



*But while he was still a long way off,  
his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him;  
he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.*

Luke 15:20

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We, the people of Boonah Catholic parish,  
acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our parish is located  
and where we conduct our mission and ministry.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders, past and present.

As a local community of faith within the Church of Brisbane,  
we are committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples'  
unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas  
and their rich contribution to society.

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*Warm greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on this 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.*

## 1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

A **scripture reflection** is from Br. Julian McDonald, a Christian brother who is in Sydney.

Once again, an appreciation of context is vital for finding a way into understanding the parables of today's gospel.

In the time of Jesus, there was no such institution as a nursing home or a hostel for elderly people to live their final years in comfort and care. Care for elderly parents was the responsibility of their sons. The younger son, who demanded his share of the family inheritance, cashed it in and spent it on a fruitless search for personal pleasure. His behaviour demonstrated that he saw his father as undeserving of care and attention. In the society of the day there was no greater sin. The younger son neglected his filial duty and treated his father with utter contempt. So, it's important that we don't simply pass off that kind of behaviour as the thoughtlessness of youth.

We also have to remember that very few of Jesus' parables come to a clear resolution. They are deliberately left unfinished, challenging those who hear them to wrestle with what they

really mean. In this context, let's not forget that Matthew, Mark and Luke made a point of stating that Jesus explained his parables to those close to him while he left the crowds who were unmoved by his teaching to wallow in their ignorance, their lack of faith and their refusal to entertain a need to repent.



Note, for instance, Mark's record of Jesus' comment to those close to him about his reason for using parables: "Now when he was away from the crowd, those present with the Twelve questioned him about the parables. He told them: 'To you the mystery of the reign of God has been confided. To the others outside it is all presented in parables, so that they will look intently and not see, listen carefully and not

understand, lest perhaps they repent and be forgiven'. He said to them: 'You do not understand this parable (the Sower)? How then are you going to understand other figures like it?' (Mark 4: 10-13). If we stop to reflect on many of the parables with which we are familiar, we soon see that they are open to various interpretations, and that they are often enigmatic and, even, quite ambiguous.



Master of story-telling that he is, Luke sets us up to make judgements about the characters in his story of the "prodigal son". He begins with: "A man had two sons..." inviting us immediately to conclude that one was good and the other bad. Aware of his ongoing conflict with the religious leaders of his day on the topic of the real purposes of God's law, we are set up to misjudge the Pharisees and scribes who are presented as grumbling: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." Luke's way of narrating his story sets us up to adopt the view that, whenever Pharisees and scribes are critical of Jesus, they are wrong. But isn't there some justification to their criticism of Jesus? Don't teachers and prophets compromise themselves by sitting at table with public sinners?

If we don't tread warily with this parable, we can be drawn into viewing it as little more than an illustration of how notorious sinners can come to their senses, repent of their sins and find their way to embrace God's merciful love, and an insight into those who believe that they have not strayed from the path of right living. This latter group are simply unable to bring themselves to recognise that their arrogance and pride have

distanced them from God and their broken sisters and brothers. Mind you, appreciating that is no small achievement for we know that both descriptions have applied to us at different times. But there is even more to this parable.

This gospel-reading has several parables about the lost being found and rejoiced over when they return or are returned to their proper place. The fact that we are told that Jesus welcomes outcasts and even eats with them is a statement of God's magnanimous love expressed in and through Jesus. But being welcomed and forgiven calls for repentance on the part of all who accept Jesus' invitation to be at home in his company.

"Repentance" is an interesting word that has come into our language from Greek. It's fundamental meaning is the price to be paid for destroying someone else's property. While we would not think of engaging in vandalism of public or private property, we need to remember that God's property includes every human being, and we know that we are all guilty of hurting or maligning or gossiping about others, even about those close to us.



