



## 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](mailto:northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au) 03 50324144

Website: [northeastmallee.org.au](http://northeastmallee.org.au)



### BAPTISM OF THE LORD 8<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022

#### *SOMEONE IS COMING, SOMEONE WHO IS MORE POWERFUL THAN I*

Each of the Gospels point to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan as the beginning of his public ministry. It is clearly a crucial event, the foundation of all that is to come, but it is not always so easy to get our head around what it actually means. I think it helps to take a step back for a moment and consider what John himself understood he was doing by calling Israel back to the Jordan for baptism. One way to describe it would be hitting the reset button. Israel had lost its way, and it was time for a reboot. John therefore calls the people back to where it all began.

If you remember the story of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt, the people crossing the river Jordan marks the moment when they finally reach the Promised Land. The whole book of Deuteronomy is in fact set in the wilderness beyond the far banks of the Jordan. Before they cross, Moses prepares the people by reminding them of all that God has commanded and by calling on them to choose God as the foundation of all that is to come. But here is the interesting bit, after leading Israel for 40 years, Moses himself goes no further. It is up to another to lead the people forward into the promised land; Joshua son of Nun. The name *Joshua* means 'The LORD is deliverance', or more simply, 'God saves'. Put that name in the Aramaic of the Gospel times and you get *Yeshua*, or as we know it, *Jesus*. It is clear that all this background is directing John in his own vocation. He knows Israel needs to start again, so he calls them back to the wilderness, to the Jordan where it all began. He calls them to repent, to recognise their weakness, their sinfulness, their need for God's help and grace. In doing so he prepares them for the new life ahead, but he knows it is not his calling to lead them forward. As great as John is, there is another coming to meet them there. That someone is Jesus. Jesus comes to meet his people at the Jordan. He meets them at their weakest and most desperate. He doesn't shy away from their need but immerses himself fully. And by immersing himself in their weakness, he is then ready to lead them forward into New Life with the Father.



The New Year is often a time to consider fresh starts and reboots. Whether we are looking to renew our own personal lives, our relationships, our families or our communities, let's look to yChrist to lead us forward. Many voices can prepare us for renewal by helping to point out our weaknesses, but only one voice can lead us on into new life. *Christ is that voice*. We hear his voice in the Scriptures and meet him in the Sacraments.

Jesus is God's salvation sent to meet us at our weakest, our lowest, so that he might lift us up.

All true renewal flows from him.

#### **Parish Contact Details:**

St Mary's Presbytery 62 Splatt St  
Po Box 71 Swan Hill, Vic 3585

[northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

Phone: 03 5032 4144

Website: [northeastmallee.org.au](http://northeastmallee.org.au)

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

#### **Parish Priest**

Fr James Kerr

#### **Parish Admin Officers:**

Glenda Klabbers

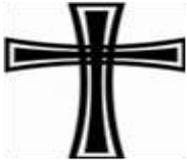
Mary Kennedy

#### **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**

Monica Livingston

Bill Croft

Kevin Lester (Denniliquin)

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Annie & Ken Dwyer, Frank & Theresa Sheils, Betty Borchard, John Rogers, Ralph Jones, Florentino Aranas, Jenny Leonardi, Rhonda Coughlan, Domenic Bartalotta, Marie DeLeux, Bill Hogan, Tanya Foott, May Croft, Nyree Templeton, Peter Power, Mary Walsh  
Mary Allen, Norah Gregor,

**SICK LIST**

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

**THIS WEEKEND (8<sup>TH</sup> /9TH JANUARY)**

**BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

Friday 5pm Culgoa

Saturday 6:30pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Nandaly

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**

Tuesday 5.30pm

Wednesday 10am

Thurs Confession 5pm and Mass 5.30pm

Fri Adoration 11am, Mass 12pm

**NEXT WEEKEND (15/16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY)**

Saturday 6:30pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Lalbert

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Sea Lake



**Total Collections for Christmas and Last 2 Weekends**

1<sup>st</sup> (Presbytery): \$2776 Christmas Offerings: \$526

2<sup>nd</sup> (Parish): \$1509 Bishop's Collection: \$1500

**NOTICES**

**LAKE BOGA FINAL MASS- SUN 30<sup>TH</sup> JAN 12PM**

Last year we spoke about the decision to close St Joseph's Church in Lake Boga. We had a couple of dates picked out for a fitting celebration and final Mass, but had to cancel due to restrictions. We now have a new date. Bishop Paul will be joining us for the last weekend in January, so we hope to celebrate our final Mass of Thanksgiving in Lake Boga on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 12pm followed by a shared lunch. All are welcome. Please let any family or friends with connections to Lake Boga church also know.

**LAKE BOGA WORKING BEE**

To get the Church ready, there will be a working bee on one of the afternoons (prob Wednesday) of the week leading up to the final Mass. Many hands make light work. More details to come. Contact Mary if you can help out; 0423234283

**FROM WRAPS WITH LOVE HEADQUARTERS**

News from wraps with love; 3000 wraps sent to Syria, 3000 wraps sent to Somalia, 900 wraps sent to Lebanon. Several given locally to newly arrived refugees in Australia.

