



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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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



8TH JANUARY 2023

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

DEATH OF POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI



Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI died peacefully in Rome last Saturday morning (31st). His reported last words were simply 'I love you Lord.' What more did he need to say? He was buried on Thursday by Pope Francis in a relatively simple funeral as per his wishes. A Pope carries immense responsibilities, which is why we pray for our Popes every day in the Liturgy of the Church. It is fitting for us to also pray for him now at his death. To do this we will offer a Mass for him in each of our churches, starting this Friday in Culgoa. We will also offer a special memorial Mass for him in Swan Hill this Friday 13th at noon, using the readings and prayers of his funeral Mass.

The media unfortunately has tried to politicise this moment. Pope Benedict himself however was anything but political. He was inspired by a vision of the Church

as a loving Communion, brought together as One by Christ. Christ therefore became the focus of all his efforts and teaching. He somehow found time as Pope to write the series 'Jesus of Nazareth' which aimed to help its readers better encounter Jesus in the Gospels. This series reached millions both inside and outside the Church, bringing many closer to Christ. He was an absolutely brilliant scholar, but always spoke straight from the heart with simplicity and faith. He was very humble too, seen above all in his decision to retire when he knew he was no longer fit for the burdens of his role.

I think it is no accident that he died in the Christmas season. His life's work was to help give birth to Christ in our hearts. He made the most of his talents to share the Light of Christ to all the nations, so that we may be drawn together as one. This is the season of peace. May Benedict now enjoy that peace in eternity.

I will leave you with some of his own words; "Quite soon, I shall find myself before the final judge of my life. Even though, as I look back on my long life, I can have great reason for fear and trembling, I am nonetheless of good cheer, for I trust firmly that the Lord is not only the just judge, but also the friend and brother who himself has already suffered for my shortcomings, and is thus also my advocate, my 'Paraclete.' In light of the hour of judgment, the grace of being a Christian becomes all the more clear to me. It grants me knowledge, and indeed friendship, with the judge of my life, and thus allows me to pass confidently through the dark door of death. In this regard, I am constantly reminded of what John tells us at the beginning of the Apocalypse: he sees the Son of Man in all his grandeur and falls at his feet as though dead. Yet He, placing his right hand on him, says to him: 'Do not be afraid! It is I...'"

Parish Contact Details:

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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

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

1 Month Giovanni Russo

Teresa Aiello, Dorothy Tuohey, John Maher,
Ray Leschke, Margaret Foott, Lance Learmonth,
Trish McGrath, Tom & Margaret Bookham,
Mary Stemmer, Annie & Ken Dwyer,
Frank & Theresa Shiels, Betty Borchard,
Jenny Leonardi, Rhonda Coughlan,
Domenic Bartalotta, Marie LeDeux,
Bill Hogan, Tania Foott

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 8TH JANUARY

EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

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

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 5.30pm
Wednesday: 10 am
Thursday: Confessions 5pm
Mass 5.30pm: Adoration until 7pm
Friday: 11am Adoration, 12 noon Mass
(*Memorial Mass for Pope Benedict XVI*)

NEXT WEEKEND 14/15TH JANUARY 2023

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8:30am Lalbert
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill
Sunday 5pm Sea Lake

NOTICES

ROSARY IN THE PARK (BUT IN THE CHURCH)

Saturday 14th January 10am. All welcome. Prayers offered for our families, our Church and our world. Please note new venue from now on will be St Mary's Church Swan Hill on the second Saturday of each month, unless otherwise noted.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

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



HOUSE BLESSINGS FOR THE EPIPHANY

This week we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. This is traditionally held as a special time to call on God's blessing over our households for the year ahead. Like last year, we will bless some chalk and prepare some prayers for you to take home as a family. If you would like, I will also be very happy to come to your homes to join you for the blessing. Just let me know and we can organise a time. Christ is revealed as the Light to draw all peoples together. May his light shine brightly in our homes that they may be beacons of love and peace!

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

Just a short word on the tradition of the 'Three Kings'. If you read Matthew's Gospel, you will see it doesn't actually say how many magi there were. In a simple sense the number '3' comes from the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Could there be more? Quite possibly. But when we don't know for sure

