



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



18TH FEBRUARY 2024: FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

***'THE TIME HAS COME AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS CLOSE AT HAND.
REPENT, AND BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS.'***

So here we are, at the start of another Lent. And like every year, we begin with the story of Jesus' time of trial and temptation in the wilderness. Mark keeps the story short, using as few words as he can, but the basic points are there. After his Baptism, Jesus is 'driven' into the desert, where he 'remained for 40 days' (hence our 40 days of Lent), and was 'tempted by Satan', but the 'angels looked after him.'

Now that bit about being 'tempted by Satan' can sound a little awkward to our modern ear. We live in a very materialistic world, with a very materialistic world-view to go with it, so even as people of faith it can be difficult for us to acknowledge and talk about spiritual realities that are beyond our vision. Angels sound nice, even kinda cute, so we can sneak them into polite conversation every now and again, but demons... that just feels too much! Mention them and you risk being labelled a religious nut, or at least a bit cooky. And yet, the consistent witness of the Gospels is that angels and demons are real. Jesus isn't embarrassed to talk about them. They are part of our reality and are engaged in a spiritual battle that involves us as well. The Angels fight on our side, watching over us and giving us aid. Satan and his demons, not so much. They are doing their best to trick us and trip us up. They hate to see us living freely. They hate to see us living faithfully. They hate to see us thriving and living life to the full. In other words, they hate nothing more than seeing Jesus winning the battle in our lives.

Of course, there is a delicate balance here. We don't want to get too caught up in talk of angels and demons, because it can distract from our own agency. We have ultimate responsibility over our own lives and the choices we make. It isn't an accident that after he emerges from the desert, Jesus doesn't start trumpeting his Victory over the devil, but rather proclaims the choice that is set before us; repent (turn back to God), and believe the Good News. It really is as simple as that. The Ultimate Victory has been won. God's time is now. All we have to do is follow Christ day by day and eternal life is ours.

Christ is the ultimate focus. The freedom he has won for us the ultimate reality. But while we stumble along, it is also good to remember that we are engaged in a spiritual battle. There are powers that will try to deceive us and lead us astray, and we should be aware of this. But the greater reality is Christ and his power in us. He entered the battle on our behalf. He faced the trial and emerged the stronger. And that same freedom and strength is now made available to us. With Christ, we have nothing to fear.

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+**
Desma Roberts

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Blessing Ngobi Ugbejie, John Bernard Bell
Patrick McInerney, Maude Deagan, Kath Ritchie
Ellen Wright, James Ryan, Lorraine Rogers,
Barry Power, Adele, Concetta & Pasquale Colombo,
Honorah Quirk, Johanna (Josie) King, Jaron Bennett,
Mary Doran, Thomas Irwin, Adrian Penno,
Raffaele Caccavello

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 (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

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tues: **1:30pm Funeral Desma Roberts**

5.30pm Mass

Wednesday: 10am

Thurs: Mass 10am

(Fr James heading to Halls Gap in afternoon)

Friday: 11.30 Mass, 6pm Stations of the Cross

NEXT WEEKEND (24TH/25TH FEB)

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

NOTICES

PYRAMID HILL RAFFLE RESULTS

My apologies- I had forgotten to pass on the results of the Pyramid Hill Parish Raffle drawn December 23.

Here is a message from Fr Dean Bongat PP...

Dear Fr. Kerr, and Holy Family Parishioners,

Thank you very much for the support you have extended to us during our Marian Festival Raffle. Your generosity is truly valued and appreciated. Here are the winners during our Raffle draw on the 23/12/23.

1st Prize Fr Gerald B of Maidstone

2nd Prize Isabella A of Colac

3rd Prize Vaughn H of Pyramid Hill

Gross Income \$15,196

Thank you deeply for you generous support towards our cause! Kind regards, Fr Dean

TET THANKS

Just a little note to say thank you to our Vietnamese community for sharing Lunar New Year celebrations with us last week. Thank you to all those who put so much work into making it a great celebration.



FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS

You are welcome to join for Stations of the Cross in the Swan Hill Church, every Friday of Lent at 6pm. Starting this coming Friday we will also share a little supper afterwards- pumpkin soup to start with. Hopefully this might be a special way to observe Lent as a Parish and also share a bit of fellowship. Keep an eye out each week as we will have a couple of specially themed nights as Lent progresses- one for couples and one for kids.

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

PROJECT COMPASSION

Many of you have a great tradition of supporting Caritas' **Project Compassion** Program each year. Envelopes and boxes are now available in the church.



