

John Paul II Centre for Family and Life

"created in the image of God"



Welcome and Blessings!

PO Box 81
Ashgrove Q. 4060
202 Waterworks Road,
Ashgrove Q. 4060
Director: Ray Campbell

Tel: (07) 33662111
Fax: (07) 33662188
Email: familycentre@bne.catholic.net.au
Web: www.bne.catholic.net.au/familyandlife
Development Officer: Gail Godfrey

Great Palm Island

Earlier this month I attended an 18th Birthday celebration of a young man living on Palm Island. His family and friends from the island have visited our family in Brisbane over the years and it was an honour to be invited through my daughter Lana, to the Island.

Lana has been back and forth for seven years to Palm, and is considered 'family'. Her initial contact was through an invitation to attend a leadership program with the PCYC in 2004. Lana made connections with various young people across the State and reciprocal hospitality continues. The word 'family' is synonymous with Palm Island, a place where goodness and sharing blossoms in this aboriginal community situated 57 km south of Townsville.

As we stepped off the plane in Townsville and onto the boat heading to Palm, Lana reminded me *once again* to 'just be' and 'be open'. I had already prepared myself to 'be open' however I appreciated her reminder because I did consciously zip my mind from tempting judgements. I was going to learn not to teach; not to think how something could be done differently but rather immerse myself in the daily lives of these warm and loving families. And what a privilege it was to be welcomed so earnestly.

Privacy and individualism is a modern construct and does not really apply on Palm except perhaps for the teachers, medical and religious groups who live in accommodation suited to their needs. It was

assumed that we were staying with one or other of the three groups mentioned. But I was so happy to say 'no, we're living with the families in their homes'. Together we experienced the pace, obstacles and joys of island life.

An obstacle for the parents of the boy having his 18th birthday, for example was not having the cake on time. This large ornately decorated birthday cake, purchased in Townsville, carried on the lap of various people on the two-hour boat ride back to Palm, was then stored in the fridge at the local store. On the evening of the 18th birthday it took an hour before the celebration could get underway until someone found the lost key to open the store.



Arriving at Palm Is.

The ability of 'letting go' becomes a regular part of life. One afternoon the plan was to collect fire wood and load it on a trailer but the car didn't have fuel or transmission oil so we walked from house to house to borrow. A baptism celebration was postponed because an elder from the mainland couldn't arrive until the next day due to tidal changes which affects the boat timetable. Therefore tidal flow dictates when people arrive or not. Lana and I planned days in advance our return by boat to Townsville for the connecting flight to Brisbane but the tide changed and so we had to book a flight instead. Specific time is not a priority because of other priorities. Fortunately we could book a flight, however this is not the case for most on the island as money is borrowed and shared. Food on the island is very expensive and most people shop in Townsville or Ingham.

Continued next page

We met two brothers in their 60's who had not succumbed to living in the impractical small three bedroom besser-block homes but rather chose to remain in humpies in the natural bush near the crystal blue water and soft sand. They explained how they made their spears by sharpening metal prongs over the fire and wrapping them with tar at the end of bamboo poles. We ate turtle, speared fish and stingray and cooked it over the fire.

Children, young people and adults all worked calmly together in preparation for the 18th celebration. Children climbed high in trees collecting mulberries to make special drinks for us. Boys and men dug holes and gathered palms to create a canopy for the timber tables soon to be adorned with desserts, meat and vegetables cooked underground in Kup Murri style. During the late afternoon guests arrived, conversations flowed along with the drinks, loud contemporary music set the scene for a lively evening. Before the banquet I was asked to say grace; this was a humbling experience. The meal was first served to children then women and men followed.

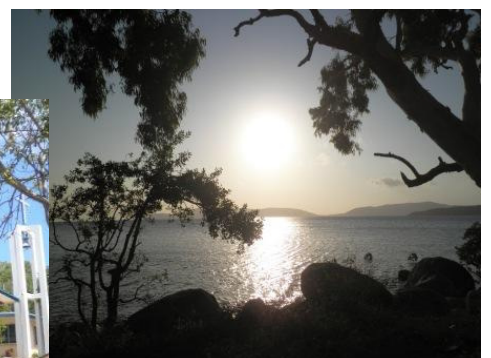
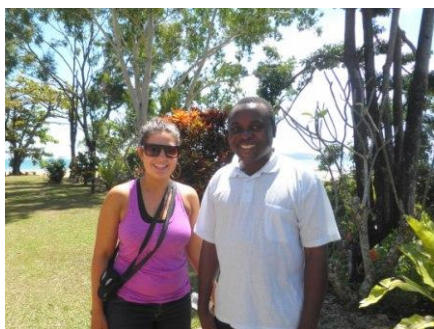
Next morning we met Fr. Daniel PP and volunteers from Brisbane. After Mass the parishioners organised their usual delicious morning tea. We then ventured into the mini-bus which offers a pick-up and drop-off service around

the island for anyone wishing to go to Mass or other functions. Fortunately our driver Tom, decided to take the elders for a drive around parts of the island. The commentary about where the old convent and school was located in addition to the very old stories the elders nostalgically recounted was very interesting.