But Jesus does not call us to repentance for some kind of distorted satisfaction at seeing us squirm. God's call to repentance presupposes that we are worthwhile, valuable, worthy of being treated with respect and dignity. God's call to repentance is rather like a very dear friend shaking us to life and telling us to wake up to ourselves. God believes in us more than we

believe in ourselves. While we know that we have been created in God's image, we often find it difficult to accept that, like God, we are good, creative, free and loving. So, too, is every other person we encounter. We have missed the point of all the parables in today's gospel-reading if we fail to see that we are all worthwhile objects of God's boundless love.

Still, let's not rush to a resolution of the prodigal parable. The younger son does not get an A rating for self-knowledge. There is something lacking in his level of repentance. His reasoning to himself for returning is based on self-interest. He knows that he'll be fed by a father who makes sure that even the servants are properly cared for. And he doesn't get a chance to recite the speech he has rehearsed, so overwhelming is the welcome his father extends. And what to we make of the elder son? Luke has presented him in a way that forces us to see that this son is also lost. His initial reaction to the extravagant welcome his father has extended to his younger brother is entirely understandable. The way his younger brother had treated their father is nothing short of scandalous. Moreover, he knows that his brother's conduct has destroyed the reputation of the whole family. He must have been wondering if his father had lost control of

his mind. Part of Luke's skill is that he tells his audience only how the elder son reacted in the shock of the moment. We, too, are left to ponder whether or not he was able to temper his inflexibility and live into a change of heart and attitude more in keeping with his father's response. And the younger son's half-hearted repentance would also have to grow into behaviours that would be more socially accepted. He would have to demonstrate the authenticity of his repentance by involving himself in the hard work needed to sustain the family farm.

While not fully resolved, this parable is a mirror into which we all might look with benefit. We might see that our efforts at repentance are sometimes shallow and that, at the same time, we can be quick to judge others. We might also see someone who is almost faultless at keeping all the rules but whose response to those around him is loaded with passive aggression. We may even see a man who just doesn't know how to fall into the arms of a father that are outstretched to prodigals. Perhaps, too, we might see a father who has learned how to combine both justice and mercy and mete them out accordingly. What we see might give us cause to change and grow.

A **second reflection** is by Laurie Cassidy, PhD who is a theologian residing in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, an anti-racist activist and spiritual director. She currently teaches in the Christian Spirituality Program at Creighton University.

Click [here](#) to watch and listen to her homily.





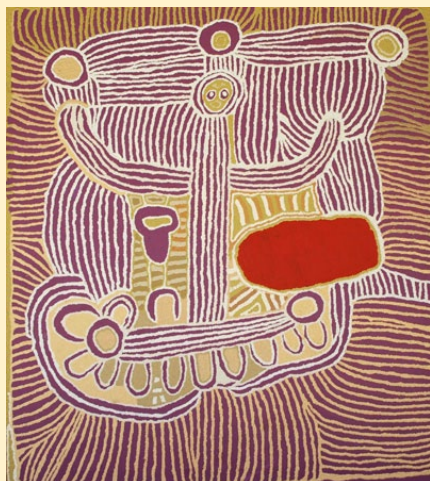
## 2. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

from commands to invitations,  
from laws to ideals,  
from threats to persuasion,  
from coercion to conscience,  
from monologue to conversation,  
from ruling to serving,  
from withdrawn to integrated,  
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,  
from exclusion to inclusion,  
from hostility to friendship,  
from static to changing,  
from passive acceptance to active engagement,  
from prescriptive to principled,  
from defined to open-ended,  
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,  
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,  
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.

When these elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

- Fr. John O'Malley SJ, 2006

Our **SUNDAY EUCHARIST** schedule is:



*Desert Eucharist,*  
Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (b. 1937)

**Saturday**

5.00pm

**Boonah church**

**Sunday**

7.30am

**1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday: Harrisville church**

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Peak Crossing church**

9.30am

**Boonah church**

(5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month:

6pm Sat night Harrisville church & 9.30am Sun morning Boonah church.

