

A statement from the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

Dear Parishioners and friends of St Agnes,

I had hoped that a statement from the Australian Bishops was available before last weekend, however it was published this week and reads as follows:

A statement from the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB, regarding the Christopher Saunders case.



**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC
BISHOPS CONFERENCE**

The crimes of abuse of which the former bishop of Broome, Christopher Saunders, has been found guilty following a jury verdict in the District Court of Western Australia represent a betrayal of everything the gospel and the Catholic Church stand for. They are a violation of the human dignity of victims and survivors and a complete betrayal of their trust: these crimes deserve the strongest condemnation.

As Bishop Tim Norton, the current bishop of Broome, has said in his pastoral letter, those whose bravery enabled them to come forward to expose these crimes – the victims, the survivors and other witnesses – have shown great courage, commitment and resilience through a long and difficult process. The Catholic community in Broome, and more widely in Western Australia and the rest of our nation, owes them a great debt of gratitude.

While the horrors of abuse occur in secret, it is the courage of those who bring these horrors into the open which enables accountability and, through that accountability, the beginning of healing.

The persistence of the Western Australia Police Force in pursuing this matter has also been a key element in bringing this matter to trial and opening up the possibility for healing to begin.

The bishops of Australia join Bishop Norton in his apology to all those who have been a part of this terrible story. Standing beside him, we too “are deeply sorry for the hurt they have experienced. We are sorry for the shame they have endured. We are sorry that it has taken so long for their voices to be heard and for their pain to be acknowledged. We will do all we can to reach out to them for hope and healing”.

The crimes of which Christopher Saunders has been found guilty are offences against both the civil law and the law of the Church.

The criminal penalties will be determined by the presiding judge and announced at the sentencing hearing.

The Church’s own legal processes, necessarily suspended once the police investigation had begun, continued when the police indicated they were not in a position to proceed.

These processes were suspended again once the police, partly on the basis of the Church’s investigations which were made available to them, were able to re-instate their formal enquiries.

With the conclusion of the trial the Church’s investigation can now recommence. Decisions about the position of the former bishop of Broome in the Church will therefore be determined by Rome.

At the local level practical decisions about future financial and other support will be made by the Broome Diocese and informed by the outcome of the proceedings in Rome.

Given the many failures of leaders and other members of the Church in the past, and tragically as we now realise still today, it is important that the Church continue to follow clear protocols.

(Continued over the page)

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.



**UNCOMPROMISING
INTEGRITY**

(continued from front page)

Among these protocols is that of ensuring that complaints against bishops and other senior Church leaders are managed not by other bishops but by independent bodies. This is to avoid any possibility of “in-house” (and potentially biased) investigations.

A second fundamental protocol is that of temporarily suspending any Church investigations while formal police enquiries are taking place. This is to avoid any possibility of Church actions interfering with or compromising the integrity of the police investigations. Church authorities in Western Australia cooperated fully with the police throughout this long process.

These two related protocols have been followed in relation to the Saunders case. The intention was always to allow the allegations against the former bishop to be dealt with objectively and transparently, and independently of the Church. This has now been achieved.

In his pastoral letter Bishop Norton asks some important questions: “How could such a proud, caring and determined diocese that features such remarkable communities and people be home to such a betrayal of trust? How could our diocesan leadership be involved in such heartless events?”

These are questions not just for the diocese of Broome but for all of us in the Church in Australia.

It is distressing, demoralising and humbling that in the Church in Australia we are still being confronted by such dreadful failures and still being challenged by such probing questions. We must never think that the sexual abuse crisis is somehow behind us.

We must never relax our vigilance or lower our expectations in relation to safeguarding. There is still much to do.

Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB

Adoration

Every Wednesday during the School term in St Francis of Assisi Chapel, 3.30pm – 4.00pm.

Every second Saturday of the month in St Agnes’ Church after the Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion at 11am. The next opportunity is 12 September.

Cenacle

Cenacle including Adoration and the Rosary occurs on the following days. Contact Rose for more information on 0415 435 135.

1. Wednesday at St Francis of Assisi Chapel, Lochinvar Place at 11.00am.
2. Thursday at St Mary Star of the Sea Church, Lake Cathie at 2.00pm.



Gospel Reflection: 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 16:13-20

Like last week’s gospel, this week’s story takes place in a region that was outside predominantly Jewish territory. Caesarea Philippi (north of Galilee and in the region of modern day Syria) had long been a centre of pagan worship. It was used originally by the Canaanites as a site of worship; the Greeks built a temple to one of their gods there; in 20 BCE Herod the Great built a temple to Caesar Augustus; and after his death, Herod’s son, Phillip, renamed the city Caesarea Phillipi after Tiberius Caesar and himself. It is intriguing that Matthew’s gospel chooses such a site as the location for such a significant revelation of faith.

