



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



SUNDAY 28TH DECEMBER 2025: FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



MY SINCERE GRATITUDE AND THANKS

This will be my last 'front page' for a few months, so just wanted to take the chance to express my deep gratitude to you all. Firstly, for all the work and love that went into our Christmas celebrations- the wonderful decorations, cleaning, beautiful singing and music, welcoming and other ministries- there were many, many hours given so generously to make the celebrations what they were. Thank you! Secondly, thank you for your very kind wishes, prayers and encouragement as I head off for my Sabbatical, and for the tremendous generosity you have shown. I really am blessed to be in this Parish. Thank you! I will miss you all and will be praying for you. Please pray for me! God's blessings for the New Year! I will see you at Easter!

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 & 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+**
Lynette Graham

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Bill Croft, Freda Livingston, Rex Delmenico
Giuseppe "Joe" Saraceno
Alexander Irwin, Charlie "Billy" McClelland
John Capiello, Maria Mirabito, Patricia Hinton
Marg Mason, Paul Dutto, Margaret Johnston
Teresa Aiello, Antonietta Barresi

SICK LIST

Shane Ryan, Pat Jeans, 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 28TH DECEMBER
FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Quambatook
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL

*Please note the changes for while Fr James is away-
Tuesday & Wednesday: No Mass*

**Thurs 1st Jan New Years Day
Mary Mother of God
Swan Hill Mass 5.30pm**

Friday: 10.30am

**NEXT WEEKEND 4TH JANUARY
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8:30am Sea Lake
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill

NOTICES



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDARS

Thank you for your beautiful response and generosity, we have been able to donate 63 boxes to Swan Hill, 2 boxes to Sea Lake and 5 boxes to families in Kerang. Also a thank you to the wonderful team who helped complete the filling of boxes.

COLUMBAN CALENDARS

There are still a few available from the Parish Office & after Masses- Calendars \$10 each.

FR JAMES SABBATICAL

(29TH DEC 2025- 2ND APRIL 2026)

I will be heading to Rome after Christmas for 3 months Sabbatical leave, returning just in time for Easter. Ballarat will be organising our priest supplies for the weekends. Fr Matthew Thomas and his assistants in Sunraysia will be covering our school liturgies and funeral needs during the weekdays. They have also generously committed to offering Masses on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK WHILE I AM AWAY

When it comes to asking for the Anointing of the sick, please don't delay or put this off! Please get in early and leave a request with the Parish Office. That way our visiting priests can come as soon as they arrive in town. You can expect a priest to be here overnight on Saturdays, (they will likely head home Sunday lunchtime if there is nothing scheduled), and overnight most Thursdays. Please don't delay, or you may miss the opportunity.

YOUR HELP PLEASE- BEDS AND CLEANING

We also ask for some volunteers to help with washing and changing the bed linen and towels and perhaps doing a quick clean in the presbytery for our visiting

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

St Mary's Primary School Swan Hill

Principal: Kate Quin
2 Murlong St Swan Hill
Ph. 03 5033 2541

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

priests while I am away. If we have a few volunteers we can share the load. Please leave a message with the Office so Glenda can coordinate.

**READINGS NEXT WEEK
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Second Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

**NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY BY
MARY COLOE PBVM**

The Gospel used for Christmas Masses come from Luke, even in this year of Matthew. Today's liturgy returns to Matthew's Infancy account and it is important therefore to say something about these two different birth narratives.

Luke presents a joy-filled announcement of Jesus' birth with angels singing and shepherds hurrying to see the child born in poor and lowly circumstances. This theme of Jesus' coming to the poor and the outsiders will continue across his Gospel.

Matthew tells a different story as he is writing for a community who have come to faith in Jesus from within Judaism. Matthew therefore emphasises Jesus' links with Israel's past. So he draws on the story of Moses, who, as a baby, was under threat from the Pharaoh of Egypt and his decision to kill all the male children (Exodus 1:15-22). By recalling God's saving action at the time of Moses, Matthew is teaching his community that the same God is now continuing this saving action in the life of Jesus. So Joseph, modelled on the Old Testament Joseph who had a special coat, who had strange dreams and saved his family by bringing them to Egypt, now Mary's husband Joseph leads his family down into Egypt until it is safe to bring them back to the land of Israel.



