

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, ST JOSEPH & OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) – 13 December 2020



Pathway to the mountain of Ben Nevis , Scotland | Unsplash | edited www.stjosephsbrackenridge.com

THE ROSE CANDLE OF JOY

We light the 3rd Candle of Advent this weekend – the Rose Candle of Joy.

WAKING TO A SENSE OF GRATITUDE

Yesterday morning, I woke up after 4am with a sense of real gratitude. I had been reliving the last week's pastoral visits in my sleep, remembering many people I had known over the years. Remembering their courage and creativity. A brief introduction to the pastoral visits is highlighted below with gratitude.

This weekend, with deep gratitude and inner joy, we thank God for the incredible gift of the first Christmas, with Jesus Christ, our Saviour, born into the world for us.

We are all invited this week to express our gratitude to God for people who have been a blessing in our lives.

We find inspiration in **St Joseph** and **St John the Baptist**.

GRATITUDE FOR CLINT'S JOURNEY

Clint, a member of our parish, is preparing for the next step in his journey to becoming an ordained permanent deacon in the church.

During the last week, in a Murri way, we have been travelling, meeting, listening, consulting, praying and sharing.

MINJERRIBAH & THE QUANDAMOOKA PEOPLE

On Friday 4th December, Clint and Karley, their sons, and myself travelled to Stradbroke Island (*Minjerribah*) to meet *Quandamooka* people and members of [Star of the Sea Parish, Cleveland](#) living on the island. The visit was organised by Bernice Fischer, a Quandamooka woman and parish member.

She welcomed the family as they arrived at the church.
One of the highlights was the Eucharist on Sunday.
Aunty Rose and Fr Ashley (parish priest) welcomed the family.
Sunday afternoon we returned to Bracken Ridge.

CHERBOURG & THE WAKKA WAKKA PEOPLE

On Wednesday and Thursday, Clint and I visited people in Cherbourg in the South Burnett. Uncle Bevan Costello, a *Wakka Wakka* Elder and parish member of [St. Joseph's Parish Murgon](#), organised the visit to the community. Uncle Bevan, Aunty Daisy and Fr Bryan (parish priest) welcomed Clint. Clint was interviewed over community radio – [Cherbourg Radio 94.1FM](#). Ravina and Uncle David from Murri Ministry travelled up for the Wednesday consultations.

At **Minjerribah** and **Cherbourg**, we prayed at the local cemeteries. Local symbols in the churches in Dunwich and Cherbourg were explained to us. Local expectations and histories were shared. Frustrations and hopes were expressed.

We thank God for the blessings of the past week in being a part of Clint's journey.

Netta has kindly posted photos of the week's journey on parish Facebook and Instagram. The photos can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/frgerrysjourney2020>

A BLESSING TO COME – SAINT JOSEPH

This year as we gaze at the Christmas Crib, we also ponder on St Joseph. Pope Francis has announced the **Year of St Joseph** from **8th December 2020 to 8th December 2021**. Gathered today in St Joseph's Church, Bracken Ridge and with our St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we have a wonderful opportunity to grow in understanding of the blessings of St Joseph in our lives.

Pope Francis speaks of Saint Joseph as a 'creatively courageous father'. ([Apostolic Letter **PATRIS CORDE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS ON THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROCLAMATION OF SAINT JOSEPH AS PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**](#)).

"If the first stage of all true interior healing is to accept our personal history and embrace even the things in life that we did not choose, we must now add another important element: creative courage. This emerges especially in the way we deal with difficulties. In the face of difficulty, we can either give up and walk away, or somehow engage with it. At times, difficulties bring out resources we did not even think we had. As we read the infancy narratives, we may often wonder why God did not act in a more direct and clear way. Yet God acts through events and people.

*Joseph was the man chosen by God to guide the beginnings of the history of redemption.
He was the true “miracle” by which God saves the child and his mother.
God acted by trusting in Joseph’s creative courage.
Arriving in Bethlehem and finding no lodging where Mary could give birth,
Joseph took a stable and, as best he could,
turned it into a welcoming home for the Son of God come into the world (cf. Lk 2:6-7).
Faced with imminent danger from Herod, who wanted to kill the child,
Joseph was warned once again in a dream to protect the child,
and rose in the middle of the night to prepare the flight into Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-14).
A superficial reading of these stories can often give the impression
that the world is at the mercy of the strong and mighty,
but the “good news” of the Gospel consists in showing that,
for all the arrogance and violence of worldly powers,
God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan.
So too, our lives may at times seem to be at the mercy of the powerful,
but the Gospel shows us what counts.*

*God always finds a way to save us, provided we show the same creative courage as
the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by
trusting always in divine providence.
If at times God seems not to help us, surely this does not mean that we have been
abandoned, but instead are being trusted to plan, to be creative, and to find
solutions ourselves.”*

BLESSING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST IN JOHN’S GOSPEL 1:6-8, 19-28

In today’s Gospel, we recall that

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

John the Baptist was sent by God.
God trusted him to prepare the way for Jesus.
John the Baptist was creative and courageous.

We are all called to witness to the love of Jesus.
The Gospel further relates that

“He came as a witness to testify to the light,”

Jesus is not a secret we keep to ourselves this Christmas.
He is the light to our world, the light to ourselves.
The light that shines on our words,
our actions, our hospitality, our prayer for others.
We pray that we may witness to Jesus, with creativity and courage.
The light of Jesus draws us into a deeper faith.
The Gospel says, **“so that all might believe through him.”**

Even though John ministered in one geographical area,
and in one historical time, the mission was for all people.

We don't keep the Good News of Jesus to ourselves.

"He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light."

We are commissioned to testify to Jesus.

John the Baptist testified to the people, saying

*'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
"Make straight the way of the Lord"'*.

As John humbly points out:

*"John answered them, 'I baptize with water.
Among you stands one whom you do not know,
the one who is coming after me;
I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.'
This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing."*

As we prepare for Christmas, we learn about creative courage from Saint John the Baptist and Saint Joseph.

Let us now pause and acknowledge with gratitude,
people in our own lives who blessed us by their creative courage.

[pause]

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/121320.cfm>

