

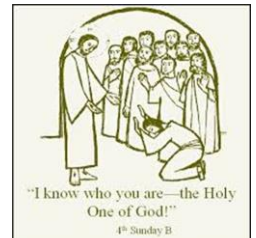


Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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



11TH FEBRUARY 2024: SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME *'OF COURSE I WANT TO... BE HEALED!'*

What would you say is the hardest thing to believe? That God exists? That he created the world and all that is in it? That he has it in his care? That he defeated death when he rose from the dead? That we now share in eternal life as well? Or is it this more personal one; that he truly loves us? That he loves you, that he loves me... or in other words, that we are lovable.

For many of us, this is probably the hardest truth to grasp. We can spend so much of our efforts into trying to prove ourselves and pleasing the people around us. And of course, part of that comes from a good intention to love and serve and to put others first. Nothing wrong with that. But part might also stem from an anxiety deep down, that we can't possibly be loved just for our own sake. Unless we keep loading up the scales with reasons for people to love us, *for God to love us*, then we will be found out and cast aside. For much of the time we can function pretty well under this tension; we carry the burden of the anxiety, but it spurs us to acts of service and again, that isn't such a bad thing. But when we have a fall or find ourselves in desperate need, it can feel like our whole world suddenly crashes down. When we have nothing to give, nothing to bargain with, how could anyone possibly love us?

When the leper approaches Jesus in today's Gospel, he says, 'If you want to, you can cure me.' *If you want to.* Here is the leper, standing before the powerful healer everyone has been talking about. From what he has heard, he knows Jesus *can* help him. But when it comes to it, he isn't sure that he would *want* to. His disease has seen him cast out by the village, and even his family. No-one has touched him for years. When he approaches anyone he has to call out 'Unclean, unclean', to warn them. He has said it so many times that he now doubts that anyone can see the good in him. He isn't sure that he is lovable. He isn't sure he is worth saving. And what is Jesus' response? He reaches out to touch him and says, *'Of course I want to!'* How precious must that gentle touch have felt? How delightful those words? It has to be one of the most powerful phrases in the whole of the Gospels.

'Of course I want to!' If ever we find ourselves in a moment of doubt that we are worth helping, that we are worth saving, this might be just the Gospel we need to read. Of course Jesus wants to reach out and help us. Of course Jesus loves us. That is simply who he is. And who are we? Right down at the core of our being? We are his beloved. That is the whole reason he came to be like one of us. That is why he reached out to share in all our joys, but also our trials and hurts. That is why he continues to reach out to us today. That is why he touches us in the Sacraments in such a special way; so that we can know we are truly loved.

CHÚC MỪNG NĂM MỚI! HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR!

A special greeting for all who are celebrating Lunar New Year this weekend!
We wish you all every blessing for the year ahead!

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

Natale Pino, Aileen Meehan, James Elliott
Salvatore Buccheri, Edward Fitzgerald,
Frank Lonergan, Jan Marie Bell,
Carmela Mammone, Ronald Duryea
Annunziata Russo, Lorna Phyland

SICK LIST

Pat Croft, 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 (10TH/11TH FEB)
6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill (In Vietnamese)
Sunday 8.30am Quambatook
Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill
Sunday 5pm Nandaly

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday 5.30pm

Ash Wednesday: 10am and 6pm

Thurs: Confessions 5pm, Mass 5.30pm, Adoration

Friday: 12.35pm Mass with St Mary MacKillop School
6PM Stations of the Cross

NEXT WEEKEND (17/18TH FEB)

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Culgoa
Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Sea Lake Beginning of Year Mass

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-15
Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22
Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

NOTICES



ASH WEDNESDAY

AND THE BEGINNING OF LENT

This Wednesday 14th February is ASH WEDNESDAY

To mark the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, each of our schools will be celebrating special liturgies. Mass will also be celebrated in Swan Hill Church at 10am and then again at 6pm for any who would like to join. Our other Church communities can then distribute the ashes on the first Sunday of Lent.

Lent is a special time for growth and renewal.

Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving we look to strengthen our spiritual life, grow closer to God and prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Easter.

PRAYER

What better time to try and grow our prayer life than Lent? As always, the best way to pray is the way we can, so aim for something realistic and suitable. All life needs nourishment, and it is the same with prayer. That's where the many great resources for Lent can be a real help. Perhaps you might like to try the **Lenten Program Pieta Booklets?** These are available from the office for \$7 each. They include a reflection for each day as well as the readings and reflections for Sundays. Perhaps you might also like to join a group to work through the program together.

Or if you would prefer videos to booklets check out the many programs available on the online platform **FORMED**. There are some posters up in the Swan Hill Church pointing out some good material you might like.

If you haven't yet signed up simply:

1. Go to formed.org
2. Click on 'Sign up as a parishioner'
3. and then Create a New Account

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

Under Find your Parish or Organisation enter 'Holy Family Parish Swan Hill' & select 'Holy Family Parish 62 Splatt St Swan Hill Vic'

4. Click Next, enter your Name & email and Sign-Up. Or perhaps you might like to make a special effort to join in praying the **Stations of the Cross**? We will have these each Friday of Lent at 6pm in Swan Hill.

FASTING

Don't forget to kick off Lent by skipping meat on Ash Wednesday! This day and Good Friday are also held as days of Fasting, which of course is undertaken according to your health needs and stage of life (basically only asked of adults in good health).

