



OUT OF THE DARKNESS

The man driving the taxi said he grew up in Kolkata. Since Pope Francis had recently canonised Mother Teresa, I asked him what he thought about her.

He glanced in the mirror, smiling. "Oh yes, Maa, I met her three times," he said energetically. "We always give to her house when we go home." "Are you Catholic?" I asked. "No, Hindu," he replied. "But you call her Maa, Mother?" I said, searchingly. "We all do," he declared. "She is Maa to us all."

The readings for Mass today help us to reflect on how we form community. When St Paul speaks about "belonging," he confronts us with questions about how religious identity can both bind and separate people. When he refers to opposing leaders, we can easily make connections with rivalries in our own world.

As if hearing folks say they belong to Apollos or Cephas or Paul, we hear about people following a particular priest and escaping another, or about how this pope outdoes that pope, or how belonging to Christ trumps other forms of religious loyalty. It can happen to us all: our faith in Christ can service our self-righteousness and rivalry with others.

Since their earliest days, Christian communities have experienced disagreement. For a range of reasons, many Christians appropriate the meaning of their faith differently. But if there are differences and disagreements among the members, how can we affirm the oneness of the Church? How can we say, "I believe in one Church?"

The key to any satisfactory answer to this question begins with recognising the inseparability of the Mystery of the Church and the Mystery of the Eucharist. By our faith in the person of Christ Jesus, we can affirm the unity of the Church because in him we are truly "members one of another." Inviting us to know Jesus, the gospel points us to a way of thinking about her belonging to Christ that stands apart from all forms of enmity and competition.

When the gospel says that Jesus fulfils the scriptural anticipation of light rising on those who dwell in darkness, the gospel announces how Jesus reconfigures the lines of religious belonging. God breaks down the rivalries that separate people. The choice to call Simon and Andrew represents a choice to call us, too – a choice for us to participate in the building of human relations by the power of God's mercy.

Mother Teresa once said, "If I ever become a saint, I will surely be one of 'darkness.' I will continually be absent from Heaven to light the light of those in darkness on earth."



If we are to experience God's mercy, we must join Maa and the others in the darkness. We must know our own poverty. In the darkness, the light of Christ illuminates the oneness of his body.

Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer
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OUR VISION

"Everything is to be oriented towards the praise and glory of God".

OUR MISSION

The St Agnes' Parish Community strives to make our Vision a reality by a commitment to:

- holiness in the image of Christ
- minister within the faith community
- proclaim the good news of salvation
- the service of all, particularly those in need

A Prayer for our Country

Father, you reached out by the power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus your Son to show your love for all creation.

You invite everyone to share in your life made available to us in Jesus.

You established the Church to bring your good news to all people.

Let your Holy Spirit help us to proclaim your good news in a way that is meaningful to people and touches their hearts.

May we, like Mary Help of Christians, have the courage of the cross to fulfil the mission you have for us no matter what the cost.

Sharing in his confidence and trust in you, we ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Reflection

Two sets of two brothers were running successful family businesses. But once Jesus passed by and *called* them, the Gospel says, at *once* they left their boats and followed him. I think because, hearing his voice, they realised that Jesus was the true vocalist of God.

Irish author and mystic, John O'Donohue, once wrote, 'Something in us senses and knows how perfectly the contours of the soul fit the divine embrace.' *

Maybe Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John sensed that, in this Jesus, there was a Soul whose contours perfectly fitted the divine embrace. They were prepared to risk everything for the chance to have *their* souls contoured along the same lines.

The call: 'Follow me ...', was not to an isolated individual promising to save his soul, but to two brothers and then another two brothers. Immediately, a community was being formed and its task was to bring others into that Jesus-following community.

We could pause for a moment to hear the brothers beckoning us to follow the call of that voice sounded by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*John O'Donohue, *Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*, Bantam Press, 246.

© Fr Michael Tate



Feast of St Agnes

The official Feast Day for St Agnes is Saturday, 21 January. However, as this feast day traditionally falls during the holidays we celebrate our Patron saint's feast day in August.

