



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*

HAVE FAITH
TO MAKE
MIRACLES
HAPPEN
Matthew 17: 13-21

18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 2ND AUGUST 2026

"GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT"

I love the story we hear in today's Gospel, as well as the other accounts of the same miracle that we hear in the other Gospels. The very fact the event is recalled in all four demonstrates just how awesome and meaningful an experience it was for the first disciples. But before going on, I just want to clear something up that really annoys me. I've often heard the event explained away along these lines; that Jesus started to share, and that then shamed everyone else into pulling out their own secret stashes of food to share too. In other words, there was no miracle. There was always plenty of food, people were just mean, and had never thought of sharing, but Jesus shamed or inspired them into being nice. Well, quite frankly that is a rubbish interpretation and misses the whole point of the story. That reading doesn't fit at all with what we actually hear. The crowd has no food with them. That is the whole point. They hadn't planned to be out all day. They're just so hungry for Jesus's teaching, so eager to hear more, that they have forgotten their physical hunger. Any true interpretation of Scripture has to begin with what we actually hear, and then we can go on to understand what it might be communicating and what we can draw from it. The 'Everyone Shared' explanation just ignores the given narrative and replaces it. Matthew and the other Evangelists are quite clear that a miracle took place. We can either believe them, or not, but we can't turn their story into something it isn't. And why is it that we are so embarrassed by a miracle? Why do we hesitate to recognise God's action in the story? There is much that can be said about miracles, and how we are to understand them, but for now we will have to settle with this; whatever happened back on that day in Galilee, it was quite clearly understood to be a sign of God providing for his people. They were hungry and he made sure they were fed, just as he had promised he would do. Remember the first reading from Isaiah? That promise is important- what happened should not be understood so much as an interruption or a break with how things are meant to be, but as a restoration into what God has planned for us. In God's eyes, hunger and need are the interruption. His plan is for abundance and plenty. He has made us to share life with him, and to share it to the full. The miraculous feeding of the crowd is a sign that his Kingdom is near. God has come to us in Jesus. He is true to his promises, he will not leave us hungry. The crowd was fed, and we will be fed too.

So, if we are to receive the story for what it is, there truly was a miracle or sign worked on that day. God did act, but listen carefully to the story again and you will see that the disciples were still very much at the heart of it. Jesus received the little food they had. After blessing and breaking it, he left it to them to distribute. And here is where we are invited to enter into the story with our imagination. Put yourselves into the shoes of the disciples. They are being sent out with their baskets, which at first must have felt very empty. Five loaves and two fish are hardly anything. They start with almost nothing, mere fragments, and are sent out on an impossible task, to feed the crowd. And yet, somehow, beyond their hopes, beyond our vision or our imagination, the task is completed. The crowd is somehow fed, and fed abundantly. Twelve full baskets come back- in other words, the twelve disciples return with more than what they started with. There is a miracle that day, and God is active, but he chooses to show his power and shower his abundance through the disciples' hands. What was impossible is made possible. Can you imagine their excitement building as the story unfolds? Can you imagine their hearts shifting from despair to wonder and hope and joy? Can you picture Jesus watching on, overjoyed to see their surprise and excitement, perhaps even laughing with pure delight? Maybe that is now my imagination going too far, but I think that is where this story wants to take us. God has truly come to us, and he has come to you too. His power is within you. Think about it, how many times have you been called upon to give of yourself and you honestly felt there was nothing left to give? As a carer, as a parent, as a friend or neighbour or even as a stranger... you were called upon and at first what was being asked seemed simply impossible. But in faith you offered the little morsel you had, the tiny fragment, and somehow, somehow, that proved to be more than enough. Even now, you still cannot see or understand how it all worked out, and yet it did. God made the impossible, possible. Christ took your offering in his hands, blessed it and multiplied it. That was truly the miracle of the loaves and fishes all over again, and you were right at the heart of it, just as he has planned, and just as he has promised.

