



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



22ND OCTOBER 2023: 29TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

I HAVE CALLED YOU BY YOUR NAME... THOUGH YOU DO NOT KNOW ME...

It would be easy to brush it aside, but I think it is worth focusing on the reading from Isaiah. What is going on, and who is this Cyrus? Well, God's People had been living in exile and servitude under the Babylonians for 70 years now, and as far as they could see they were no closer to freedom and returning home. They had no powerful friends, no influence, no leverage to lift them out of their seemingly hopeless position... but where they were weak and powerless, God could show his providential hand.

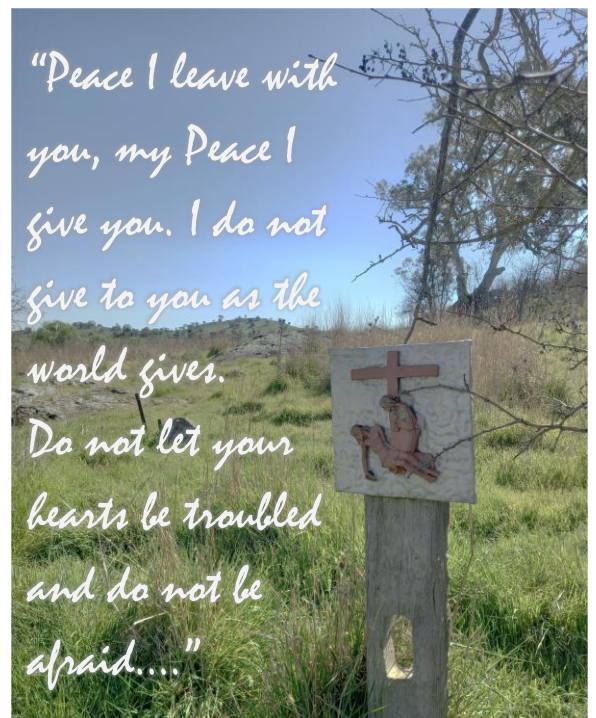
Cyrus led the Persians in a revolt and overthrew the Babylonians, just like they had overthrown the Assyrians before them. But so what? The Assyrians had oppressed the Israelites, the Babylonians then picked up where they left off... why would the Persians under this Cyrus fella be any different? He wasn't a good man. He didn't know God, still less follow his ways. He didn't give too hoots about justice or the plight of God's people... and yet God's hand worked through Cyrus and he let the Israelites return home. When all human hopes had failed, God's hand brought freedom and restoration for his people.

Governments and leaders will come and go, but God is the true Lord of History.

PRAYING FOR PEACE

The violence and conflict unfolding in the Holy Land right now is awful to see. Too many innocents are suffering. Hopefully the situation will settle down and there can be a ceasefire soon, and for a time at least an end to the killing... but we know that a ceasefire is something very different to lasting peace. Recent history teaches us that it is only a matter of time before the conflict will stir up again. Humanly speaking, it is so hard to see how a just and balanced peace can be achieved. Leaving aside the terribly complicated history, what

hope is there for peace when civilians on both sides of the border are living in constant fear? How can you make peace with your neighbour while you are living in terror? On a purely human level, I struggle to see how the situation can drastically improve. The seemingly perpetual cycle of violence might be leaving us feeling utterly powerless. But as people of faith, we recognise a greater power that can continue to work for peace when all hope seems lost. We live in the hope that Christ is at work too. He has the power to heal and to reconcile. He can lift people out of the paralysis of fear, and build bridges between those who once were enemies. Christ bridged that chasm in his very Body; torn from limb to limb on the Cross. Hatred and violence tried to destroy him... but His love proved the stronger. And even today, his love can bring true and lasting Peace wherever there is even *one* heart is ready to receive it. Let's live that Peace in our lives, may we never tire of going out at its missionaries, and may we never cease to pray that all peoples may come to know it in their lives too.



