



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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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



15TH JANUARY 2023 2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



'YES, I HAVE SEEN AND I AM THE WITNESS THAT HE IS THE CHOSEN ONE OF GOD.'

I don't think anyone could argue that John the Baptist didn't take himself and his mission seriously. The Gospels leave the impression of an intense and focused man with a very clear idea of the job he had been sent to do. He was no shrinking violet. And yet here he is, ready to fade into the background to make way for Christ. I am not sure I can articulate it very well, but I think there is an important lesson in that. Isn't it precisely because he knows his own dignity so deeply that he is able to wear it so lightly, completely forgetting himself to point wholeheartedly to Christ?

We can be so anxious, especially as Australians, of rating ourselves too highly, that we end up selling ourselves short. But God values us very, very highly; so highly in fact that he was ready to send his Son to die for us. By acknowledging our innate worth, aren't we giving glory to our Creator? Of course, we are called to humility, but this does not mean running ourselves down. True humility is in being ready to see ourselves as God sees us; deeply loved despite all our failings, and called to greatness no matter how many times we stumble. It is by embracing our worth in his sight that we are able to truly forget ourselves and point to him.

TRUST IS THE KEY. GOD WILL NOT FAIL US.

"Don't spend your life sitting on the fence, keeping your options open, because only commitments bring fulfillment. Happiness comes from meeting our obligations, doing our duty, especially in small matters and regularly, so we can rise to meet the harder challenges... Whatever our situation, we must pray for an openness of heart, for a willingness to take the next step, even if we are fearful of venturing too much further. If we take God's hand, he will do the rest. Trust is the key. God will not fail us."

From the Homily for 2008 Sydney World Youth Day Opening Mass, given by Cardinal George Pell

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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

Valeire Bell
(Ireland, mother of Caireallain)
George Cardinal Pell

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

May Croft, Nyree Templeton, Peter Power
Joe Clarke, Pauline Martin, Angela Shepherd
Pauline Nolan, Eddie Dalton, Bryan Hogan
Cameron Looney, Margaret Walsh
Loughlin Curran, Bill Magee, Concetta Caruso

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 15TH JANUARY
2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Lalbert

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Sea Lake

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 5.30pm

Wednesday: 10 am

Thursday: Confessions 5pm

Mass 5.30pm (*Memorial Mass Valeire Bell*):

Adoration until 7pm

Friday: 11am Adoration, 12 noon Mass

(*Memorial Mass offered for Cardinal Pell*)

NEXT WEEKEND 14/15TH JANUARY 2023

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8:30am Quambatook

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

1st Coll (Presbytery): \$872

Christmas Offerings: \$40

2nd Coll (Parish): \$2248

NOTICES

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

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



First Communions in Nyah West

DEATH OF CARDINAL GEORGE PELL

Following the loss of Pope Emeritus Benedict, this week we heard of the sudden death of Cardinal George Pell in Rome. Many of you knew him personally from his time here as curate in the early 70's. Swan Hill was his first parish placement in Australia, and one he always held dear. Our last meeting was mid-way through last year at a priest's conference. Pell was happy to see me, and delighted to hear I was now in Swan Hill. He basically spent the whole conversation asking after the many parishioners he remembered.

From what I have heard from many of you over the last couple of years, Pell is remembered fondly as well; friendly and personable, even if a little dry and academic when it came to his homilies!

On a personal level, I doubt I met him more than 10 times, but he somehow remembered who I was and where I was from (as an aside, one of the more comic commentaries I have read in the last few days described our hometown Ballarat as the 'Australian outback'!). The first encounter was his return to St Patrick's College as Cardinal while I was still a student. Pell celebrated a special Mass in the school Chapel. Dad still remembers his homily and has quoted it many times. The basic gist was this; when your footy team is

Our Parish Schools

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struggling you go back to the basics. The same is true of the faith. Work on the foundations and everything else will fall into place. I can't remember if it was the same occasion, or a few months later, but I also got to attend a special dinner inducting Pell as a 'College Legend'. As members of the Student Council we all received copies of his book 'Be Not Afraid.' I made sure I got mine signed, and we had a little chat as he did, although to be honest I think I was doing my best to hide the fact we boys had sneakily downed a few too many beers over dinner (like I could hide that from a publican's son)! Whatever of that, I do remember the strong impression I was left with. He was certainly a presence wherever he went; and not just due to his size but even more so the way he carried himself. You felt it was no surprise at all that he had accomplished what he had. And yet he was also very easy to approach, showed great interest in who I was and encouraged me in my own aspirations. The word 'inspirational' is probably a bit overused, but I really did experience his visit in that way. He had walked the same corridors as I had, and so I felt I could also achieve great things for the Lord. Because he was ready to stand tall, I felt I could as well. Anything was possible. There is so much more that could be said, but I think for now the best thing is to pray for him and for all who are hurting. We will offer Friday's midday Mass for him as a special memorial.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

What image is generated by the description of Jesus as the 'lamb of God'?

What emotions might John have felt in the situation described in this passage?

How might the crowd have initially reacted to John's declarations about Jesus?

Who has been a John the Baptist in your life and 'pointed the way' for you in your faith?

How can your actions 'point the way' for others?

Why was it necessary for John to draw the crowd's attention to Jesus?

What is meant by John's repeated declaration, 'I did not know him myself'?

Why was it important to emphasise the message of salvation for all the world?

Where do you see an 'us and them' attitude in the world (or your own community) today?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION – GREG SUNTER

LIVING THE GOSPEL – POINTING THE WAY

John the Baptist fills the role of 'pointing the way' to Jesus. In our own lives we also have the ability to 'point the way' towards Jesus. It doesn't need to be as blatant as John's 'Look, there he is!' However, the way we choose to live our life can point the way just as powerfully as John did. More often than not, our actions speak much more powerfully than any words we might utter. Consistently treating others with respect, maintaining prayer as a central part of life and working for justice in the world will make an impression on others and point the way to Jesus.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT – BAPTISM OF JESUS

Each of the three synoptic gospels (Mark, Luke and Matthew) presents an account of the baptism of Jesus. All three versions record the Spirit descending in the form of a dove. In the fourth gospel, it is interesting that the gospel writer does not actually give an account of the baptism as by the time of this gospel's writing the story is well entrenched in the Christian culture. Instead of a baptism account, John the Baptist appears to recall the event. Rather than needing to describe the event, this gospel writer treats it as a given and simply refers to it.

GOSPEL FOCUS – RANKING

There is an odd line in today's passage. John reminds the crowd that he had said 'A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me.' In Jewish tradition, the prophets and patriarchs who came earlier in their history ranked higher than those who came later. They believed that the history of salvation was at its pinnacle with God's self-revelation to Abraham. Successive episodes and characters were regarded as lesser. But John affirms that Jesus ranks before himself because Jesus existed before John. He is saying that Jesus is more than simply the latest in a long line of prophets.

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

3RD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Is 8:23 – 9:3

Second Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13, 17

Gospel: Mt 4:12-23

FIRST READING Is 49:3. 5-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah:

I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

The Lord said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified';

I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord, my God was my strength.

And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him:

'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob

and bring back the survivors of Israel;

I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 39:2. 4. 7-10. R. vv.8. 9.

(R.) Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

I waited, I waited for the Lord and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God.

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear. You do not ask for holocaust and victim.

Instead, here am I.

In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will. My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart.

Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord.

(R.) Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

SECOND READING 1 Cor 1:1-3

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, send greetings to the church of God in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Jn 1:14. 12

Alleluia, alleluia! The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He enabled those who accepted him to become the children of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Jn 1:29-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

