



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



6TH APRIL 2025:

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

'NEITHER DO I CONDEMN YOU,' SAID JESUS 'GO AWAY, AND DON'T SIN ANY MORE.'

I tried to find a good image of this Gospel, but found that most of them had the scene all wrong. Many had Jesus standing, I suppose to symbolise his authority, and of his taking charge of the situation. The problem... the Gospel itself says the exact opposite. Jesus bends down when confronted with the 'test', and remains bent down the whole time. Just think about it; Jesus deliberately places himself into a position of lowliness, of humility, of vulnerability. We can even see in his gesture a foretaste of what he will do on the Cross. Christ is ready to risk all, humbling himself and entering our lowliness, so that he might raise us up. So back to our story today, when Jesus bends down in front of the crowd and in front of the woman, it means something important, because *he meant* something by it. Any image of him standing therefore just doesn't quite cut it.

The second problem came with the depiction of the woman who had been brought before Jesus. Many images have her collapsed on the ground, covering her face as if ashamed. But again, what does the Gospel story actually say? Read carefully, and you will 'see' that she remains standing the whole time. Jesus 'looks up at her'. And far from covering her face, it would seem she has kept her eyes open for the whole episode. After it all ends, Jesus asks her what has happened and where everyone has gone. She can tell him. Had she been staring down her accusers the whole time? Had her defiant gaze turned their condemnation back onto themselves? They were hypocrites after all. They were in no position to condemn her. They themselves were sinners, every single one of them. Whatever they may have declared, they had no concern for God's Law. They only tried to use the woman as a pawn to trap Jesus. But here is the crucial point; Jesus does not see her as simply a pawn to be used. He sees her as a beloved daughter of his Father. He is not satisfied with simply dismissing the crowd or rescuing himself and her from the sticky and violent situation. In his mind, the episode is not complete until he has also led the woman to freedom from her own brokenness and sin. And here is where his gesture of bending down really comes in. He does not stand over her in condemnation. Condemnation traps us in shame and enchains us to our past. No, Jesus does not condemn. But he does name her sin so that she may be free of it; *'Go, and sin no more.'* He has made himself humble and lowly, so that she can receive his words not as a condemnation to shame, but as a loving and heartfelt invitation to repentance, healing and freedom. She can truly 'Go', and leave that place of condemnation and shame, because Jesus has helped her to see that she is far greater than her sins and brokenness.

So what about us? Clearly the Gospel teaches us of the hypocrisy of throwing stones in condemnation. But it also teaches us something more; of how Jesus humbles himself and risks vulnerability before us, so that we too can be freed from our own sins and brokenness. Sometimes we are like the prodigal son; we 'come to our senses' and fall to our knees to ask for mercy for our sins. But more often, we are a bit more defiant than that. We make excuses for our behaviour, pointing to everyone else's sinfulness instead. We stand defiantly, refusing to bend down or humble ourselves... but we find we are still stuck in the place of shame nonetheless.

In these moments, Christ does not passively wait for us to 'come to our senses'. He takes the initiative. He bends down into that place of sin and brokenness, so that he may lift us out of it with his truth and mercy and lead us into freedom. For Jesus, the story is not finished until we are truly free.

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+**

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Michael Slattery 40 Days

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

SICK LIST

Pope Francis, Pat Hoare, Maureen Allen, 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 6TH APRIL 2025

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sat 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Sea Lake

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tues: 10am Mass

Wednesday: 10am Mass

Thursday: Confessions 5pm,
5.30pm Mass, Adoration

Friday: 11:30am Mass

Confessions 5:30pm

Stations of the Cross 6pm

**NEXT WEEKEND 13TH APRIL
PASSION SUNDAY (PALM SUNDAY)**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

(No Nandaly 5pm- Moved to Easter Sunday instead)

NOTICES



BAPTISM WELCOME

We welcome Scarlett and Addison, daughters of Blake and Naomi as they are presented for Baptism into God's family, the Church. May God bless you always and keep you in his care!



CUPPA AFTER 10:30AM MASS THIS SUNDAY

EXTRA TIMES FOR RECONCILIATION

As well as Thursday evening 5pm, Reconciliation will also be available this week Friday at 5:30pm and Saturday at 9:30am.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays of Lent 6pm St Marys Swan Hill.



HOLY WEEK & EASTER MASS TIMES

Holy Thursday: 6pm Swan Hill

Good Friday: 3pm Swan Hill

Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday)- 6pm Swan Hill

Easter Sunday: 8:30am Culgoa, 10:30am Swan Hill,
5pm Nandaly

MINISTRIES FOR HOLY WEEK & EASTER

If you are able to help out with the different ministries (reading etc.) for our Easter Liturgies, please put your name down on the rosters.

LITTLE ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

Say a prayer for someone who is hurting. (Psalm 34:18 – "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted.")

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

St Mary MacKillop College

Principal: Michelle Haeusler
53 McCrae Street, Swan Hill
Ph: 5032 9771

principal@smswanhill.catholic.edu.au

Tell a family member one thing you appreciate about them. (1 Thessalonians 5:18 – "Give thanks in all circumstances.")

Help make dinner and serve it with a smile. (Matthew 20:28 – "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.")