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+

Joyce Phyland
Joseph "Jim" Crowe
Neville Hoare

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH

Mary McLaughlin Burns, Allan Irvine
Ethel Sullivan, Veronica Butler, John Phyland
Nell Frazer, Antoinetta Agosta, Richard Pippin
Matthew Noone, Martino Carbone, Tony Carlo
John Bell, Honora Bunworth, Emily Downes
Edward Fitzgerald, Jack McMahon

SICK LIST

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

**THIS WEEKEND 2ND AUGUST
18TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 8.30am Sea Lake
Sunday 10.30am Swan Hill

WEEKDAYS IN SWAN HILL THIS WEEK

Mon: **Holy Hour for Priests 12pm**
Tues: 5.30pm
Wed: **11am Requiem Mass Neville Hoare**
Thurs: **10:15am Mackillop College Feast Day Mass,**
Confessions 5pm, Mass 5.30pm
Friday: **10.30am Requiem Joseph "Jim" Crowe**
1:30pm Requiem Mary "Joyce" Phyland
Sat: **NO MORNING MASS**

**NEXT WEEKEND 9TH AUGUST
19TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**

Saturday 6pm Swan Hill
Sunday 10:30am Swan Hill
Sunday 5pm Nandaly

NOTICES

CUPPA THIS SUNDAY AFTER 10:30AM MASS

HOLY HOUR FOR PRIESTS

This **Monday 3rd August** some priests from our region will gather in Swan Hill for a special Holy Hour at **12pm**. Close to the Feast of St John Vianney, the patron saint of Parish Priests, we will offer this time for all priests. If you are able to join us, we would very much appreciate your prayerful presence too.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY WINTER APPEAL

With fuel, the cost of living and rental prices higher than ever, an unexpected bill, the loss of a job or a relationship break down can be enough to push someone into homelessness. For more and more people, homelessness is just one sudden crisis away. And this winter, more people than ever before are facing homelessness and poverty in Australia. Your generous gift today can help people at risk of or experiencing homelessness get the support they need to find and keep a safe place to stay. To donate online, go to <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/winter-appeal> or phone 131812.

'Eucharist28'

***The International Eucharistic Congress
(‘Eucharist28’) is coming to Sydney in 2028!***

Eucharist28's theme, 'This is My Body, Given For You', invites us to reflect on Christ's words as he instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice. At each Mass, the priest repeats Jesus' words from the Last Supper, and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. As we receive the Eucharist, we are called to carry His presence into our homes, workplaces, schools, parishes and communities. We are invited to allow Christ's presence to transform us as we share in the breaking of the bread. The journey begins now. For catechetical material to help your parish and community prepare for this moment, head to www.eucharist28.org/resources

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

**SPIRITUAL DAY RETREAT –
ST PETER'S DAYLESFORD
SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2026**

You are invited to a day of prayer, formation, and fellowship in the beautiful setting of St Peter's Catholic Church, Daylesford. Led by Fr John Corrigan and Fiona Bradley, the retreat day **A Pierced Heart: The Path of Our Lady of Sorrows** will include Mass and Eucharistic Adoration (with Confession available). Morning tea and a light lunch will be provided. The retreat is open to all men and women.

Date: Saturday 12 September, 9.30am–4pm Cost: \$30
Bookings essential: www.trybooking.com/DNJOM
Contact: Fiona 0402 474 074,
fiona.bradley@ballarat.catholic.org.au

**ADVANCE NOTICE: SPECIAL MASS SEA LAKE
30TH AUGUST**

There will be a bonus Mass in Sea Lake on Sunday 30th August at 5pm, followed by a presentation on my Sabbatical and the invitation to dinner at the pub.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT?

What are three different emotions Jesus might have experienced in the course of this passage?

Why might the people have been so determined in following Jesus?

How might the disciples have felt when Jesus told them to feed the loaves and fish to the people?

What message can you take from this passage that is applicable today?