Parish Contact Details:

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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
 Phillip Parsons

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Mary Morton, Fr Frank Monaghan, Henry Kiley
 Luke Brennan, Brian O'Loughlin, Patrick Pearce
 John (Jack) McNamara, Michael O'Connor,
 Mary Dobeli, Grazia (Grace) Pati, Dorothy Bishop,
 Ronald Hoare, Lia Pino, Patrick O'Reilly,
 Jack Giddings, Ukadia Mercy Nwuobia

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 (21ST/22ND OCT)
29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

Saturday: 6:00pm Swan Hill
 Sunday: 8.30am Quambatook
 Sunday: 10:30am Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 5.30pm
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday: 5pm Confessions
 5.30pm Mass, Adoration until 7pm
Friday: 11am Adoration, 11.30am Mass

NEXT WEEKEND (28TH/29TH OCT)
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill
After Mass: Opportunity for Prayer & Adoration
with Sr Rosie & Sr Mel
 Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND

Presbytery (First): \$ 1270
 Parish (Second): \$ 1642

NOTICES



FINAL MASS LALBERT

Last Sunday we were delighted to have over 60 faithful join us for the Final Mass of Thanksgiving in St Michael's Lalbert. We had former parishioners return from Ouyen, Cobram, Eurora, Mitiamo, Bendigo and Melbourne (and I am sure I have missed a few there!). There was a group photo after Mass, before we moved to the Community Centre for some fellowship and plenty of stories and laughs.

My sincere thank you to everyone who made this day so special; for the locals who prepared the Church and Community Centre and had them looking spick and span; for all those who brought food to share, and for those who helped lay out the tea and coffee and cleaned everything up afterwards; for all those who helped pass the word around so well- it was amazing how it travelled; for those who brought photos and memorabilia, and for those who shared some stories. It really was a community event.

I would also like to add a sincere thanks to our Lalbert regulars for keeping the Church alive and open for as long as they had, but also for the maturity in making the call on its future. There is real sadness in closing a building that houses so many memories, but I think there is also room for some healthy pride- for the vision and generosity of the pioneers who established and built the church, for the way in which it has truly fulfilled its purpose in being a home for faith and community, and for the dedication and energy of the faithful in keeping it open for so long.

We will now begin preparing the church for sale. I have already had some ask- yes, the pews are available for sale! Make contact if you are interested.

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

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM

We have now met with all the families of children preparing for their Confirmation and have begun our preparations. Please continue to keep these children in your prayers. In a special way, please pray for the success of the retreat this coming Thursday.

SPECIAL VISIT OF SR ROSIE & SR MEL

Speaking of the Confirmation Retreat, this coming week we welcome Srs Rosie Drum and Mel Edwards from the Missionaries of God's Love. They are coming to help run the Retreat on Thursday, and while here they will also visit MacKillop on Friday to spend some time with the staff and students, and then they will also offer a special opportunity for Prayer and Adoration after the Saturday evening Mass (28th Oct). This will include some music and reflections from the sisters. Our world certainly needs prayer right now, perhaps this is the invitation you've been waiting for!



HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why did the Pharisees send their disciples to ask Jesus about paying taxes?

In what ways were the Pharisees' men 'hypocrites' as Jesus called them?

How can we apply today Jesus' words, 'give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God'?

In today's world, how can we give to God what belongs to God?

In what ways can you better give to God what belongs to God?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION BY MARY COLOE PBVM *WHAT BELONGS TO GOD?*

Religion & politics – always a volatile brew! Today's Gospel shows that this is not a modern dilemma but one faced by Jesus & his first disciples. While we try to live out the values of God's kingdom, we are not divorced from the realities of this world, in fact it is this world that we are missioned to, and living in this world demands that we are political – that is, we are part of the society we live in. Vatican II expressed it like this, 'The joys & the hopes, the griefs & the anxieties of the people of this age ...are the joys & hopes, the griefs & anxieties of the followers of Christ.'

