



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

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2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 5TH DECEMBER 2021

"IN THE FIFTEENTH YEAR"...

OUR HOPE IS NOT ABSTRACT, BUT ANCHORED IN A HISTORICAL PERSON

It can be tempting just to skip over the first part of today's Gospel. It is a rather long list of names, a who's who of the authorities at the time. If you at first find it all a bit boring, I can hardly blame you. The truth is, Luke is not trying to excite us either. He is simply setting the historical context for us. The story of John the Baptist that follows and the message he brings is the really exciting bit. Valleys filled in and mountains laid low for the coming of the Lord... that sounds more like a good start to a ripping yarn. But if we think about it, without the historical context before it, John's message would remain just that, a good story.

The Gospels certainly make for a good story. The plot, the characters, the tensions and even the beautiful words certainly stir the imagination and prick the emotions, like any good story can. God's own Son coming down to earth to free his people, only to be rejected and ultimately crucified, and then the biggest plot twist of all; death defeated and sin destroyed... it truly is a thriller. But we get tired of even our favourite stories. Why is it then that the Gospel story still fills our heart and nourishes our lives after 2000 years? The answer really comes down to this; the Gospels are anchored in history. The characters we hear of were real people. The events they went through actually happened. The Gospels were written to give witness to this. And indeed, if the people and events were mere tales or fables, the Gospels would lose all their power. The idea of God coming down to earth is a great plot device. A story about a Chosen One giving his life can even be inspiring. But unless they actually happened they give us no cause for hope or joy. That is why Luke spends so much time setting the historical context. Our hope is not in the abstract, it is pinned on an actual person who appeared at a certain time and place in history. Jesus was truly sent to us by the Father so that we might be free. His coming in history changed everything. And if we heed John's call to 'Prepare the way', that same Jesus, now risen, is ready to come to us today and fill us with his life. And nothing could be more exciting than that!



Parish Contact Details:

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

Parish Priest

Fr James Kerr

Parish Admin Officers:

Glenda Klabbers

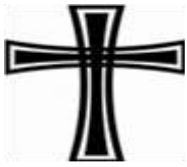
Mary Kennedy

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

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Sheila Kelly, Tom Stutley, Veronica Power,
Jack Robinson, John Currie, James Derham,
Donna Gammond, Des McDonald, Bernie Ryan,
Margaret Joan Brennan, Mary Kelly, Desmond Jones,
Reginald Bryne, Thomas Irwin, James Stewart,
Luigi Fedele, Eliza Driscoll. Tony Campinelli

SICK LIST

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

SACRAMENTS THIS WEEK

THIS WEEKEND (4TH/5TH DECEMBER)

*At the Masses marked with an *DV, adults will need to
show you are double vaccinated.*

Saturday 5pm Swan Hill*DV

Saturday 6:30pm Swan Hill

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill*DV

Sunday 5pm Sea Lake*DV

(Please note change of time for graduation Mass)

WEEKDAYS

Tuesday 5.30pm

Wednesday (Feast Immaculate Conception)
10am & 5:30pm followed by Vigil (see notice)

Thurs Confession 5pm and Mass 5.30pm

Fri 12pm

NEXT WEEKEND (11TH/12TH DECEMBER)

Saturday 5pm Swan Hill*DV

Saturday 6:30pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill*DV

Sunday 5pm Nandaly

*(Please note Culgoa Mass will be on Friday 17th
December in lieu of this coming week)*

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND

1st Collection (Presbytery): \$ 928

2nd Collection (Parish): \$ 1366.85

NOTICES

PRAYER VIGIL FOR OUR DIACONAL CANDIDATES

Many of you will remember Matthew Restall from his couple of stays here in the parish. After much preparation and discernment he has been found worthy by the Church as a candidate for orders. Next Friday he will be ordained a deacon in Ballarat together with his year mate Bill Lowry. This is a joyful occasion for the whole Diocese. That two young men are ready to lay down their lives in generous service for God and his Church should give us all hope.

As a way for us to support these men as they prepare for this huge step, we will host a Prayer Vigil on Thursday 9th after the 5:30pm Mass. We will have a period of adoration and the rosary. All welcome to join. I also encourage you to pray for them at home.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Thank you for the over whelming response to the Reverse Advent Calendar. We have families, businesses and classrooms participating, so much so that there are only a few boxes left. Another way you can help is by donating a gift that can be given to children in need at Christmas. These can be left at the Parish office any time between now and the 17th of December.

CUPPA AFTER MASS

There will be a Christmas Cuppa after our 10:30 Mass TODAY in the Parish Function Centre.

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS

have sent 7 boxes of wraps, to the "Wrap with Love" centre in Sydney. This is a mighty effort on the part of our knitters and crocheters. Many thanks for your ongoing support.

