



## 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*



**20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: 16<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2026**

### ***GOD'S NEW FAMILY: THE CHURCH***



So what is going on in today's Gospel? Why does it seem to take Jesus some convincing to reach out and help the Canaanite woman? Of course, we can't read Jesus' mind, but we can know the background and context. And that background is really key to understanding the whole Gospel story.

Jesus belonged to the house of Israel. This was God's Chosen People. Beginning with their father Abraham, he had called them out from darkness and patiently raised them up. Through Moses and the many prophets sent after him, God had taught Israel his ways and formed them to be his Holy Nation, his Royal and Priestly People, a people set apart to be his own. He formed a covenant with them, a special bond. He would be with his People to guide, nurture and protect them. And they, in their turn, would keep his commandments and worship him alone.

Belonging to this Family was an awesome privilege, but with the awesome privilege also came great responsibility. And Israel didn't always live up to that. Their history was one of stumbles and falls. Time and again they failed in their trust and turned to the false gods of their neighbours (like the Canaanites). Time and time again God forgave them and lifted them up. Even when they went astray and were lost, God never forgot them or gave up on them. He searched for them and called them back. And slowly and patiently God worked on a new plan; not just to save this small family of Israel once again, but through them, to save the whole world. The prophets started to give us glimpses of this time to come- we heard one of the important ones in today's first reading- *'for my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.'* The nations turning to God would be an important sign.

With the coming of Jesus comes the fulfilment of this new plan. God is going to establish a new family, and a new People. This one will not be based on ties of blood and kinship. You won't have to be born into it. Rather, the door to this new family will be **faith**. The Canaanite woman shows great faith. She perseveres when at first it seems that Jesus is ignoring her, and that perseverance breaks down whatever resistance or prejudice the disciples might have felt towards her as a foreigner. They begin to plead for her, even though she is 'outside the family' so to speak. Her tenacious faith is not even broken by what seems to be Jesus' sharp rebuke- *'it is not fair to give the children's food to the house-dogs'*. She still doesn't give up- *'Ah yes, but even dogs can eat the scraps that fall from the table.'* Touche! What a come-back! I can't help but imagine that Jesus must have broken into a smile on hearing her reply. What great faith! What awesome trust! That faith becomes the open door for to receive what she came for; her daughter's deliverance and healing. But it also signifies something far beyond any particular need; her perseverance has been a sign for all those who witnessed it; the key to Communion with God is no longer kinship, but faith. And her great faith demonstrates that the time of this new family has finally arrived. Look around you. All the nations are represented. We are now part of that same family of faith, that new family, because that new family of faith is the Church.

#### **Parish Contact Details:**

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**Office Hrs:** Tues, and Fri 10:30 -2.00

#### **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+**

**ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH**

Therese Barry, Eileen Conlan, Patricia O'Brien  
Michael O'Callaghan, Florence McDonald  
Ellen Clohesy, Leslie Clohesy, Douglas Scott  
Beatrice McLean, Alice Hayes, Geraldine O'Loughlin  
Donna Murchie, John O'Brien, Gina Colombo  
James "Megs" McMahon, Thomas Good  
Elise McInerney Joan Blythman, Phonse Clohesy,  
Vincenzo Massara

**SICK LIST**

Bill Free, Sheila Templeton,  
Shane Ryan, Pat Jeans, Yvonne Richardson,  
Jayden Williams, Margaret Foott, Jarrod Crimmins,  
Michael Bourke, Jack Donohue, Jude Lewis,  
Peter Amezdroz, Ken Duryea,  
Helen Duryea, Geoff Duryea

**THIS WEEKEND 16<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST  
20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill  
Sunday 8.30am Culgoa  
Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

**WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL THIS WEEK**

**Tues: No Mass**  
Wed: 10:30am Mass  
**Thurs: No Mass**  
**Friday: No Mass**  
Sat: 10am Confessions, 10.30am Mass

**NEXT WEEKEND 23<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST  
21<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**

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

**NOTICES**

*To our two Primary Schools  
St Mary's Sea Lake and St Mary's Swan Hill...*

**HAPPY FEAST DAY FOR  
THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY!**

Good luck to the students at Sea Lake for their  
Athletics carnival on Friday,  
have fun and enjoy the day!