Jesus asks the disciples who people say he is. They report that people associate Jesus with one of the great prophets of Jewish tradition. By people identifying Jesus with other great prophets they were projecting Jesus into the same mould as that prophet. What they were saying was that Jesus will be a great leader in the style of John the Baptist, or Elijah or even Jeremiah. The expectation of a messiah was running very high at the time of Jesus and everyone had their own idea about what that messiah would be like – usually aligned with some previous leader. They didn’t seem to understand that Jesus was breaking the mould and was not going to fit in with any of those expectations. To see him as one of the great prophets come again is always going to be an inadequate understanding of Jesus as messiah.

When Jesus pushes the disciples for their own ideas, it is Simon Peter who speaks up and identifies Jesus as being the Son of the living God. Making a play on Peter’s name (in Greek, petros = Peter and petra = rock), Jesus states that hereafter, Simon Peter will be known as Peter and upon the rock of his profession of faith the church will be built.

© Greg Sunter, Liturgy Help

Catholic Life



Copies of the August 2026 edition of the ‘Catholic Life’ magazine are available from the church, chapels and the Pastoral Office.

Take a copy to read stories from around the Diocese.

The magazine is also available on line by scanning the QR code.



First Holy Communion

Please keep in your prayers all the children of our parish who have now started preparing to receive their first holy communion. This will be the third of their three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist) into the church and when they receive this sacrament they will be 'full' members of our community.

2026 Diocesan Art Prize

There is still time to submit your entry.



This year's theme is 'The Face of Compassion'. Compassion is seen in Christ's encounters with the vulnerable, outcast, and broken, and it continues to be lived out in the Church today. You are invited to use your artistic talents to help recognise the face of compassion in our world today.



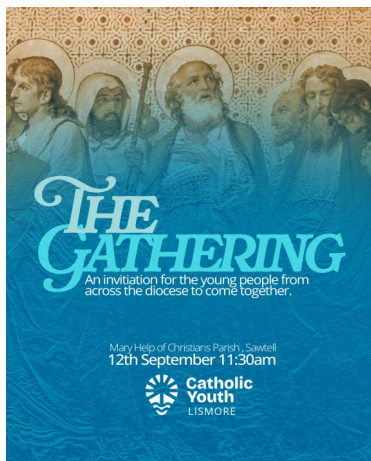
Categories: 0-7 years, 8-12 years, 13-17 years, 18+ years, Group and People's Choice. Entries close 24 August 2026. Scan the QR to learn more.

Adult Formation

Faith: Recording of Creating an LGBTIQA+ Inclusive Faith Community webinar is now available. Presented by the Council of Australasian Catholics (CAC) and Garratt Publishing, on Wednesday, 12 August, at 7.00 pm with panelists, Angela Han, Stef Rozitis, and Tim Smyth who considered questions around identity, faith, and belonging – and what it means for the Church to be a place where all are truly welcome. See the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkahuZZWtAE>. You may be interested in the book *The Rainbow of God's Creation: LGBTIQA+ Realities and Catholicism* by Trish Hindmarsh with the Preface by Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen. Buy now or contact Tony Worner by email tony.worner@stagneparish.org.au to receive either link.

The Gathering

The Gathering is an opportunity for young people from across the Diocese of Lismore to come together and celebrate the launch of Catholic Youth Lismore. This is an initiative of the Diocesan Youth Council, and a ministry of the Diocese of Lismore, which seeks to strengthen, connect, and grow youth ministry across the Diocese. For further details, please contact our Youth Coordinator, Christa Morrow: christa.morrow@stagneparish.org.au



Remember in Prayer

Recently Deceased: Alwyn Shaw, Bob Ryan, Sullivan Kennedy-Waterman,

Anniversaries: Rowland & Tasma Cruce, David Burr, Monsignor Kerry Bayada, Roger Toyloy, Tyler O'Connor, Emilia & Walter Sztajniger,

Other Intentions: Marie & Patrick Mullens, Mary Clark, Margaret Gallagher, Barbara Riordan, Win Rohan, Peggy Collins, and masses of thanksgiving and donor intentions.



ENCOUNTER

Encounter Youth & Kids

Encounter Youth & Kids invites all primary and high school students to our Brotherhood & Sisterhood Night on Friday 4 September. Join us as we explore what it means to be young men and women of God through fun, friendship, and faith. 5:30pm - 7:30pm in the St Agnes Community Centre.

Encounter Young Adults

Young adults aged 18-35 are welcome to join us at the St Agnes Community Centre from 6pm. Bring your Bible and come along for an evening of prayer, scripture and fellowship. New? Contact Christa to join our WhatsApp group and stay connected. For Youth Ministry enquiries, please contact: christa.morrow@stagneparish.org.au

Baptism Information Session

An information session on the sacrament of Baptism will be held on Wednesday 26 August at 5.30pm in St Agnes' Church. If you are planning on having your child baptised please contact the Pastoral Office to register your attendance at an information session.

