



This Week's Readings

Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15
1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Luke 13:1-9

Next Week's Readings

Joshua 5:9-12
2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32



Send O Lord, Holy Apostles into Your Church!

St. Mel's Parish

BULLETIN

Looking at the Readings

The first reading from Exodus contains the encounter with Moses and God in the burning bush. This chapter has been described as the Gospel within the Old Testament because it is a revelation of God, God of our ancestors in faith and the God for all generations to come. God reveals his sacred name to Moses. By giving this sacred name God reveals his nature and person to Moses and to the people. God is the true and living God. This passage continues the Lenten readings on our salvation history, in fact, presents the most definitive moment in salvation history.

The significance of the burning bush is captured by St Paul who "reminds" his brothers and sisters of Moses' mission and purpose to bring us from slavery of sin through the saving waters of baptism.

This Sunday commences a three part series of Gospels on the call to repentance and the saving forgiveness of God through the ministry of Jesus.

Lenten Quotes from the Saints

"Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ; discipline your body; do not pamper yourself, but love fasting." *St Benedict of Nursia*

Text for Today

The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy. For as the heavens are high above the earth so strong is his love for those who fear him.
Psalm 102(103):11

The Annunciation of the Lord

The solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is a feast of the Jesus Christ's incarnation. Mary accepted the call to be the mother of the Lord. This day, nine months before Christmas, is considered the beginning of our salvation as Easter; the day of the Resurrection, is considered the day of our salvation. In the Julian Calendar, 25 March was New Year's Day. A bit confusing. George Washington was born in Virginia on 11 February 1731. In 1752 Britain and all her colonies adopted the Gregorian calendar which moved his birthday to 22 February 1732. This day is now called "Presidents Day" and New Year Day was moved to 1 January. Europe accepted the Gregorian Calendar in 1582.

On the Lighter Side

Though England was a bit tardy accepting the Gregorian Calendar, it celebrates 25 March as "Lady Day" with some festivity. The English also call it Quarter Day (four per year), the Spring Equinox, though astronomically it is earlier, and the first day of a new school term.



Liturgical Jottings Sunday Readings

For the 3rd – 5th Sundays of Lent Parish congregations may opt for Cycle A readings, especially with RCIA candidates who are preparing for Baptism, or for Cycle C readings which focus on Reconciliation: Jesus call to conversion and parables on the forgiveness of sins.

Lenten Prayers 3

Protect from Any Temptation

O Christ, Son of God, for our sake you fasted forty days and allowed yourself to be tempted.

Protect us so that we may not be led astray by any temptation. Since man does not live by bread alone, nourish our souls with the heavenly food of your Word; through your mercy, O our God, you are blessed and live and govern all things, now and forever. Amen.

Source: modified from the Mozarabic Rite Collects

St Mel's Parish would like to acknowledge the elders past and present of the Yorta Yorta Nation, and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our parish and church is situated.



Weekly Reflection

UNLESS YOU REPENT, YOU WILL ALL PERISH - Let's reflect and learn.

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way" (v. 3). Jesus denies that the Galileans suffered because of their sins but calls his listeners to repent lest they suffer for theirs. What happened to the Galileans is history, and nothing can be done about it. The fate of Jesus' listeners, however, is still negotiable. Jesus does not condemn them but instead shows them the way. His purpose is to redeem. While not all tragedy is the result of sin, sin sometimes leads to tragedy. Jesus' listeners have sinned (as we all have), and he calls them to repent so that they might escape disaster.

"I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way" (v. 5). This is the same response that Jesus gave to the first story. Jesus denies that the eighteen were worse offenders than others but uses the opportunity to call his listeners to repentance. Again, his purpose is not condemnation but redemption. The call to repentance shows that it is not too late for his listeners. Salvation is still possible.

We need to live lives of repentance, because we never know when a tyrant will rise up against us. Neither the Galileans who were killed by Pilate nor the eighteen who were crushed by the wall had the opportunity to repent. Their end came swiftly – without warning. So it may be for us. Repentance helps us in life and in death – helps us to live as forgiven people – helps us to face death without fear.

