



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

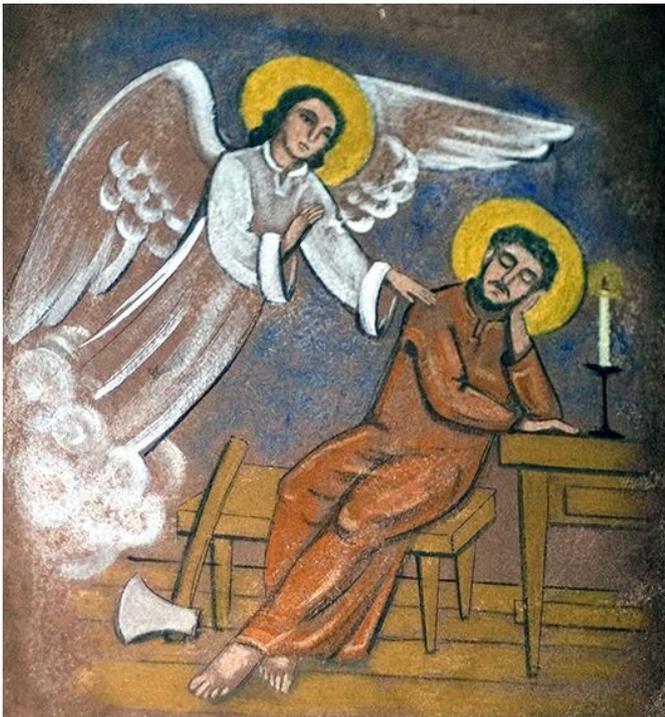
northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au 03 50324144

Website: northeastmallee.org.au

Incorporating the Communities of St Mary's Sea Lake, Sacred Heart Culgoa, St Michael's Lalbert, St Joseph's Nandaly, S's Peter & Paul Quambatook & St Mary's Swan Hill as well as the Lake Boga Families & Faith Group



18TH DECEMBER 2022 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT *THE FOURTH STEP: SAY 'YES'!*



God's love is never forced. He always waits for our 'Yes' to his plans. Mary had to say her 'Yes' before she conceived Christ in her womb. As we hear in today's Gospel, Joseph also had to add his 'Yes', trusting in God's plan and taking Mary into his home. Without their 'Yeses', there would be no Christmas.

God has special plans for each one of us. Our story might not be quite as well known, but in the awesome mystery of our faith it is no less important. God also awaits our 'Yes'... or perhaps more truthfully our repeated 'yeses' as we stumble along the way!

There is a beautiful moment during Mass for us to renew our personal 'Yes' to God. As we approach to receive Holy Communion, and the Host is held up, we hear the words "The Body of Christ" and we reply "Amen." That word 'Amen' expresses so much. It literally means 'so be it', or more simply 'Yes'. So what are we saying 'yes' to in that moment?

Well, firstly it is our 'yes' in faith that what we are receiving is truly Christ's Body. On this level it means "Yes, I believe Christ is coming to me in the Eucharist." Just like Mary received him in her womb, and Joseph took him into her home, so too we add our 'yes' and stand ready to welcome him into our hearts.

That is already a lot to say Amen to, but our 'yes' goes even further still. Christ gives us his Body so that we might become his Body. When we say 'Amen', we are also adding our 'Yes' to this awesome mystery; that we become Christ's Body in this world! He asks for our 'Yes' to trust in the Father's plan for us, even when that might mean enduring through hard times. He asks for our 'Yes' to live as his healing hands and tender heart, reaching out to all in need. He asks for our 'Yes' so that he can truly form us as one people in a perfect Communion of love. Our 'Amen' opens us up to the wonderful adventure of Christian life. If we take it seriously and say our 'Yes' with all our heart, we will never find Mass boring again!

