

ST. AGATHA'S PARISH

52 Oriel Rd Clayfield Q 4011

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Facebook: facebook.com/St. Agatha's Catholic Parish Clayfield
Aggies Youth: facebook.com/aggiesyouth

Parish Priest: Fr. Anthony Mellor (ph: 0448 840 040)

Associate Pastor: Fr. Saji George, CMI.

Parish Secretary: Mrs Rosemary Greer **Admin. Assistant:** Mrs Jane Cameron

Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 8.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30 pm to 4.30pm
(Please note: the Office is closed between 12.30 - 1.30pm)

Local Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Representative: Georgia Allan (0456 441 717)



St. Agatha's Catholic Primary School 6 Hunter Lane Clayfield Qld 4011. Phone: 3326 9222

School Principal: Mrs Carol Sayers **APRE:** Mr Nick Fogarty **Outside School Hours Care Coordinator:** Ashleigh Stacpoole

Third Sunday of Advent (Yr. B) - 17th December 2017

Readings

1st Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11; **2nd Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; **Gospel:** John 1:6-8, 19-28

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday 18 December: 6.30am

Wednesday 20 December: 9am

Thursday 21 December: 9am

Friday 22 December: 9am

WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday 5.00pm

(1st Rite of Reconciliation:

Saturday 4.30pm)

Sunday 7.00am

9.00am

5.30pm

Rosary before Mass.

Parish Calendar

DECEMBER

• **Monday 18th**

SVDP Meeting 5pm Parish Office

• **Tuesday 19th**

2nd Rite of Reconciliation 7pm

• **Thursday 21st**

Choir practice 6pm-7pm

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Tickets \$2 each or
3 for \$5.

Drawn Sunday
24 December
at 9.00am Mass



*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.*

Dear Friends,

Today is called "Gaudete Sunday" because today's Mass begins with the opening antiphon (see above), *Gaudete in Domino semper* ("Rejoice in the Lord always"). Today we light the rose candle of the Advent wreath, and the priest can wear rose

vestments to express our communal joy and anticipation at the coming of Jesus, as our Saviour. The theme of the third Sunday of Advent is rejoicing in hope. Advent is a time for joy, not only because we are anticipating the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, but also because God is already in our midst. Christian joy does not come from the absence of sorrow, pain or trouble, but from an awareness of the presence of Christ within us and around us. A sad Christian is a contradiction in terms.

However, there is a rather painful and curious twist to the celebration of Gaudete Sunday this year. We gather in the immediate shadow of the final recommendations of the Royal Commission. It would be naïve to think that this is a conclusion to a troubling chapter; as we can see from the forceful language of the recommendations, this is only the beginning of an on-going process of accountability and transparency. The weeks, months and years ahead will be difficult in their own way.

On this particular Gaudete Sunday, do we have it within us to cry out, "Rejoice!"? I hope so, even if it is a little more muted than other years. Let us be disappointed in the Church if we need to be, let us be ashamed when confronted with the terrible truth, and let us be sorrowful when we hear the damning judgements. But let us never lose hope; let us hope in God, in one another, and — yes — in the Church. Only Christ can redeem us, only Christ can heal whatever is broken, and only Christ can truly make the Church a true light to the nations which reflects Him as the true light of all the world. Despite everything, Christ is still to be found here — even among a sinful and broken people. Where else would God be? Perhaps that thought alone is enough for us to lift our eyes towards the light of the Advent candle.

Fr. Anthony

The Wisdom of Pope Francis

When we await at home a visit from a loved one, we prepare everything with care and happiness. In the same way we want to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord: to wait for him every day with solicitude, to be filled with his grace when he comes. In Advent, we are called to be more attentive to the needs of others, those closest to us.

Like John the Baptist, in this way we can open roads of hope in the desert of the dry hearts of many people. The Saviour we are waiting for is able to transform our life with the power of the Holy Spirit, with the power of love.

Clayfield Conversations

Last Friday, the final recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse were released. There were, and will continue to be, a flurry of analysis and commentary. In weeks to come, there will be official responses from Archbishop Coleridge. In the meantime, below are my observations regarding the Royal Commission and its final conclusions.

