



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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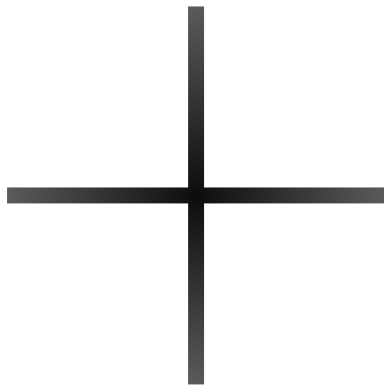
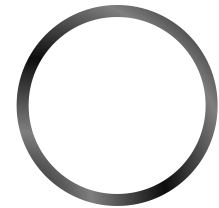
Incorporating the Communities of St Mary's Sea Lake, Sacred Heart Culgoa, St Michael's Lalbert, St Joseph's Nandaly, S's Peter & Paul Quambatook & St Mary's Swan Hill as well as the Lake Boga Families & Faith Group



10TH MARCH 2024 FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE EVER-WIDENING ARMS OF THE CROSS

Picture these two shapes in your mind, a circle and a cross. Or if you have a bit of paper in front of you, you could even sketch them out. Let's start with the circle. It's a nice shape. You can trace the outline around and around and around again, without ever hitting a corner or coming to an end. That's why a ring is often used to depict eternity or timelessness. But now try to expand the circle. You can't. Or at least, you can't widen it without breaking it. It's like when you have a few people linked up in a circle- in order to let anyone in, you have to break the link.



Now go to the cross. Draw it nice and small. Now make it bigger. And then bigger again. And then bigger again. There is no limit now is there? You can keep stretching each line as long as you like without ever breaking the shape. And that is the power of the Cross. There is no limit to its reach. It can stoop down to meet us at our weakest, right down to the lowest pits of suffering and despair. Meeting us there, it can then raise us up to the highest heights of heaven. And its arms can stretch out as widely as they need so that they can come to embrace the whole world.

No-one is ever beyond the reach of the Cross.

It is no accident that God chose the Cross as *the Sign* of his all-embracing love for the world. There could be no better sign, no symbol more fitting. Its arms are for ever reaching out, searching for the lost and broken. Only one point of the Cross is fixed- its centre where the arms cross each other. And what do we find there at the centre of the Cross, holding the whole Mystery together? There at the centre, we find the living Heart of Christ. The love we find there in that Sacred Heart is what gives the Cross its inexhaustible power. The beating of that Heart is what drives those arms to reach ever wider and wider. No-one is beyond their embrace.

"The Son of Man must be lifted up... Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life..."

Parish Contact Details:

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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+**

Darryl Roberts

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Domenica Salvo (1yr Anniversary)

Rhodesia McNamara, Kevin Mikes,

Frank Fazzalori, Daniel Wright

Mary Ellen Irwin, Frank Howley, Ian Giddings

Helen Harris, Antonio Fazzalori, Nina Taverna

Margaret Mudge, Dorothy Burgess

SICK LIST

Pat Croft, Yvonne Richardson, Paul Donohue,

Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott,

Jarrold Crimmins, Michael Bourke, Jack Donohue,

Jude Lewis, Susan, Yvonne Annan,

Bridget Phyland, Carmel Ryan,

THIS WEEKEND (9TH/10TH MARCH)

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

NO 5pm MASS Nandaly this week- Cancelled

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tues: 5.30pm Mass

Wed: 10am Mass

Thurs: **1.30pm Funeral Prayers Darryl Roberts**

Confessions 5pm, Mass 5.30pm, Adoration

Friday: 11.30 Mass

1pm Internment Wilma Neville Lalbert Cemetery

6pm Stations of the Cross

NEXT WEEKEND (16TH/17TH MARCH)

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Culgoa

Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

NOTICES

CUPPA THIS SUNDAY

The monthly cuppa and chat will be held today after the 10:30am Mass in Swan Hill.



ST PATS RACES SUNDAY 17TH MARCH

The St Pats Day Races is an annual event in support of our schools. Tickets and raffle tickets available after Masses this weekend.

This is a fun filled day for families with free activities for the children, there is everything from face painting, foot races, kick the footy in the ute, the jumping castle and pony rides, not to mention the actual races. Tickets are \$10 pp, children free. Proceeds go to St Mary's Swan Hill and MacKillop.

WELCOME TO GOD'S FAMILY

A special welcome to Marcel and Jessica Patterson who are presenting Elijah and Oscar for baptism this weekend. May God bless you today and always!

CONGRATULATIONS

Our heartfelt congratulations and special prayers for Marilyn and Graeme Foley as they celebrate their Golden Anniversary. Thank you for your beautiful witness to faithfulness and love.

FREE SCREENING: THE CHOSEN

We've been invited to come along and enjoy a series of **free** screenings of the powerful series 'The Chosen' at the Showbiz Cinema, Swan Hill. Episodes 1 & 2 were screened last Tuesday evening, and it was great to see a few parishioners there checking it out.

