

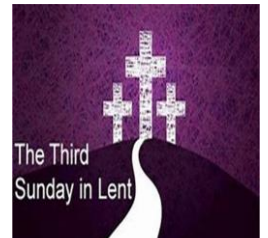


Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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



3RD MARCH 2024 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

WELCOME TO THE CHILDREN PREPARING FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION!

A special welcome to all the children preparing for their first experience of Reconciliation, and to all the families who are here to support them. Our enrolment sessions will take place straight after Mass. And please know you are in our prayers!

SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME

Think for a moment about the people you love the most, and your relationship with them. Now think how crazy it would be if you kept a ledger and demanded payment for every little thing you did for each other. Make your loved one a cup of tea? \$2. Tidy up the mess? \$5. Drop them off or pick them up? \$10. And what about if you hurt each other? Should we bring in some fines? \$10 fine for losing our patience? \$50 for an offensive comment? You can reduce that by 50% with an early plea and apology. But let's not just limit this to acts of service or reparation; we must also remember to charge for acts of love and affection. Say 'Thanks' for \$2, 'How was your day' for \$5 and 'I love you' for \$10. And don't forget you can charge per minute for 'quality listening time.' Each person has to keep a track of what they are owed and what they owe, then at the end of the pay-cycle you balance the ledger...

I am being ridiculous of course. No-one could live like that. And yet... the feeling of 'being owed something' or the desire to 'be free of debt' is temptation in all relationships, and none more so than in our relationship with God. The life of faith is all too easily turned into a transaction. We can fall into the trap of trying to bargain with God, 'I will do this for you, or avoid that, if you give me this or spare me that.' And in doing that we lose sight of the true nature of that relationship; of God's free gift and our free response, or in other words a relationship rooted in Love.

I think this is in the background of today's Gospel as Jesus takes a whip to cleanse the Temple. The sacrifices of the Temple were meant to be a sign of the people's reliance on God's help and of their entrusting their lives to his care. Yes, certain offerings were prescribed, but they were meaningless if the heart wasn't in it. You could not 'buy' God's forgiveness or favour by making certain sacrifices. Rather, the offering was meant as an outward sign of the inner moving's of the heart. Jesus follows the Prophets by condemning superficial practice, but he is especially angry at the Temple Authorities for not only allowing this corruption, but for directly fostering it (see note on historical context inside). And his challenge to them set him on the path to his Crucifixion... which in its turn will then open up the promise of the 'New'; "Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up... But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body." Christ on the Cross shows us once and for all that God's love is pure gift- we cannot earn it- but we do not need to. All he asks of us in return is our love.

Parish Contact Details:

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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+**

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Giuseppe & Nell Bellofiore, Mitchell Donohue
Francesco (Frank) Salvo, Norah Walsh
Mary Eleanor Ryan, Thomas Walsh, Frank Dillon
Sarina & Giovanni Edera, Charles Healy, Kath Daniels
Ron Noble, Linton Ryan, Mary Foley, Kath Clohesy
Rosaria Fedele, Leonard Patching

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 (2ND/3RD MARCH)
2ND SUNDAY OF LENT**

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

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tues: 5.30pm Mass
Wed: 10am Mass
Thurs: Confessions 5pm, Mass 5.30pm, Adoration
Friday: 11.30 Mass,
6pm Stations of the Cross

**NEXT WEEKEND (9TH/10TH MARCH)
3RD SUNDAY OF LENT**

Saturday 6:00pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Quambatook
Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill
Sunday: 5pm Nandaly

NOTICES



CUPPA NEXT SUNDAY

The monthly cuppa and chat will be held off from today and offered again next Sunday (10th) 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 and next.

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 Primary School and MacKillop College.



MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Last week we were blessed to hear from Jordan and Ah Kwi Lan about their beautiful experience at a Marriage Encounter Retreat last year. I will put a copy of their talk on our website for those who missed it.

Marriage Encounter is a ministry in the Catholic Church offering couples a weekend of discovery for their marriage. The aim is to strengthen relationships by enhancing communication and so rekindling the passion in your marriage.