**We have a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday on 29<sup>th</sup> October)**

Our **WEEKDAY EUCHARIST** schedule for this week, the 24<sup>th</sup> week in Ordinary Time:

**Wednesday** 14<sup>th</sup> September 6.00pm **Peak Crossing** church followed by meal at *The Peak Pub*

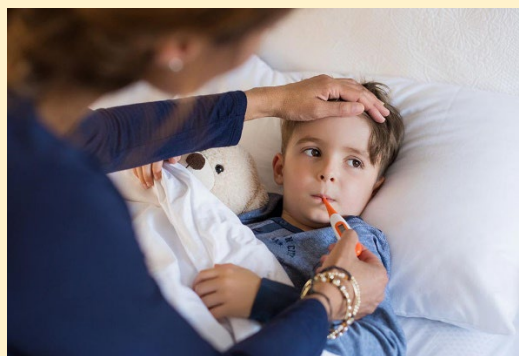
**Thursday** 15<sup>th</sup> September 9.15am **Boonah** church

- *No Friday Mass due to presiding at early morning whole of school Mass for a Catholic College.*

#### **FUNERALS AND DEATHS OUTSIDE THE PARISH.**

We remember **Clare Conway** whose funeral was celebrated last Friday at St. Mary's, Ipswich. We extend our sympathy to three of Clare's children who are parishioners: Angela, Peter and Andrew. We also remember the grandchildren of the Conway clan. It was good that some of us were able to celebrate the Funeral Mass on Friday. *Thanks to Fr Stephen Bliss and the ICC for their warm welcome.*

Let us continue to remember those who are dying because of war and conflict as well as those who are dying because of COVID and/or ill-health from COVID.



**We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond:** all across the globe infected with COVID-19; all those who are unwell because of the war raging in Ukraine and in other places; all who are starving; Chris Healy, Paul White, Arthur Devin, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Marko Babic, Max Gardiner, Bernadette Pinchin, Cate Mitten, Bernice Brault, Paula Ebrington, Fletcher Casey, Jill Archer, Louisa, Lynne Nunan, Bea Bedard

(USA), Carol Libke, Angela Kearney, Tony Pisani, Lorraine Bakon, Luca (a grandson), Maureen Wilson, Fletcher Casey, David Judge, Lyle Winks, Moira Lehmann and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.


- **EVERY SUNDAY** when we gather for the Sunday eucharist, there are baskets (of some kind or another) at the entrances of our churches.

We are invited to bring a gift of **non-perishable food or goods** for people seeking help from our local St. Vincent de Paul.

*The local conference very much appreciates our weekly support.*



- **BOONAH PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER.** Leigh Muller is the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Email: [boonah@bne.catholic.net.au](mailto:boonah@bne.catholic.net.au)



**Safeguarding Commitment**

The Archdiocese has **zero tolerance** for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding everyone involved in its activities, ministries and services. The safety and wellbeing of children and adults-at-risk is paramount.

*+ Mark Coleridge*  
 Most Rev Mark Coleridge  
 Archbishop of Brisbane

- Last week Mr Jim O'Brien, Safeguarding Advisor – Office for Safeguarding Services from the Archdiocese, conducted our parish Safeguarding Audit for 2022.

The process was very thorough and I thank Jim for his attention to detail.

Leigh Muller who is our Local Safeguarding Representative and I will contact parishioners who undertake ministries in the parish regarding their signing of two documents: Safe Conduct Standards as well as a Prior Conduct Declaration.

Some of us who have contact with children and adults who may be at risk will also need to complete one and/or two online training videos. Both of these are short.

We will also be replacing our Safeguarding Commitment signs in all public places – in our

churches and parish centre – with the new sign (see above).

- **CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Rite for Reconciliation (formerly known as Confession) may be celebrated anytime. Please phone 5463 1057 to make a suitable time. Alternatively see me before Mass (if there is plenty of time) or after Mass (once the majority of people have left the church).