I enjoyed watching animals roam free, a memory from my own childhood; where people and nature co-exist. However, animals are generally not considered pets; the dogs look a little worse-for-ware, the cats tend to look after themselves, and it was amazing to wake to the sounds of a mare and foal nibbling grass outside the bedroom window. The paradox is watching young boys riding horses bare-back while texting on their mobile phones, a great skill!

The grave sites of Cameron Doomagee and his son are highly decorated. We strolled along with adults and children who enlightened me about who was who from the tombstones or little timber crosses leaning on mounds of soft white dirt. One can feel the sadness on Palm, their sorrow and pain is recent and occasional stories surfaced about violent happenings. Life on Palm is overwhelming in some ways, unique, beautiful and unforgettable. There is much to learn.

Gail Godfrey



Lana and Fr Daniel, St. Anne's Catholic Church, sunset, the party feast



Life and Family Issues
Queensland Bioethics Centre and JPPII Centre for Family and Life
 Archdiocese of Brisbane
 June 2011

E-newsletter and date claimers.
 JPPII Centre for Family and Life and Queensland Bioethics Centre have launched a joint monthly e-newsletter to provide information on current life and family issues, and date claimers for upcoming events. If you would like to receive this *Life and Family Issues* or wish us to include your event please email familycentre@bne.catholic.net.au or ph. (07) 3366 2111.

A story about an aboriginal man

I am a Catholic priest from Ghana, West Africa. My colleague and I were sent here in Australia to help in the pastoral work of Townsville Diocese. We arrived in Townsville on the 5th of September, 2009. In mid November of 2009 I was sent to St. Anne's Parish in Palm Island to do pastoral work. Since I was going through a cultural shock, I was always sad, lonely and confused. Due to that, I used to go the beach to sit on the rocks there sometimes, just to watch some boats passing, the beauty of the beach and the sea, the big rocks and the waves of the ocean. Since I was not born near the coast I really admire this scenery.

Once while on my regular visit to the beach, a certain man and his children came for fishing. I was engaged in conversation with him and I told him whom I was, my mission in Palm Island and why I was sitting there alone on the beach. I told him I was feeling sad, lonely and confused. He said, "You have the biggest man to talk to." I asked him who that man was and he pointed to the sky, and said "God." I sighed and did not know what to say anymore. Not that I was not praying. I was praying always but my prayers were not yet answered so I was still disturbed.

The man cast his net into the sea just near the beach and to my surprise he caught a lot of fish, very big ones and small ones alike. With the help of his children, he began pulling the net ashore. I could see the fish jumping here and there in the net. Since I was not born near the coast, I was admiring the scene very much.

When the man saw the great number of the fish and how big they were, he said to his children, "I need just some small amount." "I don't need the very big ones either." The man picked out a small quantity of fish and to my surprise, he asked his children to let the rest go into the sea. For him, he does not have to take the whole lot home. He felt he should return the rest to the sea for anybody who needs to come and fish. More or less his fridge is the sea. How many of us in this world could behave selflessly like this man?

For me, I could see that one of the philosophies of the people I am living with is the spirit of sharing. This man I am talking about also had the right to take whatever he and his children caught but he thought of his neighbours and so he let go of the rest of the fish. I believe if we all have the spirit of sharing like this man, the world will be a better place to live.

Fr. Daniel - Daniel Djodjowu Mawuko

Men's Workshop News

Deanery cohesion was an unexpected yet positive outcome from a **Men's Breakfast** held at St. Matthew's Parish in Loganholme on 24th September. Twenty-two men from various Parishes in the Logan Deanery gathered



for a hearty breakfast and to learn about every man's spiritual journey. Guest speaker was David Formby. David comes from a trade background and has a master's degree in Social Work and qualifications in theology. He has five children and sixteen grandchildren and has been working with the Men Transforming Men (MTM) organisation as a counsellor and board member for many years.

One of the men echoed the sentiments of the group saying that "everything went extremely well. David's presentation was all about secret Men's business (only joking) and as such I can't go into the nitty gritty of his presentation. Suffice to say that the content of his presentation did generate healthy discussions from the attendees, some pictured above. I am sure by the conclusion of his presentation we could all take away something to think about, ponder upon and apply along our journey of life. Judging from the comments of those

who attended these sorts of get-togethers not only benefit those who attended but help to foster a closer relationship between the various Parishes within our Deanery."

David was also guest speaker for a **Men's Dinner** which proved to be a wonderful success at the St. Maximilian Kolbe's Parish in Marsden on 4th October. The Men's Association has been established two years and meet every two months. Twenty-seven men enjoyed great fellowship and look forward to their next gathering.

