



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 20th February 2023
Term 1 Week 5

P.O. Box 2027
Ballarat East VIC 3354
Phone: 5331 6311
Fax: 5331 8337

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 Week 5

Tuesday 21st February

9.30am School Alive Tour

Wednesday 22nd February

9am Ash Wednesday Liturgy

Foundation children at home

3.30-5pm Getting to Know
your Child as a Learner -
Session 2 in the Gym

Friday 24th February

Casual dress day *Donations
to Royal Children's Hospital*

Years 4-6 District Swimming
at Eureka Pool

Term 1 Week 6

Monday 27th February

School Photos

Tuesday 28th February

9.30am School Alive Tour

Wednesday 1st March

Foundation children at home

Friday 3rd March

12.40pm 6PB Assembly

Term 1 Week 7

Tuesday 7th March

9.30am School Alive Tour

Wednesday 8th March

Foundation children at home

Friday 10th March

12.40pm 4HC Assembly

Term 1 Week 8

Monday 13th March

Labour Day holiday

Tuesday 14th March

Student Free Day -

Staff Professional

Development Day

(Structured Literacy

Partners - Reading)

Regional Swimming at
Horsham

Wednesday 15th March

NAPLAN testing commences

Thursday 16th March

Year 4 SFX Sacrament of
Reconciliation

Friday 17th March

No Assembly today

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

Our recent spell of hot weather certainly reminds us that summer is still well and truly here. We might have thought that we were entering an early autumn just a week or so ago but this week with such warm predictions we are certainly aware of the need to look after ourselves in the heat.

Last week we made the difficult decision to postpone our Year 3-6 athletics sports event. At the time we were concerned that erratic weather patterns might affect the day. By Friday we knew that we had made the right decision with extreme heat a factor which could not be denied. While we were disappointed to have to call the day off, hopefully our new date of 26th May will provide us with better conditions to enjoy the day together.

At school the staff are working hard to remind the children of the importance of wearing their sun hats at school every day. I must say, they are very good at it too! While we do have some great sun shade areas around the school I am aware that we need to explore more options in future for providing protection from extreme heat. Soon we will have new shade sails erected which will help and we can try to increase these over time. In extreme heat, we will restrict the amount of time we are outside as much as we can, as your children may have told you, we had to do last week.

Summer isn't over yet. Let's enjoy this season for the gift that it is. It won't be too long before summer becomes a memory and we are digging out the rain coats again!

God bless,



Mark Hogbin.



School Photos Last week you would have received your child's personalized photo envelope from MSP Photography (5333 5577). If you wish to purchase photos please ensure your child has the photo envelope on photo day with the correct money or alternatively, there will be an option to order photos online. Family Photo envelopes will be available from the Office. **Photo day is Monday 27th February and children will be required to be in full summer uniform (not sport uniform).**

Please find at the end of this newsletter: School Alive Tours and 2024 Enrolment Information; Assembly roster; St Alipius parish bulletin; Parenting ideas – working closely with your child's teacher this year.

St. Francis Xavier Primary School is a Child Safe School called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition. Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.

School Communications

A reminder to all parents that the SkoolBag app doesn't exist for our school anymore.

PAM does not send an alert or reminder notice to families when the school sends a new letter or permission slip to be signed. Therefore we request that you login to your PAM account on a regular basis to check for outstanding notifications, to avoid missing important event information or deadlines. We have requested from PAM Support that alerts and reminders be future features.

Parent Helping and Volunteering at St Francis Xavier

In the spirit of partnership we welcome family members to be actively involved in the education of their children.

In line with the Child Safe Standards Guidelines we now require all members of our community who would like to parent help and volunteer their time to complete our **Volunteer Induction Presentation** (link below) which includes a Volunteer Induction Application.

This will familiarise you with the protocols and expectations for volunteering at St Francis Xavier Primary School.

You are only required to watch the presentation and complete the application once.

[Volunteer Induction Presentation](#)

<https://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/SFX-Volunteer-Induction-Presentation-.pdf> (This should take approximately 5-10 minutes)

Documentation required: Please bring your Working with Children card to our Office when volunteering for the first time. You will be required to sign in via our electronic Passtab system and will need your WWC card to do this. After signing in once you can save your details with as Quickpin which is your mobile number.

You will also be required to sign a hardcopy of the DOBCEL- Child Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct on your first time volunteering, which we will keep on file. Hard copies will be available from the Office.