Beyond the Gloom and the Shadows: A Pastor's Eye-View of the Royal Commission

Five years ago, I was just beginning my doctorate and I can remember clearly the manner in which the proposal for a Royal Commission slowly began to emerge. A series of reports regarding the Newcastle-Maitland diocese on the now defunct late night current affairs program, *Lateline*, stirred the initial public interest. At the same time, historical issues in the diocese of Ballarat were also under the spotlight. Wherever the place, the basic story was the same. Abuse was ignored, the problems and the personnel weren't dealt with, the local Church leadership failed in its duty of care and, therefore, the cycle continued. This is the standard storyline, even if, in reality, it is more complicated than that. Nonetheless, that's the bare bones of our systematic failure.

We've heard this story and the pain inflicted over and over again. Behind every story, there is a person and a family, all too often damaged and broken by their experience. Among the Faithful, these accounts generated a mixture of shame, anger and disappointment. Sadly, for some within the Church, and for many outside, these revelations provided them with the concrete evidence they needed to conclude that the Church was merely a self-protective, self-advancing human institution, that at best, should not be taken seriously, or at worst, was a danger to society's well-being and a barrier to its proper development. However the Royal Commission might come to be interpreted in the years ahead, it exposed deep wounds of all kinds and publically revealed a Church of painful contradictions and jolting hypocrisy. "Catastrophic failures in leadership" was one description used by the Royal Commissioners. It is not history or tradition which burdens the Church; it is "blindness" and "deafness". We are afraid to see things that we don't want to see and to hear things that we don't want to hear. In scriptural terms, this is a condemnation, because true "seeing" and "hearing" are indications – guarantees – of the saving presence of Christ; "the blind will see and the deaf will hear" whenever and wherever the Good News is proclaimed.

I remember a Jewish rabbi once saying that redemption begins with the question, "Where to from here?" The conclusions of the Royal Commission have been blunt, unvarnished and uncompromising, and will take some time to unpack, with the Catholic Church, and other parties, having the opportunity to respond directly over the coming months. Nevertheless, leaders from the past have been found wanting, and named as "self-serving" and "negligent". These are the very things that we are called not to be, but time will tell whether prosecutors and courts will judge these matters to be criminal. The world that we live in is different now, thank God, and we are aware of damage that is done by the cultivation of silence, and how institutionalised secrecy enables darkness to take hold. We are still learning how to break these habits and change powerful, often subtle, collective patterns of thinking and acting, otherwise known as "culture". But change we must.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I wrote my doctoral thesis while the Royal Commission was unfolding. My dissertation is essentially about the connection between faith and culture. The relationship between the Catholic Church and Australian society will never be the same again. "How" it will be different is another question. Towards the end of my doctorate, I wrote this:

In Australia, as in many Western countries, the promise of the light of faith (and religion) is threatened by the eclipse of scandal. The Australian Government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse exposed the dark culture inherent in religious and public institutions. This excoriating yet necessary moment does not make the work of evangelisation any easier. It is an example of the light of justice being shone *into* the Church, illuminating that which was hidden. It feeds into a prevailing secular view that religious institutions are opposed to authentic human growth rather than being its facilitators. The "de-positioning" of the role of institutionalised religion within culture caused by these historical moments of accountably cannot be underestimated. The Catholic Church in Australia, indeed all churches, will need to work hard, in a sincere and humble fashion, to regain trust and enable any proclamation to be heard as Good News. Paul VI recognised that the first step of evangelisation was the evangelisation of the Church itself. In a similar sense, reform is a priority of the pontificate of Francis. Authenticity remains a powerful precondition for evangelisation.

Archbishop Coleridge has said often enough that it can no longer be "business as usual". We have faced the external examination and now we must comply with community expectations as well as being true to an on-going and thorough self-examination and confront the core issues which have shamed us and broken lives. In every Eucharist we pray, "Look not on our sins but on the faith of your church". Let this be our prayer in these Advent days. May the One who came among us as the humblest of lights amid the prevailing darkness show us the way forward beyond the gloom and the shadows, toward that festival where the blind "see" and the deaf "hear".

Fr. Anthony

ST AGATHA'S GIVING TREE - 2017

At Christmas time we may be overindulged with food and presents whilst many go without basic necessities.