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

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St Mary's Primary School Swan Hill

Principal: Kate Quin
2 Murlong St Swan Hill
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St Mary MacKillop College

Principal: Michelle Haeusler
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REFLECTION BY FR MICHAEL TATE

We are John the Baptists.

Do we have to be like John the Baptist, eccentrically dressed and scavenging for food, to prepare the way of the Lord? No. You and I are called to be a John or Joan the Baptist, preparing people's hearts in our own time and place.

But we have to allow God to prepare *our* hearts for this role. John the Baptist challenges us to 'Repent', i.e. to turn around our own lives seeking God's forgiveness. John then challenges us to see the big picture which is that 'All who live shall see the salvation of God'.

Pope Francis is the exemplary universal pastor inspiring us to become 'les mercifuls sans frontieres'. And young people through social media are already saying 'We are one community of human beings on this fragile planet'.

The challenge for most of us is more immediate and apparently of smaller scope. The challenge this Advent is to identify the one person whose heart you can help prepare to celebrate the coming of the Lord Jesus in three weeks' time. The best method is to let that person see your faith and joy centred on that little Jewish baby lying in a manger.

Do that, and who knows what may happen because that little baby is in fact the Sovereign Lord of history and of the whole cosmos. With God's grace, you don't have to be as eccentric or bizarre as John the Baptist to play your part in changing the course of history!

We could take a moment to pray that, repenting of our own sins where necessary, we may prepare the heart of at least one person so that the Lord Jesus may enter in this Christmas, helping him fulfil his mission that all who live shall see the salvation of God.

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RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR ADVENT

Call a relative to say hi

Donate food to a food bank

Make a present for a friend.

Ask others "Are you Ok?" and really listen to their reply

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Why does the gospel writer go to such extremes to identify the historical timing of this event?

In what ways did John the Baptist fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah?

In what ways can holding on to our faults and failings get in the way of allowing God into our lives?

What would it take for you to 'Prepare a way' - to clear the obstacles and allow God's love through?

How can you assist others to 'Prepare a way'?

Why is it so hard to forgive ourselves when we are assured God's forgiveness is there for the asking?

How has reflection on this week's gospel enhanced your understanding of Advent?

What's The Meaning Behind The Advent Wreath?

While the exact origin of the Advent wreath is uncertain, one thing is undeniable: the use of this symbol is a longstanding tradition in our Christian faith, dating back to at least the 17th century.

As we progressively light the candles throughout the Advent season, we acknowledge God's coming through reflection, prayer, and hope. We make our own private vigil while awaiting "The Light of the World."

Not only do we recall His first coming, we also await His second coming, where He will judge the living and the dead.

Significance of the Advent Wreath Shape and Color

Since circles have no beginning and no end, the circular shape of the Advent Wreath symbolizes eternal life in Christ. The wreath holds four candles which are lit progressively, over the four weeks of the Advent season. Generally, three are violet (purple) and one is rose-colored, each representing 1,000 years. Added together, the four candles symbolize the 4,000 years that humanity waited for the Savior.

Violet is a liturgical color symbolizing penance, sacrifice, and prayer. During the first, second, and fourth weeks of Advent, we light violet candles as a reminder of the preparation of heart and mind undertaken in this season, which was traditionally known as a "little Lent."

First Reading Bar 5:1-9

A reading from the prophet Baruch:

Jerusalem – God will show you splendour.

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress, put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever, wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you, put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head: since God means to show your splendour to every nation under heaven, since the name God gives you for ever will be, 'Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness'.

Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights and turn your eyes to the east: see your sons reassembled from west and east at the command of the Holy One, jubilant that God has remembered them. Though they left you on foot, with enemies for an escort, now God brings them back to you like royal princes carried back in glory. For God has decreed the flattening of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills, the filling of the valleys to make the ground level so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory of God. And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade for Israel at the command of God; for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory with his mercy and integrity for escort.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 125. R. v.3

(R.) The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage, it seemed like a dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs.

The heathens themselves said: 'What marvels the Lord worked for them!' What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage as streams in dry land. Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap.

They go out, they go out, full of tears, carrying seed for the sowing: they come back, they come back, full of song, carrying their sheaves. **(R.)**

Readings Next Week

First Reading: Zep 3:14-18

Second Reading: Phil 4:4-7

Gospel: Lk 3:10-18

Second Reading Phil 1:3-6. 8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians
Show yourselves sinless and without blame in the day of Christ.

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Lk 3:4. 6

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 3:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:
All people shall see the salvation of God.

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Iturea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness; Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth. And all mankind shall see the salvation of God. *The Gospel of the Lord.*

Congratulations to our year 6 students at Sea Lake on their graduation and to the students at MacKillop College as they finish up for the year.