



# 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*



## 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024: 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



### ***JESUS SAID TO HIM, 'EPHPHATHA,' THAT IS, 'BE OPENED.'***

I love today's Gospel. I must admit though- I'm not 100% sure if I am getting the pronunciation right on 'Ephphatha'- I will just have to do the best I can. Which is a bit of a pity- because it is one of those rare occasions in the Gospels when we hear the actual Aramaic word that comes directly from Jesus' lips. For the most part, we are getting a translation into Greek, and then into English. But here the very word 'Ephphatha' must have impressed itself so deeply on the disciples' hearts, that they didn't just hand down a translation, but the actual word Jesus spoke. And so, it now comes down directly to us. *Ephphatha! Be opened!*

Now these same words are echoed in the Baptism Rite. Just after the newly baptised receives the Light of Christ, the priest completes the celebration with a blessing over the ears and the lips. Recalling the story we heard today, the priest says; *"Ephphetha! The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father."* Through baptism, the Lord opens our ears, so that we may understand his word, and treasure it in our hearts. But he doesn't stop with just our ears; he also loosens our tongue to proclaim his faith. Our lips have been blessed and our tongue set free so that we may give thanks with loud voices, proclaiming the wonders God has done and sharing our love for him. We are also sent out to share his word with the people around us. We are commissioned to speak his words of love to all who long to hear them.

Our lips are no longer our own; they belong to the Lord.

Perhaps this is a good moment to reflect on how we use our words. When people hear us speak; do our words bring them closer to God, or do they drive them away? Do our words lead them to the source of our strength and our hope, or do we seldom speak of our faith and what it means to us, and so they left none the wiser? And finally, do our words build up the people around us, or do they tear them down? The Lord didn't loosen our lips for gossip or nasty talk. He loosened them to speak truth and love. Is that obvious to the people around us? Is that what they hear in our speech?

There are lots of other things I love about the passage, but just one more thing for now. After the man is healed, Jesus asks the witnesses to keep quiet about the whole thing. And how did that turn out? *"The more he insisted, the more widely they published it."* In other words, he couldn't shut them up! May people say the same about us! Let's never shut up about all the wonders the Lord has done for us!

#### **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:**

Tony and Joelle Whiting

#### **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+**  
Francis Xavier (Vietnam)

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Mary Maher, George Egan, Frank Grant, John Conlan  
Elizabeth Gertrude Byrne, Bernie Noble  
Mary Mangiameli, Vi Power, John McNamara  
Mary Casey, Ellen Olive Considine, Alice Ross  
Ronald Shepherd, Mary Scarce, Maria Tuntar  
Les O'Halloran, Eileen Young, Joseph Case  
George William Ledwich, Thomas Nolan  
Norma Meney, Guiseppina Mase

**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, Peter Amezdroz

**THIS WEEKEND 7/8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER  
23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill  
Sunday 8.30am Quambatook  
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill  
Sunday 5pm Nandaly

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**

Tuesday: 5.30pm  
Wednesday: 10am  
Thursday: Confessions 5pm, 5.30pm Mass, Adoration  
Friday: 11.30Mass

**NEXT WEEKEND 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER  
24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Sat 6pm Swan Hill  
Sunday 8.30am Culgoa  
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

**NOTICES**

**NEW PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES  
AND THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

The new planned giving envelopes are now available, and will be distributed across our churches over the next couple of weeks.

Once again, many thanks for your ongoing support of our Parish and its mission. Your regular giving towards the Second (Parish) collection is our main source of steady income. Whether your giving is via the envelopes, online, via direct debit or simply via cash on the second collection, we simply wouldn't be able to do what we do without your constant support. Once the September quarter is finalised, we will give an update on the full year's parish income.

**BALLARAT CLERGY SUPPORT FUND ANNUAL  
APPEAL – THIS WEEKEND**

Many thanks for your support of this appeal. If you would still like to contribute, envelopes can be placed in basket at the collection.



***"EVERY CONVERSATION MATTERS"*  
SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

Holy Family Parish and the Diocese of Ballarat are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and people at risk in our community. Mindful of the theme for National Child Protection Week, may we work to create safe spaces where we can have meaningful conversations with children and adults at risk about their safety.

Find out more about the Church's work in this area at: [www.catholic.au/s/article/Safeguarding-Sunday-2024](http://www.catholic.au/s/article/Safeguarding-Sunday-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](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)



**LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE IN LOVE...**

**A MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND IS FOR YOU!**

Every married couple deserves this very special weekend. Time-out to nurture your most precious relationship away from daily distractions. The two of you will come away from your weekend feeling more deeply connected and with tools to help keep the passion alive. No group sharing required.

The weekend is based around Catholic values.

Couples of all faiths are welcome.

***Please check our website for more details and to book your special weekend:***

**Our next weekend is: 4 - 6 October 2024 at St Paul's Retreat Centre, Wantirna South.**

Starts Friday evening at 7pm and finishes Sunday afternoon around 4:30pm

We are also offering a weekend in Trafalgar, Gippsland on November 16 -17th, 2024.

**Information/Bookings:**

Phone Mercy & James 0409 183 676 or

Email: vicbookings@wwme.org.au

Website: wwme.org.au

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT?**

Why did Jesus take the man aside in private rather than healing him in front of the crowd?