This information can also be found on the school website:

<https://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/community/volunteering-at-st-francis-xavier-primary-school/>

Term 1 Week 9

Monday 20th March

NAPLAN testing concludes

Friday 24th March

12.40pm 5CC Assembly

7pm Mix + Mingle at Oscar's

Term 1 Week 10

Wednesday 29th March

9.30am School Alive Tour

6pm School Alive Tour

Thursday 30th March

Ballarat Catholic Primary

Schools Cross Country at

Fed Uni

Thurs 30th-Fri 31st March

Year 5 Sovereign Hill School

Friday 31st March

Casual dress day

Donations to Caritas

(Project Compassion)

12.40pm 3VG Assembly

Term 1 Week 11

Thursday 6th April

Holy Thursday Liturgy

Last Day of Term 1

Term 2

Monday 24th April to Friday

23rd June = 9 weeks

Friday 26th May

Years 3-6 SFX Athletics Day

at Llanberris

Term 3

Monday 10th July to Friday

15th September = 10 weeks

Term 4

Monday 2nd Oct to Wed 20th

Dec = 12 weeks

Religious Education News

Shrove Tuesday: In Australia the day preceding Ash Wednesday is popularly known as Shrove Tuesday. With the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, it was the day when Christians were encouraged to go to confession in preparation for the penitential season that would end 40 days and 40 nights later with Easter Sunday. Dating back to 1000 AD, Shrove Tuesday not only became a day for confession but a time for Catholics to feast on eggs, sugar and dairy which were restricted during the Lenten fast. Shrove Tuesday became a way to use up these foods before the fast began. To celebrate Shrove Tuesday you may like to make up a batch of pancakes. Here's my favourite recipe!

Ms Meneely's No-Fail Fluffy Pancakes

- 2 cups all purpose | plain flour, (290 g)
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar or sweetener, (60g)
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 3/4 cups milk, (440ml)
- 1/4 cup butter, (60g)
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 large egg



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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine together the flour, sugar (or sweetener), baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large-sized bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the milk, slightly cooled melted butter, vanilla and egg.
2. Use a wire whisk to mix together until smooth (there may be a couple of lumps but that's okay).
3. Set the batter aside and allow it to rest while heating up your pan or griddle. The batter will be thick and creamy in consistency. If you find the batter too thick -- if it doesn't pour off the ladle or out of the measuring cup smoothly -- fold a couple tablespoons of extra milk into the batter at a time until reaching desired consistency).
4. Preheat your pan on medium heat first. Once it's hot, lower the heat down to low-medium heat then wait about two minutes (this part is crucial and so worth it).
5. Lightly grease the pan with a small amount of butter (yes, even on non stick pans).
6. Pour ¼ cup of batter onto the pan and spread out gently into a round shape with the back of your ladle or measuring cup.
7. When the underside is golden and bubbles begin to appear on the surface, flip with a spatula and cook until golden. Repeat with remaining batter.
8. Serve with butter, honey, maple syrup, fruit, nutella, ice cream or enjoy plain!



Ash Wednesday: This week our children will attend an Ash Wednesday liturgy in the Gym at 9am to signify the beginning of the Church Season of Lent.

Lent is the 40 days of prayer, penance and almsgiving as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. Lent for us as Christians is a time to



focus not so much on ourselves but for those less fortunate and those in need both near and far away. As always, parents and friends are more than welcome to join us in our prayer time.

Free Dress Fridays A free dress day is one where children can wear casual clothes to school instead of their usual uniform. We ask that children still wear clothing that is sunsmart, including hats. This Friday we have our first free dress day for 2023 and we ask each child to please bring a gold coin donation. This week the money collected will be donated to the Royal Children's Hospital. Over the last year, several SFX students were treated by the RCH and we wish to support their work for other families in need.

Why do we ask the students to share what they have? St Francis Xavier Primary School is a Catholic school and a Mercy school and this means that we teach Catholic Christian values to our students. These values are inspired by the behaviour of Jesus, who healed the sick, taught people, helped those in need and cared for all people no matter their nationality or religion. These are also the values that Catherine McAuley followed when she began the Sisters of Mercy in the 1800s.



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Curriculum News

Getting to know your child as a Person and Learner Session 2



Staff will be doing all they can to get to know your child at the beginning of this term so they can enhance wellbeing and support and challenge each child to be the best that they can be, to be successful!

