



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au 03 50324144

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



24TH SEPTEMBER 2023: 25TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME



A LANDOWNER GOES OUT TO HIRE WORKERS FOR HIS VINEYARD...

I see two challenges in today's Parable. The first is to understand God's abundant generosity. "Why be envious because I am generous?" If God wants to reward the late-comers in the same way as those who have toiled throughout the day... well, who are we to complain? God's ways are not our ways, his thoughts above ours. But of course the flip side to this is the awesome message of hope offered to those who are either new to the harvest or who are yet to hear God's call. No matter how recently you have joined, you will not miss out on your reward. God does not withhold his blessing from anyone who has answered the call. And of course, even for us who are already toiling away, this message should still fill us with a different kind of hope; the gate is still open and we can look forward to plenty more joining us. I know many of you are praying for loved ones that they might come to faith. Don't lose heart. In God's reckoning of time, it is still not too late.

Now, if you are like me, there might be a little tendency to grumble like the first workers in the parable. You might be asking yourself, 'If you get the same reward even for joining at the last minute, well, why am I working so hard? Why not take a break, sit back and relax, and then pick up my tools again at the last minute?' And it is not made easier when we see so many around us seemingly doing just this. How can we answer this second challenge? Well, the first part of the response is found in the parable itself. The workers are paid for working. Whether they came early or late, they answered the summons of the Master and were still working when the day came to a close. Well, as so many other parables tell us, we simply can't know when that time will come, so if we want to guarantee the blessing, we have to persevere and keep toiling away. We can't risk being caught napping. We have to stand ready and remain awake.

But there is also another way of viewing the challenge, and that is as a call to deeper conversion. If God is so generous, then as his *friends* we should learn to be generous too. A servant will do as they are asked, and do it as their duty, but a friend will go far beyond that. Friends share hopes and dreams, toils and struggles. They never begrudge or resent deeds done out of love. It is simply what true friends do. Now God has called us his friends. That means we are called to share in his great Work, not just for our own sake but purely out of love for Him alone. It means we should delight in toiling away during the heat of the day, because we are working alongside our truest Friend to help him accomplish his awesome plan. That calls for a change of heart on our part, to learn to love as he loves. Such a change doesn't come easily, but don't lose heart. In God's reckoning of time, it is still not too late! God is both abundantly patient and generous. We can persevere in the hope that even if it takes us the whole day to reshape our hearts, he will not deprive us of the reward.

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**

Joan Hayes (*nee Humphreys*)
Patsy Taverna

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

John Nolan, Mary O'Loughlin, William McInerney,
Chris Pupillo, Mary Cecilia Kelly, Br Pat Stanley
Mary "Josie" Johnston, Rema O'Sullivan, Leo Deola,
Giovanna & Lorenzo Colombo, David Burns,
Catherine Hilda McInerney, Leo Phyland

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 (23RD/24TH SEPTEMBER)

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 5:30pm

Wednesday: 10am

1:30pm Funeral Mass Patsy Taverna

Thursday: 5pm Confessions

5.30pm Mass, Adoration until 7pm

Friday: 11am Adoration, 11.30am Mass

NEXT WEEKEND (30TH SEPT/1ST OCT)

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Saturday: 6:00pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8:30am Sea Lake
Sunday: 10:30am Swan Hill

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEK

Presbytery (First Collection): \$980

Parish (Second Collection): \$1790

NOTICES



RAFFLE: ST PATRICK'S PYRAMID HILL

Fr Dean Bongat has asked if we might help support a raffle being run by St Patrick's Pyramid Hill. The proceeds of the raffle will go towards constructing a new accessible toilet for the Parish. The raffle will be drawn on Saturday 14th of October in Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall, and winners will be notified via text message, call or email.

1st Prize is \$1500

2nd Prize \$1000, 3rd Prize \$500

Tickets are \$2 each and will be available after Masses over the next three weekends, or through the Parish Office. If you are happy to take a booklet or two away to sell outside the Parish it would be much appreciated. This is a good way for us to show practical support to one of our neighbouring Parishes.

A MESSAGE FROM JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS

We have sent nine boxes of rugs to our Sydney depot on Wednesday. We would like to thank out wonderful band of knitters and crocheters, who work continually for cold humanity. We are also grateful to Pickering Transport, who take the rugs to Sydney for us free of charge. Josephite Companions of Swan Hill.

ST MICHAEL'S LALBERT

We will celebrate a **final Mass of Thanksgiving in Lalbert on Sunday 15th 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.

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



SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT: KINGDOM PARABLES

A feature of the kingdom parables that Jesus used is a challenging 'shift' to the unexpected. Jesus only ever uses parables to describe what the kingdom is like, and never says exactly what it is or isn't. In each parable he compares the kingdom of God to something that would be familiar to a 1st century audience but then he twists the familiar and makes the challenging shift by making the familiar, unfamiliar. (This 'shift' is sometimes called a 'discombobulating shift'.) Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God disrupts our normal way of thinking, it turns our expectations upside down and it completely challenges our 'normal' relationships.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

How did the labourers hired first feel when they collected their pay? Were they justified?

