



# 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



## 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

### *"THE PASSION LEADS TO THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION"*

So... I have some good news, and then some great news! The good news is you won't have to listen to my homily this week (or should that be 'great' news?). The great news is we will have a very special sharing instead... more on that below. But just so no-one can accuse me of taking a week off; here is a brief word on the Gospel. We have the story of the Transfiguration. Jesus takes Peter, James and John up the mountain with him. Their eyes are opened and Jesus is revealed to them in his full glory. But the sight was almost too much for them; they were overwhelmed with fear.

There is so much going on here; the details of the story reveal so much about who Jesus is. But for today, let's just focus on where it fits in the wider story. Before going up the mountain, Jesus had warned his disciples that he faced rejection and the Cross. Peter didn't like the sound of that, and tried to tell Jesus 'No way!' That didn't go down too well, and Peter was put back firmly in his place. But Jesus didn't want to leave his closest friends confused and in the dark. They had a hard road ahead, and so they were given a glimpse of his glory up the mountain so that they might have the strength to persevere. In their turn, they would also have to share in the Cross of Christ. But the vision of Christ's glory before them would give them the hope they needed to persevere. Or in other words, "that the Passion leads to the glory of the Resurrection."



### ***A SPECIAL TESTIMONY: MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER FOR A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP***

So back to the great news, we are blessed to hear from Jordan and Ah Kwi Lan this weekend who will share at our Swan Hill Masses about their experience attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend. I don't want to take too much away from their talk, so I won't say anymore about Marriage Encounter. However, I will say this; our world needs the witness of married love. For all our couples doing your best to live and grow in that love day by day, thank you! We need your example of faithfulness and self-sacrifice. We need your witness to mutual understanding and the readiness to forgive. You show us so powerfully what it means to live for the other and to continually give of yourself in love. But of course, even the best of marriages is 'work-in-progress', because none of us are completely perfect. And so every couple needs encouragement as they look to strengthen and grow in their relationship. I hope our special testimony today can help encourage us all as we look to live out our own vocations. It is also an important reminder for us to pray for all couples.

#### **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, Thurs 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+**  
 Henry "Harry" Simpson  
 Peter Coady  
 Pat Carty (late of Queensland)

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Vin Conway, Francis Foott, Ron Free, Clare O'Bryan  
 Wilhelm Wierderman, Mary Giddings  
 Vincenzo Iannuci, Flavia Dutto, John Quirk  
 Lozz Nolan, Simon Hayes, Gary Patching  
 Ted Corrie, John Walsh, Ellen Sheehan

**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 (24<sup>TH</sup>/25<sup>TH</sup> FEB)**  
**2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

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

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**

Tues: **11am Funeral Prayers Peter Coady**  
 5.30pm Mass  
 Wed: **10:30am Funeral Prayers Harry Simpson**  
 Thurs: Confessions 5pm, Mass 5.30pm, Adoration  
 Friday: 11.30 Mass,  
 6pm Stations of the Cross (**Special Focus: Couples**)  
 Saturday: Confessions 9:30am, Mass 10am, Rosary

**NEXT WEEKEND (2<sup>ND</sup>/3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH)**  
**3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill  
 Sunday 8.30am Sea Lake  
 Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

**NOTICES**



**FRIDAY STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR COUPLES**

This Friday at 6pm we will celebrate a very special Stations of the Cross for Couples. We will pray for all married couples and families. It is also a chance for couples to reflect on how they themselves can grow as a husband or wife, and how they can better love and encourage their spouse. And it isn't just about prayer; there will be an opportunity for fellowship afterwards over some Friday Fish and Chips!

We will also have some activities for the little ones while parents are praying the Stations. And while the focus is on couples, please don't be put off if only one of you can make it on the night; the idea is to draw fruits from the prayer and reflection that can be taken home and lived out.



**HARMONY DAY: SATURDAY MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>**

Swan Hill's annual Harmony Day celebrations will be held next Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> March from 4-8pm at Riverside Park. This event is a special celebration of the many peoples and cultures who have made this region their home, from the most ancient to the newest. 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.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Principal@mackillopsh.vic.edu.au)

## MESSAGE FROM 'WRAPS WITH LOVE'

A message from the 'Wraps with Love' Headquarters in Sydney: *We have picked up your last delivery of 5 boxes of wraps just before Christmas. We have just packaged them to go to Vietnam with 'Good Neighbours Australia'. Thank you!*  
*'Warming the World with Love.'*

Josephite Companions

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER: FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH

The annual Swan Hill World Day of Prayer will be held this coming Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 10am. This year it is the Uniting Church of Swan Hill's turn to host; corner of Rutherford and Beveridge Sts. All welcome.

## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

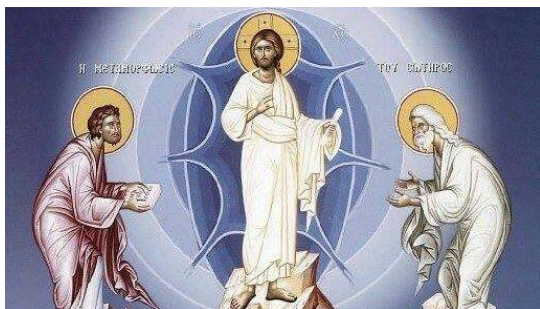
Pray on the way to work/school/outing.

