

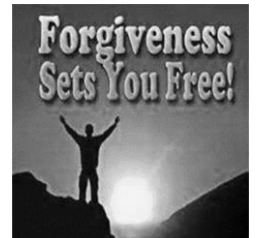


# Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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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



## 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023: 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

***"...UNLESS YOU EACH FORGIVE YOUR BROTHER FROM YOUR HEART"***



Today's Gospel is not an easy one. Forgiveness can be hard. Very hard. Whenever we hear the call to forgiveness in the Gospels (which is very often), it cuts us straight to the heart. Why? Because it is a message we all need to hear. We have all been left disappointed by the people around us in one way or another. We have all been hurt. And I dare say you might be carrying some of that hurt with you, just as you read this. The need to forgive is a reality we all face, and one I guess we will grapple with right up to our dying breath. That is why Jesus is so consistent in calling us to forgiveness.

We can forgive because we have first been forgiven. Just as the Father forgives us our sins, so too we are called to forgive others the hurts they have caused us. And just as seeing our own sins forgiven allows us to move forward into new life, so too does letting go of our hurts. Unless we forgive, our hurts will never leave us. Think about it, the person who hurts us may 'make it up', justice may be restored, wrongs may be set right... but for us, until we find forgiveness, we can never truly move on. Finding forgiveness sets us free. That is why Jesus is so strong in calling us to forgiveness.

How can we find forgiveness? With God's help and grace. He is the Healer of all hurts. If we are struggling, turn to him. Place our hurts in his hands, for they are also the hands of justice. We can trust in him. He has our past in his care, and he has our present and future too. Perhaps a helpful thought can be that God promises that our best days are before us; as believers we have the vision of eternity and look forward to the restoration of all things in Christ. I've shared the story of the Abdallah family before, who lost three of their children to a drunk driver. They made the decision immediately to forgive him, but that is not to say that choice came easily. Healing came slowly. A pivotal moment for father Danny came one day as he was driving his car. *"God spoke to my heart and said, 'Danny, your past needs to be the size of a review mirror in a car and your future and your present moment is the front screen'. And it made me realise our kids aren't behind me anymore. They are actually in front of me. I'm actually heading to them. It's two years, two years since the tragedy, but it's two years closer to seeing them."* Perhaps that same vision can be of help to us. Letting go of our hurts frees us to step forward into healing. The Cross leads to the Resurrection.

### THANK YOU!

Thank you for the fantastic celebrations last weekend, and for all the kind words and gifts on the occasion of my anniversary. I am certainly feeling the love! Thank you to everyone who put so much work into the organisation of the day; the coordinating team, all who prepared and served the food, to all who were involved in the setting up, the decorations and beautiful flowers, and to all who were part of the the clean up too, to all who prepared the special presentations, the speeches and songs, to our musicians, readers and MC, our photographers, to all who travelled from across the parish and of course to my family (D ad reads this each week and can pass the message on!). Thank you for celebrating with me, and for all your kind messages, cards and gifts. It has all been a bit overwhelming. I will have to take some time to think about what I can use your generous gifts for- I will keep you posted. But in the meantime- thank you!

#### 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, Wed 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**

Bridget & Sean Walsh, Mary Jane Phyland,  
Jack Cleary Pierce Derham, Martino Raco,  
Irene Drummond, James Francis Kiley,  
Michael Considine, Nance McNamara  
Colin Gregor, Millie Grant, Francis John Conlan

**SICK LIST**

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

**THIS WEEKEND (16<sup>TH</sup>/17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER)**

**24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**

**Tuesday: NO MASS**

**Wednesday: 5.30pm**

**Thursday: 5pm Confessions  
5.30pm Mass, Adoration until 7pm**

**Friday: 11am Adoration, 11.30am Mass**

**NEXT WEEKEND (23<sup>RD</sup>/24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER)**

**25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday: 6:00pm Swan Hill

Sunday: 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday: 10:30am Swan Hill

**NOTICES**

**ST MICHAEL'S LALBERT**

We will celebrate a **final Mass of Thanksgiving in  
Lalbert on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October at 2:30pm.**

I'm sure many families with ties to Lalbert might like to be part of this- please pass the word around. If you are keen to help out on the day let us know. We would also appreciate any photos or memories that might be shared. The plan will be to share an afternoon tea after the Mass- more details to come.



**SWAN HILL SHOW GATE VOLUNTEERS**

On the weekend of Friday 6th and Saturday 7th of October the Show committee have asked for assistance from the local churches for people to work on the gates. We are looking for volunteers to help out. There will be a meeting for volunteers prior to the show to show you what is needed. Signup sheets with times slots are in the foyer. If you are able to assist by helping for even an hour it would be greatly appreciated as this is an event which supports the local community.

