



# Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee

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*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 21ST SEPTEMBER 2025: 25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### *"USE MONEY, TAINTED AS IT IS, TO WIN YOU FRIENDS"*

With every parable, we usually see some unexpected twist, a surprising turn that makes us pause and wonder 'what the?' The story has been unfolding just like we think it should be according to our human reckoning, then all of a sudden 'bam!', the table is flipped and we have to ask ourselves 'what just happened'? That moment of surprise is then what opens us up to see as God sees; that kicker or twist then turns the parable back on us as if it were a mirror. I say that, because I think it is easy to confuse the real 'kicker' in today's parable, and that can mean we end up kind of missing the point. What do I mean here? Well, I've often heard the parable explained like this; when the dishonest steward meets with the debtors and cuts down their debt, he is in fact only cutting into his own profit. When he arranged the initial loan, he would have added on a commission that he would pocket, and now he is abandoning his cut. Now that may be true as far as the mechanics go, but I think the mistake is in leaving our explanation there as if there is nothing else going on. The suggestion is the steward has had a change of heart and is finally acting honestly, and this is the sole 'twist' of the parable, and he is held up as a good example to follow. But that just doesn't work for me. For one, if we are thinking in purely human terms, why does the Master then go on to praise the steward? He does not gain anything from the steward's actions, in fact he loses out on what he could have extracted from his debtors once the steward was out of the way. And secondly, what do we actually hear him say? The Master praises the *dishonest* steward for his *astuteness*. He is not praised for his *honesty*, in fact it is quite the opposite. He is praised for his *shrewdness*, his *smarts*. There is something else going on here, something more to the parable. Let's go back to the beginning and read it more carefully.

If you think about the story as it unfolds, the dishonest steward is acting out of self-interest *the whole time*. Everything he does is true to form, he does not have a change of heart as far as that goes, he just has a change of strategy. Up until now he had been using his position to pocket money for himself. That was his whole focus, and he cheated both his Master and fellow man to build up his riches. Money has been his master, but when he finds out that it is about to fail him, he quickly gives up on the money and makes use of what little influence he has left to buy himself some friends. Let's be clear once again, he does this purely out of self-interest. There is no higher motivation or morality driving him, just a desire to see some friends on the other side of his judgement. But even though he is acting purely out of self-interest, he is still *clever* enough to land on a truth that we all need to learn; the money won't save us. He is *shrewd* enough to let go of the dough, and invest everything into his relationships with his neighbours instead. He is *smart* enough to do what he can to help them out so that they might help him too. And this is then where we find the real twist of the parable, the bit that is unexpected... his Master, the very one who is getting ripped off in this exchange, *praises* the steward for his astuteness. And we have to ask ourselves, *why?* Why would the Master be happy with what the steward has done? Because the Master stands for God, and God does not see as man sees. He does not need our money or riches and does not really care for them, but he *does* have a concern for the poor, and he *does* have a concern for our salvation. He sees us clinging to material things, thinking they will save us. How stupid can we be? If even the dishonest steward, a dodgy crook, can figure out that money won't save him, surely we as 'children of the light' should be able to realise this too. It is as if God is saying, '*Come on guys, if even that crook, dodgy as he is, can figure this one out, surely you can too?*' Of course, we should go further than the steward. We should not only turn away from money, we should also turn to God. But before we can do that we have to be free of any disordered attachment to riches so that we can instead use them for doing good. And if even a dodgy steward can figure that one out, surely we should be able to too.

#### **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+

Gabrielle Boers

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Rosina Amitano, Guiseppe Caccaviello, Nance McNamara, Gina Colombo, Colin Gregor, Millie Grant, Francis Joseph Conlan, John Nolan, Mary O'Loughlin, William McInerney, Mary Patricia McGuinness, Chris Pupillo, Mary Bell, Mary Cecilia Kelly, Mary "Josie" Johnston, Br Pat Stanley.

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 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

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

Tuesday: NO MASS (Fr returning from Melbourne)

Wednesday: 10.30am

Thurs: Confession 5pm: Mass 5.30pm, Adoration

Friday: 10.30am

Saturday: 10:30am

NEXT WEEKEND 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill

Sunday 8.30am Quambatook

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: Weekly Giving Envelopes are now available. Monthly and yearly will be ready for next weekend. Thank you for your patience.