The whole of Lent can also be a time to set aside some luxuries or indulgences and live more simply.

And this is not just limited to food and drink, for example cutting back on our screen time might be just what we need.

Fasting is not about proving to God or others how strong we are, but rather about recognising our ongoing need for God's help and grace. The money and time we save can also then be redirected towards others in acts of charity.

ALMSGIVING

This is often highlighted by the saints as the most important of all our efforts. 'Charity covers a multitude of sins.' Perhaps some of you have been considering volunteering for St Vincent de Paul or A Good Kitchen? Now might be the perfect time! Many of you have a great tradition of supporting Caritas'

Project Compassion Program each year. The envelopes and boxes are available at the back of the church. There are also many other charities offering aid across the world that you might also consider.

Aid to the Church in Need aidtochurch.org, Catholic Mission catholicmission.org.au and Salesian Missions salesianmissionsaustralia.org.au are all worthy bodies with strong connections to the communities they serve. Or back to thinking more locally- perhaps you might even just make this Lent the time to reach out to your neighbours? The opportunities for charity and almsgiving are endless, but thankfully so too is the great store of God's love freely offered to us every day.

ROSTERS FOR SUNDAY MINISTRIES SWAN HILL have been emailed out and are also available at the back of the church. We are looking for people to assist in the Ministries of reading, taking up the gifts at the offertory and Eucharistic Ministers as some people have moved on and some of our older members would like to step down. If you know of someone, please contact the office and we will follow it up.

REFLECTION BY NICK BRODIE

'He was like a deadman walking', quipped Pope Francis. Not only did the leper in today's Gospel have a terrible disease, but he was excluded from wider society and 'marginalised by the civil and religious community'. The physical disease brought with it painful social consequences.

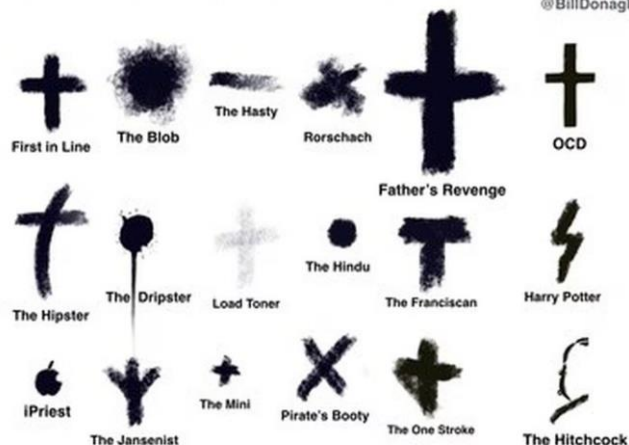
There was a sense at the time that such leprosy was punishment for sin; that somehow the lepers deserved what they were getting. But Jesus saw past these misunderstandings. He saw the person in front of him, responded to their cry, and felt compassion for them. 'Of course I want to!', Jesus says.

Tellingly, Pope Francis points out, Jesus 'does not stand at a safe distance and does not act by delegating, but places Himself in direct contact.' Like Jesus, therefore, we should be close to those in need. We should make contact with them. We should respond to them.

Jesus' response, the Pope points out, is thus essentially about compassion and contact. Firstly, it is important to feel the situations faced by other people. To empathise, sympathise, and understand what they might be feeling. Secondly, it is necessary to reach out and remove the stigma; to respond in some physical, practical way to the situation before us. Even Jesus did not cure social diseases by good intentions alone. © Nick Brodie

A Catholic Guide to Ashes, Extended Edition

©BillDonaghy



FIRST READING *Leviticus 13:1-2. 44-46*

A reading from the book of Leviticus

As long as he is unclean, he must live alone, outside the camp.

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'If a swelling or scab or shiny spot appears on a man's skin, a case of leprosy of the skin is to be suspected. The man must be taken to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests who are his sons.

'The man is leprous: he is unclean. The priest must declare him unclean; he is suffering from leprosy of the head. A man infected with leprosy must wear his clothing torn and his hair disordered; he must shield his upper lip and cry, "Unclean, unclean". As long as the disease lasts he must be unclean; and therefore he must live apart; he must live outside the camp.'

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 31:1-2. 5. 11. R. v.7*

(R.) I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Happy the man whose offence is forgiven,
whose sin is remitted.

O happy the man to whom the Lord
imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no guile.

But now I have acknowledged my sins;
my guilt I did not hide.

I said: 'I will confess
my offence to the Lord.'
And you, Lord, have forgiven
the guilt of my sin.

Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord,
exult, you just!

O come, ring out your joy,
all you upright of heart. **(R.)**

SECOND READING *1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1*

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Whatever you eat, whatever you drink, whatever you do at all, do it for the glory of God. Never do anything offensive to anyone – to Jews or Greeks or to the Church of God; just as I try to be helpful to everyone at all times, not anxious for my own advantage but for the advantage of everybody else, so that they may be saved.

Take me for your model, as I take Christ.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Luke 7:16*

Alleluia, alleluia!

A great prophet has appeared among us;
God has visited his people.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Mark 1:40-45*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
The leprosy left him and he was cured.

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to' he said 'you can cure me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your recovery.' The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would come to him.

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

