



Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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*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*

7TH APRIL 2024

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

'PEACE BE WITH YOU'



So here we are, a week from the huge celebration of Easter Sunday. But the start of today's Gospel still takes us to that first Easter Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead. The disciples have hidden themselves away. They have heard that the tomb is empty, and that Jesus is risen and has appeared to Mary of Magdala... but they are not quite ready to believe the Good News. Jesus doesn't want them to be left in sadness and fear, and so he comes to them.

And the first thing he offers them is his Peace.

How much do we ourselves yearn for that peace today, that deep and lasting peace that only he can give? Christ gives it, and gives it readily. And how much does our world need that same Peace?

Peace to overcome all anxiety, division, conflict and violence? Christ wants the whole world to know his peace, and he always stands ready to give it, but he calls for messengers to share it out.

We are those messengers. Christ sends *us* out. When we were baptised, we were anointed with the oil of Chrism. This was a sign that we are commissioned to be 'other Christs', to take up his work and be his body for the world. And perhaps the greatest gift we can share is the gift of his peace.

When we offer the sign of peace, pray that Christ will fill us up in a special way today, so that all tensions are eased and overcome, all hurts reconciled and healed. And perhaps that calls for forgiveness, but what better day to forgive than on this Feast of Divine Mercy? And when we are sent out in peace, let's really take that peace with us as we go, and share it with all we meet. If we want Christ's peace to reign in the world, it really is as simple as that. He gives it to us. We pass it on.

Am I naïve? Maybe. Don't get me wrong. I certainly don't expect my words today to have any earth shattering effect. But the words of Jesus on that first Easter Sunday, 'Peace be with you'... well, they *did* shake the world.

They have moved countless hearts right down to today, and will continue to do so until their work is complete. They were arguably the most powerful words ever spoken... even if at first hardly anyone was there to hear them. The disciples were in a private room. We don't know exactly how many were there; 10 at least, probably 30 at most... and yet that was enough messengers to receive the words and so change the world. We continue that same mission today.

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+
 Vittoria Guarneri
 Kathleen Meehan

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Alma Higgins, Carmela Mazzarella, Marianna Ganci
 Mario Raudino, Ellie Fallon, Patricia Wilkinson
 James Hoare, Bub O'Bree, Cath Baker
 Pat Dillon, Jane McInerney, Vincent Lavey
 Mary Anne Foott

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 6TH/7TH APRIL

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Sea Lake

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Divine Mercy Holy Hour- 2-3pm Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Monday: 2:30pm Funeral Mass Kathleen Meehan

Tuesday: 1.30pm Funeral Mass Vittoria Guarneri

Wednesday: 10am Mass

Thursday: Confessions 5pm, 5.30pm Mass

Friday: 11.30am Mass

NEXT WEEKEND 13TH/14TH APRIL

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Followed by Monthly Cuppa

Sunday 5pm Nandaly

NOTICES



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

Divine Mercy Sunday is a significant time for reflection on the Christian faith. As Pope John Paul II stated, "It is a time where we are blessed with divine mercy as it reaches us through the heart of Christ crucified." Divine Mercy Sunday focuses on the gifts that flowed from Christ's death, burial, and resurrection — his mercy and love that were so freely given to humanity after such a betrayal. Divine Mercy Sunday concludes the Easter celebrations and welcomes the ultimate gift that Christ gave after his crucifixion.

Divine Mercy Sunday is a space specifically designated for those who feel unworthy of God's love and Jesus's acceptance. In a vision, he told St. Faustina, "I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the fount of My mercy." Divine Mercy Sunday, from its advent, has been a source of reconciliation with faith and God's mercy. It provides a specific day on which people from all walks of life can humble themselves before God, and ask for his mercy, love, and forgiveness, which he grants to all those who are willing to ask for it. It is also about forgiveness and mercy, how Jesus offered his to us, and how we should act in kind throughout our lives.

AN HOUR OF MERCY

For those who would like to celebrate this Feast in a special way, you are invited to join us for a Holy Hour of Mercy from 2pm-3.15pm in Swan Hill.

The schedule is as follows:

- 2pm - 3pm Adoration with Reconciliation available (Including Rosary at 2.30pm)
- 3pm Divine Mercy Chaplet, Benediction to finish
- Drinks and nibbles to follow (anything you can bring to share will be greatly appreciated!)

Our Parish Schools

St Mary's Primary School Sea Lake

Principal: Kate Nunn

47 Hannon Street, Sea Lake

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St Mary's Primary School Swan Hill

Principal: Kate Quin

2 Murlong St Swan Hill

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St Mary MacKillop College

Principal: Michelle Haeusler

53 McCrae Street, Swan Hill

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Principal@mackillopsh.vic.edu.au



CUPPA NEXT SUNDAY

Swan Hill's monthly cuppa will be moved to next Sunday 14th April after 10:30am Mass. All welcome.

BECAUSE IT IS WORTH REPEATING... THANK YOU!

Once again, a huge thank you to all the dedicated parishioners across the Parish who helped make our Holy Week and Easter Celebrations so successful.