**WRAP WITH LOVE**

***Preparing for the Northern Winter***

We would like as many people as possible to knit  
eight- or ten-inch squares in plain knitting (garter  
stitch) to be sewn into rugs to send to the Ukraine in  
readiness for their cold winter. We would be so  
grateful for your help, thank you.

*Josephite Companions Swan Hill*

**SPECIAL MASS SEA LAKE: 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST**

There will be a bonus Mass in Sea Lake on Sunday  
30<sup>th</sup> August at 5pm, followed by a presentation on my  
Sabbatical and a shared dinner in the church.

**ST JOSEPH'S NANDALY 100TH ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS – SAVE THE DATE!**

All are welcome to celebrate the 100th anniversary of  
St Joseph's Church, Nandalay on Sunday, October 11,  
2026. We plan to celebrate Mass at 1.30pm with a  
meal to follow (to be organised). For planning  
purposes, please contact one of the following people  
to register your attendance: Jo Brady, ph. 0427 572  
752; Sam Brady, ph. 0427 781 244; Barb Hall, ph.  
0408 059 784. We would be grateful for any photos,  
documents, or historical information you may have to  
help commemorate this wonderful milestone. All  
items will be returned following the day. Please  
contact the above listed people if you can contribute.  
Accommodation is available at Nandalay (limited),  
Sea Lake and Ouyen.  
More information at a later date.

**Our Parish Schools**

**St Mary's Primary School Sea Lake**

Principal: Kate Nunn  
47 Hannon Street, Sea Lake  
Ph: 03 5070 1272

**St Mary MacKillop College**

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

**St Mary's Primary School Swan Hill**

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

**PRAYING WITH THE HOLY FATHER  
FOR EVANGELISATION IN THE CITY.**

Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness, we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community. Lord, hear us.

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT?**

Why do you think Jesus first responded to the woman in the way he did?

What turned Jesus' attitude around?

What do you think the woman was thinking/feeling as she approached Jesus?

What message would the followers of Jesus have taken from this event?

What is the message of this Gospel passage for us today?

**READINGS NEXT WEEK:**

**21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading: Isaiah 22:19-23

Second Reading: Romans 11:33-36

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

**NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY**

**by Mary Coloe PBVM**

**'YES LORD – BUT'**

Again, to understand this Sunday's Gospel it is important to place it within its narrative context, so I repeat the structure of these recent Sunday readings.

Matt 14:13-21 – Feeding on the Western (Jewish) side of Lake Galilee (Mark 6:30-44)

Matt 14:22-35 – Miracle on the Sea (Mark 6:45-52)

Matt 15:21-28 – The Canaanite Woman (Mark 7:24:30)

Matt 15:29-31 – Jesus on the Eastern (Gentile) side, teaches the people (Mark 7:31-37)

Matt 15:32-39 – Feeding on the Eastern (Gentile) side (Mark 8:1-9)

Two Sunday's ago we read the account of the first feeding miracle on the Jewish side of Lake Galilee. You need to recall that the words used in this episode are particularly Jewish and that at the conclusion of the episode there are twelve baskets of leftovers. The miracle portrays the feeding of the Children of Israel as once they were fed by Moses in the Wilderness. Following this miracle Jesus crosses the Sea 'to the other side' (Matt 14:22) where the disciples experience difficulty.

In today's Gospel it is quite clear that Jesus has moved beyond the territory of the Jewish people, into the northern region of Tyre and Sidon. Here he encounters a Gentile woman – again very clearly identified as a Canaanite from that region. In Matthew this is the first explicit encounter with a non-Jew. From the evidence of the Gospels it seems that Jesus worked primarily within the land of Palestine and saw himself involved in a mission to the people of Israel. He rarely ventured beyond Israel to Gentiles.