READINGS NEXT WEEK:

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9.11-13

Second Reading: Romans 9:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

LIVING THE GOSPEL – GRIEVING JOHN

The passage begins with Jesus receiving the news that his cousin, John the Baptist's death. In response, Jesus immediately withdraws to a lonely place where he can be alone with his disciples. His response to this terrible news is to take time out. He wants to go away to a quiet, lonely place to pray and grieve. He doesn't just take the news in his stride and carry on regardless; he steps back from the busy-ness of life to mourn. It's a lesson for us in times of stress and grief: the response Jesus models is to take time to grieve the loss. © Greg Sunter

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

'Come, eat of my bread'

Jesus nourishes us. In a world that is fraught with meaninglessness, he offers purpose; to a world that is stumbling in darkness and confusion, he provides direction. He satisfies the hungry heart; he enlivens the drooping spirit. Those who follow Jesus will never be left to languish in the desert. If we but open our eyes, we will be amazed at the bountifulness of the nourishment that is provided for us. We will discover that God is magnanimous, even prodigal in giving, that God's generosity exceeds all of our expectations and also our understanding.

Furthermore, we are nourished by God through the ministry of each other, through the simple things of life, (distributing bread and gathering up the fragments): visiting the sick and consoling the grieving; caring for a child and giving aid to an elder; bagging groceries and directing a choir. If we but open our eyes, we will be astounded at how ordinary actions can satisfy our hunger and the hunger of others.

Most amazing of all is that this nourishment is given freely; there was no thought of requiring payment. God simply invites: Come! All we have to do is reach out our hands to receive and we will never be sent away to find nourishment for ourselves. We will discover that a bond is established that endures. Jesus is filled with compassion, a compassion that is not a fleeting emotion, but an enduring attitude. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

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FIRST READING *Isaiah 55:1-3*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah
Hasten and eat.

Thus says the Lord:

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!

Buy corn without money, and eat,
and, at no cost, wine and milk.

Why spend money on what is not bread,
your wages on what fails to satisfy?

Listen, listen to me and you will have good things to
eat and rich food to enjoy.

Pay attention, come to me;
listen, and your soul will live.

With you I will make an everlasting covenant
out of the favours promised to David.

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 144:8-9. 15-18. R. v.16

**(R.) The hand of the Lord feeds us:
he answers all our needs.**

The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures.

The eyes of all creatures look to you
and you give them their food in due time.
You open wide your hand,
grant the desires of all who live.

The Lord is just in all his ways
and loving in all his deeds.
He is close to all who call him,
call on him from their hearts.

**(R.) The hand of the Lord feeds us:
he answers all our needs.**

SECOND READING *Romans 8:35. 37-39*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans
*No creature can separate us from the love of God,
which is in Christ.*

Nothing can come between us and the love of Christ,
even if we are troubled or worried, or being
persecuted, or lacking food or clothes, or being

threatened or even attacked. These are the trials
through which we triumph, by the power of him who
loved us.

For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, no angel,
no prince, nothing that exists, nothing still to come, not
any power, or height or depth, nor any created thing, can
ever come between us and the love of God made visible
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Matthew 4:4*

Alleluia, alleluia!

No one lives on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Matthew 14:13-21*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
They all ate and were satisfied.

When Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's
death he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they
could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and,
leaving the towns, went after him on foot. So as he
stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity
on them and healed their sick.

When evening came, the disciples went to him and said,
'This is a lonely place, and the time has slipped by; so
send the people away, and they can go to the villages to
buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'There is no
need for them to go: give them something to eat
yourselves.' But they answered, 'All we have with us is
five loaves and two fish.' 'Bring them here to me,' he
said. He gave orders that the people were to sit down on
the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish,
raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And
breaking the loaves he handed them to his disciples who
gave them to the crowds. They all ate as much as they
wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining, twelve
baskets full. Those who ate numbered about five
thousand men, to say nothing of women and children.

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