

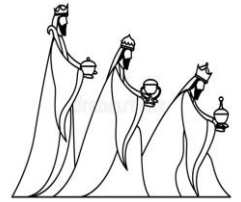


# Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au 03 50324144

Website: northeastmallee.org.au

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



## 5<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025:

### THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY



This week we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany; God's presence is revealed to all the world. The Child Jesus is God-here-among-us, and he is to be a Light to all the Nations!

Just consider the story of the Magi for a moment; they tell Herod that 'we saw his star as it rose'. Now, we usually imagine a big whopping star hanging over Bethlehem, because that is what we see in artwork. And there is some truth in that depiction. It is just like how the baby Jesus is often depicted as shining light onto those around him... these depictions in art depict the deeper truth that Jesus is our Light, and that he shines brightly in

our hearts. But let's go back to the story for a moment. Herod and his advisors are blindsided by the Magi's arrival. In other words, the Magi have noticed something that Herod and many others have missed. Does a stunningly bright star fit that story? No, otherwise everyone would have noticed it.

Instead, the story suggests something far more subtle; these Magi are skilled and dedicated observers of the night sky. Perhaps it was something in the movement of a planet or comet, perhaps one crossing or meeting with a significant constellation (like the Great Lion), and perhaps this then made them think of the Kingdom of Judah and so they 'followed' it to Jerusalem. That is all just conjecture, but the deeper point of the story is this; they were able to find and recognise Jesus for who he was, even when others were still blind to his presence. The signs that led them there were available to everyone, but the Magi had the open hearts to begin the search, the wisdom to read the signs, the dedication to pursue those signs all the way through to the end, and finally the humility to fall down in homage once they had got there. And so, they became the first to 'see' what others had missed. But the great news is this; millions upon millions have since followed after them. We are part of that same story; we too have to work hard to read the signs that are all around us, we too have to persevere through times of darkness and doubt, we too even have to swallow our pride at times, so that we too can come to know God's presence to us in Jesus.

### HOUSE BLESSINGS FOR THE EPIPHANY

The Feast of the Epiphany is traditionally held as a special time to call on God's blessing over our households for the year ahead. The Magi risked all and worked hard to follow the light of the star. May we set our hearts on Christ and his ways. And following the light, the Magi found God, present to all the world in the child Jesus.

So too may we recognise God's loving presence in our own homes today.

Like last year, we will bless some chalk and prepare some prayers for you to take home as a family. Christ is revealed as the Light to draw all peoples together. May his light shine brightly in our homes that they may be beacons of love and peace!

#### Parish Contact Details:

Po Box 71 Swan Hill, Vic 3585

Phone: 03 5032 4144

northeastmallee@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Website: northeastmallee.org.au

**Office Hrs:** Tues, Wed and Fri 10:30 -1.30

#### 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.



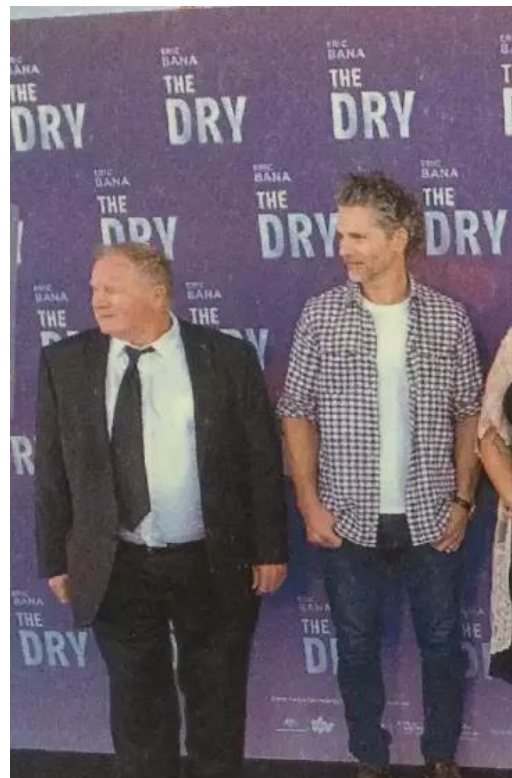
**PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS**  
**RECENT DEATHS+**  
 John O'Loughlan

**NOTICES**



**FR JAMES AWAY, FR EUGENE TO COME**

I will be heading off overseas on Monday for two weeks; for a conference in Rome with a quick trip to Malta on the way. I will be praying for you all, please pray for me! In my absence, Fr Eugene McKinnon will be celebrating Masses on the weekends of 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup>. Fr Eugene has previously ministered in all of our Churches, so many of you will remember him and I am sure will make him very welcome! And just a bit of fun trivia. Fr Eugene has also starred in a movie alongside international star Eric Bana- here is a picture below of the two at the movie Premier of 2021's *The Dry*.



**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Kenneth McManus, Margaret Foott,  
 Lance Learmonth, Tom & Margaret Bookham,  
 Michael Conlan, Trish McGrath, Mary Stemmer,  
 Elizabeth Loader, Margaret Cleary, John McLoughlin,  
 Annie & Ken Dwyer, Frank & Theresa Shiels,  
 Betty Borchard, John Rogers, Ralph Jones,  
 Florentino Aranas, Jenny Leonardi, Rhonda Coughlan

**SICK LIST**

Pat Croft, Yvonne Richardson, Paul Donohue,  
 Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott,  
 Jarrod Crimmins, Michael Bourke, Jack Donohue,  
 Jude Lewis, Bridget Phyland,  
 Carmel Ryan, Peter Amezdroz  
 Ken Duryea, Helen Duryea

**THIS WEEKEND 4<sup>TH</sup>/5<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**  
**FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD.**

Sat 6pm Swan Hill

**No 8.30am Mass**

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**  
 NO WEEKDAY MASSES THIS WEEK

**NEXT WEEKEND 11<sup>TH</sup>/12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY**  
**THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD.**

Saturday 6pm

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Nandaly

**READINGS NEXT WEEK:**

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4. 6-7

Second Reading: Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38

Gospel: Luke 3:15-16. 21-22

**Our Parish Schools**

**St Mary's Primary School Sea Lake**

Principal: Kate Nunn  
 47 Hannon Street, Sea Lake  
 Ph: 03 5070 1272

**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

## HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why does Herod appear to take a great interest in the birth of Jesus?

