



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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5TH SUNDAY OF LENT 3RD APRIL 2022 SEEING US WITH EYES OF MERCY ALONE



They keep coming don't they? Powerful stories telling of God's abundant Mercy. The Gospels are full of them, and Lent is a special time for us to have them as our focus. Today is the story of the woman caught in adultery. The crowd is desperate to condemn her. Pointing the finger at her is a great way to distract themselves from their own many sins, and the authorities think they can use her plight to catch Jesus out as well. But he is having none of it. While they jump at the chance to strike their sister down, Jesus refuses to abandon her and never loses sight of her as a person to be loved.

He challenges the crowd. They are in no position to condemn. None of them is without sin. All are reliant on God's forgiveness and mercy, which they would experience in abundance if only they turned to God in humility. But they are too proud and simply walk away, leaving the woman alone with Jesus. Is it only now that she gathers the courage to look up at Jesus? What does she see? His tender gaze resting upon her, his eyes filled with mercy, and mercy alone.

God wants us to know that mercy in our lives too. He wants us to feel His Mercy right down to the deepest depths of our hearts; he wants to heal every hurt, to lighten every darkness, to lift every burden and to drive away every shame. His love brought Creation into being. Nothing and no-one is beyond his Mercy.

Perhaps some of you have heard of a special devotion to this gift of Divine Mercy? It invites us to gaze on the risen Christ, and to see there God's abundant Mercy poured out upon us. It invites us to place our trust in Jesus and his love for us. Nothing can separate us from that love, if only we turn in trust to him. This year we hope to celebrate this devotion to Divine Mercy in a special way, culminating in the Feast of Divine Mercy the weekend after Easter. I have seen this devotion bring hope and joy to so many people from all walks of life. I pray that it will be of help to you too.

Parish Contact Details:

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Office Hrs: Tues, Wed and Fri 10:30 -2:30

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

Patricia Gibson (later Bendigo)

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Sr Dawn Power, Mathilda Lariche, Catherine Irwin,
Mary Considine, Leo Clohesy, Leonard McLoughlan,
Mary Nolan, Fred Lawry, Paulo Pupillo,
John O'Bryan, Ann Clarke, Alma Higgins,
Carmela Mazzarella, Marianna Ganci, Ellie Fallon,
Patricia Wilkinson, James Hoare

SICK LIST

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

THIS WEEKEND (2ND/3RD APRIL)

Saturday 6:30pm Swan Hill
Sunday: 8.30am Sea Lake
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 10am
First Reconciliations: 5pm, 6pm & 7pm
Wednesday 10am
Thursday: Confessions 5pm, Mass 5:30pm
Friday Adoration 11am, Mass 12pm
Saturday: Confessions 9-10am

NEXT WEEKEND (9TH/10TH APRIL)

Friday 5pm Culgoa
Saturday 6:30pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Quambatook
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill
Sunday 5pm Nandaly

EASTER MASS TIMES

Holy Thursday Swan Hill 6:30pm
Good Friday Swan Hill 3pm
Holy Saturday Easter Vigil Swan Hill 6:30pm
Easter Sunday
Lalbert 8:30am
Swan Hill 10:30am Sea Lake 5pm

NOTICES

FIRST RECONCILIATIONS FOR CHILDREN

These will be celebrated on Tuesday April 5th in three 'shifts', first at 5pm, then 6pm and finally 7pm. Spreading things out this way will mean the experience won't be rushed for the children, and will also give families (parents, siblings, grandparents...) the opportunity to experience God's reconciliation as well by making their own confessions if they wish.

CUPPA AFTER MASS THIS SUNDAY 3RD APRIL

ROSARY IN THE PARK, next Saturday 9th April will be at Joe & Teresa Tavernas, 109 Werril St, all welcome.

LOOKING FORWARD:

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY – Sunday 24th April

To commemorate this great feast, we will pray together as Parish Community the Divine Mercy Chaplet after our weekend Masses.

An additional, special observance for Divine Mercy Sunday will be held from 2pm - 3.30pm.

A schedule for the celebration is as follows:

- 2pm - 3pm Adoration with Reconciliation available
- 2.30pm - Rosary
- 3pm - Divine Mercy Chaplet in Song with Benediction to finish
- Drinks and nibbles to follow

'Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to my mercy.' (Diary 300)

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
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Principal@smsealake.catholic.edu.au

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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DIVINE MERCY: WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?



Divine Mercy has been called "the greatest grassroots movement in the history of the Catholic Church" and has changed millions of lives. But what is it?

