



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

Incorporating the Communities of

St Mary's Sea Lake, Sacred Heart Culgoa, St Michael's Lalbert, St Joseph's Lake Boga, St Joseph's Nandaly, S's Peter & Paul Quambatook & St Mary's Swan Hill
northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au 03 50324144

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4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 19TH DECEMBER 2021

MARY AND ELIZABETH: BEACONS OF HOPE AND JOY



Today we hear of the joyful encounter between Elizabeth and Mary, both with child. It should have been impossible for either of them to be pregnant, but both had been open to God's grace in their lives and so were able to experience the truth of Gabriel's promise that 'Nothing is impossible to God!' May Mary and Elizabeth continue to shine out as beacons of hope for us today. Let's never tire of following their example of loving trust in the Father's care for us, so that we too might also join in Mary's song, joyfully proclaiming the wonders God has done for us.

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour; because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid.

Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things to me. Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear him. He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy – according to the promise he made to our ancestors – of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

AND WHILE SPEAKING OF JOYFUL NEWS

The latest changes announced by the state government on Wednesday have basically removed all remaining COVID restrictions on places of worship. While we will still need to check in, we can now gather in unlimited numbers with no need to make any distinctions about vaccination status. This is great news and a huge relief to me personally. Our doors are finally truly open once again! There is also no further requirement to wear a mask, but please feel welcome to continue doing so if you feel more comfortable doing so.

We will keep with our Mass roster as advertised for this weekend and Christmas, but with no further need to show any proof of status. All are welcome to attend any Mass they choose. We will once again return to a single Mass on a Saturday evening in the New Year. As the earlier time is proving the most popular, we will make this 6pm (starting from Saturday Jan 1st).

SAFE TRAVELS

Finally, to all who are travelling over Christmas, we wish you a safe journey and every blessing.

Parish Contact Details:

St Mary's Presbytery 62 Splatt St
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Phone: 03 5032 4144

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Office Hrs: Tues, Thurs, and Fri 10am -2pm

Parish Priest

Fr James Kerr

Parish Admin Officers:

Glenda Klabbers

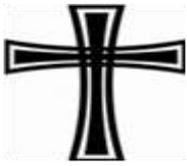
Mary Kennedy

Child Protection Officers:

Damian and Karen Kelly

Child Safe Church

Here in the Parish of Holy Family North East Mallee we follow the Child Safe Standards outlined by the Victorian Government and we also implement procedures and standards as directed by the Ballarat Diocesan Office.



Please keep in your prayers

Recent Deaths

Frank Raudino
Sr Kathleen McSweeney RSJ,
Mary Gunn (Helen Dean's sister)

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Dot Kelly, Connie Taverna, Monica Brady, Jack Barry,
Maggie Stacey, Brian Hogan, Charlie Taverna, Ada Noble,
Shirley Vain, George Dawes, Mary Robbins, Molly Curran,
Robert O'Meara, Pat Mikes, Geoffrey Johnston, Alice
Shanahan, Alexander Irwin, Catherine Spry, Margaret
Cleary, Jim Romeo, Eileen Watson, George Livingston
Paul Peluso, Connie Isgro, Nicholas Bruton

SICK LIST

Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott, Jarrod Crimmins,
Jack Donohue, Jude Lewis, Yvonne Annan, Sarah Kenny,
Michael Bourke, Bridget Phyland, Carmel Ryan,
Tully Williams.

SACRAMENTS THIS WEEK
THIS WEEKEND (18TH/19TH DECEMBER)

Proof of vaccination no longer required

Friday Culgoa 5pm

Saturday 5pm & 6:30pm Swam Hill

Sunday 8.30am Lalbert

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

***NO MASS SEA LAKE**

THIS WEEK IN SWAN HILL

Tues 5.30pm, Wed 10am,

Thurs Confessions 5pm, Mass 5.30pm

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sea Lake 4.30pm

Swan Hill 6.30pm

Swan Hill 8.30pm

Swan Hill Midnight

CHRISTMAS DAY

Quambatook 8.30am

Swan Hill 10.30am

NEXT SUNDAY 26TH DECEMBER

FEAST HOLY FAMILY

10:30am Swan Hill

*I will head off for a few days after Christmas but will
return in time for Mass on **Friday 31st 6pm***



NOTICES

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Thank you to all who have returned their boxes. If you haven't yet returned yours it is not too late. As long as it is in by Monday 20th that should be fine. Once again thank you for the fantastic response from across the parish and beyond... we even had some items sent up from Bacchus Marsh!

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU

Congratulations to all our school staff and students who finished this week. It has been another tough year with all the ins and outs. Hopefully staff, students and families will all be able to enjoy a well-earned rest! Thank you especially to our school leadership for navigating all the directions and restrictions so well, especially to our principals Kate Nunn, Kate Quinn and Michelle Haeusler.