Episcopal Ordination of Bishop-elect Gregory Homeming

In anticipation of the forthcoming ordination of Bishop-elect, Gregory Homeming OCD, on 22 February in St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore, we are asked to offer this prayer :

'For Gregory, our Bishop-elect, as he prepares to take up the sacred office of Bishop of the Church of Lismore. As our Chief Shepherd in the line of the Apostles, may he govern your people in love, and inspire and strengthen them in the faith, and in their lives of Christian witness.'



Please see below back to school dates.

Tuesday, 31 January: Years 7 & 11.

Wednesday, 1 February: Years 8,9,10 & 12.

Friday, 3 February: Years 1-6.

Monday, 6 February: Kindergarten.

Parish Retreat

Will be held on Saturday, 11 February at the Francis Retreat Centre, Bonny Hills. It will be a one day retreat. All parishioners, teachers and parents are most welcome. To register, forms are available at the Presbytery Office or, register on line via the St Agnes' website using the following steps, or call the Presbytery Office.

- Website: www.stagnesparish.org.au.
- Click on Parish Education link.
- On the RHS click on Parish Registrations.
- This will take you to School Interviews, enter Event code for Parish Retreat - 422eh - then click green 'Go' button. This will take you to Retreat Registrations.

Pope Francis Tweet

'There can be no true peace if everyone claims always and exclusively his or her own rights, without caring for the good of others.'

St Agnes' Parish State School Sacramental Program

If you are interested in your child participating in this program and require a Registration Form, or you have any questions please contact Stacey or Donna. The sacramental timeline is below. More detailed information will be available closer to the dates. The Registrations will be held in St Agnes Church.

- **PENANCE:** students in Year 4 or over. Registration: 20 February.
- **CONFIRMATION:** students in Year 2 or over. Registration: 15 May.
- **COMMUNION:** students in Year 3 or over. Narrated Masses will be held on 20, 21, 22 August.

Email: sacramentalprogram@gmail.com
Phone Stacey on 0438 287 898 or call Donna at St Agnes Primary School on 6583 7433.

Palm Encounters

An experience to share this Easter and beyond. A Palms Encounter is an intimate, immersive, inter cultural experience providing insights that challenge perceptions and deepen understanding. Palms long-term volunteers guide the Encounter with our Catholic Communities in East Timor.

Register now for our **2 – 14 April Encounter** and receive **\$400 off a 2nd ticket.**

Call Roger on **02 9560 5333** or go to

www.palms.org.au/Encounters for more.

Real encounter, real people, real exchange, real life.

Australia Day

As Thursday, 26 January is Australia Day and a public holiday, the following offices will be closed:

- Parish Administration and Property Services.
- Presbytery Office.
- Diocesan Investment Fund.
- MacKillop Gift Shop.

Weekday Mass will be offered at 9.00am not 5.15pm. This is a special Mass with music.

Also, there will be no Mass held at Telegraph Point on Australia Day.

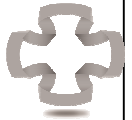
Need help with your parish giving?

Call Trudi
(02) 6588 7444



Parish Giving Programme

Remember in Prayer



Recently Deceased: Jeffrey Condron, Ellen Breakell and Margo O'Connor.

Anniversaries: Gerard O'Brien, Lil Murray, Nola Hemsley, Angus Gaul, Marguerite Carlon, Arthur Gilmour, Fr Louis Bean and Minnie Downes.

Other Mass Intentions: Noel Clarke, Marija Miller, Pat Chuck, Peter Chuck, Hilton Dodds, Nora Downes Roberts, Ern O'Reilly, Beryl Thomas, Molly & Robert Friggens, donor intentions and Masses of thanksgiving.

St Agnes' Rugrats

Community Youth Group

Rugrats is an open youth group centred around social activities held at the Port Macquarie Youth Hub in Horton Street. It is held on Friday from 3.30pm to 7.00pm. The cost is \$3.00 per person or \$6.00 per family, with two or more children and includes afternoon tea and dinner. It is fully supervised. For further information please contact Peter on mobile number 0429 658 404.

Gift Bearers Roster

If you are currently a volunteer on our gift bearer's roster can you please advise the Presbytery Office by Monday, 6 February, if you wish to be taken off that roster, or change Mass times.