The Giving Tree is loaded with little gift ideas which will help bring a smile to others on Christmas Day. You are encouraged to take a tag and return the gift and leave it at the base of the tree. Gifts to be in by this **Sunday 17 December**, as members of St Vincent de Paul will be collecting the gifts and distributing them for Christmas.

ST AGATHA'S SVDP CHRISTMAS APPEAL

will be conducted over the weekends 9/10th and 16/17th December. The Conference visits people in a large area from Pinkenba to Bowen Hills. Assistance is provided for families and single people seeking food, clothing, furniture, and financial help. All donations will be gratefully appreciated. Appeal envelopes will be provided on the church seats. If paying by cheque, make payable to "St Agatha's Clayfield SVDP Conference". Any donations of food should be delivered by this **Sunday 17 December**, due to Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday this year.

In our prayers we remember



Those who have died recently:

Bishop John Gerry, Barney Conroy, Patricia Crowley

Those whose anniversaries occur about now:

Hugh McBride, Bernard McBride, Fr Anthony Bishop, Peter Turnbull, Noel Turnbull, Eve Turnbull, Denise Clifford, Florence Hinson, Mary Dethlefs, Sally Meehan, Douglas Munt

Those who are sick:

Sr Assumpta O'Flynn, Maureen Long, Anne Seymour, Bev O'Brien, Margaret-Mary Hayes, James Elliott, Kahyam Baines, Paul Gaynor, Lorraine Atkinson-McEwen, Camille Butler-Storms, Mary Ann Marcelo, Isabel Leddick, Carmel Elms, Helen Orosz, Lisa Bowes, Sophia Horrocks, Mario Di Filippo, Norma Fiore, Joan Healy, Dell McHugh, Fr Michael Cooney, Craig Gerran, Ken Kipping, Paul White, Edward Clark, Joyce Rodgers, Carmel See, Regina Hwan, Val Boevinlic, Deanne Du Bour, Melissa Waka, Agnes Tam, Kerri Smith, Ann Tully, Patrick Gallagher, Eileen Clarke, Mel Purwo, Hellen Passente

PARISH CENTENARY RECOLLECTIONS BOOK – DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

Commemorating our Parish Centenary is all about the people of our Parish, past and present. We need your stories, memories, photographs, snippets, recipes. We will be collecting your contributions at each of the Masses over the next weeks. All contributions are welcome – even if it is only a few lines!

The Book of Parish Recollections will not be the same without YOUR contribution.

Please pass this onto those who have left the Parish – we would love to hear from them too.

The Book Team: stagathacentenarybook@gmail.com

As part of our centenary at St Agatha's, we are also planning to celebrate 100 years of *tying the knot* at the parish. By sending in your wedding image, you will have a chance to be part of a commemorative poster to mark the centenary. So if you were married at the church or know someone who was, feel free to email your wedding shot (at the church) to stagathasweddings@gmail.com. Please use the following wording in the subject line of the email: "WEDDING - (YOUR SURNAME)". This will make it easier for us to keep a track of the photos. Please also include the names of the couple, their wedding date and a contact number in the email so we can get in touch. Some images may be used on our social media platforms. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Ainsley Crutcher on 0417792212.

ROSTERS FOR CHRISTMAS

Are you available to be on roster at any of the Christmas Masses? Please fill in the sheets on the clipboard near the Sacristy. We need Communion Ministers, Readers and Altar Servers at all Masses.

Christmas Vigil - Sunday 24 December 6pm

We invite all children (no age restrictions) to come dressed as **shepherds or angels** to take part in the opening procession, no need to notify us, just turn up on the 24th.

With great joy we welcome

Xavier Bensemman, Lara Hardy, Edward Jacks and Hallie Marshall who will be baptised this weekend.



PARISH OFFICE

Parish Office will be closed from 12.30pm on Friday 22 December and will reopen 8.00am on Monday 8 January 2018.

