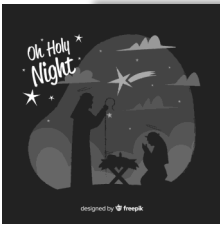


Christmas around the Worldpresented by Nicola



There are so many ways to celebrate Christmas, and these are just a few.



Christmas in Croatia:

Over 3/4 of the population of Croatia is Catholic. Advent is an important part of Christmas and it is traditional to display an Advent Wreath at this time.

Celebrating various feast days is also important. For example, on St Nicholas' Eve, (December 5) children will leave out their cleaned shoes/ boots on the window sill or near the fireplace. They then hope that St Nicholas will leave them a small present, an apple or chocolates in their boot. I was told that in some areas, according to legend, Krampus, (a hairy demon who travels around with Saint Nicholas), leaves naughty children some pretty twigs to remind them to behave.



What I do know is that where my husband lived in the countryside, Krampus would leave behind a lump of coal for those who misbehaved. On Christmas Eve, most people eat some kind of fish dish. My mother-in-law explained to me that this is because it's considered to be a time to fast from meat. After their meal, people would then go to Mass at midnight. Christmas Day is, of course, a day of feasting and celebration with family. In Croatia, Christmas celebrations conclude on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6, although this is actually Christmas Day for those who belong to the Orthodox Church.

Christmas in Vietnam:

In Vietnam, Christmas isn't an official public holiday as fewer than 10% of the population is Catholic. Nonetheless, the Vietnamese love to celebrate and lights and decorations abound in the city. Christmas Eve is often more celebrated than Christmas Day. On both days it is a time for family and friends to gather together to celebrate the birth of Jesus, both in the church and at home. All churches, and many homes, will have a Nativity scene on display, inside and sometimes outside. On Christmas Eve, it is usual, too, for children to enact the Christmas story outside the church before the start of midnight mass. Once this is over, people go inside, where Christmas Carols are sung. After mass, people would go home to celebrate.

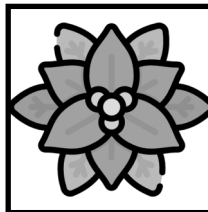


Christmas in the Philippines:

Close to 80% of Phillipinos are Christians, and because of this, Christmas is the most important holiday in the country.



Formal Christmas celebrations start on 16 December, concluding on Christmas Day. However, Christmas Celebrations continue up until the Feast of the Epiphany, or the Feast of the Three Kings. One Christmas tradition is erecting the 'parol', which is a bamboo pole or frame with a lighted star lantern on it. This represents the star that guided the Wise Men to Bethlehem. It is the most popular Christmas decoration in the Philippines. The Nativity Scene is an important feature of both churches and homes. Christmas Eve, called Noche Buena, is the highlight of Christmas, and is a time when choirs outside the church try to outdo each other when singing the carols. Dancing to the sound of the carol music, is also a feature. After attending midnight mass, families go home to celebrate some more with their families.



The Legend of the Poinsettia:

This version is based on an old Mexican tale that tells the story of the classic Christmas flower, the Poinsettia.

(Ref: James Cooper, www.whychristmas.com)

"There was once a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give to the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Service. As Pepita sadly walked to the chapel, her cousin, Pedro, tried to cheer her up. "Pepita", he said, "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves Him, will make Jesus happy." Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside, and made them into a small bouquet. She felt embarrassed because she could only give this small present to Jesus. As she walked through the chapel to the altar, she remembered what Pedro had said. She began to feel better, knelt down and put the bouquet at the bottom of the Nativity Scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as 'Flores de Noche Buena', or Flowers of the Holy Night.

The shape of the Poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought of as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem, which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red coloured leaves symbolise the blood of Christ, the white leaves, His purity."



Shepherds used crooks to bring lambs back into the fold. Candy canes remind us we are all our brothers keeper.



In Loving Memory of the Hanzic, D'Aeth and Poljakov Families





Diplomacy

by Phil Kimmins



Diplomacy, like good manners, lubricates the cogs of the societal machine. It has the potential to sow peace where there is discord, preserve sensitive feelings, save face through compromise and most importantly, to prevent lethal hostilities. But there is a depth to this word, this concept of compromise and mature exchange that, in other considerations, removes any notion of altruism for as we know, diplomacy is not the exclusive preserve of the sincere. It can be manipulated and pursued to meet any agenda. On the world stage, where the diplomatic 'game' is played for high stakes, absolute truth and selflessness will rarely, if ever, get a look in. Negotiations at this level are usually conducted in order to gain military or economic advantage but sometimes are no more than a mask to conceal a state's true intentions.