Our Parish Schools

St Mary's Primary School Sea Lake

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St Mary MacKillop College

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three is as good a number as any. Neither are they actually named as 'Kings'. That comes from earlier prophecies of foreign kings coming from the ends of the earth to adore the Lord, just as we hear today in Is 60 and Ps 71. While Matthew himself refers to the visitors as Magi, or Wise Men, it is likely he had these Old Testament passages in mind when writing his Gospel. The basic meaning is preserved whichever way you name them; the visitors represent all the nations being drawn together by the Light of Christ. Which comes to the next point; Matthew does not name where they come from. Their origins are left open as an invitation to see our own people represented there in Bethlehem. Many ancient traditions across the Church do just this. Persia and Babylon are often named, but sometimes also Ethiopia, Arabia, India and even China too. We can't know for sure, but trade routes did make such origins possible. And lastly the names. Matthew doesn't give them to us, but a very ancient tradition going back some 1500 years names them as Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar. Again, we can't know for sure, but the names are as good as any. And those names, as far as we can gather, carry meanings too; Melchior likely means 'my king is light' or 'City of the King', Caspar 'Treasurer' and Balthazar 'God protects the King'. The names therefore point again to the great mystery we celebrate today; Christ has come as King, a Light to all Nations. In him do we find our greatest Treasure.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why does Herod appear to take a great interest in the birth of Jesus?

What might Mary and Joseph have thought to see the wise men bringing gifts to their baby?

In what way was the journey of the wise men a journey of faith?

What is the significance of the wise men presenting earthly 'treasures' to the Christ child?

Why did the wise men approach Herod to ask about the infant king of the Jews?

Why is it significant that Jesus' birth be witnessed by important men from a distant land?

Whether or not the wise men are a purely literary device, what 'truth' does their story convey?

In what ways do you 'bear witness' to Jesus?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT – THE MAGI

In some translations, the 'wise men' of this passage are referred to as 'Magi'. Magi was the name given to the Persian priestly caste. Persia (now, Iran) lies to the east of Israel. These wise men are also sometimes portrayed as astrologers, but that is largely because of the reference 'We saw his star as it rose'. It is interesting that the passage describes 'some' wise men; tradition has developed a specific number of three – based on the three gifts presented. These anonymous (and purely literary) figures have been given names and their 'relics' lie in honour beneath the Cathedral of Cologne.

EPIPHANY

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus to humankind. The wise men are the representatives of humanity bearing witness to this revelation. However, the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus as not only the Messiah of Israel but the Saviour of the whole world. Interestingly, in this gospel that emphasises the 'Jewish-ness' of Jesus, the witnesses to the birth are gentiles from a foreign land. Their inclusion is a powerful declaration that the revelation of Jesus is for all people. Regardless of the liturgical year, this reading is always used on the feast of the Epiphany to celebrate this pivotal moment.

GOSPEL FOCUS – GOING HOME

The wise men, or Magi, are warned in a dream not to go back to Herod and they go home by a different way. How could they do anything but go home another way – indeed, go home as different people? They are changed by their encounter with the child Jesus and they go home a different way; in a different state; in a whole different frame of mind. When we genuinely encounter Jesus – in scripture, in life, in prayer, in ourselves – then we cannot go home the same way; we must go home by a different way as the Magi did.

COLLECTIONS OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Many thanks for your generosity!

1st Coll (Presbytery): \$3030

Christmas Offerings: \$606

2nd Coll (Parish): \$3217

Bishop's Collection: \$1105

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

FIRST READING Is 60:1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The glory of the Lord shines upon you.

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come,
the glory of the Lord is rising on you,
though night still covers the earth
and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises
and above you his glory appears.

The nations come to your light
and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round:

all are assembling and coming towards you,
your sons from far away
and your daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant,
your heart throbbing and full;
since the riches of the sea will flow to you;
the wealth of the nations come to you;
camels in throngs will cover you,
and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
everyone in Sheba will come,
bringing gold and incense
and singing the praise of the Lord.

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son
your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and
your poor in right judgement.

In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon
fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to
earth's bounds.

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coast shall pay him
tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall
serve him.

For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy
who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save
the lives of the poor.

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

SECOND READING Eph 3:2-3. 5-6

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

*The revelation means that pagans now share the same
inheritance, that they are parts of the same body.*

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by
God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a
revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery.

This mystery that has now been revealed through the
Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to
any men in past generations; it means that pagans now
share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the
same body, and that the same promise has been made to
them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Mt 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore
the Lord. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mt 2:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

We have come from the East to worship the king.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during
the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to
Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the
Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have
come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he
was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He
called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the
people and enquired of them where the Christ was to be
born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him, 'for this is
what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately.
He asked them the exact date on which the star had
appeared and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find
out all about the child,' he said, 'and when you have found
him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him
homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they
set out. And there in front of them was the star they had
seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place
where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with
delight and going into the house they saw the child with
his mother Mary and falling to their knees they did him
homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him
gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were
warned in a dream not to go back to Herod and returned
to their own country by a different way.

The Gospel of the Lord. All: *Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

2ND SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Is 49:3. 5-6

Second Reading: 1 Cor 1:1-3

Gospel: Jn 1:29-34