Jesus had been preaching revolutionary values about the treatment of the poor and the outcasts. He reminded people of God's way of looking; he spoke of the Kingdom of God, which was a dangerous message when preaching in the Roman Empire, where Herod was considered the puppet King. Jesus' message and his growing popularity with the ordinary Jewish crowds had the possibility of turning society upside down and so some saw him as a social revolutionary. At that time some groups within Judaism were looking for ways to throw off Roman rule and return to having their own independent religious kingdom worshipping God alone – these were the Zealots. The Pharisees in the Gospel set a devious trap. If Jesus says 'No, don't pay the tax,' then he aligns himself with the anti-Roman ideals of the Zealots. If he says 'Yes, pay the tax,' then he sides with Rome's oppression of the people. Note that the people who ask the question represent both Herod, (the Herodians) and the religious leaders (the disciples of the Pharisees). This is a most unlikely mix. Since Herod only has his power with the support of Rome, the Herodians would be likely to support the Roman tax. The coin used to pay the tax was a Roman denarius which had the head of the Emperor – Tiberius Caesar – and the inscription: 'Tiberius Caesar august son of the Divine high Priest Augustus'. The coin's image and words would have been offensive to observant Jews.



Jesus turns the tables on his opponents with his response – 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.' Since the image and inscription are about Caesar then the coin belongs to Caesar. But then Jesus adds, 'and to God what belongs to God'. This challenges both the Herodians and the Pharisees to consider what belongs to God. There may even be a call to recognise that people are made 'in the image of God' and that all people therefore belong to God.

Jesus' response to his questioners makes me wonder 'what belongs to God' in my life. Does God truly get what rightfully belongs to God, or just the leftovers in my busy schedule? If only giving God what belongs to God was as simple as paying taxes. My God asks more of me than that.

© Dr Mary Coloe PBVM

FIRST READING Isaiah 45:1.4-6

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah
I have taken the hand of Cyrus to subdue nations
before his countenance.*

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whom he has taken by his right hand
to subdue nations before him
and strip the loins of kings,
to force gateways before him
that their gates be closed no more:
It is for the sake of my servant Jacob,
of Israel my chosen one,
that I have called you by your name,
conferring a title though you do not know me.
I am the Lord, unrivalled;
there is no other God besides me.
Though you do not know me, I arm you
that men may know from the rising to the setting of
the sun that, apart from me, all is nothing.
The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 95:1. 3-5. 7-10. R. v.7
(R.) Give the Lord glory and honour.

O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
Tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples.

The Lord is great and worthy of praise,
to be feared above all gods;
the gods of the heathens are naught.
It was the Lord who made the heavens.

Give the Lord, you families of peoples,
give the Lord glory and power,
give the Lord the glory of his name.
Bring an offering and enter his courts.

Worship the Lord in his temple.
O earth, tremble before him.
Proclaim to the nations: 'God is king.'
He will judge the peoples in fairness. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5

*A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the
Thessalonians
We are mindful of your faith, hope, and love.*

From Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the Church in
Thessalonika which is in God the Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ; wishing you grace and peace from God
the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We always mention you in our prayers and thank God
for you all, and constantly remember before God our
Father how you have shown your faith in action, worked
for love and persevered through hope, in our Lord Jesus
Christ.

We know, brothers, that God loves you and that you
have been chosen, because when we brought the Good
News to you, it came to you not only as words, but as
power and as the Holy Spirit and as utter conviction.
The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Philippians 2:15. 16

Alleluia, alleluia!
Shine on the world like bright stars;
you are offering it the word of life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 22:15-21

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to
God the things that are God's.*

The Pharisees went away to work out between them
how to trap Jesus in what he said. And they sent their
disciples to him, together with the Herodians, to say,
'Master, we know that you are an honest man and teach
the way of God in an honest way, and that you are not
afraid of anyone, because a man's rank means nothing
to you. Tell us your opinion, then. Is it permissible to pay
taxes to Caesar or not?' But Jesus was aware of their
malice and replied, 'You hypocrites! Why do you set this
trap for me? Let me see the money you pay the tax with.'
They handed him a denarius, and he said, 'Whose head
is this? Whose name?' 'Caesar's' they replied. He then
said to them, 'Very well, give back to Caesar what
belongs to Caesar – and to God what belongs to God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

29TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Exodus 22:20-26

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40