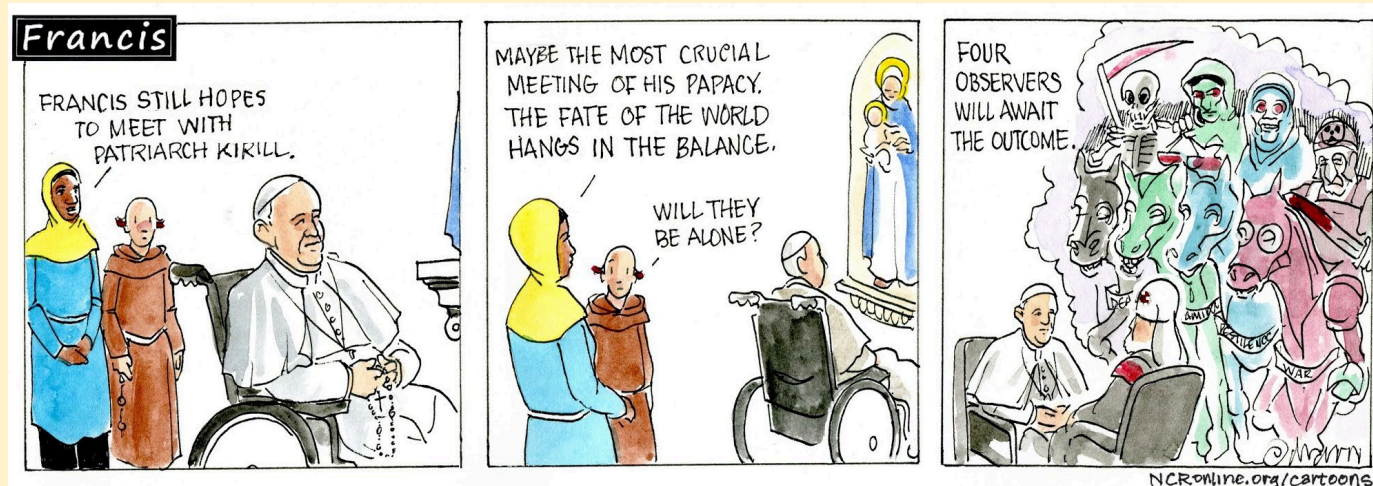
- **THANKS TO FR JIM SMITH.** On behalf of the parish, we acknowledge the presence and ministry of Fr. Jim Smith, our parish supply priest for the month of August.

People have told me they appreciated his presence and preaching. Jim enjoyed being with us.

I am grateful that Jim also agreed to preside at Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption (a while of school Mass). I am grateful that he also ministered to the Sweeney family which included presiding at the funeral for Jim Sweeney. *Thanks Jim.*

During the month of August we celebrated three funerals: Jane Platz (Harrisville) and Patricia Merlehan (Boonah) and Jim Sweeney (Boonah). I acknowledge the presence and ministry of former pastor of this parish, Fr Peter Gablonski, who returned to preside at both the Merlehan and Platz funerals. *Thanks Peter.*

3. Pat Marrin, the artist who produces *Francis, The Comic Strip*, returns to our bulletin:



1<sup>st</sup> September 2022



30<sup>th</sup> August 2022





18<sup>th</sup> August 2022

*Maturity is the ability to prioritise values before feelings*

Mark Manson

(American self-help author)

**4. Fr. Ron Rolheiser OMI wrote this piece in early September called “A biblical formula for forgiveness”.**

Nothing is as important as forgiveness. It is the key to happiness and the most important spiritual imperative in our lives. We need to forgive, to make peace with the hurts and injustices we have suffered so as not to die angry and bitter. Before we die, we need to forgive – others, ourselves, and God, for what happened to us in this life.

But, that isn't easy to do; indeed, sometimes it is impossible to do. That needs to be said because today there is a lot of well-intended literature around, in every kind of circle, which gives the impression that forgiveness is simply a question of willing it and moving on. Let it go and move on!

It doesn't work that way, as we all know. Wounds to the soul take time, a long time, to heal, and the process is excruciatingly slow, something that cannot be rushed. Indeed, the trauma from an emotional wound often affects our physical health. Healing takes time.

In looking at the question of healing and forgiveness, we can get a long-neglected, valuable insight from the Jewish and Christian spirituality of the Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath holy isn't just about honouring a certain day of the week; it's also a formula for forgiveness. Here's how it works.