An important aspect of getting to know children is the "Getting to know your child as a Person and Learner Meeting" in the Gym on Wednesday 22nd February **face to face**.

These meetings provide 5 minutes dedicated 1:1 time for parents/carers and teachers to meet and for you to share your child's strengths, passions, your

concerns, aspirations and anything you think will help your child to be successful.

If you haven't already signed up please do so. **The process to sign is through your PAM account.**

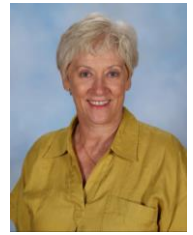
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2023 NAPLAN Preparations are underway for 2023 NAPLAN. They are earlier than in years past, please put these dates into your diary. Wednesday 15th March - Monday 20th March Week 8/9 of Term 1.

STRUCTURED LITERACY Structured Literacy is an instructional approach aligned with the Science of Reading and Learning. This year we have the pleasure to be working with Emma Rutherford and Breanna Wade from Catholic Education Ballarat who will guide us in this area. The Science of Reading and Learning tells us that a systematic, cumulative, explicit and diagnostic approach to teaching phonology, phonics, syllables, morphology, syntax and semantics is the most effective way of ensuring all children learn to read and write.

We are looking forward to gaining professional knowledge and building these skills in our children.

Enjoy the week ahead.



Jane Clark
Deputy Principal – Learning Enhancement



Congratulations go to **Indie Shillito** 2CJ and her pony Max. Indie and Max competed in the

Barastoc Horse of the Year show at the Werribee Equestrian Centre. Indie brought home a 2nd place in the lead rein section, 3rd in the led Welsh pony section and a 3rd in the ridden Welsh pony section. Great to hear about our children participating and enjoying themselves outside of school.

Wellbeing News

The school has been abuzz this week with the “Getting to Know Your Child as a Person and Learner” Meetings - I’ve had both teachers and parents comment on how valuable it is to take time to build these healthy and respectful relationships together.

As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else does! Your child’s teacher wants to get to know your child too, so they can work with you to support your child’s learning and wellbeing.

Sharing information about your child’s interests, strengths and challenges is a key part of good parent/teacher relationships; and the chance to view each other as partners in the education process builds a wonderful base for future communication and trust.

It’s important for the teacher/school to know anything that might be affecting your child’s wellbeing, for example a health condition, social issues or changes in the family, like a death, separation or divorce.

The attached article has some great tips for ways to build strong relationships with your child’s teacher. Parent-teacher relationships require effort and energy from both parties, however when everyone works together the social and academic benefits for your child are immense.

Kind regards,

Christine Meneely, **Wellbeing Leader**

Sport/Physical Education News



Division Tennis Congratulations to our 8 tennis players that represented SFX at last week’s Division Tennis at Hollioake Park. All 4 teams tried their best, played with great skill and had heaps of fun in warm conditions!

SFX Yr 3-6 Athletics Day Unfortunately we had to postpone our Year 3-6 Athletics Day last Friday due to extreme weather conditions. We have moved it to the next available date - Friday May 26th. Thank you to everyone for your understanding.

District Swimming Good luck to our squad of SFX swimmers for this week's Division Swimming Carnival. We look forward to hearing how you go.

After School Sporting Schools program This week our after school Sporting Schools program continues. The response to both programs was overwhelming so should we receive funding for future terms we will look to provide these programs again for those that missed out this time around.

Students participating on the following Monday's (Volleyball) are:

- Monday Feb 20 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Monday Feb 27 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Monday Mar 6 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Monday Mar 20 (3:30pm - 4:30pm) (*Mar 13 is a Public Holiday*)
- Monday Mar 27 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)

Mollie Arnts, Maeve Arnts, Damilare Baruwa, Elizabeth Baruwa, Mayomikun Baruwa, James Bodnar, Laura Bodnar, Meredith Bodnar, Charlotte Carter, Daulat Singh Gill, Scarlett Govan, Harper Gull, Harriet Johnson, Oscar Johnson, Oscar Kersley, Charlie Kersley, Xavier Kersley, Edward Lloyd, Macie Lloyd, Harriet Locke, Emma Locke, Jasper Patterson, India Skewes, Hannah Smith, Evangeline Spiers, Sofia St Louis, Christian Wright, Vivienne Young & Edith Young.

