



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 Joseph's Nandaly, S's Peter & Paul Quambatook & St Mary's Swan Hill as well as the Lake Boga Families & Faith Group



28TH APRIL 2024 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER



'I AM THE TRUE VINE, AND MY FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER.'

Our Quambatook parishioners will certainly remember Sr Carmel Setford in a special way. Well, I am borrowing her material today! Sr Carmel grew up on a block outside Red Cliffs where her family grew grapes.

Like all farming families, everyone had to chip in and do their bit. Harvest was a very busy time, and everyone was involved. Then after the harvest came time for pruning. Everyone would help pull out all the vines, but when it came to the actual cutting, Carmel's father would do it all himself. He knew the importance of choosing what to keep and what to cut away, so he kept that responsibility to himself. From long experience he knew which branch would be most likely to bear the best fruit. Her father was quite literally 'the Vinedresser' who pruned with care.

There is much in our lives that is worth keeping, and much that needs to be cut away. Our Father in his loving wisdom knows which is which; what is worth keeping and what is fit for pruning away. This isn't always so easy for us to see. For example, maybe you are a sensitive soul. This can be a burden at times, and you might wish that you could just 'harden up' and get on with things, or that you would be better off if your 'feelings branch' was cut right back. But our Father knows best! That same branch may be the one that brings the fruit of compassion and empathy, so like an experienced vinedresser He will carefully train it so that it bears lasting fruit. We could think of many other examples, but in each case the basic truth is the same. Our loving Father knows us best, even better than we know ourselves. He knows the work he needs to do in us to bring about the best fruits. Our part is to trust in him; to let him work on our hearts, to let go of what he asks us to leave behind, and to be patient as he carefully trains the good branches so that they may bear the fruit he has planned. And if our patience is tested, and we find ourselves wondering whether the fruit will ever come... remember this. Even simple little grapes take months and months to grow and mature, and all for a fruit that is eaten and enjoyed in a matter of seconds. Should we be surprised then if it takes a little longer for the Father's work to come to fruition in us? If we keep trusting Him, and continue to draw life from His Son, the fruits will certainly come.

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+**

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Max Sewell, Mary Beilby, John Rohan
Matthew Patching, Victor Bryant
Mervyn Bryent, William Byrne
Bernard Francis Kelly, Dot McGregor,
Francesco Miceli, Margaret Ledwich

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 27TH/28TH APRIL

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Quambatook
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: 5.30pm Mass
Wednesday: 10am Mass
Thurs: *Monthly Prayer Service Logan Lodge 1:30pm*
Confessions 5pm, 5.30pm Mass, Adoration
Friday: CESH MASS
St Mary's Primary Swan Hill 11.30am
(No Mass in the church today)
Saturday: 9:30am Conf, 10am Mass & Rosary

NEXT WEEKEND 4TH/5TH MAY

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Sea Lake
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

NOTICES



Anniversary Prayer

Blessed are you, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have received
all the gifts we enjoy.

As we mark the 150th anniversary of our
Diocese of Ballarat, we give thanks for the
blessings bestowed upon us.
We recognise the communities who have
lived on this land from ancient times. We
honour the Aboriginal peoples, here for tens
of thousands of years. We honour those who
came from overseas and settled here before
our diocese began. Yet our anniversary shines
a special light on our years as the Diocese of
Ballarat, a community of communities from
the Murray to the sea.

We remember those who have gone before
us, those who laid the foundations of our
parish and school communities and our social
services and health care.

We acknowledge the strengths and
weaknesses of our history. We celebrate the
achievements and we ask pardon for the
failures to live our Christian faith to the full.

May this anniversary year be a season of
renewal for our diocese. Inspired by the
Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist,
may we follow the example of Jesus and the
guidance of your Holy Spirit.

May we reach out in humble service,
welcoming all and caring for all creation. May
we grow in love day by day.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help. Pray for us.
Saint Patrick. Pray for us
Saint Mary MacKillop. Pray for us.

*Catholic Diocese of Ballarat
1874 - 2024*

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

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

This week our schools celebrate their shared Catholic identity and their special role in Jesus' ongoing Mission. St Mary's Sea Lake will welcome the staff and students of St Joseph's Hopetoun for a liturgy on Thursday. St Mary's Swan Hill will host the students and staff of MacKillop for a special Mass on Friday. We pray for our school communities, for their staff, students and families, and in a special way we thank our staff and leadership teams for their dedicated service to the Mission and ask God to bless them in all they do.

WELCOME TO GOD'S FAMILY!

Special prayers and blessings for Louis Van Dao Nguyen who was baptised on Friday, and for Isabella, daughter of Stephan Milano and Belinda Murchie, who we baptise on Saturday evening.