Perhaps you might like to consider taking part in a weekend yourselves? There are two scheduled for Victoria this year- the first on the 12th -14th of April & another on the 4th – 6th of October in Melbourne. For more information and application details visit: wwme.org.au

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

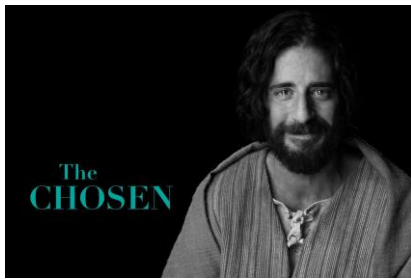
Principal: Kate Quin
2 Murlong St Swan Hill
Ph. 03 5033 2541

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



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. 'The Chosen' brings the Gospel stories to life. For many, watching the series has helped them rekindle their faith and grow closer to Jesus.

Screenings will start this 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 can't make it to all the nights- you can catch up on Episode 1 on Formed. What better way to spend a night out at the movies? Plans are already underway for screening Series 2-4 as well. And did I mention it was free?

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

- Start your day with family Bible time and prayer.
- Sacrifice your time by helping someone even if you are busy. A neighbour, friend, grandparent etc.
- Surprise some one by doing a task or chore that they normally do.
- Send someone a message to let them know you are thinking about them.
- Take time out to and pray or think about the places and people you work with eg colleagues, teachers, fellow students, team members.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

- What aspects of this gospel passage do you find confronting or challenging?
 - What was it about the practices in the Temple that spurred Jesus to such violent anger?
 - What might the poor have thought about what Jesus did in the Temple?
 - Have you ever seen something that you knew to be unjust? What did you do?
 - How can you work against injustice in your local community?
- READINGS NEXT WEEK: 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT**
First Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16. 19-23
Second Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10
Gospel: John 3:14-21

SOME HISTORICAL CONTEXT TO THE GOSPEL

Today's Gospel is not the easiest to understand- there is obviously a lot going on in the background. So what can historical research teach us? Well, there are two facts that I find helpful. The first is around the 'Temple Tax'. So perhaps you may remember having heard about this tax. Every Jewish male had to pay this yearly tax of a half shekel (or about two days wages) to go towards the upkeep of the Temple. That much was set down in the Law of the Lord (Exodus 30:13). But at the time of Jesus, the Temple authorities added a further layer by demanding the tax could only be paid in a certain currency; the *Tyrian Shekel*. This was because of the purity of its silver- ostensibly because the Holiness of the Temple demanded purity. The problem? It also bore the image of a pagan god. So... was it really about ritual purity, or was it more about profit?

The money changers we hear about exchanged the 'impure' coins the people brought with them for the 'pure' silver shekels (with the pagan idol on them). Only these could be used within the sanctuary. For their service the money changers charged a fee and so made a tidy profit. The merchant selling livestock were there to supply the offerings for sacrifice. And there was something legitimate in this; the sacrifices were set down in the Law. If you were travelling a long distance to reach the Temple, it was impractical to try and bring livestock from home. And so having it available for sale near the Temple was handy. The problem? Up until about a few years before the events of the Gospel, the markets were set up on the nearby Mount of Olives- in other words outside of the Temple precinct. And that was true of the money changers too- their tables were at the foot of the Temple Mount. But after the Royal Hall at the entrance of the Temple had been rebuilt, the Temple Authorities arranged for the markets and money changers to move up unto the Temple Mount and so within the Temple precinct. Why? For the sake of control? Or mere convenience? Certainly not out of regard of the Holiness of the Temple.

Think about it. You are a faithful Jew, coming to make your offering at the Holy Site. At the end of your pilgrimage, you have reached Jerusalem and taken your bath for ritual cleansing so that you may be worthy to ascend the Mount of the Lord. You mount the steps and there, at the entrance, you are forced to walk through cow s#%\$ and pigeon poop as you are confronted with noisy merchants spruiking their wares. Any sense of the Sacred has been smacked out of you. This is supposed to be the Holy of Holies? No wonder Jesus was angry.

FIRST READING Exodus 20:1-17

*A reading from the book of Exodus
The Law was given through Moses.*

God spoke all these words. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

'You shall have no gods except me.

'You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me; but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

'You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God to misuse it, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.

'Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work on that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, not your animals nor the stranger who lives with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred.

'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given to you.

'You shall not kill.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.'

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 18:8-11. R. Jn 6:68

(R.) Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold,
than the purest of gold
and sweeter are they than honey,
than honey from the comb. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

*A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians
We are preaching a crucified Christ, a scandal to many, but to those who have been called, the wisdom of God.*

While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION John 3:16

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son,
that all who believe in him might have eternal life.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

GOSPEL John 2:13-25

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.*

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

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