Man with a Pram

Man With A Pram brings fathers and families together to celebrate Father's Day with a walk and community event to combat isolation and raise funds for perinatal mental health. 10% of dads will experience perinatal anxiety or depression in the first six months of a child's life. That's around 83 dads every day. No dad should have to walk alone.



Join to celebrate Father's Day, here in Port Macquarie on Saturday 5 September for Man With A Pram – a community walk to raise awareness and support for dads' mental health. More details next week.



Parish Priest

Father Paul Gooley

Assistant Priest

Father Proencio Bognay

Pastoral Office

47 Hay Street: PO Box 23

Port Macquarie 2444

T (02) 6583 1024

E pastoraloffice@stagnesparish.org.au

Web: www.stagnesparish.org.au

Office Hours: 8.30am - 4.30pm Mon,

Tues, Thurs, Friday.

9.00am-4.30pm Wednesday

Parish Pastoral Council

PPC@stagnesparish.org.au

c/o St Agnes' Pastoral Office

PO Box 23 Port Macquarie 2444

Feedback to Parish

Complaints, concerns and feedback (both positive and negative)

can be made by emailing:

parish.feedback@stagnesparish.org.au

c/o St Agnes' Parish Administration

Feedback: PO Box 1736 Port Macquarie

Liturgical Celebrations

21st Week in Ordinary Time (Year A/2)

Monday 24 August

[St Bartholomew](#)

Feast

Tuesday 25 August

[St Louis](#)

Optional

[St Joseph Calasan](#)

Optional

Thursday 27 August

[St Monica](#)

Memorial

Friday 28 August

[St Augustine](#)

Memorial

Saturday 29 August

[The Passion of St John the Baptist](#)

Memorial

General Mass Times in St Agnes' Catholic Parish

(Please note: There are occasions when these Mass times may change.

Please ensure you read the inside of the newsletter for changes).

Monday: No Mass

Tuesday: 9.30am or 11.00am Residential aged care only

12.05pm St Agnes' Catholic Church

Wednesday: 9.30am St Francis of Assisi Chapel

6.00pm St Bernard's Church

Thursday: 12.05pm St Agnes' Catholic Church

4.30pm Christ the King Chapel

Friday: 12.05pm St Agnes' Catholic Church

Saturday: 5.00pm St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, Lake Cathie

Sunday: 7.30am, 9.00am, 5.00pm St Agnes' Catholic Church

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

COVID Awareness

Please continue to be mindful and respectful of each other and do not attend if you are unwell or have any cold/flu-like symptoms.

Suggested Streaming of Masses

Sunday 9.00am - Bishop Greg Homeming OCD, Lismore. [YouTube Channel](#);

Daily Mass on Demand

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYRq7AjiVimr-hcHFJD_HVaQ

Mass for you at Home: Sunday 6.00am streamed on Channel 10.

Reflections: Lismore Diocese [YouTube Channel](#); [Fr Paul Daily Reflections](#)

Roster 30 August 2026

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

7.30am:

SAC: Denise Smith

R1: Bob Green

R2: Gai Green

C: Joan Lancaster

EMHC: Mary Hayek

Denise Smith

Welcomer: Mary O'Brien

5.00pm

SAC: Vanessa Denham

R1: SAPS

R2: SAPS

C: SAPS

EMHC: SAPS

SAPS

Welcomer: SAPS

CLW: SAPS

9.00am:

SAC: Alan Wheatland

R1: Renee Barros

R2: Margaret Donnelly

C: Judy Brady

EMHC: Jenny Hayek

Sandra Hartas

Welcomer: Cathy Hawtin (S)

Gavin Smith (W)

CLW: Holly Hough

Lisa James

Tuesday 12.05pm, 1 September

SAC: Sue Williams

R: Volunteer

Thursday 12.05pm, 3 September

SAC: Leone Flanagan

R: Judy Brady

Friday 12.05pm, 4 September

SAC: Vanessa Denham

R: Kaye Stingel

Psalm: MacKillop College



Diocesan Investment Fund

4.15%

effective 1/8/2026

St Agnes' Catholic Parish Library

Library opening times

Thursday 10am - 12pm

Friday 10am - 2pm

The Port Macquarie office of the DIF is open Monday to Friday

9.00am - 1.00pm. Phone Veronica or

Mary for any enquiries on 6583

7439.

All enquiries outside these hours

Safeguarding Office. If you have any Safeguarding concerns contact the Diocese of Lismore Safeguarding Office. We will listen to you respectfully; offer support and discuss options you have available to you.

To contact the Safeguarding Office, please phone

(02) 6621 9444 or email:

safeguarding@lismore.catholic.org.au.

A copy of the Safeguarding Newsletter is available from the St Agnes' Church foyer or the Pastoral Office.