This is a normal Jewish way of teaching theology – to tell the current narrative by borrowing elements from a past narrative. It is called 'midrash'. While this is not how we do theology, or relate accounts of someone's birth, this was usual within the Old and New Testaments. Rather than seek the truth by asking 'what exactly happened' it is better to stand back and see the bigger picture of God's saving power at work through Israel's history and now at work in the life of this child.

Another strong theme present in Matthew's infancy narratives is that of the fulfilment of the Old Testament promises. In today's passage there are two citations of Scripture – the first from Hosea: 'I called my son out of Egypt' (Hosea 11:1), and the second, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'. There is no exact Old Testament passage this refers to and a number are suggested: Isaiah 4:3; 11:1. Matthew is teaching his Jewish community that in becoming a follower of Jesus they are not losing their Jewish roots, rather these ancient traditions and promises are now being fulfilled.

The Gospel can certainly speak to us today. In past years there have been many boatloads of men, women and children who landed on Australian shores. We called them asylum seekers or refugees and the media reported both their pain and a wide range of public opinion about whether we should allow them stay or send them away. These families know the horror of today's Gospel better than I. Their faces provide the best homily on this reading. They know what it is like to be frightened and powerless when a government authority starts searching for you. The Gospel doesn't tell us the difficulties experienced by Joseph and Mary as they fled Bethlehem in haste to travel hundreds of kilometres through harsh wilderness and desert to reach the borders of Egypt. How were they received in that country? Were they welcome? Did they have to live in hiding? Were they placed in some type of detention centre with others who fled from Herod?

Matthew's story of Jesus is not one of welcoming shepherds or singing angelic choirs. Matthew's narrative is far grimmer, as life still is in the Middle East and so many other countries today. Taking the story of Moses as his model, Matthew depicts the first years of Jesus' life as one of threat with his family on the move from Bethlehem, to Egypt, back to Judea before finally settling in Nazareth. As we try to imagine the reality of this Gospel, may our hearts learn deeper compassion for the refugees of our own times. In the ongoing debates on this issue may we remember this Gospel story of God coming to us as a refugee, seeking a place of safety and welcome.

© Mary Coloe

FIRST READING *Sirach 3:2-6. 12-14*

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

Whoever fears the Lord honours his parents.

The Lord honours the father in his children,
and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons.
Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins,
he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a
fortune.

Whoever respects his father will be happy with children
of his own, he shall be heard on the day when he prays.
Long life comes to him who honours his father,
he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to
the Lord.

My son, support your father in his old age,
do not grieve him during his life.

Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy,
do not despise him in your health and strength;
for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten
but will serve as reparation for your sins.

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 127:1-5. R. see v.1*

**(R.) Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in
his ways.**

O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!

By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper.

Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table.

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Zion
all the days of your life! **(R.)**

SECOND READING *Colossians 3:12-21*

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians
Concerning the Christian life in the world.*

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you and
you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness
and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one
another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins.
The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same.
Over all these clothes, to keep them together and

complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign
in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called
together as parts of one body. Always be thankful.

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with
you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom.
With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and
inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in
the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father
through him.

Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness.
Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is
what will please the Lord. Parents, never drive your children
to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Colossians 3:15. 16*

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
and the fullness of his message live within you. Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Matthew 2:13-15. 19-23*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt.

After the wise men had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to
Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his
mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I
tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do
away with him.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his
mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed
until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had
spoken through the prophet:

I called my son out of Egypt.

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a
dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and
his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those
who wanted to kill the child are dead.' So Joseph got up and,
taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the
land of Israel. But when he learnt that Archelaus had
succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to
go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the region
of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this
way the words spoken through the prophets were to be
fulfilled:

He will be called a Nazarene.

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