ARIA Angels continues to welcome new families each week. The interactive music and arts experience is proving to be a boon for parish communities.



Deacon Mike Jones and Fr. Leo Burke enjoying themselves at St Rita's. Prayer time. Children exploring insects in the garden, St. Matthew's

Special events for Women

All welcome!

Women: Woven in Love

St. Patricks, 24 Tobruk Street,
Beenleigh
Date: Saturday 22nd October
Time: 3.00pm —6.00pm



St. Mary's, Bromelton Street, Beaudesert
Date: Saturday 5th November
Time: 3.00pm —6.00pm
Contact: Jean Tamblyn ph. 0400 488 221 or Gail Godfrey
ph. 3366 2188



Mothers Prayers

Presentation and Workshop to learn more about this simple yet profound experience.

Mothers Prayers groups have flourished in over 90 countries and has the approval, support and blessing of Christian leaders of all denominations.
Venue: St. Rita's Parish, 37 Benfer Road, Victoria Point.
Date: Wednesday 30th November
Time: 8.30 am cuppa for 9.00-11.00am (Festive Morning tea)
Contact: Elaine Strati ph. 32079177

WOMEN
"Woven in Love"

John Paul II Centre
For Family and Life
"Created in the Image of God"

Significant life transitions are often times when wounds from the mother relationship can rise to the surface.

This mini workshop offers a nurturing experience to explore and support women in their relationships as daughters, or as mothers.

It offers a time for personal reflection, rejoicing, celebration and healing.

Come and listen to the stories of three women, share our faith, and grow more deeply in relationship with Jesus and each other.

Facilitator:
Gail Godfrey is a gifted Musician with 25 years in Early Childhood Music Education. Her work in the field of Human Services as a Counsellor, her studies in Theology and her innate deep spirituality now finds her working at the John Paul II Centre for Family and Life where she is employed as a Mission Development Officer.

Workshop details:		
Date: Saturday 22nd October 2011		Date: Saturday 5th November 2011
Venue: St. Patrick's Church Tobruk Street, Beenleigh		Venue: St Mary's Parish Hall
Tobruk Street, Beenleigh		Bromelton Street, Beaudesert
Time: 3.00pm - 6.00 pm		Time: 3.00pm - 6.00pm
RSVP: 19th October		RSVP: 2nd November
	Cost: Donation	

To Register or for more Information please contact:

Jean Tamblyn Logan Deanery Coordinator Email: pa.woodridge@bne.catholic.net.au Mob: 0400 488 221	Gail Godfrey John Paul II Centre for Family and Life Email: familycentre@bne.catholic.net.au Ph: 3366 2188
---	---

Women of the Way

Gail attended and thoroughly enjoyed this wonderful retreat experience. Julie Borger, a member of the planning team has written the following reflection.

Nearly 100 women gathered for the 15th Annual 'Women of the Way' Retreat in September. It was a time to step aside from the busyness of our everyday lives and listen to God speak.

Jan Heath, our retreat facilitator humorously inspired the group with humbling stories of the Holy Spirit working in her life at poignant times. Jan described Scripture as a spiritual GPS; a 'compass for our life' as Pope Benedict XV1 called it. St Augustine called Scripture 'our letters from home'.

After our reminder about the importance of Scripture we were given a simple technique for getting more out of our time in the Sacred Word. It is called S.O.A.P. First we read a piece of Scripture, Observe within ourselves our reaction to it, Apply this new insight to our lives then Pray that God will help us to live His word.

On Saturday morning Jan led the women in a naming exercise to show the importance of the Word. The women were asked whether they knew the meaning of their own names and had this impacted on their life journey. We explored the power of words and meanings.

This year we were blessed to have Fr Anthony Ananwa



as our resident priest. In the telling of his own testimony, he gave a wonderful insight into how God has a purpose and a plan for each of us that cannot be denied. We heard how Fr Anthony spent 10 years evading his vocation but could not escape God's calling. Anthony returned to his seminary studies in Nigeria and is a blessing to his congregations. Our Masses, Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction were occasions of uplifting song and praise.

We were grateful to the gifted musicians who stirred our souls with songs; their expressive voices allowed for opportunities of great spiritual renewal.

During a special time of prayer, teams of two, ministered to individuals who revealed their needs. This is always a blessed time during the retreat. This year we heard the experiences of God easing troubled hearts, restoring hope and healing. The weekend had been one of restoration and growth.

Rosa Montegrando explained how through the Holy Spirit, 'Women of the Way' started 16 years ago. Rosa felt that women needed a safe, loving and caring environment where they could meet with other Christian women and receive teaching and healing. This annual retreat has become a highlight for many women each year. Women wishing to learn more about their faith and have some time apart to listen to God speaking to them, are warmly invited. Hope to see you in Camp Warrarree, Joyner, for our next Retreat 7-9 September, 2012!

Julie Borger