rise at 5.30am for a 6am departure, stop at a place to eat breakfast (usually fresh fruit and water after a few hours of walking), finish walking at around 12 or 1pm to line up for entry into a new albergue, explore the new village/town and try a refreshing beer/wine and rest until the evening when, around 5pm, you could find a pilgrim's three course meal, find a grocery shop, then retire before the evening curfew.

There were constant daily personal and physical challenges, but having only to walk each day, without the distractions of daily work life, made the whole experience very rewarding. I would look forward each day to what the Camino would bring, as there was a wonder and awe about what and who was revealed along the path each day – a path that was well signed by the traditional scallop shell symbol – and it taught me the value of living each day in the present moment. I no longer take some of the daily essentials of life for granted – food and drink, shelter, space, toilets, good health and company of others to name but a few.

Every person I spoke to over the journey had a different reason for doing the Camino. For me, I had set myself a personal challenge – a test of physical and mental endurance – as well as the challenge of walking the journey alone and being open to meeting others on the journey. The walk was a great experience for me and I am most thankful that I had the support of my wife, Clare, to be able to take time out to realise this goal.



Burgos Cathedral is one of the sights on the route





Hilary Musgrave and Monica Brown

## Adult Faith Formation

Carole, Jeff and Rina are all members of the Network of Biblical Storytellers. This session was attended by our parishioners and also by people from other Gold Coast parishes including a few priests. After the Lenten season, a small group of people who had participated in the Lenten Discussion groups continued to meet weekly to reflect on the Scriptures from the Easter season. In April this year Rob Cosgrove returned to join us for wine and Pizza night and give a presentation on 'Faith and the Movies'. In June, Sr Sue Smith RSM, presented an inter-pray for parishioners

different adult faith education opportunities available. February will see not only the usual Lenten Discussion groups happening but something very special for all parishioners and especially those already involved in parish ministries or thinking about joining one.

The Archdiocese, through *Evangelisation Brisbane* and *Liturgy Brisbane*, will be presenting two workshops on 'Understanding the Mass' and the roles we, as lay people, take in the celebration of the Mass. Ever since the Adult Faith Education Group commenced we have been getting many requests from parishioners for 'something on the Mass'. Well here it is!

The dates for your diary are Thursdays 4, 11 and 18 February 2016. Do you have to go to Brisbane for this? NO! Do you have to go to Surfers Paradise or Burleigh parish for this? NO. The Archdiocese is coming HERE to us!! And if we want them to come and offer other wonderful experiences we need to support this. Fr John needs us all to be there! Please come along as the sessions promise to be both interesting and informative! If you are currently involved in any parish ministry you will have already received a personal invitation from Fr John.

A calendar of Adult Faith Opportunities for 2016 will be posted in both churches in January 2016.

In September 2014, about a dozen keen parishioners came together to establish an Adult Faith Education Co-ordinating group in our parish. Over the past twelve months we have organised a number of Faith Education Opportunities.

In October 2014, Rob Cosgrove from the Brisbane Archdiocese's *Evangelisation Brisbane* team gave a presentation to about forty-five parishioners on the topic of Pope Francis' Exhortation 'The Joy of the Gospel'. This was followed up by a 6 week discussion program on the same topic written by Fr John Chalmers. December 2014 saw the commencement of Advent and an Advent Reflection Day was led by Rina Wintour from our parish and Carole Danby from *Evangelisation Brisbane*. This day provided time for storytelling, prayer, discussion, and ritual, focussing on the Scriptures of Advent and Christmas.

Carole Danby was invited back in Lent this year (2015) to join Jeff Lawrence and Rina Wintour in *Telling the (Year B) Lenten gospels with joy!*

A highlight for many of us in September was the presentation by well known, internationally acclaimed singer, composer and workshop facilitator Monica Brown who was accompanied by her colleague Hilary Musgrave. Their presentation entitled 'Holy Ground, Holy Mystery' was a beautiful blending of music with Scripture, imagery and ritual, inviting us to reflect on and engage with the mystery and majesty of God's Presence in the Universe story. The year ended with small group discussions on Joyce Rupp's book 'The Open Door'. These sessions were wonderfully facilitated by our own Mary McCarthy.