Pick a relative each day and pray for that person.

Bake some treats for someone special.

Visit an elderly friend or relative who doesn't get a lot of visitors.

Smile at 10 people today and make them happy.



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTION BY MARY COLOE PBVM

### *"You are my Beloved"*

**Romans 8:31-34; Mark 9:2-10**

Last Sunday's Gospel described Jesus' entry into the wilderness and I suggested that this is a time of encountering God. In today's Gospel, while the setting is different, we glimpse such a moment of encounter. It is described as a moment of transformation, or transfiguration. An encounter with God changes us. In the Gospel this is depicted as the outer change in Jesus' appearance, but for most of us, the experience of God brings about an inner change, a change of heart. Jesus knows himself in this moment to be God's beloved one. When I have listened to people speak of their moments of experiencing God, they too speak of knowing themselves as God's beloved.

Sometimes things get in the way of our knowing this about ourselves. Some have grown up with harsh images of God, some may look on life events and see themselves as unlovable but the Gospel insists on another truth. 'God so loved the world he gave his son.' God so loves me he gives his son! Wow! Can I believe this? Dare I believe God loves me?

In Hebrew the word for 'wilderness' is *mid'bar*, and the term for 'word' is *d'bar*. Wilderness and word are related which is why so many prophets spent time in the wilderness to seek God's word. Listen to the words of today's Gospel again, 'This is my beloved.' Take these words into your heart this week as you continue this invitation into a wilderness time.

If we were reading Mark in its narrative context we would notice that this episode of encountering God on a mountain follows on from Jesus' first announcement of what awaits him in Jerusalem, namely his death. Peter, who has just confessed Jesus as the Christ, rebukes Jesus for saying such things leading Jesus to speak further of the need for disciples to follow Jesus' pattern of self-denial. The Transfiguration episode comes therefore at a time to reaffirm Jesus' identity as the Beloved, even as he faces the cross. The experience also serves to bolster the faith of Peter, James and John who are awed by their experience. As Jesus begins his journey to the cross he receives the strength needed to be faithful to his mission. Even the two prophets, Moses and Elijah, can offer comfort since they too knew times of conflict and persecution.

If we seriously enter into the journey of Lent, there can be times of discouragement when our weakness can undermine our resolutions. The gospel encourages us to know that God is still present to us, still calling us, 'My Beloved One'.

The reading from Romans has a similar message – God is on our side and with God on our side how can we possibly fail? Jesus is the sign of God's generous love for us and nothing can destroy such love – especially not our frailty. Paul is here writing to the Christian community in Rome who are experience tension that will eventually become persecution. Paul reassures the members of the community that even in times of struggle and weakness these are not signs that God has abandoned them. The reading goes on to ask a series of rhetorical questions: 'Who can separate us from the love of Christ?' 'Could tribulation or distress or persecution . . .' Paul's answer is a resounding, 'No! . . . Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ.'

It is helpful today to hear the words, 'Beloved' and 'Chosen'. While Lent is a time of discipline, a time of penance, its purpose is not to make us morbidly focussed on our unworthiness, but rather to consider the immensity of God's love. It is in response to this love that we embark on the journey of a disciple and discipline ourselves so we become more and more images of Christ.

© Mary Coloe

**FIRST READING** Genesis 22:1-2. 9-13. 15-18

*A reading from the book of Genesis*

*The sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith.*

God put Abraham to the test. 'Abraham, Abraham,' he called.' Here I am' he replied. 'Take your son,' God said 'your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you.'

When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar on top of the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son.

But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven. 'Abraham, Abraham' he said. 'I am here' he replied. 'Do not raise your hand against the boy' the angel said. 'Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son.' Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

The angel of the Lord called Abraham a second time from heaven. 'I swear by my own self – it is the Lord who speaks – because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of your enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience.'

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 115:10. 15-19. R. 114:9

**(R.) I will walk in the presence of the Lord  
in the land of the living.**

I trusted, even when I said:  
'I am sorely afflicted.'

O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;  
you have loosened my bonds.

A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:  
I will call on the Lord's name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfil  
before all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the Lord,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING** Romans 8:31-34

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans*

*God did not spare his own Son.*

With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give. Could anyone accuse those that God has chosen? When God acquits, could anyone condemn? Could Christ Jesus? No! He not only died for us – he rose from the dead, and there at God's right hand he stands and pleads for us.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** See Matthew 17:5

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

From the shining cloud, the Father's voice is heard:

this is my beloved Son, hear him.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

**GOSPEL** Mark 9:2-10

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark*

*This is my Son, the beloved; listen to him.*

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his clothes became dazzlingly white, whiter than any earthly bleacher could make them. Elijah appeared to them with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Rabbi,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say; they were so frightened. And a cloud came, covering them in shadow; and there came a voice from the cloud, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.' Then suddenly, when they looked round, they saw no one with them any more but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain he warned them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They observed the warning faithfully, though among themselves they discussed what 'rising from the dead' could mean.

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



**READINGS NEXT WEEK:**

**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

First Reading: Exodus 20:1-17

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

Gospel: John 2:13-25