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS**

Please note that during January the office might be opened during different hours, please send any bulletin notice via email and do leave voice messages on the phone answering machine as this will be checked at different times.

**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](mailto:Principal@smsealake.catholic.edu.au)

**St Mary's Primary School Swan Hill**

Principal: Kate Quin

2 Murlong St Swan Hill

Ph. 03 5033 2541

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**St Mary MacKillop College**

Principal: Michelle Haeusler

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## REFLECTION BY RICHARD LEONARD

These days there are some young Catholic parents who wonder whether baptism is the proper thing for them to seek for their children. One argument they sometimes offer is that it would be better to defer baptism until their child reaches adulthood and then he or she has the opportunity to choose it. As appealing as this argument might seem on the surface, the problem is that the reasoning behind it is so inconsistently applied.

Young Catholic parents do not give their children any choice about eating vegetables, learning to read or write and living out a moral code. They enforce these things because they know that nutrition, literacy and ethics are essential for adulthood. If we recognise that, from birth, a child has spiritual as well as educational, moral and physical needs, it strikes me as inconsistent to relegate this constitutively otherworldly element of a child's character to a 'must be decided on later' category.

Baptism is not brainwashing. Adults can come and go from the practise of their faith as they feel drawn. Sadly for us, they can even choose against belief. To grow up, however, with no religious foundation or no basis on which to make spiritual choices seems to limit freedom rather than promote it. In our culture baptism of infants by their parents is an entirely proper thing to do.

In today's Gospel we hear that Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan because it was 'the proper thing to do'.

This can seem all quaintly odd to us today because we seem to accept that our only convention is to flout convention. The done thing today is to undo what we've done before.

We hold very strongly, however, to the idea that God always does the 'proper thing'. It's called 'appropriateness' in theology. We believe, for example, that God decided it was proper to become incarnate when he did, how he did and where he did. Over the centuries there's been endless debate about what would've happened if the Word had come to us as a woman, in another era, on another continent. While these are interesting enough matters on which to speculate, they are not what God thought proper – or what, in fact, happened.

In line with the right action of God, Jesus does the proper thing in being baptised by John's baptism of repentance, even though he had nothing of which to repent.

Jesus is not simply baptised, however, simply because it was expected of him, just a fulfilment of his duty. Jesus' experience of baptism starts with John's baptism as an admission of guilt and then reveals that baptism is primarily about the Father's love. To this day our baptismal ritual holds these two realities in a healthy tension. When we are baptised in Christ, we acknowledge both Original Sin and Original Grace.

God's love comes alive in us even though we are aware of how far from that love we stray.

The Baptism of Jesus and every baptism done in his name ever since, is the moment when we hold together the greatness of God's love, that calls each of us by name to be his son or daughter, with the reality of our human frailty. What more appropriate way of welcoming anyone into the world than having a community of frail, human believers initiate its members by reminding them that Original Sin does not have the last word. For those of us baptised in Christ, the Father's love always and everywhere has the final, appropriate say on every matter.

May this Eucharist make us worthy of the love lavished on us in baptism and give us the courage to keep doing the appropriate things for the coming generations.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How might John's followers have reacted to news of someone much more powerful than John?

Why might the expectations about the Messiah have grown as time went by?

What might it mean for God to say of Jesus, 'my favour rests on you'?

What are the implications of God saying to you, 'you are my beloved, my favour rests on you'?

What reasons can you suggest for why people had difficulty believing Jesus was the Messiah?

What phrase or image from today's gospel captures your attention? Why?

For whom do you need to give reassurance that your 'favour' rests on them?

**First Reading** Is 42:1-4. 6-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

*Here is my servant, my chosen one in whom I am well pleased.*

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations.

He does not cry out or shout aloud, or make his voice heard in the streets. He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame. Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver, nor be crushed until true justice is established on earth, for the islands are awaiting his law. I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 28:1-4. 9-10. R. v.11

**(R.) The Lord will bless his people with peace.**

O give the Lord you sons of God, give the Lord glory and power; give the Lord the glory of his name.

Adore the Lord in his holy court.

The Lord's voice resounding on the waters, the Lord on the immensity of waters; the voice of the Lord, full of power, the voice of the Lord, full of splendour.

The God of glory thunders. In his temple they all cry: 'Glory!' The Lord sat enthroned over the flood: the Lord sits as king for ever. **(R.)**

**Second Reading** Acts 10:34-38

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

*God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power.*

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'The truth I have now come to realise' he said 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.

'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ – but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil.' *The Word of the Lord.*

**Gospel Acclamation** See Mk 9:8

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens were opened, and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Alleluia.

**Gospel** Lk 3:15-16. 21-22

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke:

*When Jesus had been baptised and had been praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit came upon him.*

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

**Readings Next Week: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time**

First Reading: Is 62:1-5

Second Reading: 1 Cor 12:4-11

Gospel: Jn 2:1-11