Screenings will continue with Episode 3 & 4 on Tuesday at 7pm, and will continue for all the Tuesdays of March. Each night will see two episodes of Series 1 (finishing about 9pm). And don't stress if you missed the first two episodes- you can catch up on Episode 1 & 2 on Formed.org

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

+ Ask the Holy Spirit to change you and help you to follow Christ. Read John 14:23-31

+ Clean up a mess without being asked.

+Donate some gently loved items you no longer need.

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

- + Pray the Rosary or even just a decade as a family.
- + Thank someone who has been a good influence.



**MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND IS FOR YOU...
"LIVE YOUR BEST MARRIED LIFE IN LOVE"**

Every relationship is a journey and the grind of everyday life can easily cause you to lose touch with your spouse. This weekend gives married couples time to nurture your relationship and some tools to keep passion alive in a gentle, supportive environment, away from pressures and distractions of daily living. Every married couple deserves a Marriage Encounter weekend!!

Date: **12-14 April, 2024** in Melbourne

Info/Bookings: Phone Mercy & James 0409 183 676

Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au

Please check our website for more details

Website: wwme.org.au

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why might the Israelites have turned away from God in the time before the coming of Jesus?

In what way did Jesus coming into the world bring 'light' to the darkness?

In what ways have you sometimes 'tested the boundaries' with those who care about you?

How might you reassure those you love that you do love them?

READINGS NEXT WEEK: 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9

Gospel: John 12:20-33

COMMENTARY BY MARY COLOE PBVM

God loved the world so much he gave his only Son, that all who believe in him may have eternal life.

'God loved the world so much . . .' These words must never be forgotten. At the centre of John's understanding of why Jesus came and ultimately why he died is God's love for us. In this theology there is no power given to sin as if that is what lies behind God's decision, rather God takes the initiative to come to us purely from God's own love. Sin does not force God to act. Other models of salvation can present a terrible caricature of God as an angry tyrant, waiting for his son's death before his anger is satisfied and he can forgive. This is a distortion of true Christian theology and certainly not part of the Johannine Gospel.

God's desire for us is life not condemnation, salvation not destruction. Jesus came to reveal this love of God to free people from fears and ignorance and lead them to accept such unconditional love in joy and thanksgiving. Human guilt and self-doubt tries to deny the potency of God's love so Jesus' death is a terrible sign of the extent he was prepared to go to to say – 'See, God loves you this much and I am prepared to die so you will believe this.'

God's love will ultimately lead Jesus to the cross where he will be lifted up. The evangelist recalls a similar 'lifting up' moment in Israel's history which was also a moment of life and salvation. When we look at the cross we are challenged to see the life and love of God given for us.

For the first time in this gospel we read the words, 'eternal life' – *Zoe aionion*. In my writing and teaching I prefer to translate this as 'eternity life' in order to express that Jesus offers not simply an extension in time of life as we know it, but a whole new quality of life. This is the life God lives in eternity; hence I call it 'eternity life'. Here we touch on an important and unique aspect of John's theology, for John speaks of participating in this 'eternity' life now, not some future time after death. Right now, those who believe in Jesus and are drawn to him are drawn into the very life of God. In the old days we called this 'grace', God's gift of god's own self to us. Most of the time we live unaware of this quality of God's life, but there can be times when it breaks through into our conscious awareness. These can be moments of deep insight, of awe, of wonder, of knowing oneself deeply loved. These moments pass too quickly but they give us a taste of the reality that Jesus has given to us through his life and death. Right now, we are children of God and drawn into the inner life of God.

The letter to the Ephesians speaks of this same reality as it speaks of god's generous love, and gift of life. Paul gives great emphasis to the word grace, *charis*; this is his shorthand way of speaking of God's utterly free and gracious love; God's gift of God's self to us. This is gift, not something we earn or can lay claim to. Our faith practices, Eucharists, prayers, rosaries are not some sort of transaction to earn God's love. These are our response in gratitude to a love already freely given.

This week, as part of our Lenten discipline, our growing as disciples of Jesus, you might spend some time with these two readings and pondering the many signs in your life of God's incredible love for you. Listen as God says these words over you, 'This is my beloved son/daughter.' **©Mary Coloe PBVM**

FIRST READING 2 Chronicles 36:14-16. 19-23

A reading from the second book of Chronicles

The wrath and the mercy of the Lord are revealed in the exile and liberation of his people.

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation.'

And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up."'

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 136. R. v.6

(R.) Let my tongue be silenced, if ever I forget you!

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Zion;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung our harps.

For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
'Sing to us,' they said,
'one of Zion's songs.'

O how could we sing
the song of the Lord on alien soil?
If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!

O let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
above all my joys! **(R.)**

SECOND READING Ephesians 2:4-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

When we were dead through sins, he brought us to life.

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ – it is through grace that you have been saved – and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it. *The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION John 3:16

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son,
that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL John 3:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

God sent his Son into the world that we might be saved through him.

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.

No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,

because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil.

And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

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