Next year 2016 is going to be just as exciting with a number of

Mother came in to her son's bedroom and said: " My dearie, get up, it's Sunday, You will be late for Mass."

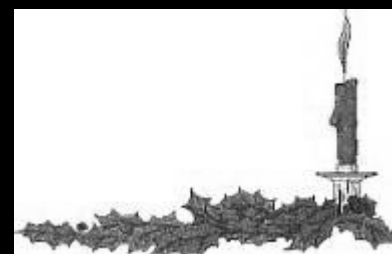
"I don't want to go to Mass."

" Don't be silly, you have just got to go to Mass."

"No, I don't.....I do not want to go to Mass. They don't like me, I don't feel wanted. Anyway, I don't like them."

"Nonsense, you just get up and get ready.

After all, you are 55 years of age and you are the Parish Priest."



### AND FOR STUDENTS...

The food at the school cafeteria isn't awful.

**It's "digestively challenged."**

You don't have detention.

**You're just one of the "exit delayed."**

These days, a student isn't lazy.

**He's "energetically declined."**

Your locker isn't overflowing with junk.

**It's just "closure prohibitive."**

Your homework isn't missing.

**It's just having an "out-of-notebook experience."**

You weren't passing notes in class.

**You were "participating in the discreet exchange of penned meditations."**

## Memories



### *Eucharist as Touch*

In an essay entitled "In Praise of Skin", author Brenda Peterson tells how at one point in her life she was afflicted by terrible skin rashes. Every medication and treatment she tried failed to heal her. One day her grandmother assessed her and pronounced, "Skin needs to be touched". Her grandmother then gave her regular skin massages and these did what all the sophisticated treatments couldn't: skin needs to be touched in ways that honour and affirm that we are embodied persons. God knows that better than anyone. That's why we have the Eucharist. Through it, skin gets touched.

The Eucharist is not an abstraction, a theological creed, a

philosophy or a moral precept. It is a bodily embrace, something astoundingly physical, a real encounter with Jesus Christ. It is true that we tend today to be shy of this kind of talk, to think about communion as something dis-embodied and symbolic. But Christianity is the most earthy of religions. It does not call us out of the physical, out of the world, or out of the body. Rather, Christ enters the physical, becomes one with it, blesses it, redeems it, and tells us there is no reason to escape from it. The claim of eating Christ's flesh and blood (John 6:53-62) even troubled Jesus' contemporaries: "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" (John 6:60) the crowds said in the Gospel of John. As astounding as this claim is, it is wonderful. In the Eucharist, our skin gets touched. We need to be touched in order to be healed. We need to be touched to live.

The late essayist Andre Dubus once wrote about why he went to daily Eucharist, even though most of his literary colleagues found the practice odd. He wrote,

*'I received the sacrament I still believe in ... the priest elevated the host, then the chalice, and spoke the words of the ritual and the bread became flesh, the wine became blood, and minutes later I placed on my tongue the taste of forgiveness and of love that affirmed, perhaps celebrated, my being alive, my being mortal... This has to do with mortality and the touch of flesh, and my belief in the sacrament of the Eucharist is simple: without touch, God is a monologue, an idea, a philosophy: he must touch and be touched...'*

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### *My friend just died and I don't know what to do*

By G. Snow

Alright, here goes. I'm old. What that means is that I've survived (so far) and a lot of people I've known and loved did not. I've lost friends, best friends, acquaintances, co-workers, grandparents, mom, relatives, teachers, mentors, students, neighbours, and a host of other folks. I have no children, and I can't imagine the pain it must be to lose a child. But here's my two cents.

I wish I could say you get used to people dying. I never did. I don't want to. It tears a hole through me whenever somebody I love dies, no matter the circumstances. But I don't want it to "not matter". I don't want it to be something that just passes.