Students participating on the following Thursday's (Basketball) are:

- Thursday Feb 23 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Thursday Mar 2 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Thursday Mar 9 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Thursday Mar 16 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Thursday Mar 23 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)
- Thursday Mar 30 (3:30pm - 4:30pm)

Connor Allen, Eddie Anderson, Judd Boyd, Flynn Boyd, Sully Boyd, Greyson, Broadbent, Odie Brooks, Freddie Brown, Tex Brown, Leni Brown, Lilly Bye, Harley Bye, Nicholas Green, Thomas Green, Olivia Green, Eliza Hanrahan, Grace Hocking, James Hocking, Alexander Hocking, Charlie Irving, Noah Irving, Isla King, Evie Loader, Patrick Ludbrook, Annie Ludbrook, Banjo Nicholson, Betsy Nicholson, Oskar Olsewski, Myah Rivett, Jet Rivett, Aurorah Rivett, Imogen Sordello & Amelia Sordello.

2023 Sports Dates

Term 1:

- Week 5 - Friday Feb 24th - Division Swimming @ Eureka Outdoor Pool
- Week 8 - Tuesday Mar 14th - Regional Swimming @ Horsham
- Week 10 - Thursday Mar 30th - Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Cross Country @ Fed Uni

SFX Football Jumpers, Singlets & Netball dresses/bibs If you have any SFX Football jumpers, singlets or netball dresses/bibs at home could you please return them to either Mr Down or Mr Carroll.



Have a fantastic week.

Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**

P&F News

Zooper Doopers for sale on Mondays. 50 cents each.

Please see below a link to sign up to help with Zooper Doopers on a Monday. Your help is really appreciated!

<https://signup.com/go/LSiymVV>

Please be aware that you will need a current Working With Children Check to be a helper. Thank you.

Uniform shop will be open next Wednesday the 22nd in the morning 8.30-9.15.

The P and F committee are continually in need for volunteers to **help pack hot lunches**, please sign up via this link.

SignUp.com
signup.com

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Mix
and
mingle



Friday the 24th March
Oscar's (Atrium Room)

18 Doveton St Sth, Ballarat

7pm start

\$30 a ticket

Includes 1st drink free, finger food, live
music and door prize

[On sale now through Flexischools](#)

Foundation Enrolment 2024 – Enrolment Information

School Alive Tours

We are happiest when prospective families pay us a visit to see for themselves what makes us different.

New and Existing Families are invited to join us to learn about St. Francis Xavier Primary School.

An information session will take place at 9:30 am with a **School Alive Tour** to follow:

1. Tuesday 21st February 2023
2. Tuesday 28th February 2023
3. Tuesday 7th March 2023
4. Wednesday 29th March 2023

An information session will take place at 6pm with a **School Alive Tour** to follow:

5. Wednesday 29th March 2023

Event Registration

To register your attendance for a School Alive Tour please complete the Registration Form at:

<https://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/enrol/open-days/>

Online Enrolment Opens from Wednesday 8th February 2023

Foundation Enrolment 2024 – New Families

Attending a School Alive Tour is the first step in the enrolment process.

The online **City of Ballarat Expression of Interest for Enrolment form** is the second step in the enrolment process. If you wish to do so, please nominate St Francis Xavier Primary School as your first preference for your child's education.

Please note the link to the CEOB Expression of Interest form does not become live until Wednesday 8th February 2023

Please click on this link below or scan the QR code and fill in and submit the City of Ballarat Catholic School Expression of Interest Form:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>



Foundation Enrolment 2024 – Existing Families

Enrolments open for children of existing families who start Prep in 2024 on Wednesday 8th February 2023. Parents of existing families who have a child to start in 2024 - please complete the Expression of Interest form by clicking on the following link to submit a **City of Ballarat Expression of Interest for Enrolment Form**:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>



Please note this is an essential step for existing families in ensuring your child is enrolled in Prep 2024.