2018 PARISH CALENDARS

The 2018 Parish (Centenary) Calendars with illustrations by St Agatha's Primary School Students are now available. PLEASE NOTE: ONLY ONE CALENDAR PER FAMILY

VOLUNTEER WELCOMER AND GUIDE - CATHEDRAL OF ST STEPHEN

Do you enjoy meeting people? Do you love your Cathedral? Do you revel in good art and juicy history? Do we have an opportunity for you! You are invited to talk with us about becoming a volunteer welcomer and guide at the Cathedral of St Stephen. Join us for an information session to be held in the Hanly Room of the Francis Rush Centre on 1 February 2018 from 10.30am-12.30pm. For more information, contact Carmel Devery at the Cathedral office on 3324 3030 or e-mail deveryc@bne.catholic.net.au by 25 January 2018

CHOSEN: Advent and Christmas Daily Reflections 2017 FOR SALE AT PIETY STALL \$4.00

PARISH ROSTERS - Please arrange a substitute if you are unavailable on your rostered day.

5.00pm

7.00am

9.00am

5.30pm

READERS:

16/17 Dec	Eric van der List Phil Zammit	Andrew Douglas Jeanine Bygott	Don Macpherson Wilma O'Connell Joseph O'Brien	Life Teen Mass
23/24 Dec	Edward Foley Cate Barrett	Aleira Egan Sr Cecily Foster	Trish Ryan Clare Smethurst Clare Smethurst	Christmas Vigil 6.00pm

COMMUNION MINISTERS:

16/17 Dec	Jan Zammit	<i>Volunteer</i>	<i>Volunteer</i>	Life Teen Mass
23/24 Dec	Ann Goves	Paulette Archer	<i>Volunteer</i>	Christmas Vigil 6.00pm

ORGANISTS:

16/17 Dec	<i>Volunteer</i>	<i>Volunteer</i>	Robyn Cuming	Life Teen Mass
23/24 Dec	<i>Volunteer</i>	<i>Volunteer</i>	Robyn Cuming	Christmas Vigil 6.00pm

ALTAR SERVERS:

9/10 Dec-20/21 Jan	<i>Volunteer/s</i>	<i>Volunteer/s</i>	<i>Volunteer/s</i>	<i>Volunteer/s</i>
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CHILDREN'S LITURGY:

3 Dec - 21 Jan 2018 *No Children's Liturgy - School Holidays*

SANCTUARY CARERS:

6 Jan Victor Podesta



A VOCATION VIEW: Every person who has ever born a child, and every person who has freely vowed away this honour, helps in some mysterious way to bring Jesus Christ into this world again.
Can you say: "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord"?

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

We hold a preparation session for baptism on the first Sunday of the month after the 9.00am Mass.
We celebrate baptism on the 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month
For bookings and further information, please phone the parish office on 3262 2859.



CHOIR PRACTICE FOR CHRISTMAS

Thursday 21 December 6.00pm - 7.00pm
in the Church. New members welcome

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to help with the St Agatha's Feast Day Celebrations on Sunday 4 February 2018. If you can help in any way, please write your name on the sheet at the back of the Church.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is needed for a family of eight, visiting Brisbane from Canada from 20 December 2017 to 13 January 2018. They are happy to negotiate about details.
For further information please phone Paul Martin 3268 1571.

ST AGATHA'S PARISH SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM - 2018

Reconciliation - *For children in Grade 5*

ENROLMENT WEEKEND: 17/18 February at any of the Masses

Saturday 5.00pm; Sunday 7.00am, 9.00am & 5.30pm

Enrolment forms available from the Parish Office.

1st Rite of Reconciliation: 17 March 4pm & 18 March 4.30pm

For further information call Jane Cameron at the parish office: 3262 2859

PIETY STALL

Variety of items for sale including Christmas, sympathy, thank you and birthday cards; and various gifts.
Come in and have a browse.

ST AGATHA'S SCHOOL has limited vacancies in Year 6 for 2018.

Please direct all enquiries to the Enrolment Secretary: wkwhite@bne.catholic.edu.au or phone: 3326 9222

MASS TIMES NEXT WEEKEND

4th Sunday of Advent: Saturday 23 December 5pm | Sunday 24 December 7am and 9am

Christmas Mass Times: Sunday 24 December 6pm Vigil Mass with carols from 5.30pm.

Midnight Mass with carols from 11.30pm.

Monday 25 December 7am and 9am Mass with carols from 8.45am.

Readings - Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year B) - 24 December 2017

1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; 2nd Reading: Romans 16:25-27; Gospel: Luke 1:26-38