



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



17TH DECEMBER 2023: 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

***"REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS; AGAIN I SAY, REJOICE.
INDEED, THE LORD IS NEAR!"***

The Third Sunday of Advent is marked out as a special time for rejoicing; our Lord is near! Even when we aren't quite feeling it... he is nearer to us than we realise, and we have faith that he helps and strengthens us in ways we do not see.

Now, if you find yourself hearing the Gospel this Sunday and thinking, "Hang on, didn't we have this one last week?", the confusion is understandable. It is very similar; last week we heard from the Gospel of Mark about this powerful figure, John the Baptist, who comes to 'Prepare the Way' for the Lord by preaching and offering a baptism of repentance. We hear the pretty much the same story again today but this time from the Gospel of John. As they say, if something is worth saying once, it is worth repeating again... 'Prepare the Way!'.

BLESSINGS AND SAFE JOURNEY FOR THOSE TRAVELLING...

We aren't quite at Christmas yet, but I know many of you will be heading away to see family and friends in the days ahead. If that is you, we wish you a safe journey and a joy-filled Christmas and look forward to seeing you again on your return. For those who are instead preparing for guests and family to arrive- we hope things don't get too stressful!

AND A GOOD TIME TO SAY THANK YOU

As always, I would like to thank everyone for so generously sharing their gifts and energy with our Parish. For all those involved in cleaning, maintaining and decorating our churches and their grounds, and for the special efforts in the lead up to Christmas- thank you! For all those who help prepare for our Masses, getting everything set up; for those who organise and lead us in music; for our readers, collectors and extra-ordinary ministers; and for all who lead our Lay-Lead Assemblies- thank you! For all of you who help welcome people when they arrive, and for those who play a special role in inviting others in- thank you! For all of you who help in offering hospitality after Masses, for funerals and other special celebrations- thank you! For all of you who have responded so generously when invited to play a special role- thank you! For all of you who take the initiative and quietly go out to visit the elderly, the sick and house-bound, taking Christ with you as you go- thank you! For all those who keep us in their prayer, and who never tire of sharing that gentle encouraging word- thank you! For all of you who play a special part in reaching out to the poor, for volunteering your time and giving so generously- thank you! For all the work each and every one of you do in your daily lives to build up the kingdom- no matter how small that effort may seem- thank you! And for the support you show to this parish by giving financially so we can continue to do what we do- thank you! On a personal level I would also like to thank all those who support me in my role so well- whether that's with your good advice and counsel, your special concern or your encouragement, your hospitality or your prayers... please know I deeply grateful for all that you do.

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
 Lawrence Turner

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Raffaele Mollo (1 yr), Connie Taverna, Monica Brady,
 Jack Barry, Maggie Stacey, Brian Hogan,
 Charlie Taverna, Ada Noble, Shirley Vains,
 George Dawes, Molly Curran, Mary Robbins,
 Robert O'Meara, Patricia Mikes, Geoffery Johnston,
 Alice Shanahan

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 (16/17TH DEC)

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Monday 10.30am *Funeral Prayers*
for Lawrence Turner

Tuesday 5.30pm **with Anointings**

Wednesday 10am **with Anointings**

Thurs: Confessions 5pm, Mass 5:30pm, Adoration

Friday: 11am Adoration, 11.30am Mass

See notice opposite for extra Confession times →

NEXT WEEKEND (23RD/24TH DEC)

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill
 Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

CHRISTMAS EVE: SUNDAY 24TH DEC

4pm Sea Lake
 6pm Swan Hill (with Nativity Play)
 8pm Swan Hill

CHRISTMAS DAY: MONDAY 25TH

Swan Hill 10:30am

NOTICES



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Once again, our schedule for the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Period will be:

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday 23rd 6pm Swan Hill
 Sunday 24th 8:30am Quambatook

Christmas Eve: Sunday 24th Dec

4pm Sea Lake
 6pm Swan Hill (with Nativity Play)
 8pm Swan Hill

Christmas Day: Monday 25th Dec

10:30am Swan Hill

Feast Holy Family: 30th & 31st Dec

Sat 6pm Swan Hill
 Sun 10:30am Swan Hill

New Years Day: Mary Mother of God

10am Monday 1st Jan

SACRAMENTS OF HEALING FOR ADVENT:

ANOINTING OF THE SICK & RECONCILIATION

To help us prepare for Christmas, we will offer special Masses with the Anointing of the Sick and extra times for Reconciliation.