The theology and spirituality of Sabbath teach us that God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh day, the Sabbath. Moreover, not only did God rest on the Sabbath, God declared this a day of rest for everyone forever, and with that God set up a certain rhythm for our lives. That rhythm is supposed to work this way:

- ◆ *We work for six days, then rest for one day.*
- ◆ *We work for seven times seven years, forty-nine years, then have a jubilee where the world itself goes on sabbatical.*
- ◆ *We work for seven years, then rest for one year (a sabbatical).*
- ◆ *We work for a lifetime, then enjoy an eternity of sabbatical.*

Now, that rhythm is also intended as the rhythm for how we move towards forgiveness:

- ◆ *We can hold a mini-grudge of seven days, but then we need to give it up.*
- ◆ *We can hold a major grudge for seven years, but then we need to give it up (The “statute of limitations” is based on this).*
- ◆ *We can hold a massive soul-searing wound for forty-nine years, but then we need to give it up.*
- ◆ *We can hold a massive soul-shattering wound until our deathbed, but then we need to give it up.*

This highlights something which is too often absent in therapeutic and spiritual circles today, namely, that we need time to be able to forgive, and that the length of time needed is contingent upon the depth of the hurt. Thus, for example:

- ◆ *When we are slighted by a colleague at a meeting, we need a little time to sulk about that injustice, but normally a few days can help put it into perspective and enable us to let it go.*
- ◆ *When we are coldly terminated at a job by an unfair employer, seven days or seven weeks will often not be enough time for us to put this into a larger perspective, to let it go, and to forgive. Seven years is a more realistic timeframe. (Note that the “statute of limitations” vis-a-vis this biblical insight.)*
- ◆ *There are traumas we suffer which leave far deeper wounds than those left by an unfair employer who treated us unfairly. There are wounds we suffer from abuse, neglect, and years of injustice that need more than seven years to process. It may take forty-nine years, half a century, to make peace with the fact that we were bullied as children or were emotionally or sexually abused in our youth.*
- ◆ *There are wounds so deep and traumatic that it is only on our deathbeds that we can make peace with the fact that they happened to us, let them go, and forgive the person or persons responsible for them.*
- ◆ *Finally, there can be wounds that are too deep, too disempowering, and too painful to ever process in this life. For them, thankfully we have the merciful healing embrace of God after death.*

The ability to forgive is more contingent upon grace than upon willpower. To err is human, but to forgive is divine. This little slogan contains a deeper truth than is immediately evident. What makes forgiveness so difficult, existentially impossible at times, is not primarily that our egos are bruised and wounded. Rather, the real difficulty is that a wound to the soul works the same as a wound to the body; it strips us of our strength.

This is particularly true for those soul-searing and soul-shattering traumas that take forty-nine years or a lifetime to heal, or sometimes can never be healed in this lifetime. Wounds of this kind radically disempower us, particularly towards the person who did this to us, making it very difficult for us to forgive.

We need a spirituality of Sabbath to help us.



5. **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September Safeguarding Sunday. These notes were prepared by Fr Amdy Hamilton SJ:**

In the Catholic Church, *Safeguarding Sunday* occurs at the end of *National Child Protection Week*.

It complements the wider Australian commemoration but has a distinctive emphasis. *Safeguarding Sunday* was affirmed by the members of the Australian Catholic Church's recent Plenary Council.

In their decrees, they expressed *our profound sorrow that children and young people and vulnerable adults have been abused by clergy, religious and lay workers of the Catholic Church, and that religious leaders have failed to act sufficiently to prevent or respond to abuse.*

That focus naturally leads to the desire to make amends to the people who were abused and to ensure that in all the relationships with children within the Church they will be safe. The processes and protocols support that commitment to say "Never Again" to abuse.

*National Child Protection Week* looks more broadly at the need of children for protection. Its theme this year is "Every child in every community needs a fair go". It asks us to reflect on the support that children need to grow into confident and trusting adults, free from abuse of every kind.

This perspective brings home to us the horror of what was done in the Catholic Church by setting it in the broader need for protection in the Australian community as a whole.