What might Mary and Joseph have thought to see the wise men bringing gifts to their baby?

In what way was the journey of the wise men a journey of faith?

What is the significance of the wise men presenting earthly 'treasures' to the Christ child?



### NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY BY MARY COLOE PBVM A Saviour for the world

#### 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?'

There are many key images in today's Gospel that have their background in the Scriptures. Bethlehem is the small village in which David, the great king of Israel was born, and later anointed by the Prophet Samuel (1 Sam 16). For this reason, Matthew quotes the prophet Micah who speaks of a new leader, a shepherd like David to be born in Bethlehem.

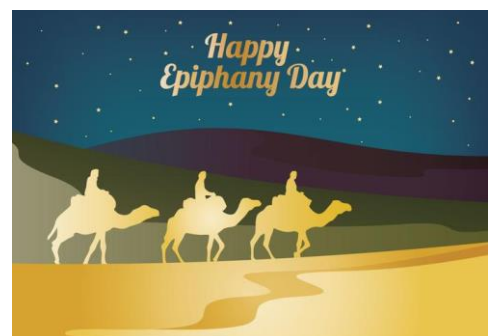
The images of the star and Magi look back to the time of Moses. When the people of Israel escaped from Egypt they wandered in the Sinai wilderness before moving up into the region now known as Jordan. This is on the east bank of the Jordan River. In order to travel into the land of Canaan, they had to pass through the region of Moab and the king of Moab did not want this large group to travel through his land. The king called on his seer (magus) to place a curse on the Israelites, but the seer instead pronounced a blessing. This magus from the eastern land of Moab proclaimed, 'I see him but not now; I behold him but not near; a star shall come out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel' (Numbers 24:17). In this episode we have the symbols used by Matthew – a magus in the East, seeing a star, the symbol of kingship. By use of these images Matthew continues to show the links between his new Christian community and the more ancient religion of Israel. Like much of the Gospel narrative, we are challenged to move from reading literally to reading these narratives seeking their theology rather than history.

Once again I suggest you make the distinction between the joy-filled narrative of Luke, and the threatening atmosphere of Matthew so that the community recognise two different, symbolic narratives. Children in school could even bring Christmas cards and separate the cards that depict Matthew's gospel, from those depicting Luke's story, and those that have mixed them up. This sort of exercise can help even young children learn to look beyond a literal reading.

In the eastern churches this Feast is celebrated as Christmas, for in today's feast Christ is revealed to the Gentiles, the non-Jews. By having foreigners come to the nativity and honour the child, Matthew looks ahead to the later Christian church which by the 80s, when Matthew is writing, has expanded beyond Judaism into the gentile lands. This is our festival, for as non-Jews, we have been brought into the blessing promised to Abraham and extended through the people of Israel to us. This is the message we find in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. God's gracious love has come to the gentiles (the pagans). Paul calls this a mystery – something that reveals the power of God at work – God has come to all people.

The Gospel contrasts wisdom and power. The Magi from the east are called wise and they come searching for Jesus in order to offer homage. It takes wisdom to acknowledge the truth of who we are before the mystery of God's ways. In humility they kneel before a child, seeing here a sign of God's presence. Herod acts with power. He commands and expects obedience. He is the King in Judea and will not tolerate another called 'king of the Jews'. Even the words of the Magi and the prophecies from the Scriptures fail to change his grasp on power. Herod's hands cling to his rule while the hands of the Magi open with gifts for the child. Grant me this wisdom God, to live with open hands and a heart that seeks your presence.

© Mary Coloe



**FIRST READING** Isaiah 60:1-6

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah*

*The glory of the Lord shines upon you.*

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come,  
the glory of the Lord is rising on you,  
though night still covers the earth  
and darkness the peoples.

Above you the Lord now rises  
and above you his glory appears.

The nations come to your light  
and kings to your dawning brightness.

Lift up your eyes and look round:

all are assembling and coming towards you,  
your sons from far away  
and your daughters being tenderly carried.

At this sight you will grow radiant,  
your heart throbbing and full;  
since the riches of the sea will flow to you;  
the wealth of the nations come to you;  
camels in throngs will cover you,  
and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;  
everyone in Sheba will come,  
bringing gold and incense  
and singing the praise of the Lord.

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11

**(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.**

O God, give your judgement to the king,  
to a king's son your justice,  
that he may judge your people in justice  
and your poor in right judgement.

In his days justice shall flourish  
and peace till the moon fails.

He shall rule from sea to sea,  
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts  
shall pay him tribute.

The kings of Sheba and Seba  
shall bring him gifts.

Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,  
all nations shall serve him.

For he shall save the poor when they cry  
and the needy who are helpless.

He will have pity on the weak  
and save the lives of the poor. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING** Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians*

*The revelation means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body.*

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Matthew 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia!

We have seen his star in the East;  
and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Matthew 2:1-12

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew*

*We have come from the East to worship the king.*

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him, 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,  
for out of you will come a leader  
who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

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