

I want to share with you parts of a letter I received last week and my reply to that letter. It gives us much food for thought and it was good to get the feedback.

"I have been a STM parishioner for 20 years and am writing with my first grumble. I was very disappointed to see in last week's newsletter the suggestion that people in "irregular relationships" bring the parish into disrepute, and should not apply to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. It felt like a return to the 1950s. The status of a person's relationship is a private matter between them, their partner and God. It is not a parish matter. In this day and age to suggest an "irregular relationship" is a source of disrepute ignores the reality of our continuously evolving community. *(abridged)*

There are many reasons why people are in "irregular relationships". Survivors of sexual abuse or trauma often find it difficult to form long-lasting relationships. For some parishioners, the clergy will have been responsible for that trauma. There are many good people in our parish who are in "irregular relationships". They do not deserve to be judged and marginalised in this way. Our Lord did not do this, and our current Pope has gone out of his way to be inclusive to them. I do hope our parish can be more inclusive too."

(My reply)

Thank you so much for your email. I agree with a lot of what you had to say and accept that the notice in the newsletter was poorly written and not well expressed. It can easily be interpreted in the way you have so well expressed. This has not been our usual practice in finding people for such important ministries. Usually we have such discussions with people one on one to help them discern if this is a ministry for them or not. I assure you this was a one off and I too was very disappointed, but the responsibility is mine and I accept that.

We will endeavour to improve our processes so that as you say we can be more inclusive. *(Fr Darren)*



All Saints by the Sea

Papamoa Coast

**4th Sunday in Advent
24 December 2017**

The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures."
[Amoris Laetitia 315]



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

**STM, Mt Maunganui Vigils 24 Dec 6.00pm & 9.00pm
Christmas Day 9.30am**

St Patrick's, Te Puke Christmas Day 9.00am

St Peter's, Maketu Vigil 6.00pm

Note: Vigil Masses (24 Dec) are Christmas Masses.
There will be NO 5.00pm Mass on Sunday, 24 Dec at STM Church.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1 January 2018

**STM, Mt Maunganui 9.00am
St Peter's, Maketu 8.00am**

Youth Co-ordinator

Natalie Smyth has been appointed our youth coordinator for next year. She has been a parishioner at St Thomas More for around eight years, and along with her husband and two children live at Papamoa. She is a familiar face to many through her involvement in reading at Mass and children's liturgy. We look forward to her start date late in January. Fr Darren

January timetable. There will be no Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament during this month. Also there will be no Tuesday Masses at Te Puke. This will be transferred to STM on Tuesdays at 9am. Anointing of the Sick will not be held during the month of January (after the 9am Mass at STM Church).

Christmas Message

On behalf of the clergy and staff of All Saints By-the-Sea Parish I would like to wish you all many blessings for the festive seasons. Our parish staff have done a wonderful job this year and we all rely on them to keep the parish moving. However without the volunteer workforce within the parish we would grind to a halt. A heart-felt thanks to you all. I would like to encourage those not yet involved in service of the parish to make a New Year's resolution, get involved. The burden of service continues to fall on the same generous shoulders and we so often take them for granted. I especially encourage young people and new people to the parish to take up opportunities to offer your talents and gifts to the Church.

Today you will see a letter from a parishioner in the newsletter which is important in that it reminds us of the complexities of church life, the failings within our communities and the need for us all to be more like Christ. I find it sobering to end the year in deep reflection during such a festive time.

But Christmas is about the birth of Christ and we should never lose sight of the need to grow, change and mature in our relationship with God. Doing things as we have always done them, I believe, is not the Christmas spirit. So instead of getting stuck in age old family Christmas traditions why not try and break the mould for a change, do something different, it can be quite refreshing and rewarding. Happy Christmas. (Fr Darren)

NEW WEBSITE: www.allsaintsbythesea.nz

Parish Priest: Fr Darren McFarlane; Assistant Priest: Fr Stuart Young

Deacons: Henk Gielen, Vince Shaw, Doug Rewi.

Presbytery: St Patrick's, Queen St, Te Puke, Ph 07 573 5377

Parish Office, 17 Gloucester Rd, Mt Maunganui 3116. Ph 07 575 4807 ext 2.

Email: admin@allsaintsbythesea.nz



We find ourselves constantly looking for answers to bigger and deeper questions to life. But what we don't realise, is that we are not alone in this.

HAVE YOU TRIED ALPHA?

Come and explore life, faith and meaning in 2018 on ALPHA. Starts Wednesday evenings on 21 February – 9 May at 7.00pm in the STM church centre.

To register contact Heidi 5754807 Ext 6 or

Email: pastoral@allsaintsbythesea.nz

NOTE: The Parish office will be closed from Fri, 22 Dec 2017 through to Mon, 15 Jan 2018. All staff will be on leave during this time.

READINGS for Christmas: 1. Isaiah 9:1-7 **2.** Titus 2:11-14
Gospel: Luke 2:1-14

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

Mon	
Tues	
Wed	Grace & Joe
Thurs	Jim Culley
Fri	Ted & Doreen
Sat & Sun	All Saints by the Sea Parish

MASS INTENTIONS:

If you wish to have a Mass offered please complete a Mass intention card & hand to priest (i.e. when office closed). Donation envelopes are available & can also be given to priest directly (when office closed). (Intention cards are in a plastic holder on the wall— by statue in STM Church foyer).

**SUNDAY
MASS TIMES**
Mt Maunganui
9.30am & 5pm

Te Puke
Saturday Vigil 5pm

Please note: these times subject to change

**WEEKDAY
MASS TIMES**
Monday
9am Te Puke

Tuesday
9am Mt
(during January)

Wednesday
9am Mt

Thursday
9am Mt

Anointing of Sick
Not during January
(after 9am STM Mass)

Friday
9am Mt

Saturday
9am Rosary Mt

RECONCILIATION
Before Mass
Tues & Sat (TP) &
Wed to Friday (Mt)
8.30am to 8.45am.

**NB: Liturgy of Word
& Holy Communion**
Mon (Mt) 9am

Maketu
Maori Mass
2nd Sunday of
month 11.30am
3rd Sunday of month
Liturgy service
11.30am