Our effectiveness in safeguarding children depends on changing deep-rooted attitudes, particularly to recognise our own sinfulness and failure to protect children and to be attentive to the vulnerable people in our Church community.

We must make safe the environment in which they live. We do this by ensuring that they are listened to, are accompanied, that they are not vulnerable to predators and that protocols of conduct with children are strictly observed.

The Plenary Council *calls on all Catholics to commit to ensuring that Church environments are safe and respectful.*

The ways of keeping safe must be imprinted on hands and feet, on fences and in timetables, as well as on minds.

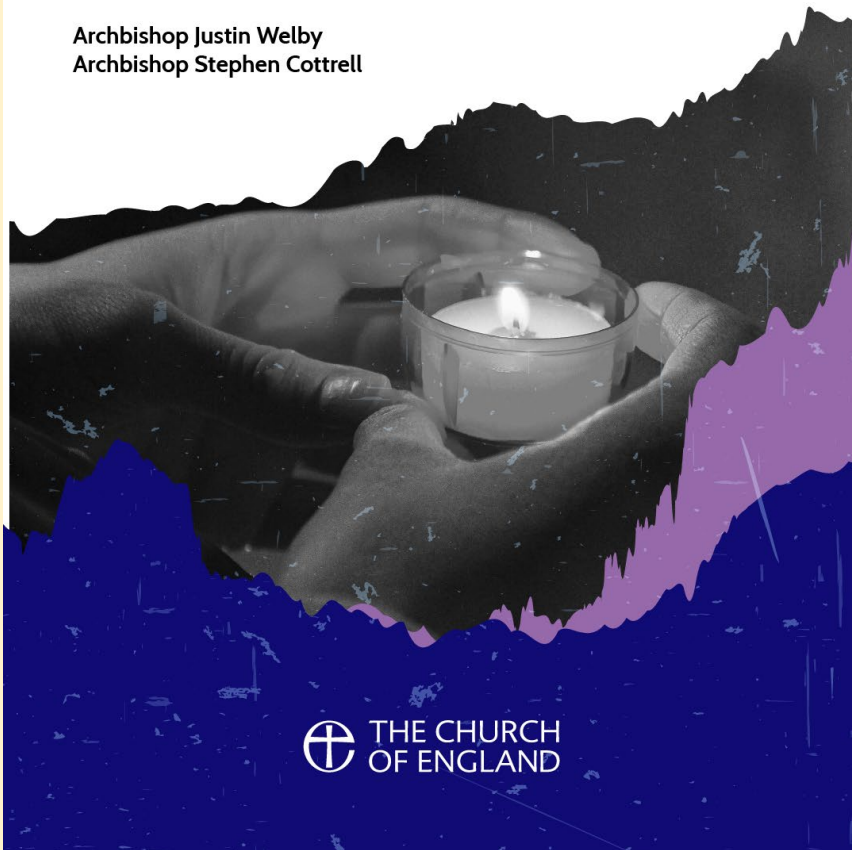
For children, being given a fair go means that they will be safe in the company they keep and in the activities they do.

For adults who accompany them, ensuring that they have a fair go means constant care to keep them safe.

### **A Prayer for Ukraine**

God of peace and justice,  
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.  
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.  
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,  
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.  
We pray for those with power over war or peace,  
for wisdom, discernment and compassion  
to guide their decisions.  
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,  
that you would hold and protect them.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.  
Amen.

**Archbishop Justin Welby**  
**Archbishop Stephen Cottrell**



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**ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE**

**centacare**

# STOPline

STOPline receives information about abuse, harm and other serious misconduct by Archdiocesan workers (including priests, religious, employees and volunteers).

**Information can be provided anonymously.**

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Phone: 1300 304 550  
Email: [AOB@stopline.com.au](mailto:AOB@stopline.com.au)  
Online Report: [www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com](http://www.bnecatholic.stoplinereport.com)

**STOPLINE**

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[Click here to visit the Stopline website](#)

*John*

pastor,

Boonah Catholic community