Anointing Masses

Tuesday 19th Dec 5:30pm
 Wednesday 20th Dec 10am

Additional Times for Reconciliation

Thursday 21st Dec 6-7pm
 Friday 22nd Dec 10:30-11:30am, 5-6pm
 Saturday 23rd 10:30am-11:30am, 5-6pm

PRAYERS FOR CAY TRINH

Please pray for Seminarian Cay Trinh who will be ordained as a Deacon this Saturday 16th in Ballarat. May God bless him in his call to serve the people of our Diocese of Ballarat.

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

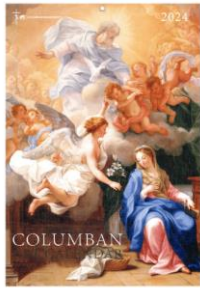
Principal: Kate Quin
 2 Murlong St Swan Hill
 Ph. 03 5033 2541

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



NOW AVAILABLE: *COLUMBAN CALENDARS, GOD'S WORD & CHRISTMAS CARDS*
Religious Christmas Cards @ \$10 pk
Columban Calendars @\$10 each
Gods Word 2024 \$20 each
All available from the office.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Thank you everyone for your generous response to this cause, your enthusiasm, assistance and donations are overwhelming.

These will be distributed through A Good Kitchen and St Vincent de Paul this week.

If you are able to help with sorting the boxes on Monday, please let Glenda know

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why do you think the priests and Levites were concerned about identifying who John was?

How might John's followers have reacted to his announcement of the one who was coming after him?

In what ways is John the Baptist portrayed as a 'witness' to Christ?

Is there someone you know who witnesses to their faith through their actions? How do they do it?

Are there forms of witnessing to faith that 'turn you off'?

How can you effectively witness to your faith?

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR ADVENT

- ❖ Ask "Are you OK?" and really listen to the reply
- ❖ Focus on all the good things you have in your life.
- ❖ Radiate positivity, it's "Look on the Bright-side" Day
- ❖ Enjoy a games night with family or friends.
- ❖ Tell a family member why you love them.

READINGS NEXT WEEK: 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL

This Sunday's Gospel invites us to continue our reflection on the person and mission of John the Baptist. Today we depart from the Gospel of Mark and read a selection from the Gospel of John.

The Gospel for today combines a brief passage from the prologue to John's Gospel with a report about John the Baptist. As in Mark's Gospel, the Gospel of John contains no birth narrative. Instead, John's Gospel begins with a theological reflection that has come to be called the "prologue." This prologue places the story of Jesus in its cosmological framework. It speaks of Jesus' existence with God since the beginning of time. In John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the culmination of the Word, the light that is coming into the world's darkness.

Following this prologue, John reports on the ministry of John the Baptist. We learn about the attention that John the Baptist received from the Jewish authorities: Messengers from the Jewish priests, the Levites and the Pharisees question John about his identity and the meaning of the baptisms that he is performing. John's Gospel uses these questions to establish the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is not the Messiah, nor is he Elijah or the Prophet. In John's denials, we hear echoes of the kind of messianic expectations that were common in first-century Palestine.

The only affirmative response that John the Baptist gives is when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. Upon answering the next question, John announces that the savior they seek is already among them, but as yet unrecognized. John's response highlights for us an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our savior. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus' presence in our midst. Advent also reminds us that Jesus will come again to fulfill the promise of salvation. We pray that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day.

The third Sunday of Advent is also called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete, a Latin word which means "rejoice," is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday's Mass. This theme is echoed in today's second reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians. It is a reminder that Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

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FIRST READING Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

I exult for joy in the Lord.

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;
to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.
'I exult for joy in the Lord,
my soul rejoices in my God,
for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.
'For as the earth makes fresh things grow,
as a garden makes seeds spring up,
so will the Lord make both integrity and praise
spring up in the sight of the nations.'

The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10
(R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians
May you all be kept blameless, spirit, soul and body, for
the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things
give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you
to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of
prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything –
hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and
may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and
body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has
called you and he will not fail you.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Isaiah 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 1:6-8. 19-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

There stands among you, unknown to you, the one who is
coming after me.

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent
priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are
you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I
am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I
am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.'
So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an
answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about
yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:
a voice that cries in the wilderness:

Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they
put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if
you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?'
John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among
you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me;
and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at
Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was
baptising. The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