Divine Mercy, in General

Divine Mercy gets to the heart of Sacred Scripture. In fact, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners" (1846). Right there: That

summarizes it. Divine Mercy is the Gospel. It's the good news. And so, it gets to the very centre of our faith. Moreover, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, "Divine Mercy is not a secondary devotion, but an integral dimension of Christian faith and prayer." Benedict even goes so far as to say, "Mercy is the central nucleus of the Gospel message."

Okay, so what is Divine Mercy? What is this thing that gets to the heart of Sacred Scripture and to the very centre of our faith? To begin, mercy is "love's second name," as John Paul II said. It's a particular kind of love, a particular mode of love when it encounters suffering, poverty, brokenness, and sin. Divine Mercy is when God's love meets us and helps us in the midst of our suffering and sin. In fact, because this side of eternity we're all sinners and because suffering is our lot in life, God's love for us here always takes the form of mercy. It's always the Lord stepping out in compassion to help us poor, weak, and broken sinners. From our perspective, then, every good we receive is an expression Divine Mercy.

The Message of Divine Mercy

The message of Divine Mercy is something that's most associated with a Polish nun who died in 1938, about a year before the start of World War II. She's known today as St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. Saint Faustina was a mystic. In other words, she received extraordinary experiences of the Lord Jesus in prayer. In fact, Jesus appeared to her and even spoke with her. Of course, Jesus didn't reveal some new Gospel when he appeared to St. Faustina. He already revealed everything He needed to say 2,000 years ago to the Apostles and through Sacred Scripture. So, why did He do it? Why did He appear to Faustina? Actually, why does He appear to any mystic for that matter?

God sometimes appears to mystics because He has a prophetic message for a particular time in history, and He uses particular men and women to share His message. Sometimes it's to remind us of something that's been forgotten. Sometimes it's a warning. At other times, it's a message of comfort. Or it may simply be a call to

conversion. Whatever it is, it doesn't change the Bible. Rather, it brings us back to it at a certain time in history.

Okay, so what's the particular and important message that God wants to give to us in our modern time through St. Faustina? Simple. He wants to remind us of the heart of Sacred Scripture, namely, His mercy for us sinners. In fact, He's saying to us sinners, "Now is the time of mercy. Now is a time of extraordinary mercy! Now is a time when I want give especially great graces to the human race. I want to pour out My mercy in a big way."

Why would God say this? Why would He want to give such great graces in our time? Blessed John Paul II explained it best. First, he pointed out something we all know: namely, that there are all kinds of blessings in our contemporary society. For instance, modern technology has done so much to make life easier for us. Just think of e-mail, cell phones, smartphones, and air-conditioning. All these things are blessings. Yet, in the midst of these blessings and in some ways because of the very same advances in technology that brought them, John Paul would say that evil has a reach and power in our day like never before. Indeed, our time, sadly, is marked by unprecedented evil. Despite this, John Paul would also say, "Be not afraid." Why should we not be afraid? Because of what St. Paul writes in Romans, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (5:20). In other words, God is not outdone by evil. So, in a time of great evil, God wants to give even greater graces, and in our time, the graces are huge, precisely because there's so much sin.

To be continued next week...

This introduction draws from Fr Michael Gaitley's book Divine Mercy Explained (see marian.org/whatwedo/divinemeracy.php)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Why did the Pharisees see this incident as a test for Jesus?

What is achieved by Jesus bending down and focusing his attention on the ground?

What happened to the mob mentality when Jesus challenged them?

Have you ever been in a situation where group behaviour overtook individual thought and action?

When Jesus says, 'Go, and don't sin any more,' how can that be applied to your life?

Readings Next Week: Palm Sunday

First Reading: Is 50:4-7

Second Reading: Phil 2:6-11

Gospel: Lk 22:14 – 23:56

First Reading Is 43:16-21

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

I am doing a new thing and I will give drink to my people.

Thus says the Lord, who made a way through the sea, a path in the great waters; who put chariots and horse in the field and a powerful army, which lay there never to rise again, snuffed out, put out like a wick: No need to recall the past, no need to think about what was done before. See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds. The wild beasts will honour me, jackals and ostriches, because I am putting water in the wilderness (rivers in the wild) to give my chosen people drink. The people I have formed for myself will sing my praises.

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

Second Reading Phil 3:8-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians:

Because of Christ I look upon everything else as useless in order to gain him.

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ, and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by

reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you my brothers, I am far from thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation JI 2:12-13

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

With all your heart turn to me, for I am tender and compassionate.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

**Gospel** Jn 8:1-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Let the person without sin be the first to throw a stone.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them.

The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away. and don't sin any more.'