



**St Michael's Catholic Church
Lalbert**

**Final Mass of Thanksgiving
Sunday 15th October 2023**

A brief history of St Michael's Catholic Church Lalbert 1907-2023

Home Mass

Before the church was built, Mass was celebrated at the home of the Meehan family. Weddings and baptisms were also held there. The priest would come out from Swan Hill on horseback several times throughout the year and attend the home Mass. Also Father Goidanich from Charlton visited on occasions. This routine continued until an actual church structure was built.

1907 A church is built.

Lalbert then became a part of the Quambatook Parish when Fr Ryan was Parish priest in 1907. After ten years he left for Coleraine and Fr Conway took his place.

Until about 1914 priests travelled by horse, but never failed to be there when needed. Fr Duffy came next, arriving in 1930. To take his place the very Irish, Fr Duggan transferred from Manangatang. During his stay a new church was built in 1953. Fr Hurley was here as a curate at this time also.

1953 A new church is built.

The new church in 1953 was an exact replica of the Chinkapook plans. Fr Duggan orchestrated this. Even the beautiful "Last Supper" depiction on the front of the altar is identical. The stained glass windows originally were situated behind the altar on the west wall. After changes to the altar now facing towards the congregation, these windows were relocated to the side of the alcove. The church windows were originally built as fixtures with the intention of keeping out draught and particularly dust, for which Chinkapook country is renowned. However as the mallee summers were so extreme, Fr R. Shepherd, in later years,

decided to have the stained glass windows remodelled for ventilation. This occurred in 1968. They were removed, sent away and modified to open outwards. While the originals were away a temporary cover filled the cavities. Around this time the church had a major face lift. Over the original weatherboard the exterior was covered with a brick-like cladding. This was to eliminate the need to paint.

Following on was Fr McDermott, Fr Meagher, Fr Dunne and then Fr Shepherd, son of Rex and Eileen Shepherd of Meath. Fr McCormick was in charge between 1975 and 1978, when Fr Brennan arrived in August of that year, serving until 1986. Then followed Fr Michael O'Toole from 1986-1994, Fr Gerard Shanahan 1994-97 and then Sr Carmel Setford RSM as Parish leader until 2004. Fr Brendan Smith acted as visiting priest around this time. Fr Andrew Hayes arrived in 2004, and was replaced by Fr Ed Moloney in 2006. Following Fr Ed, Fr John Monaghan was the last resident parish priest. Among others, Lalbert was later served supplied by Fr Peter Jose, before becoming part of the newly erected North East Mallee Parish in 2018 under first Fr Matthew Thomas and finally Fr James Kerr.

For 116 years St Michael's has provided a place for worship, meeting and welcoming locals and visitors to our area. It has been an essential source of gathering to celebrate Mass, the sacraments, weddings, funerals, baptisms. St Michael's served us well and now it is time to say goodbye. Thankyou to all present here this afternoon who were able to join us in this celebration of St Michael's service to the Lalbert community.

For sources see note at end of booklet.

Opening Hymn: **GATHER US IN**

Here in this place, new light is streaming,
now is the darkness, vanished away,
see, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in the lost and forsaken,
Gather us in the blind and the lame;
Call to us now and we shall awaken,
We shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry,
We are the old who yearn for your face,
We have been sung throughout all of hist'ry,
Called to be light to the whole human race.

Gather us in the rich and the haughty,
Gather us in the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
Give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take the wine and the water,
Here we will take the bread of new birth,
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.

Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
Give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion,
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining,
Not in some heaven, light years away,
But here in this place, the new light is shining,
Now is the kingdom, now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us for ever,
Gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in all people together,
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Offertory Hymn: OPEN MY EYES LORD

Open my ears, Lord.
Help me to hear your voice.
Open my ears, Lord.
Help me to hear.

Open my heart, Lord.
Help me to love like you.
Open my heart, Lord.
Help me to love.

I live within you,
deep in your heart, O love,
I live within you.
Rest now in me.

Open my eyes, Lord.
Help me to see your face.
Open my eyes, Lord.
Help me to see.

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Communion Hymn: One Bread, One Body

Refrain: *One Bread one Body, one Lord of all,*

One cup of blessing which we bless.

And we, though many, throughout the earth,

we are one body in this one Lord.

Verse 1: Gentile or Jew, servant or free.

Woman or man no more.

Verse 2: Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.

Verse 3: Grain for the fields, scattered and grown,
gathered to one for all.

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Final Hymn: Sing to the Mountains

Refrain: *Sing to the mountains, sing to the sea.*

Raise your voices, lift your hearts.

This is the day the Lord has made.

Let all the earth rejoice!

Verse 1: I will give thanks to you, my Lord.

You have answered my plea.

You have saved my soul from death.

You are my strength and my song.

Verse 2: Holy, holy, holy Lord,

heaven and earth are full of your glory!

Verse 3: This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us be glad and rejoice.

He has turned all death to life.

Sing of the glory of God!

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Thank you for joining us for this special Mass of Thanksgiving.

***Please join us at the Community Centre where we can share
some stories and fellowship.***

***The short history was collated by Janine Power making use of
notes from 'Lalbert Reflections' and 'Celebrating 100 Years in
the Quambatook Parish 1907-2007' as well as the memories of
parishioners.***

Farewell

Farewell St Michael's Lalbert
We entered your wooden doors
The key that hung behind the pipe
Will open them no more.

To every priest appointed
Through mud and heat and dust
For your dedication, sincere Thankyou
For the sacraments, faith, trust.

Within, you held life's emotions
Over the many years
Weddings, baptisms, funerals
Celebrations, solemn tears

Children, families, young and old
Gathered inside your walls
Afterwards socialising, morning tea
Talked politics, crops, footy scores

Blessed meeting place
For community once so strong
Times have changed, People gone
Accept and move along

Farewell St Michael's Lalbert
Final prayers, a gentle nod
The Mass has ended, go in peace
Thanks be to God.

