



# 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



## 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**"YOU MUST THEREFORE BE PERFECT JUST AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT."**

### ***THE ONE, UNIVERSAL CALL WITH A GAZILLION MANIFESTATIONS***

Now if I was to walk into a nursery and ask for 'the perfect plant', the storekeeper would think I was a bit weird. How can they answer that question? Am I wanting to plant some vegies to eat, or beautiful flowers for show? Do I want a big tree for shade, or a shrub to shelter birds? Do I want a hedge for a screen, or a ground cover to keep down the weeds? And once I have decided what I want the plant for, the storekeeper will then ask about the conditions that plant will have to grow in. What is the soil like? How much sun will it get? How much water can I spare for it? Every plant in stock is potentially 'perfect' in its own way, each exhibiting a unique type of perfection. The real question is finding the right fit for each plant.

And so it is with us. We are all called to holiness, as all of us have been moulded in the image and likeness of God, but just how that image is reflected in us will express something of our own unique nature and circumstances. If I walk into a hall of mirrors at a funpark, I will see myself reflected from hundreds of different directions and angles. Each reflection is a true image of me, but each is also entirely unique. So it is with God's singular perfection finding its unique reflection in each one of us.

For example, think of all the different temperaments we have. Some of us are full of energy and drive. Isn't that a reflection of God's abundant life and unending zeal? Some of us are perhaps more reflective and inclined to careful thought. Doesn't that express something of God's patience and understanding?

And how God's perfection is reflected in us is not just limited to our natures, but is also shaped by the circumstances we find ourselves in. When I work hard to care for my family, isn't that the Father's providential care for his Creation reflected in me? Or when I open my heart to the suffering of the person next to me, isn't that his compassion mirrored in me? Or when I turn away from resentment and chose forgiveness instead, doesn't his inexhaustible mercy shines forth? Each expression of the Father's perfection in me is firmly rooted in the circumstances I find myself in.

I have laboured the point a bit, but basically I wanted to get to this; true holiness does not work against or in spite of our nature, but *with* it to complete and perfect it as God intends. The mirror might need a clean and polish, but it should never need breaking. Nor does the call to holiness ever tear us away from our lived circumstances, but rather it is expressed *in* and *through* them. It is just about finding the right fit.

We are all called to be 'perfect as our Heavenly Father is Perfect', but exactly how that perfection actually expresses itself will vary as often as there are hearts ready to respond to that call.

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

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Phone: 03 5032 4144

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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**

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

*1 month Anniversary Giuseppe Galluccio.*

Maude Deagan, Kath Ritchie, Ellen Wright,  
James Ryan, Lorraine Rogers, Barry Power,  
Honorah Quirk, Adele, Concetta & Pasquale  
Colombo, Johanna (Josie) King, Jaron Bennett,  
Mary Doran, Thomas Irwin, Adrian Penno,  
Raffaele Caccavello, Frederick Lloyd, Vin Conway,  
Francis Foott, Ron Free, Clare O'Bryan

**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 18/19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

**Sunday 8.30am NO Mass Lalbert**

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Sea Lake School Mass

**WEEKDAYS**

Monday 5.30pm

Tuesday 5.30pm

**Ash Wednesday**

**10am Mass Swan Hill**

**2.15pm Liturgy Sea Lake**

**5.30pm Mass Swan Hill**

Thurs Conf 5pm Mass 5.30pm Ad until 7pm

**Friday: 11am Adoration, 11:30am Mass**  
*(Please note move to earlier time)*

**NEXT WEEKEND 25<sup>TH</sup>/26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

**NOTICES**

**SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS!**

We are a bit late getting these on the bulletin but some special congratulations are in order for two of our hard working parishioners.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO JUDY CAMERON**

on being nominated as Citizen of the Year for the Quambatook District of the Gannawarra Shire. The final was held in Kerang on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February evening and although not the winner, Judy's nomination was excellent, describing all the clubs, organisations and activities that she is a member of. Well done Judy and congratulations from the Holy Family Parish community.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO JANE STACEY**

On receiving her Sea Lake District Citizen of the Year award in recognition of her very generous contribution to the life of the Sea Lake community. Again, the list of groups and activities she is at the heart of is very impressive. Well done Jane on living the words 'Never see a need without doing something about it' so faithfully, and thank you for all the great work you do for our community!



**OTHER NOTICES:**

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER- SWAN HILL**



This year the Swan Hill celebration of World Day of Prayer will be held in St Mary's Swan Hill on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 10am. All welcome. The theme this year is taken from Ephesians 1:15-19, "I have heard about your faith", and the prayers prepared by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Taiwan.

**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**AND THE BEGINNING OF LENT**

**This Wednesday 22nd February is ASH WEDNESDAY.**

There will be Masses in Swan Hill at 10am and 5:30pm, and an Ash Wednesday Liturgy in Sea Lake at 2:15pm with St Mary's School.

**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  
[principal@smswanhill.catholic.edu.au](mailto: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](mailto:Principal@mackillopsh.vic.edu.au)

### **LENTEN NOTICE CONTINUED...**

Lent is a special time for growth and renewal. Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving we look to strengthen our spiritual life, grow closer to God and prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Easter.



