



# 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*



## SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025: THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS *"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD..."*



Today we celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross- focusing in on the great Sign of our Salvation. You know that I love pointing to the Cross. It is such a powerful Sign of God's Love for us. There is so much we can say about what it reveals; it really does teach us almost all we need to know. But just to focus in on this aspect of the Mystery today- the Cross stands as a reminder that Christ loves us at our very worst, before we could ever do anything to earn or merit his love. Christ does not wait for us to fix ourselves before he loves us, or to prove ourselves, or to be perfect. He embraces us in our brokenness and sin.

We profess that it is there on the Cross that Jesus shows us just how much he loves us, that it is on the Cross that he lays his life down for us.

Let's place ourselves in that scene at Calvary. What does Jesus see from the Cross? A crowd jeering and mocking him, calling for his blood. He has been rejected, derided... but that crowd is not just some other people. Truly, truly, that crowd is us. Remember that powerful moment on Good Friday when we all join in the chorus 'Crucify him, Crucify him!'

That moment is a reminder that all of us have sinned, and so all of us have in some way rejected Christ in our lives. Every time we sin, it's like we are that crowd... mocking him, ignoring him, rejecting him...

and yet his love for us never falters, even for a moment. We are that jeering crowd, and yet he still loves us at our worst. He does not give up on us, he does not reject us, even when we have rejected him.

And now let's think about what Jesus *doesn't* see from the Cross. He doesn't see Peter, who boasted that he would never desert him. He doesn't see James, who promised to share in his cup. In fact, he doesn't see any of his disciples, except for his mother, a few of the braver women and the one apostle John. He has been deserted, forsaken, almost completely abandoned... and yet his love never falters. There on the Cross, he embraces not just the faithful few that stood by him, he embraces all of humanity even as it forsakes him... he proves his faithfulness to us, even as we abandon him. Even if we lose hope or faith and drift away, even if we lose courage and run away in fear... Christ never ceases to reach out to us in loving embrace. He proves his faithfulness in the precise moment our own faith failed.

Christ loved us first, at our very worst, before we could do anything to merit that love. He loved us first, in our brokenness, so that we can be made whole in him. Whenever we find ourselves thinking that we are not good enough or doubting how God or indeed anyone could possibly love us... reminder the message of the Cross. You are loved, even in your brokenness. You are worth everything to him, even when you might feel like you are completely worthless. If he loved us even from the Cross, we can be sure that love will never fail.

### **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 & 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+**

Anna Maria Raco

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Guisepina Mase, William (Pat) Power

Denis Gallagher, Robert Ryan, Doreen Meney

Maggie Nolan, Jim Shepherd, Bruce McArthur

Ronald Ballantyne, Des Bourke, Bridget & Sean Walsh

Mary Jane Phyland, Jack Cleary, Pierce Derham

Martino Raco, Irene Drummond, James Francis Kiley

Patsy Taverna, Michael Considine

**SICK LIST**

Andrew Day, Pat Egan, Pat Hoare, Carmel Ryan,

Pat Croft, Yvonne Richardson, Jayden Williams,

Margaret Foott, Jarrod Crimmins, Michael Bourke,

Jack Donohue, Jude Lewis, Bridget Phyland,

Peter Amezdroz, Ken Duryea, Helen Duryea

**THIS WEEKEND 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

**THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

**No Mass Quambatook\* (see notice)**

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

Sunday 5pm Nandaly

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL**

Monday: 1.30pm Funeral Anna Raco

**Tuesday: No Mass** (*Fr away for meeting in Birchip*)

Wednesday: 10.30am

**Thurs: No Mass** (*Fr away for meeting in Ballarat*)

**Friday:**

**11:30am Funeral Prayers Sean Burke, Quambatook**

Sat: Mass 10.30am

**NEXT WEEKEND 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER**

**25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Culgoa

Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

**NOTICES**

**STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM – ‘YOUR GIFT SUPPORTS THE UPKEEP OF OUR PARISH’**

As our planned giving cycle comes to its end, we once again offer our thanks for your ongoing support of our Parish. Your regular giving keeps the parish ticking and allows us to plan for the future.

**ENVELOPES:** Unfortunately, envelopes will be unavailable until late-September. Due to unforeseen circumstances either human or gremlin (not sure which) the data base has disappeared and I am in the process of re-entering details etc.

**CDF-PAY & Online Giving:** If anyone is interested in joining the stewardship program or transferring to direct debit payments please contact me at the office on a Tuesday or Friday between 11am and 1.30pm.

Thankyou for your patience and understanding,  
Glenda.



**CULGOA CHURCH 100TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

An invitation is extended to all those interested or with connections to Culgoa. A special celebration of over 100 years of faith and heritage of the Sacred Heart Catholic church in Culgoa.

**Sunday 19 October – Mass at 1.00pm**

Followed by afternoon tea and sharing of stories and history displays in the town hall.

Please also pass the invite on to any family or friends who have since moved from the district but might appreciate the opportunity to celebrate their roots!

Please RSVP Chris Sewell 0439972305 or email

[sewell.chistine@activ8.net.au](mailto:sewell.chistine@activ8.net.au)

**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)



### **MASSES IN QUAMBATOOK**

The community in Quambatook have decided that given the numbers of regular Mass-goers as they are, we will now just have the one Mass a month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday at 8:30am. We will no longer have Mass there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays. Lay-led Assemblies will continue as usual on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays at 9:30am. I thank the community for their understanding and continued dedication.