WISHING YOU PEACE AND JOY FOR THE DAYS AHEAD

Many of you will be away for Christmas, so I will take this opportunity to wish you all the best and thank you for your support through the year that has been. May you travel safely, enjoy the company of family and friends and find some rest and renewal! Speaking of sleep... let's not forget that the angel appeared to St Joseph in a dream. Often God reaches us best when we are at rest!

Parish Contact Details:

Po Box 71 Swan Hill, Vic 3585

Phone: 03 5032 4144

northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Website: northeastmallee.org.au

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

Parish Priest

Fr James Kerr

Parish Office:

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
 Giovanni "Ganni" "John" Russo

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Dot Kelly, Connie Taverna, Maggie Stacey
 Brian Hogan, Charlie Taverna, Ada Noble
 Shirley Vains, George Dawes, Molly Curran
 Robert O'Meara, Patricia Mikes, Alice Shanahan

SICK LIST

Elizabeth Williamson, Paul Donohue,
 Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott,
 Jarrod Crimmins, Michael Bourke, Sarah Kenny,
 Jack Donohue, Jude Lewis, Susan, Yvonne Annan,
 Bridget Phyland, Carmel Ryan

THIS WEEKEND (17TH/18TH DECEMBER)

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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

WEEKDAYS

Monday: Holy Hour with Confessions 5pm - 6pm
(Fr Matt Restall & Fr Anthony Nagothu to assist)

Tuesday: 5.30pm
 Wednesday: 10 am
 Thursday: Confessions 5pm
 Mass 5.30pm: Adoration until 7pm
 Friday: 11am Adoration, 12 noon Mass
Confessions: 5-6pm
This Saturday: Confessions 9-10am

NEXT WEEKEND (24TH/25TH DECEMBER)

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sea Lake 4pm
 Swan Hill 6pm *(With Nativity Play)*
 Swan Hill 8pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Quambatook 8:30am
 Swan Hill 10:30am

NOTICES



Silent Night Oh Holy Night.

CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S NATIVITY PLAY

The Children's Nativity Play will take place during the 6pm Christmas Eve Mass in Swan Hill. **All children are welcome to be part of this.** There will be a practice this **Thursday 23rd at 10am.**

EXTRA OPPORTUNITIES

FOR SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Frs Matt Restall and Anthony Nagothu have kindly agreed to come to Swan Hill this Monday 19th to be available for confessions between 5-6pm. We will have adoration and a few hymns during the time as well. You are free to come at any stage during the hour.

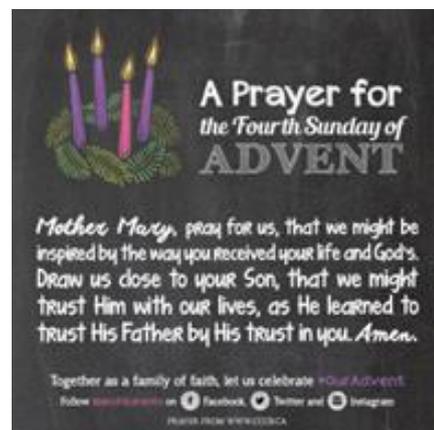
I will also offer an extra opportunity on Fri 23rd 5-6pm and Sat 24th 9-10am, or otherwise you are always welcome to ask me before/after Mass or arrange a time that suits.

COLUMBAN CALENDARS & "GOD'S WORD"

The 2023 Columban Calendars (\$10) and 'God's Word' booklets (\$20) are still available.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDARS: THANK YOU!