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

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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)

## YOUNG ADULTS GROUP: SUN 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

We plan to meet again for reflection and fellowship on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October after 10:30am Mass, in the Parish Presbytery Meeting Room. Our reflection will be on *'Forgiveness and Reconciliation'*



## 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.

## ONLY 2 WEEKS TO GO!

### TOOLEYBUC MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER RETREAT

The Marriage Encounter Retreat is now only two 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.

### 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".



## GOSPEL REFLECTION

We return again to the Lukan theme of money and how it can get in the way of being a true disciple. This week's gospel passage reminds us that we cannot be a follower of God and chase after riches at the same time. That parable of the steward and his master is one that is rarely quoted and would be unfamiliar to most readers. The actions of the steward upon learning that he is to be dismissed seem to us to be evidence of his dubious dealings and yet the master praises his astuteness.

When a steward entered into loans and deals on behalf of his master, he would build into the repayment a profit for himself. This was quite normal and acceptable. So the amount that the steward asks the debtors to reduce their debts to the master is actually the cut that he had built into the deal for himself. His actions are, surprisingly, quite noble and legitimate. What he is doing is ensuring that his master receives all that is owed to him whilst the steward is making himself more popular with the debtors because they don't have to pay back as much. It would be like a modern-day salesman saying that he would forego his commission on the sale so that the purchaser didn't have to pay as much.

But why does Jesus use this parable? He makes the point that when the crunch comes – when the kingdom of God is imminent – monetary wealth is going to be meaningless. It is best to cut your losses and turn your energy to building relationships rather than riches.

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT? TAINTED MONEY

Money seems to get a pretty bad rap in the gospel of Luke. In today's passage, it is even described as 'that tainted thing' which is the lowest measure of trustworthiness. However, it is not money as such that is the concern, but rather it is the love of money and inappropriate use of money. In the Jewish tradition, the measure of society was based on how the lowest and the least were treated and looked after. When our focus is on acquiring money and possessions, it is impossible to be using our money for the good of others.

Q. Why might the way we deal with money be seen as a measure of our trustworthiness?

Q. What appears to be the central message of this gospel passage?

### READINGS NEXT WEEK:

26th Sunday of Ordinary Time

First Reading: Amos 6:1. 4-7

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 6:11-16

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

**FIRST READING** Amos 8:4-7

*A reading from the prophet Amos*

*The Lord God spoke against those who buy the poor for money.*

Listen to this, you who trample on the needy and try to suppress the poor people of the country, you who say, 'When will New Moon be over so that we can sell our corn, and sabbath, so that we can market our wheat?

Then by lowering the bushel, raising the shekel, by swindling and tampering with the scales, we can buy up the poor for money, and the needy for a pair of sandals, and get a price even for the sweepings of the wheat.'

The Lord swears it by the pride of Jacob, 'Never will I forget a single thing you have done.'

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Ps 112:1-2. 4-8. R. see vv.1. 7

**(R.) Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.**

Praise, O servants of the Lord,  
praise the name of the Lord!  
May the name of the Lord be blessed  
both now and for evermore!

High above all nations is the Lord,  
above the heavens his glory.  
Who is like the Lord, our God,  
who has risen on high to his throne  
yet stoops from the heights to look down,  
to look down upon heaven and earth?

From the dust he lifts up the lowly,  
from the dung heap he raises the poor  
to set him in the company of princes,  
yes, with the princes of his people. **(R.)**

**SECOND READING** 1 Timothy 2:1-8

*A reading from the first letter of St Paul to Timothy*

*Let prayers be offered to God for everyone; he wants all people to be saved.*

My advice is that first of all, there should be prayers offered for everyone – petitions, intercessions and thanksgiving – and especially for kings and others in authority, so that we may be able to live religious and reverent lives in peace and quiet. To do this is right and will please God our saviour: he wants everyone to be saved and reach full knowledge of the truth. For there is only one God, and there is only one mediator between

God and mankind, himself a man, Christ Jesus, who sacrificed himself as a ransom for them all. He is the evidence of this, sent at the appointed time, and I have been named a herald and apostle of it and – I am telling the truth and no lie – a teacher of the faith and the truth to the pagans.

In every place, then, I want the men to lift their hands up reverently in prayer, with no anger or argument.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** 2 Corinthians 8:9

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus Christ was rich, but he became poor,  
to make you rich out of his poverty.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Luke 16:1-13

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke*

*You cannot be slaves both of God and of money.*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There was a rich man, and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."

'Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" "One hundred measures of oil," was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty."

'The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.

'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity. The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?

'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.' The Gospel of the Lord.

*ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*