

**3RD SUNDAY
EASTER
YR B 2018
14 / 15 APRIL**



The Parish of St James

Coorparoo.

**An Augustinian Parish:
Archdiocese of Brisbane.**



From the Outside of the Window

Born in Vietnam, raised in Germany, educated in Germany, Italy, the US and Belgium, pastoral and academic assignments in Germany, Italy, Kenya and now Australia – to name just a few countries where I have been assigned to by my Augustinian brothers. Queensland? Since my arrival in Australia in 2008, I have crossed the NSW/QLD border only three times for brief meetings at the priory. Importantly, I admit to you that I am going for the Blues at this year's State of Origin. My team is the Manly Sea Eagles, not the Broncos!

Would all these make me an outsider to you? Only, if you judge it from the outside according to external facts. Luckily, facts do not always reveal who we really are. Each life story has also something special. This "Something", Augustine called the interiority of Being. It is there that life gains its stability, in spite of the changes in our lives. For that reason, the Augustinians have chosen the heart pierced through by the flames as the symbol representing their spirituality. Augustine once famously stated that "love is the weight of our identity". Our identity is Christ Jesus in whose name and love we are all baptised. This baptism binds and transforms us into "one heart and one mind". Perhaps, I am not an outsider after all.

The heart is also a symbol of intimacy. Not all are capable of intimacy because it presupposes trust. In the story of Emmaus, the disciples have lost this intimacy. Their trust that earlier they had in Jesus evaporated with their disappointment caused by the Cross. Christ, however, restored this intimate trust with the Eucharistic words: "This Is My Body For You". Christ in his risen Body is there for us to touch, to taste and to love. He wants us to be close to him, even though we are outsiders through our sins. From the outside of death Christ in his resurrection transforms himself into an insider who diffuses love and infuses trust. If St. James is going to be an evangelising parish, it is here that we need to begin with: We need to enter into the intimacy of friendship with Jesus Christ. It here that we find the source of an authentic faith.

Reading the Gospel of Luke, the story of the lost sheep impresses me very much. Jesus left the 99 faithful behind to run after the one missing sheep. Today, the situation has reversed. Not one, but 99 sheep have left the Church. Perhaps, they did not find in our midst this joyful and caring friendship that Jesus once had shared with his disciples.

I am sure that in the last two months or so Fr. Peter OSA, Fr. Saldie OSA, Deacon Dang OSA, our Parish staff and many of you have lived and are living this love and trust. To you all, I say my sincere thanks. The Body of Christ is a reality each time you welcome and offer strangers or outsiders your friendship. I truly hope that you also extend your friendship to me, now still an outsider. I really do wish that we walk together as friends always remembering the precious words uttered by the risen Christ to his disciples: "I now call you my friends!" In doing so, "outsiders" might be inspired to become once again "insiders".

True friendship then does not discriminate between outsiders and insiders. We are all one in Christ!

Let us pray for each other...

Fr. Joseph OSA, Administrator