My scars are a testament to the love and the relationship that I had for and with that person. And if the scar is deep, so was the love. So be it. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are a testament that I can love deeply and live deeply and be cut, or even gouged, and that I can heal and continue to live and continue to love. And the scar tissue is stronger than the original flesh ever was. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are only ugly to people who can't see.

As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function.

You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything...and the wave comes crashing. But in between waves, there is life. Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O'Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out. Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks.

## Christmas



Bethlehem, December 2014. Showing the Separation Wall built by the Israelis cutting off Jerusalem from Bethlehem and Palestine as a whole.

### Bethlehem Today

By Most Rev. Rowan Williams

About three weeks ago, I sat and listened to two visitors from the Holy Land, both of them with harrowing stories to tell me of how the people they most dearly loved had been killed in the conflict raging there – a woman who had lost her son, a young man who had lost his brother. Stories that you could multiply by the thousand in the Holy Land today. But what was different was that the woman was Jewish and the young man an Arab Muslim; and they were travelling the world to tell their stories side by side.

Both these brave people belong to the *Families Forum*, a network for those who have been bereaved through violence in Israel and Palestine and who are committed to joining together to work for peace. There are several such groups – as indeed there were in Northern Ireland in the darkest days there: people who are able to say, “I know the worst that war can do, and I am turning my back on revenge.”

Few statements could be more powerful. What my visitors were saying was that grief and desperate loneliness aren't political things but human things. It's that only when we can get to the humanity, can we begin to get beyond the sterility of historic racial and religious conflicts. Facing the abiding realities of the human condition, facing death, your own or that of someone you love, is something that puts everything else into perspective.

Change, real change, happens when we're ready just to be human – not to use our suffering as another weapon against each other, not to argue about whose sufferings are worse, but just to recognise the same love and the same loss. Which is why my Jewish and Muslim visitors have been for me this year's most important preparation for Christmas.

Christians believe that the most radical and total change in the history of the world happened when God began to speak to us in the voice of a human being – not the voice of a monarch or a philosopher or even a prophet, but the inarticulate voice of a child in need. When we start hearing the voice of God in the cries of the newborn child in the manger, we start being able to hear that voice in the raw humanity of other people. We can't any longer write off the suffering of others on the grounds that they're not really like us – because they're Israeli and not Arab, Catholic and not Protestant or whatever.

My visitors from the land of Christ's birth, death and resurrection were ambassadors for the freedom to listen without fear and anger, and the freedom to act together. And that freedom, deepened and made universal and lasting, is what Jesus was born to achieve for us. This is the new humanity born with him on Christmas Day.

*Thought for the Day, 24 December, 2007. Copyright BBC*



### Mary's Christmas Dream

*supplied Desley Dolan*

I had a dream, Joseph. I don't understand it, not really, but I think it was about a *birthday celebration for our Son*. I think it was what it was all about.

The people had been preparing for about six weeks.

They had decorated the house and bought new clothes.

They'd gone shopping many times and bought elaborate gifts. It was peculiar though, because the presents were not for *our Son*.

They wrapped them in beautiful paper and tied them with lovely bows, and stacked them under a tree.

Yes, a tree Joseph, right in their house!

They decorated the tree also.

The branches were full of glowing balls and sparkling ornaments.

There was a figure on the top of the tree.

It looked like an angel might look.

Oh, it was so beautiful!

Everyone was laughing and they were very happy.

They were all excited about the gifts.

They gave the gifts to each other, Joseph ....

Not to *our Son*. I don't think they even knew Him. They never mentioned His name. Doesn't it seem odd for people to go to all that trouble to celebrate someone's birthday if they don't know him?

I had the strangest feeling that if *our Son* had gone to this celebration, *He* would have been intruding.

Everything was so beautiful Joseph, and everyone was so happy ..... but it made me want to cry.

How sad for *Jesus* not to be wanted at *His* own birthday party. I'm glad it was only a dream.

How terrible Joseph, if it had been real!

**“LET'S PUT CHRIST BACK INTO CHRISTMAS”**

**For then there will Peace on Earth for All.**