VOLUNTEER IN THE KIMBERLEY

Kimberley Catholic Volunteer Service

Urgently wanted ... volunteer workers

The Diocese of Broome, WA, requires volunteers to assist with the work of the local Church on Aboriginal Missions. We are currently seeking a couple to manage the Warmun Retreat Centre in February. There are other roles also available, including in Balgo to assist the priest in the running of the parish. Placements are preferred for a period of 6 months. For further details, and an application form, please contact: Volunteer Co-ordinator Anneliese Rohr: 0415 526 142.

Email: volunteers@broomedioocese.org

Web: www.broomedioocese.org

Mail: PO Box 76, Broome WA 6725

Parish Priest

Father Leo Donnelly

Assistant Priest

Father Peter Wood

Assistant Priest

Father Roland Agrisola

Pastoral Assistant

Peter O'Driscoll

T (02) 6584 9970

Presbytery Office

47 Hay Street Port Macquarie

PO Box 23

T (02) 6583 1024

E pastoraloffice@stagnesparish.org.au

www.stagnesparish.org.au

Office Hours:

8.30am - 4.30pm

PARISH MASSES

ST AGNES' CHURCH | Hay Street, Port Macquarie

Monday to Thursday: 5.15pm

Friday: 12.05pm

Saturday: 8.00am, 6.00pm Vigil

Sunday: 7.30am, 9.00am, 5.00pm

Please note: Weekday Masses at 9.00am on Public Holidays

Reconciliation: Friday 11.30am -12 noon, Saturday 11.30am - 12.30pm

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

1st Saturday of the month 8.30am - 9.30am.

ST FRANCIS CHAPEL /Lochinvar Place, Port Macquarie

Contact: Sr Anne Hannigan

Ph 6589 9814 or 0419 243 259.

Communion Service or Mass: 9.30am Monday - Thursday

Sunday Mass: 9.30am

CHRIST THE KING CHAPEL | Boronia St, Port Macquarie

Contact: Sr Anne Hannigan

Ph: 6589 9814 or 0419 243 259

Weekday Mass: See Notice On Chapel Door

Mass: Saturday Vigil - 4.30pm

Rosary: 1st Saturday of the month 4.00pm.

ST BERNARD'S, TELEGRAPH POINT | Rollands Plain Rd, Telegraph Point

Thursday: 6.00pm.

STAR OF THE SEA, LAKE CATHIE | Ocean Drive, Lake Cathie

Sunday: 8.00am.

FEAST DAYS

St Francis de Sales

Tuesday 24 January



The Conversion of St Paul the Apostle

Wednesday 25 January



St Timothy, St Titus & St Angela Merici

Friday 27 January

St Thomas Aquinas

Saturday 28 January

ROSTERS

28 & 29 January 2017

READERS AND COMMENTATORS

6pm Vigil: Sarah Smith
Diana Smith
Kym Condon

7.30am: Sandy Luschwitz
Jennifer Crossing
Denise McLoughlin

9.00am: Richard O'Brien
Peta Rourke
Mary Bennett

5.00pm: Lani Gobius
Volunteer
Christa Morrow

9.00am: Cath Stevenson
Phoebe Morris
Jacob Soerensen
Jenny Soerensen

5.00pm: Debbie Rennes
Casey Whitehouse
Leisa Fisher
Natalie Jennings

GIFT BEARERS ROSTER

6pm Vigil: B Crozier &
S Williams

7.30am: J Dean

9.00am: K Cooper & Family

MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

6pm Vigil: Rod Smith
Denise Smith
Joy Amos
Peter Brooks

7.30am: Pat McLoughlin
Beverly Arthur-Pfeil
Wendy Pfeil
Kevin Lewis

THE STATUE OF OUR LADY

Genevieve Postlewait
Phone: 0439 671 539

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

4th Sunday of Year A
Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13;
Psalm 145;
I Corinthians 1:26-31;
Matthew 5:1-12.

DIOCESAN INVESTMENT FUND PAYS 2.15% AT CALL!

There are no fees or charges on your account. *AGENTS: Mrs Veronica Rinkin & Mrs Mary O'Brien*
DIF Office, Parish Administration Centre, Phone: (02) 6583 7439 9am – 1pm Monday - Friday