Thanks for the terrific response again this year. Just a reminder that complete boxes or individual items can be returned either to the church or parish office/presbytery by **Mon 19th December.**



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

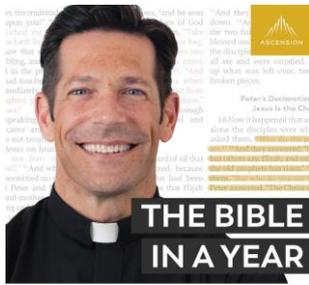
Principal: Kate Quin
 2 Murlong St Swan Hill
 Ph. 03 5033 2541

principal@smswanhill.catholic.edu.au

St Mary MacKillop College

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

Principal@mackillopsh.vic.edu.au



WITH FR. MIKE SCHMITZ, FEATURING JEFF CAVINS

“THE BIBLE IN A YEAR”: FR MIKE SCHMITZ

Would you like to know the Scriptures better? This podcast is for you! Over the course of a year, Fr. Mike walks you through the entire Bible in 365 episodes, providing commentary, reflection, and prayer along the way.

Each 20-25 minute episode includes:

- Two to three scripture readings • A reflection
- A prayer to help you hear God’s voice in his Word

Listen and...

1. Read the ENTIRE Bible
2. Feel more confident about your understanding of Scripture
3. Experience the transformative power of God’s Word in your daily life
4. Start seeing the world through the lens of Scripture

You'll finally understand how all the pieces of the Bible fit together to tell an amazing story that continues in your life today!

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Or listen on your favourite app

Note from Fr James: The beauty of this program is that you can listen in your own time, whenever and wherever best suits you. But perhaps you might find a little extra motivation in knowing that you are not on your own! A small group of us will be starting this program Jan 1st, and would look to get together to share how it is going throughout the year.



ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR ADVENT

- *Have a “Look on the Bright Side day.” Be positive.
- * Check on an elderly relative and or neighbour.
- * Switch off your devices today and be present with friends and family.
- * Bake some festive treats for a neighbour.
- *Everywhere you go leave a glitter ball of kindness behind you.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

How do you think Joseph felt when he learnt that Mary was pregnant?

What might Mary have been feeling once Joseph knew of her pregnancy?

How might a belief that God-is-with-us impact upon our actions and attitudes?

Where do you see signs that God-is-with-us?

Why might the gospel writer have used the excerpt from Isaiah to back the angel’s words?

What social and cultural issues do you think Joseph and Mary may have had to overcome?

What values and virtues does Joseph display in this episode?

GOSPEL REFLECTION

GREG SUNTER

We will see throughout the coming liturgical year that the gospel of Matthew places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the Law and upon its proper application. Indeed, the gospel writer casts Jesus in the role of the ‘new Moses’ – Moses was the great Law-giver of the Old Testament and Jesus is portrayed in this gospel as bringing a new Law to the people of Israel. In this gospel, the proper application of the Law is as important as the Law itself. In today’s passage, Joseph provides an example of the proper application of the Law. His betrothed wife was pregnant; she would have been subject to the Law against adultery and probably would have been stoned to death. Under the Law, Joseph was obliged to divorce her, and yet he determines that he will do so quietly and protect Mary from too much shame and possibly save her life. Joseph did not intend to ignore the Law, but he sought to carry it out in such a way as to bring the least shame and the least hurt to all involved.

The role of Joseph is often overlooked. There is no mention of him during the public ministry of Jesus. In fact the latest mention in any of the gospels is the account of Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12. After that, Joseph disappears and we can only assume that he has passed away by the time Jesus takes up his ministry. Yet Joseph is truly a man of great faith. By rights he should have divorced Mary and walked away. But he trusts in the word of the God that is addressed to him in a dream and from that point on he goes to great lengths to protect and care for his family. © Greg Sunter.

FIRST READING Is 7:10-14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The virgin will conceive.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No', Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:

are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,

will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child

and will soon give birth to a son

whom she will call Immanuel,

a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 23:1-6. R. see vv 7. 10

(R.) Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in his holy place?

The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things.

He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob.

(R.) Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

SECOND READING Rom 1:1-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power

through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Mt 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

A virgin will give birth to a son; his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mt 1:18-24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home. *The Gospel of the Lord.*

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

CHRISTMAS

First Reading: Is 9:1-7

Second Reading: Tim 2:11-14

Gospel: Lk 2:1-14