HARMONY DAY: SATURDAY MARCH 2ND

Swan Hill's annual Harmony Day celebrations will be held on Sat 2nd March from 4-8pm at Riverside Park.

This event is a special celebration of the many cultures and peoples who have made this region their home. Music, dance and art are all shared, as well of course as a lot of delicious food! Many of our parishioners are central to organising this event each year, it would be great to show them your support.

Flyers with full details available in the Church.



SOME GOOD LENTEN VIEWING

There are some posters up in the Swan Hill Church pointing out some good material that is available on the online platform **FORMED**. Perhaps you might like to check them out? We have a Parish subscription to FORMED so it is free for you to use.

If you haven't yet signed up to FORMED simply:

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

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to go out into the wilderness before he began his public ministry?

Have you experienced 'desert times' in your life?

What does it mean to you to know that Jesus was capable of being tempted?

How can you use Lent as a time to respond to the call to 'Repent and believe the Good News'?

REFLECTION BY NICK BRODIE

Discussing this Gospel, Pope Francis once said that 'Lent is a time of repentance, yes, but it is not a time of sorrow!'

The Pope wanted to remind Christians that Lent is a season of 'a joyous and serious commitment to strip ourselves of our selfishness ... and to renew ourselves according to the grace of our Baptism.' Note his emphasis on it being 'joyous.'

In one of his major teaching documents, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope begins as follows: 'The Joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.' He goes on to say that 'With Christ joy is constantly born anew.' This is the kind of Lent we should all strive for: a joyful one.

Later in the same document the Pope expresses concern about joyless seriousness. 'There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter.'

The Pope then reminds us that 'Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.' Our Lent should be a time of joyful response to that love. Fasts and penances should be helping us find joy in Christ, not misery.

After all, Jesus emerged from the desert proclaiming 'Good News'. © Nick Brodie



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

Tell a joke or two.

Watch something fun together, or whatever makes you and your family laugh!

Be positive all day and try only to say encouraging things to other people.

Make an extra effort to smile more at others, it really can bring joy to their day!

Genuinely compliment someone who isn't expecting it.

FIRST READING Genesis 9:8-15

A reading from the book of Genesis

I will recall the covenant between myself and you... the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

God spoke to Noah and his sons, 'See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again.'

God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh.'

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 24:4-9. R. see v.10

(R.) Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour.

Remember your mercy, Lord,
and the love you have shown from of old.
In your love remember me,
because of your goodness, O Lord.

The Lord is good and upright.

He shows the path to those who stray,
he guides the humble in the right path;
he teaches his way to the poor. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 3:18-22

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

The water of the flood is a type of the baptism which saves you now.

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the

baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.
The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Matthew 4:4

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

No one lives on bread alone,

but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

GOSPEL Mark 1:12-15

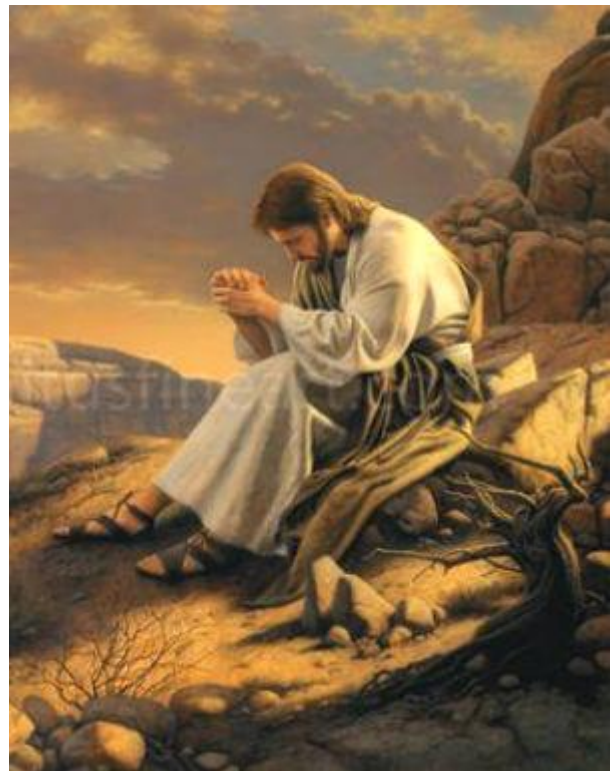
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

He was tempted by Satan, and the angels looked after him.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

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



READINGS NEXT WEEK:

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading: Genesis 22:1-2. 9-13. 15-18

Second Reading: Romans 8:31-34

Gospel: Mark 9:2-10