What is significant about Jesus touching the man in such a personal way?

Why did Jesus travel and perform miracles outside of Jewish territories?

In what areas of life do you need to 'be opened'?

How can you cross the boundaries and make a difference in someone else's life like Jesus did?

**BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL READING**

Today we continue to hear the Gospel of Mark proclaimed. In today's reading, Jesus heals a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. This is a story about Jesus' healing power, and in it we find clues about our understanding of sacrament. We are struck by the physical means used to heal the man, the use of spittle and touch. The Church continues to celebrate the sacraments using physical means. In the Sacrament of Baptism, water and oil are used to show the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, we are anointed with holy oil on the forehead and the hands. In the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

We are a sacramental people who believe that God's grace is given to us through these physical signs.

Some, however, see in this Gospel an image of the proclamation of the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. The geographic references tell us that Jesus is journeying through Gentile territory. Jesus had previously visited this region and healed a person possessed by a demon. Jesus was already famous there, which explains why people brought the deaf man to him. The story that precedes this reading in Mark's Gospel sets the stage. Jesus encounters a Gentile, a Syrophenician woman who asks him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. Jesus engages her in a dialogue about not feeding to dogs the food intended for children. Jesus is struck by the woman's great faith when she replies that even dogs eat the food that falls from the table, and he heals her daughter immediately. The faith of this Greek woman compels Jesus to respond to her plea.

Mark shows that Jesus' own mission affirms the early Church's mission to the Gentiles. This was a significant issue to the early Christian community, which found that the good news of Jesus took root and spread quickly among the Gentiles. Yet there is an irony in the story of healing that Mark tells. Jesus gives the man the gift of speech, but then tells him not to use it. Jesus asks that the news of his healing power, which is evidence of his identity as the Messiah, not be spread. This is a recurring motif in Mark's Gospel and is sometimes called the "messianic secret." © Loyola Press

**LIVING THE GOSPEL – OPEN TO COMPASSION**

When Isaiah described the signs by which the Messiah would be recognised, he identified those people who were isolated from society by their physical afflictions. He portrayed a Messiah who released them from those afflictions and allowed them to re-enter society. That is what Jesus did time and time again. In the healing of the deaf and dumb man, Jesus called on all those around him to also be opened – that their hearts may be opened to compassion. Jesus calls to us through today's gospel to also be open to compassion and open to the needs of those around us.



**FIRST READING** *Isaiah 35:4-7*

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah*

*Then the ears of the deaf shall be opened and the tongues of the dumb speak.*

Say to all faint hearts,  
'Courage! Do not be afraid.  
'Look, your God is coming,  
vengeance is coming,  
the retribution of God;  
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
the ears of the deaf unsealed,  
then the lame shall leap like a deer  
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy;  
for water gushes in the desert,  
streams in the wasteland,  
the scorched earth becomes a lake,  
the parched land springs of water.

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 145:7-10. R. v.1

**(R.) Praise the Lord, my soul!**

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free.

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bound down,  
the Lord who loves the just,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger.

The Lord upholds the widow and orphan,  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.

The Lord will reign for ever,  
Zion's God, from age to age. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING** *James 2:1-5*

*A reading from the letter of St James*

*Has not God chosen the poor of the world to inherit the kingdom?*

My brothers, do not try to combine faith in Jesus Christ, our glorified Lord, with the making of distinctions between classes of people. Now suppose a man comes into your synagogue, beautifully dressed and with a gold ring on, and at the same time a poor man comes in, in shabby clothes, and you take notice of the well-dressed man, and say, 'Come this way to the best seats'; then you tell the poor man, 'Stand over there' or 'You can sit on the floor by my

foot-rest.' Can't you see that you have used two different standards in your mind, and turned yourselves into judges, and corrupt judges at that?

Listen, my dear brothers: it was those who are poor according to the world that God chose, to be rich in faith and to be the heirs to the kingdom which he promised to those who love him.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *cf Matthew 4:23*

Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom and healed all who were sick. Alleluia!

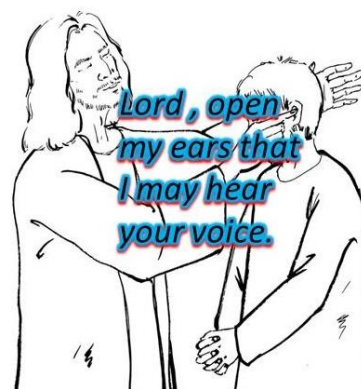
**GOSPEL** *Mark 7:31-37*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark*  
*He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.*

Returning from the district of Tyre, Jesus went by way of Sidon towards the sea of Galilee, right through the Decapolis region. And they brought him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they asked him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then looking up to heaven he sighed; and he said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' And his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened and he spoke clearly. And Jesus ordered them to tell no one about it, but the more he insisted, the more widely they published it. Their admiration was unbounded. 'He has done all things well,' they said 'he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.'

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

**ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**



**READINGS NEXT WEEK:**

*24th Sunday in Ordinary time*

*First Reading: Isaiah 50:5-9*

*Second Reading: James 2:14-18*

*Gospel: Mark 8:27-35*