On this stage, where governments manoeuvre, diplomats ply their ambassadorial wares. Lives and the well-being of millions hinge on decisions they make, decisions arrived at after presumably civil negotiations. We can but hope these negotiations are conducted against a background of transparency and sincerity; that cold pragmatism doesn't get a look in but in this setting, altruism is considered a luxury. However, despite all that, national and international diplomacy has been successful for the most part in maintaining the globe in a state that has not yet embraced total chaos, though we've come close on a number of occasions. We need only look to Hitler's cynical treatment of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's well-meaning but naive efforts to maintain peace in Europe. For now we know he never stood a chance - utter submission to tyranny was the only deal on the table and as a result, the world was torn apart by the horrors of the Second World War. Whether or not God was ever called upon during these and other failed negotiations, we can only surmise.

It is well that God continually, out of the love of humankind, informs and enables our very existence, and is able to impose upon these horrific situations, a divine alchemy that brings good from bad. For our sakes it is well that He does, but isn't it time we gave God a rest from having to do the heavy lifting?

Would that it were otherwise, but it seems the world's natural state is not geared towards peace. Constantly through-out history, so-called civilisations have thrown up men and women whose lust for power and material gain has plunged not only their own people but entire nations into death and servitude. From biblical times to the present day we have seen this but what we have

also seen is God's intervention. God's promises to His people - both Jew and Gentile - are kept. But what of the diplomacy that engages this reflection? Sometimes it just doesn't work. It can never work where one side is so totally consumed with hatred for the other that any allusions to mature deliberation are mere exercises in cynicism and double-dealing. When things have reached this state of affairs, neither honeyed words, nor the wisdom of Solomon, will move the hardened heart. But to soften the heart or better still, ensure the hearts of our neighbours never reach such a state - this must surely be the work-in-progress to which all of God's children should be devoted.

In their negotiations, diplomats seek never to over-play their hands, will always hold something back, keeping their cards close to their chests lest they cede advantage to their opponents. I think that sometimes when we pray, there may be a tendency, conscious or otherwise, to slip into 'negotiation mode' with God: "Lord, do this one thing for me and I promise... etc." Or when we examine our consciences, the purpose being to lay our cards - our sins - on the table before God: "Hmm, perhaps I'd best not mention that one - it was pretty horrendous - I'll just keep this one to myself." No need to expand on the foolishness of this choice. With God there is no scope for diplomacy. All God wants from us is the unvarnished truth, no hidden shades of meaning (impossible anyway) and a sincere desire to strive for a wholly authentic Christianity.

There is something that I reflect on from time to time as it really is commonplace among well-meaning, compassionate people. In the opening paragraph, I named one of the fruits of diplomacy as the preservation of feelings, implying a manipulation of the truth for a good cause, i.e. the 'white lie'. Is it permissible? The scrupulous would say No, but wrongly or rightly, I feel that response lacks compassion. If I were to stain my soul by choosing not to burden someone with a painful and wholly unnecessary truth, I am in no doubt that God would forgive me. What I don't know is how God would view my disregard of that person's feelings for the sake of a vaunted idea of my own righteousness.

While he walked among us, Jesus was the perfect diplomat. The Scriptures resound with accounts of his replies to those who would harm him or worse - he was never caught out by the barbed traps set for him by the Jewish authority and when his replies were sharp, the words were not delivered with a defensive malice but out of love for His attackers and a genuine sorrow for their blindness. Jesus will return and when He comes, all the diplomats will find they are without voice. Until that time however, if we wish to put a case to our Lord and Saviour, we have the perfect Advocate in the Holy Spirit.



St Augustine's Parish Primary School



In October we held another very successful Grandparents' morning with close to 300 guests sharing a fun time and morning tea. At the event, children were invited to place their guests' names or those of family members to whom they would like to have prayers dedicated

- on ribbons that were hanging from our courtyard cross.



November has seen the return of our St Augustine's Art Show. Our art teacher, Mrs Jodie Sindle (left) created an amazing display of children's art in the hall and we had a very successful evening showcasing these works to our community.