### **'WRAP WITH LOVE' UPDATE**

Five boxes of rugs have been sent to the 'Wrap with Love' program in Sydney to be distributed to cold European countries. Thanks to the knitters and crocheters! Used stamps can be left in the box in Swan Hill Church foyer

### **ONLY 3 WEEKS TO GO!**

#### **TOOLEYBUC MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER RETREAT**

The Marriage Encounter Retreat is now only three weeks away (Oct 3-5)! Please keep up your prayers for the organisers and for all the couples who will be involved. It is not too late to jump on board. To sign up, email via [vicbookings@wwme.org.au](mailto:vicbookings@wwme.org.au) or call Mercy & James Bvirakare directly on 0409 183 676.

#### **SPECIAL SCREENING: *THE FIRST HYMN***

Swan Hill Showbiz Cinema

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 6.30pm

Tickets \$11pp on the night (Cash only)

#### **BALLARAT CLERGY SUPPORT FUND – COLLECTION FOR RETIRED PRIESTS**

The Ballarat Clergy Support Fund provides for retired priests who have spent a lifetime selflessly caring for others. The Fund is currently supporting and caring for seventeen retired priests. Your generous support has enabled us to continue 'caring for those who cared for us'. Contributions over \$2.00 are tax-deductible. Donation options:

1. Special envelopes are available for this collection, which will be taken up today & next week
2. A credit card facility is available; Scan or click the QR code for CDF Pay, select your parish and select "My giving is for Retired Priests Collection".



### **3<sup>RD</sup> MARRIAGE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Mai Nguyen Hoang Lam (Andrew) intends to marry Tran Thi Thuy Thuy in Vietnam later this year.

### **GOSPEL REFLECTION**

To many people, venerating and reverencing the Cross seems a very strange practice. The Cross was the instrument of torture used by the Romans to execute particularly troublesome or rebellious inhabitants of their conquered lands. It was a form of execution – along with burning alive and being eaten by wild animals – the Romans used as a means of literally annihilating an enemy. All three methods were designed to ensure that the person was destroyed completely so that nothing was left to bury. In the eyes of the Romans, this was the greatest insult that could be paid to an enemy: without proper burial their families could not properly mourn their passing and they could not enter into the afterlife. The general practice with crucifixion was that the executed person was left on the cross for wild dogs and carrion birds to attack. Ultimately, the picked over bones were cast into a lime pit where they effectively dissolved. It was rare that a victim of crucifixion was allowed to be buried.

Given this history, it is easy to understand why the early Christians did not generally reverence the Cross. It was not until the 4<sup>th</sup> century, apparently on 14 September, 326, that Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, identified the cross of Christ's crucifixion and acclaimed its potential for miraculous cures. On the site that she located the Cross, Helena ordered to have built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. From this time, and with the formal adoption of Christianity as the religion of Rome, the Cross became a symbol of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. The common understanding shifted from the Cross being the means of Christ's death to being the means of his triumph over death.

#### **SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT – LIFTED UP**

The gospel of John, written later than the other three canonical gospels, reflects a very different understanding of the cross. In this gospel writer's imagery, the cross is the means by which Jesus is 'raised up'. This theology flows through the entire gospel and in today's excerpt, from very early in the gospel, we see the language of the Son of Man being 'lifted up'. Furthermore, it is through the raising up of Jesus that all people are also raised up. It is through the Son, sent by the Father, that all people may enter into eternal life.

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**FIRST READING** Numbers 21:4-9

*A reading from the book of Numbers*

*When those that were afflicted looked upon it, they were healed.*

On the way through the wilderness, the Israelites lost patience. They spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this wilderness? For there is neither bread nor water here; we are sick of this unsatisfying food.'

At this God sent fiery serpents among the people; their bite brought death to many in Israel. The people came and said to Moses, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you. Intercede for us with the Lord to save us from these serpents.' Moses interceded for the people, and the Lord answered him, 'Make a fiery serpent and put it on a standard. If anyone is bitten and looks at it, he shall live.' So Moses fashioned a bronze serpent which he put on a standard, and if anyone was bitten by a serpent, he looked at the bronze serpent and lived.

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 77:1-2. 34-38. R. v.7

**(R.) Do not forget the works of the Lord!**

Give heed, my people, to my teaching;  
turn your ear to the words of my mouth.

I will open my mouth in a parable  
and reveal hidden lessons of the past.

When he slew them then they would seek him,  
return and seek him in earnest.

They would remember that God was their rock,  
God the Most High their redeemer.

But the words they spoke were mere flattery;  
they lied to him with their lips.

For their hearts were not truly with him;  
they were not faithful to his covenant.

Yet he who is full of compassion  
forgave their sin and spared them.

So often he held back his anger  
when he might have stirred up his rage. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING** Philippians 2:6-11

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

He humbled himself, therefore God had exalted him.

The state of Jesus was divine,  
yet he did not cling  
to his equality with God

but emptied himself

to assume the condition of a slave,  
and became as men are;  
and being as all men are,  
he was humbler yet,  
even to accepting death,  
death on a cross.

But God raised him high  
and gave him the name  
which is above all other names  
so that all beings  
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,  
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus  
and that every tongue should acclaim  
Jesus Christ as Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,  
because by your cross you have redeemed the world.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** John 3:13-17

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to John*  
*The Son of Man must be lifted up.*

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'No one has gone up to heaven  
except the one who came down from heaven,  
the Son of Man who is in heaven;  
and the Son of Man must be lifted up  
as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,  
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.  
Yes, God loved the world so much  
that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost  
but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world  
not to condemn the world,

but so that through him the world might be saved.'

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

**READINGS NEXT WEEK:**

**25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**

First Reading: Amos 8:4-7

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

Gospel: Luke 16:1-13