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none" (v. 6). A vineyard is a common metaphor for the people of Israel, and the fruit to be expected from Israel is Godly living. Jesus' listeners would understand this connection as Jesus tells this parable.

"Behold, these three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and found none" (v. 7a). Leviticus 19:23-24 forbids the eating of fruit from a newly planted tree for three years and requires that the fruit of the fourth year be "for giving praise to Yahweh." It is only in the fifth year that the owner can benefit from the harvest. We don't know whether this is the third year of the tree's life or the third year that the owner could have harvested (the seventh year of the tree's life). In either case, the owner believes that this tree has had time to demonstrate whether it will be fruitful or not.

"Cut it down. Why does it waste the soil?" (v. 7b). The owner has waited long enough. Judgment Day has come! Israel's history provides numerous instances where God used an axe to prune their sins. They know both the sweet taste of God's providence and the bitter taste of God's judgment.

The gardener replied, *"Lord, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it, and fertilize it. If it bears fruit, fine; but if not, after that, you can cut it down"* (vv. 8-9). The plea is to leave the axe in the shed long enough to give the tree just one more season – one more chance. Yes, three years is a long time, plenty of time for the tree to bear fruit. However, the owner has three years invested. One more year will not break the bank. The payoff could be a fruitful tree in only one year – a significant gain for one year's patience. That is the argument, but we have the sense that the gardener is motivated less by the pocketbook than by the heart. The gardener planted the tree – watered it – fertilized it – watched it grow. He does not want to lose it.

The gardener, if the landowner agrees to leave the tree another year, will not leave the tree's salvation to chance. He will loosen the soil to ensure that water finds its way to the roots. He will fertilize the tree with manure. If the tree is redeemed, it will be the work of the gardener that saves it. This is Good News! Our judgment will take place under the watchful eyes of a redeemer whose purpose is to save rather than to condemn.

The story ends without telling us whether the owner accepts the gardener's offer, but Jesus leaves us with the notion that he does. Any reprieve, however, will be only temporary. If Israel does not repent, the gardener will have no choice next year but to obey the owner. The axe will come out of the shed – no further negotiation will be possible.

Prayer of the Heart

Loving and merciful Father,
give us a heart that is humble and contrite,
may we find our way to you
through repentance and confession of our
sins.

Let us experience your forgiveness
so that we may not perish but live.
This we ask through Christ our Lord.

Amen. – (FRM)

Be a Good Egg this Easter

BE A GOOD EGG THIS EASTER and make sure your Easter chocolate is slavery-free. A significant portion of chocolate comes from cocoa beans harvested by child labourers enduring enslavement and exploitative working conditions. As Pope Francis says: "Every person ought to have the awareness that purchasing is always a moral – and not simply an economic – act". Scan the QR code to check out how your favourite brand rates? (Note Cadbury is owned by Mondelez.) Use these logos to identify slavery-free chocolate.



View the notice boards in the Narthex for more detailed information of sessions at St Anne's College!

GREAT FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT

Be Italian for the day!

LIVE ALL DAY ENTERTAINMENT
FOOD STALLS | MARKET STALLS
CHILDREN RIDES | AMUSEMENT RIDES
FIREWORKS

NOON - 9 PM
SHEPPARTON SHOWGROUNDS

29.03.2025

THE ITALIAN Festival GROUP

SISC SHEPPARTON SOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL
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John King SIGNS

For more details, see the notice boards in the Narthex!