Have a laugh!
He broke into song because he couldn't find the key!
He had a photographic memory which was never developed!



Do you know a Catholic who isn't attending Mass in our parish?
The Parish Office has support tools to help you reconnect these people to the Eucharist.

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Parish Activities



Did you know - Advice corner

DID YOU KNOW?

There are live enzymes in honey. When in contact with a metal spoon, these enzymes die.

The best way to eat honey is with a wooden or plastic spoon.

Honey contains a substance that helps your brain work better.

Honey is one of the rare foods on earth that alone can sustain human life.

One teaspoon of honey is enough to sustain human life for 24 hours.

Propolis that bees produce, is one of the most powerful antibiotics.

Honey has no expiration date.

The bodies of the great emperors of the world were buried in golden coffins and then covered with honey to prevent putrefaction.

The term 'honeymoon' comes from the fact that newlyweds consumed honey for fertility after the wedding.



A bee lives less than 40 days, visits at least 1000 flowers and produces less than a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.

One of the first coins had a bee symbol on it.

Deep gratitude to the humble bee.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS SPIDER

A long time ago in Germany, a mother was cleaning for Christmas. Spiders fled up to the attic to escape the broom. One quiet Christmas Eve, the spiders slowly came down for a peek. "Oh, what a beautiful tree!"

In excitement, they scurried up and out along each branch. They were filled with happiness as they climbed amongst the glittering beauty. But alas! By the time they were done, the tree was shrouded in their dusty grey web.

When Santa came with gifts for the children and saw the tree covered with spider webs, he smiled because he saw how happy the spiders were, but knew how heartbroken the mother would be if she saw the tree covered in dusty webs. So he turned the webs to strands of silver and the tree was even more beautiful than before.



That's the story of tinsel and why every tree should have a Christmas Spider in its branches.

Obviously German spiders lack the robustness of their Australian relations.



A Post from Mary



People often say, with pride, I'm not interested in politics. They might as well say, I'm not interested in my standard of living, my health, my job, my rights, my freedoms, my future or any future. If we mean to keep any control over our world and lives, we must be interested in politics.

Martha Gellhorn – American novelist, writer and journalist (1908-1998)

PARISH COUNCIL

Greetings all.

Well it's great to have Fr Noy back, but having said that, we would like to express our thanks to all our visiting priests who filled in for Fr Noy. On top of this, we are certainly blessed having our Seminarian Sean and the dedication of Julie and Paula. Between them, the Parish functioned very well.

As I type this, we are still waiting for quotes and approval for a range of work at St Augustine's. In the meantime, there have been quite a few small items repaired at both Churches. There are quite a number of ongoing maintenance issues with which to be dealt. Unfortunately the biggest problem facing us is the lack of volunteers. If you do have some spare time, please consider contacting the office and chat to them. I'm sure Paula would welcome you.



On behalf of us all, we have to congratulate the committee organizing the Centenary Celebrations for St Augustine's. If you can afford it, a donation towards the up coming celebrations would be gratefully received. Look in the parish bulletin for details of raffles, functions and banking details for donations. As I write this, the internal works at St Augustine's will commence on Monday 18th November and take about 3 weeks.

We must also thank the Communion Ministers who attend John Flynn Hospital every Sunday. If you have someone in John Flynn who would like Communion, please contact the Parish Office, and register as Catholic on their hospital admission form.

On behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council, I wish you all a happy and Holy Christmas.

God Bless!

This page sponsored by



457 Golden Four Drive, Tugun
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Celebrations



The following celebrations have blessed our Parish life since our last edition. Please let us know your important occasions so that we can publish them and acknowledge significant events in our Parish.




- Nel de Graaf - 92 yrs
- Lloyd Pinchin - 87 yrs
- Iris Hanney - 86 yrs
- Nicola Hanzic - 80 yrs
- Carmel Elms - 76 yrs
- Brenda Hindmarsh - 75 yrs



We welcome the following who have recently become members of our Faith family through Baptism.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Harvey Evans | Landon Smith |
| Roman Kakanis | Cielle Smith |
| Georgi Love | Angus Curran |
| Payton Bellingham | Oliver Killeen |
| Dillon Fendley | Jaya Sweeney |
| Oliver Tomlinson | Dylan Sweeney |
| Christie Rocky | Parker Munnery |
| Ned Dilley | Abigail Munnery |



2024 is the **90th** anniversary of the Tugun/Coolangatta St Vincent de Paul conference


Blessing

May the God of Stillness be with you calming your heart when it is agitated, inviting you to meet God in the stillness of your being. May God often break through into the activity of your day and call you to stand still and notice God's activity in your life. May your own inner stillness draw others to the God of peace. May the blessing of Stillness be with you. --Maxine Shonk, OP




This candle burns in loving memory, of those who are forever in our hearts.