#### **PRAYER**

What better time to try and grow our prayer life than Lent? As always, the best way to pray is the way we can, so aim for something realistic and suitable. All life needs nourishment, and it is the same with prayer. That's where the many great resources for Lent can be a real help. Perhaps you might like to try the **LENTEN PROGRAM TRIUMPH BOOKLETS**? These are available from the office for \$10 each. They include a reflection for each day as well as the readings and reflections for Sundays.

Or if you would prefer videos to booklets how about keeping Lent with **'THE CATHOLIC GUY' BRUCE DOWNES**. For 40 days you will receive a short, practical and inspiring video in your inbox every morning to help you make this Lenten journey more powerful and prayerful. This program is FREE and you can sign up here: [BruceDownes.org/Lent23](http://BruceDownes.org/Lent23)

Or for even more options check out the many programs available on the online platform **FORMED**. For the kids there is *Brother Francis*, and for the adults much, much more. If you haven't yet signed up simply: 1. Go to [formed.org](http://formed.org) 2. Click on 'Sign up as a parishioner' and then Create a New Account 3. Under Find your Parish or Organisation enter Holy Family Parish Swan Hill & select Holy Family Parish 62 Splatt St Swan Hill Vic 4. Click Next, enter your Name & email and Sign-Up.

#### **FASTING**

Don't forget to kick off Lent by skipping meat on Ash Wednesday! This day and Good Friday are also held as days of Fasting, which of course is undertaken according to your health needs and stage of life. The whole of Lent though can be for us a time to perhaps set aside some luxuries or indulgences and live more simply. And this is not just limited to food and drink, for example cutting back on our screen time might be just what we need.

Fasting is not about proving to God or others how strong we are, but rather about recognising our ongoing need for God's help and grace. The money and time we save can also then be redirected towards others in acts of charity.

Speaking of which...

**CONTINUED IN NEXT COLUMN...**

### **ALMSGIVING**

This is often highlighted by the saints as the most important of all our efforts. 'Charity covers a multitude of sins.' Perhaps some of you have been considering volunteering for St Vincent de Paul or the Soup Kitchen? Now might be the perfect time! Many of you have a great tradition of supporting **CARITAS' PROJECT COMPASSION PROGRAM** each year. The envelopes and boxes will hopefully have arrived by next week. Perhaps you might also like to consider some of the other many charities offering aid throughout the world? For example, **AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED** [aidtochurch.org](http://aidtochurch.org), **CATHOLIC MISSION** [catholicmission.org.au](http://catholicmission.org.au) and **SALESIAN MISSIONS** [salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au](http://salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au) are all worthy bodies with strong connections to the communities they serve, and each are currently running special appeals for the victims of the earthquake in Syria and Turkey. Or back to thinking more locally- perhaps you might even just make this Lent the time to reach out to your neighbours? The opportunities for charity and almsgiving are endless, but thankfully so too is the great store of God's love freely offered to us every day.

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#### **HAVE YOU THOUGHT?**

What situations in your own experience require a stand to turn the other cheek?

In what ways is Jesus' teaching more complex than a simple lesson of revenge vs submission?

What do you think may have happened to a person who acted on Jesus' teaching at the time?

What aspects of today's gospel do you find most confronting/challenging?

What aspects of the gospel passage do you find most comforting/reassuring?

#### **GOSPEL THOUGHTS**

##### **LIVING THE GOSPEL – LOVE YOUR ENEMY**

Jesus tells us that it's easy to love those who love us – anyone can do that. The test of Christian love is to love those who seem unlovable or even seek to make themselves appear unlovable. It's easy to stop saying hello to the person who never returns your greeting. It's easy to avoid the person whose disability makes you uncomfortable. It's easy to hate the person who's nasty to you. But Jesus says that it's these people who we must love. If we are only polite, pleasant and hospitable to our friends then we are failing to follow the footsteps of Jesus.

## FIRST READING

Lv 19:1-2. 17-18

A reading from the book of Leviticus

*You must love your neighbour, as yourself.*

The Lord spoke to Moses; he said: 'Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.

"You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. You must openly tell him, your neighbour, of his offence; this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord."'

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 102:1-4. 8. 10. 12-13. R. v.8

**(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful.**

My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults.

As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. As a father has compassion on his sons, the Lord has pity on those who fear him.

**(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful.**

**SECOND READING** 1 Cor 3:16-23

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians  
*All things are yours, but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.*

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple.

Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture says: The Lord knows

wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are, or again: God is not convinced by the arguments of the wise. So there is nothing to boast about in anything human: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life and death, the present and the future, are all your servants; but you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** 1 Jn 2:5

Alleluia, alleluia! Whoever keeps the word of Christ, grows perfect in the love of God. Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Mt 5:38-48

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
*Love your enemies.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Readings Next Week**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

First Reading: Gen 2:7-9; 3:1-7

Second Reading: Rom 5:12-19

Gospel: Mt 4:1-11