Holy Week & Easter 2025

Palm Sunday, 13 April
9:30am & 5pm Masses

Holy Tuesday, 15 April
No Weekday Mass
11am Chrism Mass - Bendigo Cathedral

Holy Wednesday, 16 March
9:15am Weekday Mass

Holy Thursday, 17 April
No Weekday Mass
5 to 6:30pm Personal Confession
7pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday, 18 April
9:30am Stations of the Cross - St Anne's College, Kialla
3:00pm The Lord's Passion

Holy Saturday, 19 April
7:00pm Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday, 20 April
9:30am Easter Sunday Mass
No evening Mass

St Mel's Parish - 18-22 Hamilton St, Shepparton

Advanced Notice of Office Closures

The St Mel's Parish office will be closed on the following days;
Friday 11 April, Tuesday 15 April, Friday 18 April
And the week of Tuesday 22 April to Friday 25 April.

Any queries during this time can be emailed to
sheppartonsouth@sandhurst.catholic.org.au



Subscribe to Flocknote, to receive parish news & updates about upcoming events: Subscribe by using the QR Code.



Shepparton & Nagambie Mass Schedule

St Mel's

SUNDAY

St. Mel's 9:30 am
St. Mel's 5:00 pm

TUESDAY to SATURDAY

St. Mel's 9:15 am

St Malachy's

SUNDAY (1st & 3rd)*

St. Malachy's 09:00 am
*2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays
Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion

CONFESSIONS

St. Mel's: Every Thurs at 8:10 - 9:10 am

BAPTISMS (St Mel's)

3rd Sunday of the month

MARRIAGE

2 months-notice required

Parish Staff

Fr. Joe Taylor
Parish Administrator

Fr. Ruel Desamparado RCJ
Assistant Priest

Sr Pam Barlow
Religious Sister of Mercy

Carmel Zito
Bookkeeper

Mel Shiels
Secretary
Sacramental Program Coordinator

Office Address

18 Hamilton Street
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sheppartonsouth@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
www.smps.org.au
(03) 5831 2194

Office Hours

Tuesday to Thursday: 9:30am- 2:30pm
Friday: 9:30am -12:30 pm



**PROJECT
COMPASSION**

Third Sunday of Lent
22nd and 23rd of March 2025

Lam is 27 years old from a small village in rural Vietnam who faced significant challenges due to his short stature. Through the I-SHINE program Lam completed a six-month course developing his graphic design skills. He now runs a successful freelance graphic design business from home, serving clients worldwide and earning a steady income.



Photo credit: Caritas Australia

Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2025 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code above.

Or online at: caritas.org.au/project-compassion

Or by calling: 1800 024 413 413.

Commentators/Lectors/ Special Ministers

**Sunday 30th
March**

Commentators
9:30am Pauline Pettigrew
5pm Tim Kelly

Lectors
9:30am Elizabeth Holligan (L1) David Sellwood (L2)
5pm Luisa Cassise (L1) (L2)

Special Ministers
9:30am Gabrielle Barrette & Gita Kelleher
5pm Angie Knez & Erin Tanner

Support your Parish!

Help fund our initiatives to move from maintenance to mission!

"Together we do more"

Use the QR Code to access our Donations Page.



\$14,227
March Target

\$
Week Four

\$8,327
Week Three \$2,220

\$6,107
Week Two \$2,450

\$3,657
Week One \$3,657

**TOGETHER
WE CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE**

JOIN US IN REACHING OUR
MONTHLY GOAL

**DONATE
TODAY!**

ST. MEL'S PARISH

We ask for your prayers for the Eternal Repose of

Anniversaries: Giuseppina & Bruno Cavallaro, Antonio & Maria Angela Parini, Antonio & Cecilia Iaria, Vincenzo, Grazia & Phillip Vannicola, Terry Brasher



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We are committed to the
**NATIONAL CATHOLIC
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

We are a Safe Church Community. We promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all and a zero tolerance to abuse.

St Mel's Parish Safeguarding officer is Trish Mathisen. Ph: 0428 213 757

To find out more ways on how you can help improve our Parochial Community please contact Mel at **(03) 5831 2194**
Tuesdays to Thursdays, between 9:30am to 2:30 pm
email: sheppartonsouth@sandhurst.catholic.org.au
or visit our website at www.smps.org.au