ANOTHER SPECIAL THANKS

As we come to the end of another year, I would also like to especially thank Glenda and Mary for their steady and generous support. I consider myself very lucky to have such faithful and caring fellow workers here in the parish. I wouldn't have made it through this last year without them.

SR KATHLEEN MCSWEENEY RSJ

Many of you would remember Sr Kathleen McSweeney. A special legacy she left behind is the group of Josephite Companions she helped form while working here. We will look to have a special memorial Mass for her in the New Year once everyone has returned from Christmas catch-ups.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND

1st (Presbytery): \$ 801 2nd (Parish): \$ 856.90

PARISH PRAYER

God our Father, through the intercession of the Holy Family our patron, we pray that you bless this parish so that we may love you more. Help parents to be a good example to their children and our youth to grow in strength as good Christians. Encircle our families with your loving care; to the sick and the weak grant health; to the aged bring serenity and to those in sorrow joy. May we grow stronger in faith and may our love for one another become deeper in our daily life. Amen.

Our Parish Schools

St Mary's Primary School Sea Lake

Principal: Kate Nunn
47 Hannon Street, Sea Lake
Ph: 03 5070 1272

Principal@smsealake.catholic.edu.au

St Mary's Primary School Swan Hill

Principal: Kate Quin
2 Murlong St Swan Hill
Ph. 03 5033 2541

principal@smswanhill.catholic.edu.a

St Mary MacKillop College

Principal: Michelle Haeusler
53 McCrae Street, Swan Hill
Ph: 5032 9771

Principal@mackillopsh.vic.edu.au



THE VISITATION- ELIZABETH GREETES MARY

REFLECTION BY MARY COLOE PBVM

In this last week of Advent, the Gospel turns its focus to two pregnant women, Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. As any parent knows, pregnancy is a time of heightened longing, waiting and expectancy; as such, these two women provide a great symbol of Advent's theme. Elizabeth feels in her womb the first stirrings of her child and filled with the Spirit gives praise for the child in Mary's womb. While recognising the blessedness of Mary's child, Mary herself is called blessed for her faith, rather than her maternity. Mary believes. In this is her greatness and her importance in the Christian tradition – as woman, mother and believer.

This visitation of Mary to Elizabeth prefigures the great visitation that is the joyful message of Luke's Gospel, God's visitation to all people. As the Gospel unfolds, Jesus will be the symbol and presence of God's gracious visit to us. Luke will show us Jesus visiting the homes of various people such as Peter whose mother-in-law is ill (Lk 4:38-39), Simon the Pharisee (Lk 7:36-50), and Zacheus (Lk 19:1-10). Jesus will also be the host inviting all to gather at his table (Lk 9:10-17; 22:14-27). Even before Jesus' ministry begins, God's active coming to people is given flesh in a young woman's journey to her cousin.

May this Christmas be a time when you experience the joy of family visitations, and you become for others the symbol of God's loving hospitality. May God's Spirit be a cause of joy and blessing in the depths of your life.

© Mary Coloe

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR ADVENT

*Bring in a neighbour's rubbish bin.
Tell a passer-by to have a nice day.
Shop local small businesses.
Pay for the person behind you.
HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What does Elizabeth mean when she describes Mary as 'blessed'?

When have you had an experience of incredible joy?

In a world full of electronic communication, how is a face-to-face visit more special?

Why is this gospel passage appropriate for the final week of Advent?

Why do you think Luke's gospel is the only one to deal with the Visitation and John's birth?

Why is Mary regarded as a role model for humankind?

How does this gospel help to focus our preparation towards Christmas?

In response to this gospel, is there anyone that you should make the effort to visit.



THE ADVENT WREATH

The fourth and final Sunday of Advent symbolizes Peace with the Angel's Candle reminding us of their message to all mankind, repeated in the Gloria at Holy Mass: "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

The Advent Wreath is a beautiful way to enter into reflection alone or with your family. Slowing down during the hectic rush of the season and bringing family together nightly around the wreath can be a source of peace, grace, and blessings shared with one another, and with Christians throughout time.

First Reading Mi 5:1-4

A reading from the prophet Micah

Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old. The Lord is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.

Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel. He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord, with the majesty of the name of his God. They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land. He himself will be peace. *The Word the Lord.*

Responsorial Psalm Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19. R. v.4

(R.) Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O Shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne. O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord, come to our help.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted.

May your hand be on the man you have chosen, the man you have given your strength. And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name.

(R.) Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Second Reading Heb 10:5-10

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

I am coming to do your will.

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, prepared a body for me. You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin; then I said, just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book, 'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.' Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 1:38

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done. Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 1:39-45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:
Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Readings Next Week

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

First Reading: Sir 3:2-6. 12-14

Second Reading: Col 3:12-21

Gospel: Lk 2:41-52