**PARISH STEWARDSHIP-**

**THANK YOU & WORD ON NEW ENVELOPES**

Thank you for playing your part in supporting our Parish and making our parish family what it is.

Envelopes are available at the back of the Church

If you have changed your method of giving, for example by signing up to CDF Pay, envelopes may still be available in your name as they were ordered a few weeks ago. If you no longer need the envelopes, please just hand them back to Glenda or myself or leave them outside the Parish Office with a note. If you have signed up to CDF Pay could you please let Glenda know so that our records can be adjusted.

**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](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)

## ST BRIGID'S COLLEGE HORSHAM REUNION

St Brigid's College Horsham invite past pupils of the Classes of 1973, 1983, 1993, 2003 & 2013 for the milestone reunion! The reunion will be held at St Brigid's College on Saturday 21st October, 2023, at 2pm. Attendees can RSVP by calling the Front Office on (03) 5382 3545 or via this link:

<https://forms.gle/uKfjHb2KMsZ1huXa9>



### SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS...

The parable sees the unforgiving servant putting his fellow servant in prison 'until he paid back the debt'. This is almost exclusively what prisons were used for until only a few hundred years ago. When a person could not repay a debt, they were held in prison until the debt was paid. Of course, being in prison, they had little opportunity to repay the debt themselves and relied on friends and relatives to repay the debt on their behalf. To pay someone's debt was to 'redeem' them. The earliest ideas of Christ as a 'Redeemer' were based on the idea of Christ paying a debt on behalf of humankind.

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Which character in the parable is most like God / least like God?

In the parable of the unforgiving servant, which character do you identify with? Why?

When have you been forgiven for something you did wrong? What did it feel like to be forgiven?

Have you ever truly forgiven someone and tried to forget about what happened? Is it difficult?

What gets in the way of forgiving someone when they have hurt you?

What aspect of the gospel passage do you find most challenging / interesting?

How might it be possible to forgive someone who has committed a crime against you?

In the light of the gospel passage, what is the role of 'punishment'?

### GOSPEL REFLECTION: GREG SUNTER

This gospel passage follows directly from last week's passage. It concludes the whole of Matthew Chapter 18 that deals with sin, forgiveness and reconciliation. Peter's question to Jesus and suggested answer is a reflection of the view that there is a limit to the number of times we should forgive someone. Seven is a significant number in scripture and implies a 'perfect' amount. Even though by his use of seven, Peter is suggesting that he should forgive someone many, many times, Jesus quickly corrects Peter and says not seven, but seventy-seven times (or seventy times seven). Jesus plays on the use of the number seven and multiplies it to indicate that one should forgive as many times as is required – without keeping count; without keeping score.

The story of the unforgiving servant is a familiar one of forgiveness and mercy being shown but not passed on. The sting in the tail of this parable is Jesus' final warning that, 'So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart.' This is an unsettling statement, as we believe God's forgiveness to be without measure and without end. Jesus warns that unless we seek to imitate God's forgiveness and forgive others 'from our heart' (with compassion) then we are not going to recognise the forgiveness of God and will cut ourselves off from it.

The whole idea of forgiving from the heart is a powerful contradiction of a popular concept: 'I can forgive, but not forget.' Is it really possible to forgive but refuse to forget? Surely holding on to a memory of hurt is holding on to the hurt itself and does not display that any forgiveness has occurred at all. To forgive but not forget is to keep count. How many times should I forgive the one who has hurt me? As many times as it takes! © Greg Sunter

**FIRST READING** *Sirach 27:30 – 28:7*

*A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus*

*Forgive your neighbour's faults and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.*

Resentment and anger, these are foul things, and both are found with the sinner.

He who exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord, who keeps strict account of sin.

Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.

If a man nurses anger against another, can he then demand compassion from the Lord?

Showing no pity for a man like himself, can he then plead for his own sins?

Mere creature of flesh, he cherishes resentment; who will forgive him his sins?

Remember the last things, and stop hating, remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments.

Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will;

remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence.

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 102:1-4. 9-12. R. v.8*

**(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful;  
slow to anger and rich in compassion.**

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.

His wrath will come to an end;  
he will not be angry for ever.

He does not treat us according to our sins  
nor repay us according to our faults

For as the heavens are high above the earth  
so strong is his love for those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west  
so far does he remove our sins.

**(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful;  
slow to anger and rich in compassion.**

**SECOND READING** *Romans 14:7-9*

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans*

*Whether alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.*

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life,

it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *John 13:34*

Alleluia, alleluia!

I give you a new commandment:

love one another as I have loved you.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** *Matthew 18:21-35*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
I tell you that you forgive not seven times but seventy times seven.*

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time," he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me", he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he said. "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

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

**READINGS NEXT WEEK:**

**24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

First Reading: Isaiah 55:6-9

Second Reading: Philippians 1:20-24. 27

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16