I honestly couldn't be happier. Our churches were beautifully prepared and ready to welcome the fantastic turn out we had across all our Liturgies. And thanks to the generous help and work of so many, those Liturgies were truly fitting and moving celebrations. All the visitors that I spoke to were very impressed and appreciative. And it wasn't just about what happened inside the churches or during the Liturgies, the hospitality offered after our Sunday Masses was a brilliant way to complete our Easter celebrations. So once again a massive thank you for all the work that went into making our Easter what it was; for cleaning and decorating our churches, for preparing the palms, flowers and candles, for the music and singers, for the servers, sacristans, readers, welcomers and for all those who prepared our Easter Lunch... so much work just happens quietly in the background to help make these days such prayerful ones for all... thank you, your generous efforts are greatly appreciated!

And finally, a special thank you to all who helped bring others along. The big numbers don't just happen magically. We had a crowd because you passed the word around, or invited family, friends or neighbours, or even literally brought some in the car along with you. And in helping bring others along, you are picking up what started with Mary Magdalene almost 2000 years ago- sharing the joy of Easter and bringing others to an encounter with the Risen Christ.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

What aspects of this gospel passage stand out or have special significance?

Why were the disciples in hiding at the start of this passage?

Why might Thomas have been so reluctant to believe without seeing Jesus for himself?

How is Thomas like many people today?

What message do you take from this passage?



GOSPEL REFLECTION: MARY COLOE PBVM

God, I'll believe if ...

Thomas' role in the Easter narrative is to reveal how hard faith is. No matter what the other disciples say Thomas cannot change death to resurrection without certain criteria being met. He places conditions on God – 'I need to see the holes and touch the living body.'

Real faith means letting go such conditions. We are challenged to surrender our human doubts, our expectations, and our normal rational systems of proof. The other disciples come to faith when they actually see Jesus; this is what Thomas asks for – sight of the Risen One. Jesus doesn't rebuke Thomas, but he speaks words of blessing for those who can go beyond Thomas and believe without seeing him – for those who will believe without conditions.

Today we do not have the risen Jesus visible in our midst, as did those first disciples. Like the Beloved Disciple in last Sunday's Gospel, we are called to have faith in more subtle signs. We have the written testimony of those first believers, we have the living witness of other Christians today, and we have those divine stirrings in our own lives inviting rather than compelling belief. At the end of the Gospel, the evangelist turns to us to say, 'I have written these things so that you may believe and have life.' In this way, the evangelist speaks to his first century readers and across the centuries to us.

Jesus also seems to turn aside from the disciples and gaze into the future centuries to the many who come after, and Jesus' final words are addressed to these future believers. **'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'** This is our blessing.

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READINGS NEXT WEEK: 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 3:13-15. 17-19

Second Reading: 1 John 2:1-5

Gospel: Luke 24:35-48

FIRST READING Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

The whole group was united, heart and soul.

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect.

None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need.

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 117:2-4. 15-18. 22-24. R. v.1

(R.) Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Let the sons of Israel say:

‘His love has no end.’

Let the sons of Aaron say:

‘His love has no end.’

Let those who fear the Lord say:

‘His love has no end.’

The Lord’s right hand has triumphed;

his right hand raised me up.

I shall not die, I shall live

and recount his deeds.

I was punished, I was punished by the Lord,

but not doomed to die.

The stone which the builders rejected

has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,

a marvel in our eyes.

This day was made by the Lord;

we rejoice and are glad. **(R.)**

SECOND READING 1 John 5:1-6

A reading from the first letter of St John

Anyone begotten by God has already overcome the world.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ

has been begotten by God;

and whoever loves the Father that begot him

loves the child whom he begets.

We can be sure that we love God’s children

if we love God himself and do what he has commanded

us;

this is what loving God is –

keeping his commandments;

and his commandments are not difficult,

because anyone who has been begotten by God

has already overcome the world;

this is the victory over the world – our faith.

Who can overcome the world?

Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God;

Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,

not with water only,

but with water and blood;

with the Spirit as another witness –

since the Spirit is the truth.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION John 20:29

Alleluia, alleluia!

You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me;

happy are those who have not seen me, but still believe!

Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

After eight days, Jesus came in and stood among them.

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the

doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for

fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said

to them, ‘Peace be with you,’ and showed them his hands and

his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the

Lord, and he said to them again, ‘Peace be with you.’

‘As the Father sent me,

so am I sending you.’

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

‘Receive the Holy Spirit.

For those whose sins you forgive,

they are forgiven;

for those whose sins you retain,

they are retained.’

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not

with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, ‘We

have seen the Lord’, he answered, ‘Unless I see the holes that

the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the

holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I

refuse to believe.’ Eight days later the disciples were in the

house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were

closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. ‘Peace be

with you’ he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, ‘Put your finger

here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into

my side. Doubt no longer but believe.’ Thomas replied, ‘My

Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him:

‘You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.’

There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the

disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These

are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,

the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life

through his name.

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