



# 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*



**9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025**

**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

***"HERE THEN I BRING THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THE PRODUCE OF THE SOIL THAT YOU, LORD, HAVE GIVEN ME"***



The first reading today is worth paying close attention to. It is a prayer for the people of Israel as they offer the fruits of their land. The prayer reminds them of their history and of all that God had done for them: of how he delivered them from slavery in Egypt and led them safely to a new home. There, in the good soil of the Promised Land, they could grow food aplenty. The prayer then is a reminder for the people that they can only offer what they offer because God has already delivered them. The first fruits of their harvest are themselves tangible signs of all that God had done for them: of his love, his care and his grace. "Here then I bring the First Fruits... that you Lord, have given me. "

It is worth asking ourselves, why might we be hearing this reading today, here at the beginning of Lent, this time of repentance and renewal on the path to Easter? Well, we might think of it like this. The Church has always understood the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' Death and Resurrection as the New and Final Exodus. Through Moses, God led Israel out of slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. This then became a foretaste or preview of the greater work he was later to do through his Son Jesus. Through his Death and Resurrection, Jesus doesn't just deliver us from an earthly power like Egypt, he saves us from the far greater enemy of sin and death. The people in the promised land were still wounded and bound by sin and haunted by death. But we don't need to be. Sin and Death should have no power over us.

Through our Baptism, we were immersed in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus' death and Resurrection. We died with him, so that we might rise with him, freed from the clutches of sin and death. But just as the people of Israel had to walk the long path to the promised land, so too are we called to cooperate with God's work of salvation and sanctification in our lives. Baptism has purified us, so we are no longer bound by sin, but some of its wounds still afflict us. There is still a struggle that we have to undertake with God's light and help to uproot all trace of sin from our lives. He has delivered us yes, but that deliverance is an ongoing work.

Lent is offered as a special time for just this by calling us to repentance and renewal. But as we hear this call and take up the powerful remedies of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, it is important to remember that all our efforts here are just the 'first-fruits' of God's great work of salvation. They are the 'first-fruits' in the sense that we can only offer them because of the good work God has already done within us. Lent is not about proving ourselves to God by feats of endurance and strength. Rather, the Lenten journey is more a living proof of what God has already been doing in us. Our 'successes' in Lent are signs of God's grace in our lives, but even when we stumble and fall short, our imperfect efforts are still 'first-fruits' in the sense that they are only the beginning of the great things he is still yet to do. There are far richer fruits still to come, grown to their fullness and ripened to perfection. The first-fruits we offer during this Lent are a hopeful anticipation of what is still yet to come. God has started the good work in us, and he is not done yet.

**Parish Contact Details:**

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**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+**

Joan McNamara

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Nella Bellofiore, Kath Clohesy, Rosaria Fedele

Leonard Patching, Rhodesia McNamara,

Kevin Mikes, Frank Fazzalori, Daniel Wright

Mary Ellen Irwin, Frank Howley

Ian Giddings, Domenica Salvo, Helen Harris

Antonio Fazzalori, Nina Taverna, Margaret Mudge

**SICK LIST**

Maureen Allen, Pat Croft, Yvonne Richardson,

Paul Donohue, Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott,

Jarrold Crimmins, Michael Bourke, Jack Donohue,

Jude Lewis, Bridget Phyland, Carmel Ryan,

Peter Amezdroz, Ken Duryea, Helen Duryea

Pope Francis

**THIS WEEKEND 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025**

**1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

Sat 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8:30am Quambatook

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Nandaly

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**

**Tues: 11am Funeral Mass Joan McNamara CULGOA**

Wednesday: 10am Mass

Thursday: Confessions 5pm,

5.30pm Mass, Adoration

Friday: 11.30am Mass

**Stations of the Cross 6pm**

**NEXT WEEKEND 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

**2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT**

Saturday 6pm

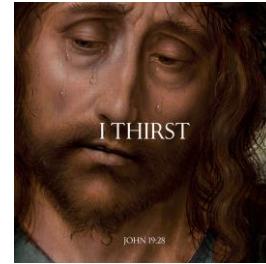
Sunday 8:30am Culgoa

Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

**NOTICES**

**ST PATRICK'S DAY RACES & RAFFLE**

Tickets available after Swan Hill Masses this weekend.



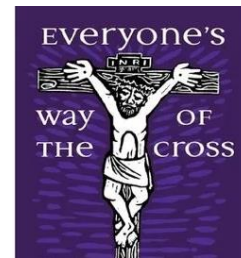
**LENTEN VIDEO SERIES:**

**"THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST"**

*Discover the Heart of Our Saviour.*

In The Seven Last Words- a weekly Lenten video series from the St Paul Centre- Dr Scott Hahn explores the final words that Jesus uttered while He hung dying on the Cross, and shows how these words reveal the heart of our salvation.

See <https://stpaulcenter.com/lent>



**STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Fridays of Lent 6pm St Marys Swan Hill.



**GIVING TO THOSE IN NEED THIS LENT**

**Project Compassion** Boxes and envelopes now available. You can also donate online via

[www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

Other worthy causes include

**Aid to the Church in Need:** [www.aidtochurch.org](http://www.aidtochurch.org)

Or **Catholic Mission:** [www.catholicmission.org.au](http://www.catholicmission.org.au)

**"WRAP WITH LOVE." JOSEPHITE COMPANIONS.**

"Wrap with love" Sydney have responded to the rugs sent from Swan Hill. They have sent 3000 rugs to Bangladesh: 150 to Uganda and 3000 to Vietnam via Good neighbours Australia. Thank you to all knitters.