Listen to someone without interrupting. (James 1:19 – "Be quick to listen, slow to speak.")

Offer your seat to someone who needs it more. (Philippians 2:3 – "In humility, value others above yourselves.")

Make a list of things you are grateful for and share it at dinner. (Psalm 107:1 – "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.")

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

Why did the Pharisees see this incident as a test for Jesus?

What is achieved by Jesus bending down and focusing his attention on the ground?

What happened to the mob mentality when Jesus challenged them?

Have you ever been in a situation where group behaviour overtook individual thought and action?

When Jesus says, 'Go, and don't sin any more,' how can that be applied to your life?

Why do you think this passage is selected for use during Lent?

What's the effect of Jesus challenging the woman's actions rather than condemning them?

REFLECTION BY FR MICHAEL TATE THE GAZE OF JESUS

The accusers of this woman make her 'stand there in full view of everybody.' She is surrounded by the hostile glare of eyes filled with blood lust. It is only when the accusers have left in embarrassment that Jesus, who has been bent to the ground, looks up at her. He adopts the posture of a slave, seeing her as she could be if she gives up her current pattern of behaviour. Up till now, no-one has spoken to this woman. Now Jesus treats her as a human being worth speaking to. And what does she hear? That he does not condemn her but points her to a new sort of life in the future. We could pause for a moment to allow Jesus the time to look at us, talk to us, in that way. Do you have the courage to 'lock eyes' with Jesus and live out the consequences?

'The eyes have it.' © Fr Michael Tate;
mtate@bigpond.com



GOSPEL REFLECTION

This entire scene is a conspiratorial 'set-up' to trap Jesus. Jewish law dictated that adultery was to be punished by death for both parties. However, the Roman occupation had forbidden the Jewish authorities to carry out the death penalty. By bringing the woman to Jesus they sought to place him in a no-win situation. If he upheld the Jewish law and ordered the death penalty, then he was flaunting Roman law. If he did not uphold the law then he could be branded as a false teacher. They thought it was a perfect trap!

But where is the man with whom the woman was committing adultery? When he is not also brought forward for judgment as any legitimate accusation would demand, Jesus senses the trap being set for him. He realises that those accusing the woman must have somehow been involved in setting her up so that she could be 'caught committing adultery'. In Jewish law, accessories to a crime were equally guilty and subject to the same penalty. When Jesus says to the gathering, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned ...,' he's letting them know that he's aware of their part in this crime and what judgment is due them also! If they persist with their accusation, they'll also be tried as accessories! So they quietly walk away.

Jesus' words to the woman sum up his message throughout the gospel: 'Neither do I condemn you, go away, and don't sin anymore.' As with others in the gospels, Jesus recognises that the woman has indeed sinned, but he does not condemn her for it. By telling her not to sin any more he is calling her to conversion. He is saying, yes, you've made mistakes, but you can do better and I'm challenging you to try.

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READINGS NEXT WEEK: PASSION SUNDAY (PALM SUNDAY)

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Luke 22:14 – 23:56

FIRST READING *Isaiah 43:16-21*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

I am doing a new thing and I will give drink to my people.

Thus says the Lord,
who made a way through the sea,
a path in the great waters;
who put chariots and horse in the field
and a powerful army,
which lay there never to rise again,
snuffed out, put out like a wick:
No need to recall the past,
no need to think about what was done before.
See, I am doing a new deed,
even now it comes to light; can you not see it?
Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness,
paths in the wilds.
The wild beasts will honour me,
jackals and ostriches,
because I am putting water in the wilderness
(rivers in the wild)
to give my chosen people drink.
The people I have formed for myself
will sing my praises.
The Word of the Lord. ALL: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 125. R. v.3*

**(R.) The Lord has done great things for us;
we are filled with joy.**

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs.
The heathens themselves said: 'What marvels
the Lord worked for them!
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad.
Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap.
They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves. **(R.)**

SECOND READING *Philippians 3:8-14*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

*Because of Christ I look upon everything else as useless in
order to gain him.*

I believe nothing can happen that will outweigh the
supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For
him I have accepted the loss of everything, and I look on

everything as so much rubbish if only I can have Christ and be
given a place in him. I am no longer trying for perfection by
my own efforts, the perfection that comes from the Law, but
I want only the perfection that comes through faith in Christ,
and is from God and based on faith. All I want is to know Christ
and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings
by reproducing the pattern of his death. That is the way I can
hope to take my place in the resurrection of the dead. Not
that I have become perfect yet: I have not yet won, but I am
still running, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus
captured me. I can assure you my brothers, I am far from
thinking that I have already won. All I can say is that I forget
the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing
for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to
receive in Christ Jesus.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Joel 2:12-13*

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
With all your heart turn to me,
for I am tender and compassionate.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

GOSPEL *John 8:1-11*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Let the person without sin be the first to throw a stone.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he appeared
in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat
down and began to teach them.
The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had
been caught committing adultery; and making her stand
there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master,
this woman was caught in the very act of committing
adultery, and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn
women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?'
They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use
against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the
ground with his finger. As they persisted with their question,
he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not
sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.' Then he
bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard
this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest,
until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained
standing there. He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are
they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir,' she replied.
'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and don't sin
any more.'

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