How do you think the labourers hired later in the day felt?

What is the 'shift' in this parable that takes it from a narrative story to a parable about the kingdom?

What message about the kingdom do you think Jesus was trying to convey in the parable?

What is a situation today where we could apply this parable?

GOSPEL REFLECTION: MARY COLOE PBVM

'YOU HAVE TREATED THEM THE SAME AS US.'

This parable always makes me uncomfortable since I identify with the workers who came early in the morning and find myself saying, 'It's not fair,' and then 'God's not fair' – which is exactly the point of the parable. God is not fair! God doesn't measure things out according to what is deserved.

God simply gives generously.

In my classes when I teach this parable I have students take the various roles and then imagine and enact what might have happened later that night in the local tavern. The feelings run high. Some want to work for this master again.

Others aren't sure that he will act the same way in the future. He might have foolishly so overpaid the latecomers that he is short of money in the future. It all seems very haphazard. Others want to form a union and negotiate set wages for set times. Which just goes to show once again that God is not like us, or should I say, we are not like God. The words of Isaiah offer an appropriate response to this parable: 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are my ways your ways,' says the Lord.

The parable is unique to Matthew's Gospel and its place in the Gospel narrative is important. At the start of chapter 19, Matthew records that Jesus left Galilee and crossed into the Southern region of Judea, heading towards Jerusalem. Galilee has been a place where Jesus' teaching was generally welcomed. In Galilee he found both men and women prepared to become his disciples. Heading to Jerusalem though, is a journey into the centre of Jewish religious authority. It will be, for Jesus, the centre of conflict. There is a cost in this journey, for Jesus it will ultimately cost him his life. On this journey Jesus begins to teach in greater detail the cost of discipleship. Across chapters 18 and 19 Jesus teaches the rigorous demands of following him. The ethics of the reign of God ask more than the ethics of Moses. The model for Christian behaviour is to be based not on Moses, but on the model of God. And the God Jesus describes does not measure things as we do and does not act as we might expect.

Jesus begins the parable with the words, 'This is what the reign of God is like' (Matthew avoids the name of God and uses 'heaven'). Taking Jesus' words seriously he describes a ridiculously generous God who doesn't give what is earned or deserved but uses some other criteria. God's criteria are God's own selfless love.

In placing the parable here, in the narrative context of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and death, it may be that Mathew understands Jesus' death coming from that same source of utterly ridiculous love. The parable might then be read as a commentary on Jesus' own life, given to both the first comers and the late arrivals.

This concept of God's ridiculously gracious love humbles me. It's beyond my comprehension. Like most people I know, I have a suspicion that I've got to earn love – human or divine. That someone could simply love me! But this is what the parable asks us to consider. The reign of God is not something we earn or deserve through our own efforts. The Kingdom is God's gift.

© Mary Coloe

FIRST READING *Isaiah 55:6-9*

*A reading from the Prophet Isaiah
My thoughts are not your thoughts.*

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.

Let the wicked man abandon his way,
the evil man his thoughts.

Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on
him, to our God who is rich in forgiving;
for my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.

Yes, the heavens are as high above earth
as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts.

The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 144:2-3. 8-9. 17-18. R. v.18*
(R.) The Lord is near to all who call him.

I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever.
the Lord is great, highly to be praised,
his greatness cannot be measured.

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
who call on him from their hearts.

(R.) The Lord is near to all who call him.

SECOND READING *Philippians 1:20-24. 27*

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians
For me to live is Christ.*

Christ will be glorified in my body, whether by my life
or by my death. Life to me, of course, is Christ, but
then death would bring me something more; but
then again, if living in this body means doing work
which is having good results – I do not know what I
should choose. I am caught in this dilemma: I want
to be gone and be with Christ, which would be very
much the better, but for me to stay alive in this body
is a more urgent need for your sake.

Avoid anything in your everyday lives that would be
unworthy of the gospel of Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *cf Acts of the Apostles 16:14*

Alleluia, alleluia! Open our hearts, O Lord,
to listen to the words of your Son. Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Matthew 20:1-16*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
Why are you jealous because I am generous?*

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like
a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for
his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers
for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard.

Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing
idle in the market place and said to them, “You go to my
vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.” So they
went. At about the sixth hour and again at about the
ninth hour, he went out and did the same.

Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found
more men standing round, and he said to them, “Why
have you been standing here idle all day?” “Because no
one has hired us” they answered. He said to them, “You
go into my vineyard too.”

In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his
bailiff, “Call the workers and pay them their wages,
starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first.”
So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour
came forward and received one denarius each.

When the first came, they expected to get more, but
they too received one denarius each. They took it, but
grumbled at the landowner. “The men who came last”
they said “have done only one hour, and you have
treated them the same as us, though we have done a
heavy day’s work in all the heat.” He answered one of
them and said, “My friend, I am not being unjust to you;
did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings
and go. I choose to pay the last-comer as much as I pay
you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why
be envious because I am generous?”

Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:25-28

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-11

Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32