Gabriel Bellhouse	Jospeh Bassi
Carol Plithakis	Bosco Correa
Jinky Ace Tayabas	William Williams
Geraldo de Souza	Winifred Taylor
Suzane Bobsien	Fred Bothma
Tony Castles	Wendy Drysdale
Lance Purdie	Michael Rudd
Michael Lannen	Ewold Van Bergen
	Katherine Olsen



Blessings on all those who have recently married

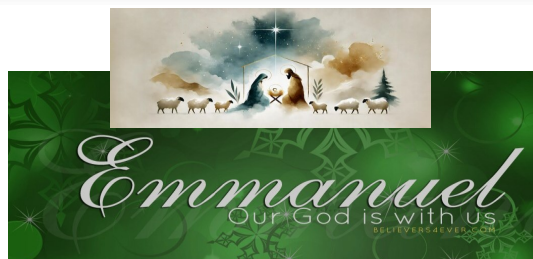

Desmond Hardman and Rebecca Griffin
Edward O'Dwyer and Sophie Callan
Jackson Campbell and Lucy Taylor
Tristan Lostroh and Neringa Rimkute



Sean Woods, our resident Seminarian was ordained a Deacon on 15 November 2024
Congratulations Sean!



Congratulations to all celebrating a Wedding Anniversary.
John and Iris Hanney 63 Yrs.

No matter how you feel, get up, get dressed and show up! No-one is in charge of your happiness but you.
When in doubt, just take the next step.

At home in Heaven, loved members of the Cabban, Harvey, Taylor and Walker families.






From the "Editor's" Desk



"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Isaiah 9:6

"The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honour.

But, that does not lessen our possible impact, for there are scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along; people who will appreciate our compassion, our unique talents, someone who will live a happier life merely because we took time to share what we have to give. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. It's overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our love felt."

Lee Buscaglia, source unclear.

It struck me that these words, although speaking to us, relate to the very person of Jesus, who was born as God made man, in a humble stable, fulfilling the prophecy:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Isaiah 9:6

What does this article have to do with Christmas? Well, simple! Really it's like a recipe. We have always been taught that we should show others that we are Christians by the lives we lead, lives which



follow the way of Jesus. This article suggests how to go about it which exactly mirrors how Jesus related to others. What it does not include, however, is the need for diplomacy and tact in our dealings with people.

When we think about Christmas, we remember the birth of the baby Jesus, over two thousand years ago, and we celebrate.

However not everyone thinks this way. For some, Christmas is a time of sadness, a time that is wished away. Through our actions, we need to reach out, tactfully and diplomatically to include the lonely and those in need, at this time.

We don't need vast sums of money to do this, just a smile, a listening ear and maybe a meal. After all, God loves us all. We can do no less than love others, on His behalf.

In the Mexican Legend of the Poinsettia, we read how a poor girl was sad because she had nothing to give to Jesus on Christmas Eve. Her cousin told her that the smallest thing given to Jesus out of love, would be pleasing to Him.

The AM Committee would like to pay a special tribute to Peter Cossins, who was our editor for so long. Thank you Peter, you were, and still are, an inspiration to all!

We would also like to thank our sponsors for supporting our endeavours, as well as our many readers. We could not exist without you. We wish you all, a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

**COOLANGATTA-TUGUN
CATHOLIC PARISH**



We recognise the traditional owners of this land, The Yugambah people. Coolangatta means 'place of Splendid Lookout.'



*Our mission is
to live our faith by ...
demonstrating communion
with all,
being missionary people
who bring the joy
of our Christian faith
to our society,
proclaiming God's Reign
of Justice, Peace and Love.*



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*The material in this journal remains
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While considering articles for the next edition at Easter, please consider being a sponsor for the 'AM'. Contact Church Office for information!

With thanks from the AM Committee: Nicola Hanzic, Sharon Cabban, Brenda Hindmarsh, Chris Mason, Pauline Goh-Stribling, Paula Lancaster.

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