**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

## READINGS NEXT WEEK:

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent

First Reading: Genesis 15:5-12. 17-18

Second Reading: Philippians 3:17 – 4:1

Gospel: Luke 9:28-36

### LITTLE ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

Check in with someone who is lonely (*James 1:27 – "Look after orphans and widows in their distress."*)

Write a surprise thank-you note to a teacher or coach. (*1 Thessalonians 5:11 – "Encourage one another and build each other up."*)

Take some books you no longer use and fill up a Little Free Library. (*Proverbs 16:24 – "Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul."*)

Donate to a local food pantry/assistance group. (*Luke 3:11 – "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none."*)

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why is it significant that Jesus was able to be tempted?

Why might the account of the temptations immediately follow Jesus' baptism?

How might we interpret the fact that Jesus was 'led by the Spirit' through the wilderness?

What are the temptations that you face?

How do you try to resist these temptations

### NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

BY MARY COLOE PBVM

**Lent. Lent what?**

**Life. It's mine.**

**On loan – borrowed. It's lent.**

**40 days, 40 years**

**On borrowed lent-time.**

**Ashes to ashes and in between**

**Lent-life.**

In the rhythm of the Church year Lent is the time to stop and look within, facing the inner truth of our lives. The ashes of Wednesday remind us of the stark reality of our humanness, our finitude. Our identity is shaped by our mortality and yet in the busyness of our lives we can try to deny this. 'I am invincible!' we cry with our new technologies, and new medical triumphs. This is the core human temptation – to deny our humanity and forget our utter dependency on the God who holds us in life. Our life is not our own. It is God-given. It is lent.

The Gospel shows us Jesus facing similar temptations. The first and third scenes begin with the words, 'If you

are the Son of God...' The Tempter is questioning Jesus on the very central fact of his life, his identity as Son. Prior to this scene Jesus was acclaimed by a heavenly voice at his Baptism, 'You are my beloved Son.' Luke then traced Jesus' ancestry back through the generations to 'the son of Adam, the son of God.' Jesus' identity is shaped by his relationship with God and this is what the Tempter strikes at. 'Do you really believe you are God's beloved? Do you really believe you are God's son? If you are, then you could turn these stones to bread; if you are, then you could leap from the pinnacle of the Temple and God would protect you from harm.' The Tempter voices the inner doubt Jesus, and all of us experience, when we consider the overwhelming and incredible love of God for us. Could God really love me? One way to escape from doubt is to look for a sign of assurance of that love. In the temptation scene, the signs of assurance are presented as food, power and safety. Sometimes we might think that if God really loves me, then bad things will never happen; or conversely, when bad things do happen, then we read these as signs that God does not love us. This is a real human and spiritual struggle – to plunge into raw faith in God without demanding signs.

In this section of Paul's letter to the Romans, he is insisting that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus make salvation available to all. God's covenant, once given to the people of Israel is now opened to bring blessing to all nations. He draws upon Israel's scriptures in his teaching. In the book of Deuteronomy, as Moses is about to die, he speaks to the people, assuring them that even though he will not be with them into the future, God's word will always be with them. 'Surely this teaching that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor too far away. It is not in the heavens so that you should say, "Who will go up to the heavens for us, and get it so we may hear and understand?" Nor is it beyond the sea ...No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.' (Deut 30:11-14) Paul paraphrases these words of Moses to emphasise that through Jesus Christ, God is now near to all people.

As we begin this time of spiritual rigour, I suggest we spend time with the teaching of today's readings – that God is very near to us; that we are God's beloved and that we do not need to seek external signs or go to extraordinary lengths to find God. The word is very near to you; it is in your heart.

© Mary Coloe

**FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 26:4-10

*A reading from the book of Deuteronomy*

*The confession of faith of the elect.*

Moses said to the people: 'The priest shall take the panner from your hand and lay it before the altar of the Lord your God. Then, in the sight of the Lord your God, you must make this pronouncement:

"My father was a wandering Aramaean. He went down into Egypt to find refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty, and strong. The Egyptians ill-treated us, they gave us no peace and inflicted harsh slavery on us. But we called on the Lord, the God of our fathers. The Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. He brought us here and gave us this land, a land where milk and honey flow. Here then I bring the first-fruits of the produce of the soil that you, Lord, have given me." You must then lay them before the Lord your God, and bow down in the sight of the Lord your God.'

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 90:1-2. 10-15. R. v.15

**(R.) Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.**

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High and abides in the shade of the Almighty says to the Lord: 'My refuge, my stronghold, my God in whom I trust!'

Upon you no evil shall fall,  
no plague approach where you dwell.  
For you has he commanded his angels,  
to keep you in all your ways.

They shall bear you upon their hands  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.  
On the lion and the viper you will tread  
and trample the young lion and the dragon.

His love he set on me, so I will rescue him;  
protect him for he knows my name.  
When he calls I shall answer: 'I am with you.'  
I will save him in distress and give him glory. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING** Romans 10:8-13

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

*The confession of faith of the believers in Christ.*

Scripture says: The word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart. If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips you are saved. When scripture says: those who believe in him will have no cause for shame, it makes no distinction between Jew and Greek: all belong to the same Lord who is rich enough, however many ask for his help, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. *The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Matthew 4:4

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!  
No one lives on bread alone,  
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

**GOSPEL** Luke 4:1-13

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke*

*Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led by the Spirit through the wilderness where he was tempted.*

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit through the wilderness, being tempted there by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end he was hungry. Then the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.' But Jesus replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone.'

Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, 'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.' But Jesus answered him, 'Scripture says:

You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'

Then he led him to Jerusalem and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God', he said to him 'throw yourself down from here, for scripture says: He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and again:

They will hold you up on their hands  
in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'

But Jesus answered him, 'It has been said:  
You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time.

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