

Saints and Masses this Week Tuesday 28 April – S Peter Chanel, Wednesday 29 April – St Catherine of Sienna, Thursday 30 April – Easter wk4, Friday 1 May – Easter wk3, Saturday 2 May – St Athanasius, Sunday 3 May – Easter wk5

Catholic Care Collection 2-3 May This year the appeal focuses on homelessness. Faith calls us to welcome the stranger and care for those most in need. The compassionate support of our parish helps to open doors to safety, dignity and hope. Together, we can ensure no one faces their darkest moment alone.

First Friday Exposition and Adoration Exposition, silent prayer following the First Friday Mass. Exposition and Litany of the Sacred Heart at 6pm.

First Saturday Devotions 9:30am Following Saturday morning mass we have First Saturday devotions praying for the entire parish and its members.

St Mary's Parish Fundraising Initiative The Jack Riley Gift Box comes with two 750 ml bottles of Prosecco from a local boutique winery, a waxed-cotton wine cooler bag, a gift card, and a booklet about Jack Riley's life. Each box costs \$55, with \$30 from every sale supporting St Mary's Parish. To order, please email John Bacash at info@jackriley.com or call 0411 615 202. Remote Sellers Liquor Licence 36309169. To pay, use BSB 083 004 and Account 850804443. We offer free delivery in Seymour, or you can arrange to pick up your order from the back of the church. Bank statements will confirm all transactions.

2026 Collection/Observance Details		
26 April	Good Shepherd Sunday	OBSERVANCE
3 May	CatholicCare	- Sunday Appeal

Pious Goods Stall We have lots of pious goods and instruments of devotion to help you or someone you love to grow in holiness. Great opportunity to give a gift of faith and encouragement.

The New Sacred Heart Centre for our Senior Students The new build has been longer than expected and consumed much of our time. There is still more to do, particularly with graphics and this will happen in time. There will be a brief history of Sacred Heart College to be added so the building's name has continual relevance for the College community. The Sacred Heart Centre is new, fresh, modern and promotes healthy wellbeing interactions. May it remain so for many years beyond 2026.



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH, SEYMOUR
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Parish Priest: Rev Fr Eugene Ashkar

Parish Secretary: Lorraine Nagle (Thurs)

MASS TIMES		ROSTERS THIS WEEK	
TUES – SAT	9am at St Mary's	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	
SAT VIGIL	6pm at St Mary's	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
SUNDAY	8:30am Tallarook 10am at St Mary's	M Winnell	J Devanney
MASS PREPARATION		COMMENTATORS/LECTORS	
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
C Smith	R Smart	C Smith	M Flynn C Crowe
COUNTERS		COLLECTION SUPERVISORS	
C Smith	S Doyle	SATURDAY C. Spykers W. Spykers	SUNDAY C. Spykers

Thanksgiving Env - \$522.50

RECENTLY DECEASED We pray for the repose of the souls of Richard Plunkett and of all those who have died recently.

ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH 26/4-2/5: Barry O'Sullivan, June Gordon, Tom Tehan, John Kanters, Michael Donohue, Earl Ross, Frank Nemeth, Melissa Kean

ILLNESSES: We pray for: Anne King, Brian Woods, Margaret Jennings, Sonia Willett, Rimon & Ellen Ashkar, John McMahon, Peter Matthews, Peter Gough, Colin Cooper, Milly Brock, Jeremy Stokes, Pete Dillon, and all who are suffering from the Corona Virus and all those unwell at the present time, who receive support from our prayers.

2/3 MAY 2026

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS

Sat: M Winnell

Sun: E Devanney

LECTORS

Sat: C Spykers

Sun: S Royals S Liddell

MASS PREPARATION

Sat: C Spykers

Sun: S Anderson

COUNTERS: D Ring G Quillinan

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 22)

ANTIPHON: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

(Or) Alleluia.

RESPONSE: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want

LECTOR: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. **R.**

LECTOR: He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff; with these you give me comfort. **R.**

LECTOR: You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes. My head you have anointed with oil; my cup is overflowing. **R.**

LECTOR: Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life. In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.

TODAY'S READINGS Acts 2:14, 36-41; 1 Peter 2:20-25; John 10:1-10

NEXT WEEK (5th Sunday of Easter, Year A) Acts 6:1-7; Ps 32; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12

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Gently guiding the flock



26 April 2026 4th Sunday Easter Year A

One of the most memorable moments in the Australian film *Babe* comes when the sheep explain that all border collies and kelpies are wolves. The dogs chase, nip, and intimidate. They move sheep by pressure and fear. *Babe*, however, learns another way. He listens. He speaks gently. And, astonishingly, the sheep follow him because they recognise that he means them no harm.

In this week's gospel, Jesus insists that "the sheep hear his voice" and follow him because they know it (John 10:3-4). This image does not sit comfortably with Australian experience. On a real property, sheep do not respond to the grazier's voice at all. The spoken commands are for the dog. "Come by!" "Away!" "Lie down!" The sheep move as the dogs circle them, cutting off any avenues of escape, applying constant force, until the mob are moved through the gate. It works; but it is leadership by proxy.

In John 10 there is no border collie, no intermediary barking commands or nipping heels on the shepherd's behalf. The relationship is direct. The sheep follow not because they are herded, but because they recognise who is calling them; and just as importantly, who is not. Strangers, thieves, and brigands do not get a hearing. The sheep run from those voices.

This distinction helps make sense of the other readings. In Acts, Peter's Pentecost sermon does not press its audience. Those listening are "cut to the heart" and ask, freely, "What must we do?" (Acts 2:37). Their response – repentance, baptism, and entry into the community – flows from recognition

rather than force. Likewise, the letter of 1 Peter describes people who had "gone astray like sheep" but have now returned to "the shepherd and guardian" of their souls (1 Pet 2:25). They are not driven back into line. They come back because they have learned where safety and life are found.

There is something quietly confronting here for contemporary Australians. We are rightly suspicious of authority exercised through fear, pressure, or manipulation. The gospel affirms that instinct. Jesus does not ask for blind obedience. Jesus calls for discernment and reason. Not every voice deserves our trust. Some voices do steal, kill, and destroy. Others promise freedom but operate like wolves in disguise.

Jesus, the good shepherd, does not "dog" our heels. He goes ahead of the flock rather than pushing from behind. He opens the gate rather than cornering the sheep. He leads the flock toward open pastures, not enclosed pens. And he promises not just survival, but life "to the full." Perhaps the humour lies in recognising ourselves in *Babe*'s sheep. We are not stupid, but we are vulnerable. We know pressure when we feel it, and we know when fear is being used to move us along.

Easter's good news is that the risen Christ does not manage us like livestock. He calls us by name, invites trust, and teaches us to recognise His voice among all the others clamouring for attention.