When the Canaanite woman asks Jesus to heal her daughter Jesus states his understanding of his mission, 'only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. He then continues, 'It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' This harsh reprimand makes use of an idiomatic way that Jews used when speaking of Gentiles, as 'Gentile dogs'. The woman responds, 'Yes Lord, but even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the master's table.' Keep in mind the larger context. The children of Israel have been fed (Matt 14:13-21) and there were twelve baskets of scraps left over. In response to the woman's witty and faith-filled response Jesus accedes to her request and heals her daughter. In effect, Jesus changes his understanding of his mission to include Gentiles. Immediately following this episode Jesus returns to the Lakeside but now goes to the Gentile side and on this side of the Lake the number of loaves and the number of left-over baskets is seven. Within Jewish symbolism seven signifies completion or fulfilment. When considering all of these episodes and their sequence Matthew is presenting a view that Jesus' mission is complete only when it includes the Gentiles. It is also worth noting that on this side of the Lake Jesus takes the bread and 'gives thanks' which in Greek is the word 'eucharistein'. Now, when both Jew and Gentile can be fed at the table, there can be Eucharist.

At the time when the Gospels are being written this story would have been very important, for some disciples were taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, while others still thought of a mission primarily within Judaism. This episode would have helped the community to reach out beyond the narrow confines of Judaism as Jesus did on this occasion. We know from the Acts of the Apostles, that when Gentiles joined with Jewish disciples they had problems about eating together. Matthew's Gospel in these episodes addresses this pastoral situation by indicating that real Eucharist is only possible when all are welcome to the Lord's Table.

This Gentile woman, an outsider, is a strong character prepared to argue with Jesus as Abraham, Moses and Job once argued with God. She provides me with a good model of vigorous prayer. ©Mary Coloe

**FIRST READING** *Isaiah 56:1.6-7*

*A reading from the prophet Isaiah  
I will lead the foreigners to my holy mountain.*

Thus says the Lord: Have a care for justice, act with integrity, for soon my salvation will come and my integrity be manifest.

Foreigners who have attached themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love his name and be his servants – all who observe the sabbath, not profaning it, and cling to my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their holocausts and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.

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

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** *Ps 66:2-3 5-6. 8. R. v.4*

**(R.) O God, let all the nations praise you!**

O God, be gracious and bless us  
and let your face shed its light upon us.  
So will your ways be known upon earth  
and all nations learn your saving help.

Let the nations be glad and exult  
for you rule the world with justice.  
With fairness you rule the peoples,  
you guide the nations on earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you.  
May God still give us his blessing  
till the ends of the earth revere him.

**(R.) O God, let all the nations praise you!**

**SECOND READING** *Romans 11:13-15. 29-32*

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans  
The gifts and call of God are irrevocable.*

Let me tell you pagans this: I have been sent to the pagans as their apostle, and I am proud of being sent, but the purpose of it is to make my own people envious of you, and in this way save some of them.

Since their rejection meant the reconciliation of the world, do you know what their admission will mean? Nothing less than a resurrection from the dead! God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice.

Just as you changed from being disobedient to God, and now enjoy mercy because of their disobedience, so those who are disobedient now – and only because of the mercy shown to you – will also enjoy mercy eventually. God has imprisoned all men in their own disobedience only to show mercy to all mankind.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *Matthew 4:23*

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus preached the Good News of the kingdom  
and healed all who were sick.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** *Matthew 15:21-28*

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew  
Woman, you have great faith.*

Jesus left Gennesaret and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Then out came a Canaanite woman from that district and started shouting, ‘Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil.’ But he answered her not a word. And his disciples went and pleaded with him. ‘Give her what she wants,’ they said ‘because she is shouting after us.’ He said in reply, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.’ But the woman had come up and was kneeling at his feet. ‘Lord,’ she said ‘help me.’ He replied, ‘It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the house-dogs.’ She retorted, ‘Ah yes, sir; but even house-dogs can eat the scraps that fall from their master’s table.’ Then Jesus answered her, ‘Woman, you have great faith. Let your wish be granted.’ And from that moment her daughter was well again. *The Gospel of the Lord.*

*ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