MEETING FOR FLORES DE MAYO

In preparation for our celebration of Flores de Mayo on Sunday 26th May, if you are interested in being involved we will have a meeting after 10:30am Mass this Sunday.

CUPPA NEXT SUNDAY AFTER 10:30AM MASS
All Welcome!

MAY MASS COUNTS

From next weekend, 4th/5th May and continuing throughout the four weekends of May, we will hold our annual Mass counts across all the Masses and Lay Lead liturgies of the Parish.

JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS NEWS

We have sent another 5 boxes of "Wraps with love 'to the warehouse in Sydney this week. Please don't forget to bring your used stamps to the church and put them in the box provided. The sale of used stamps is a valued asset towards the mission in Peru.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

In what ways can Jesus be compared to a grape vine?

In what ways are we like the branches of a vine?

What is some of the 'fruit' that you bear (talents, skills, positive actions)?

What aspects of your life need a little 'pruning' so that you might bear more fruit?

How are you able to do some 'pruning' for others in a positive way?

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY

BY DIANNE BERGANT CSA

The story of Saul illustrates the transformation that the grace of God can effect; even a persecutor can become a disciple. Initially Saul meets resistance from the Christian community, not to his message but to his claim of conversion. Barnabas (son of consolation, cf. Acts 4:36) intercedes on his behalf, witnessing to the salvific grace of God that transformed Saul into a believer. If God can raise Jesus from the dead, surely God can recreate Saul. Saul's rebirth is a sign of the grace that has been unleashed by the resurrection. Saul's apostolic fervour may not have convinced the Greek-speaking Jews of God's choice of Jesus, but it convinced members of the Jerusalem community of the genuineness of his conversion.

In the Letter of John, believers are called 'little children' (*teknion*), a term of endearment, and 'beloved' (*agapetoi*), an expression of the love that God has for them. This reading links three important theological themes: Christian love; confident belief; and faithful obedience. First, it is not enough to proclaim love for God; it must be demonstrated through concrete action. Second, confidence will be manifested in the way believers turn to God in prayer. Finally, the commandment to love covers all other commandments. From the perspective of Trinitarian theology, we see that the ground of Christian confidence is the great love of God; the focus of Christian faith is commitment to Jesus; the assurance of divine indwelling is the gift of the Spirit.

The allegory of the vine calls to mind the song of the vineyard found in Isaiah (cf. Isa 5:1-7). The prophet condemned his people for their infidelity. In contrast, Jesus is the true vine that faithfully brings forth good fruit. We must be careful about how we understand this passage, lest we perpetuate unacceptable anti-Judaic sentiments.

It does not contrast Christian faithfulness with Jewish infidelity. The metaphor characterises the intimate nature of the relationship between Jesus and his followers. Since the life of the vine flows through the branches, Jesus lives in his branches, and his branches live in his life. This metaphor shapes the religious identity of the disciples. This intimacy is offered to all who will live in union.

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READINGS NEXT WEEK: 6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

First Reading: Acts 10:25-26. 34-35. 44-48

Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-10

Gospel: John 15:9-17

FIRST READING Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

He explained how the Lord appeared to Saul and spoke to him on his journey.

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 21:26-28. 30-32. R. v.26

(R.) I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.

My vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.
They shall praise the Lord, those who see him.
May their hearts live for ever and ever!

All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord,
all families of the nations worship before him.
They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust.

And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him.
They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come,
declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn:

‘These things the Lord has done.’ **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the first letter of St John:

His commandments are these: that we believe and that we love one another.

My children,
our love is not to be just words or mere talk,
but something real and active;
only by this can we be certain
that we are the children of the truth
and be able to quieten our conscience in his presence,
whatever accusations it may raise against us,
because God is greater than our conscience and he
knows everything.

My dear people,
if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience,
we need not be afraid in God’s presence,
and whatever we ask him,
we shall receive,
because we keep his commandments
and live the kind of life that he wants.
His commandments are these:
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ
and that we love one another
as he told us to.

Whoever keeps his commandments
lives in God and God lives in him.

We know that he lives in us
by the Spirit that he has given us.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION JOHN 15:4-5

Alleluia, alleluia!

Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord;
my branches bear much fruit.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
All who live in me, and I in them, bear much fruit.*

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘I am the true vine,

and my Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away,
and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes
to make it bear even more.

You are pruned already,

by means of the word that I have spoken to you.

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.

As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,

but must remain part of the vine,

neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, - you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in him,

bears fruit in plenty;

for cut off from me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me

is like a branch that has been thrown away – he withers;

these branches are collected and thrown on the fire,

and they are burnt.

If you remain in me

and my words remain in you,

you may ask what you will

and you shall get it.

It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much
fruit, and then you will be my disciples.’

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