Assembly Roster – 2023

Friday at 12.40pm

Ash Wednesday	Liturgy on Wednesday
Friday 3rd March	6PB
Friday 10th March	4HC
Friday 17th March	NIL (NAPLAN and closures)
Friday 24th March	5CC
Friday 31st March	3VG
Thursday 6th April	Holy Thursday Liturgy
TERM TWO	
Wednesday 26th April	ANZAC gathering
Friday 5th May	6MM
Friday 12th May	Mother's Day
Friday 19th May	1EMc
Friday 26th May	3GW
Friday 2nd June	FTW
Friday 16th June	2EH
TERM THREE	
Friday 14th July	4BW
Friday 21st July	1MM

Friday 28th July	School closure
Friday 4th August	5OH
Friday 11th August	FLH
Friday 18th August	6ZA
Friday 25th August	Book Week celebrations
Friday 1st September	Father's Day
Friday 8th September	1JS
TERM FOUR	
Friday 13th October	5JF
Friday 20th October	2CJ
Friday 27th October	Grandparent's Day
Friday 3rd November	FMM
Friday 10th November	4CP
Friday 17th November	3NMc
Friday 24th November	FGJ
Friday 1st December	2GH



▶ **SS PETER & PAULS**
701 FISKEN ST
BUNINYONG 3357



▶ **ST ALIPIUS**
82 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350



▶ **PARISH OFFICE**
84 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350
PH 5332 6611
OPEN TUE – FRI
10.00 AM – 1.00 PM

19 February 2023

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Lord is kind and merciful

St Alipius parish

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballar-at-east/

MASS TIMES

St Alipius

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9:30 AM
Ash Wednesday 12 noon and 6:00 PM
Saturday 9:30 AM and 6.00 PM
Sunday 9.00 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th)
10.30 AM (2nd & 4th)

Ss Peter and Paul's

Sunday 9:00 AM (2nd & 4th)
10:30 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th)
Rosary – Thursday 11:00 AM

Mass and prayer resources

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

Counting team 4 this week – 9:30 AM

PARISH VISION STATEMENT

THE COMBINED
COMMUNITIES OF ST ALIPIUS
PARISH REACH OUT IN THE
SPIRIT OF FAITH, HOPE,
LOVE, AND ACCEPTANCE, AS
GOD CALLS US TO IN THE
GOSPELS.

WE PRAY FOR

Faithfully departed: Mary Dyer

Anniversary: Jack Gittings

Unwell: Madeleine Ballinger .
Remy Bourke, Anne D'Cruz, Ray
Gregory, Noreen Griffin, Mary
Hall, Heather Healy, John Healy,
Peter Martin, Betty McGarry, Peter
McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan,
Trish O'Donohue, Barry Orchard,
Letitia Simmons, Margie Wilmott.

*Our parish is committed to the
safety, well-being, and dignity of
all children and vulnerable adults.*

*We acknowledge this land's
traditional owners and custodians
and pay our respects to Elders
past, present, and emerging.*



Parish Priest
Fr Jorge Jr De Chavez, OSJ

Sacramental and Parish
Coordinator
Cathy Prunty

Administrative Assistant
Natalie Shannon

Parish Pastoral Council
Chair
David Morrison

Finance Officer
Kerrie McTigue

Finance Chair
Paul O'Beirne

Child Safety Officer
Emily Clarke

Liturgy Coordinator
David Santamaria
www.sapliturgy.net.au

Funeral Ministry
Carmel Flynn
stalipiusfuneral@gmail.com



BACK TO MASS WEEKEND

This weekend Fr Jorge and the parish warmly welcome everyone to mass at St Alipius, Ballarat East, and Ss Peter and Pauls in Buninyong.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Back to mass weekend 6:00 PM, 18 Feb at St Alipius, followed by a BBQ 10:30 AM, 19 Feb at Buninyong, then morning tea
Rite of Welcome for RCIA for Children 6.00 PM, 18 Feb at St Alipius
Ash Wednesday mass times 22 February, 12 noon and 6:00 PM, St Alipius
Parish Pastoral Council meeting 27 February
World Day of Prayer 2.30 PM, Sunday 5 March, Ss Peter and Paul's

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The Ballarat Committee of World Day of Prayer invites you to join WDP services in Ballarat and surrounds, including Ss Peter and Paul's at Buninyong at 2:30 PM on Sunday 5 March. WDP is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome all to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. This year our sisters in Taiwan have chosen the theme "I have heard about your faith." Let us listen to these women's stories of faith and their prayers for wisdom in the face of the political isolation that their island home experiences.

RCIC AT ST ALIPIUS

We are currently working with 14 children within our parish who have expressed a wish to become full members of the Catholic Church. To prepare them for this we are following the guidelines of the RCIA for Children of Catechetical age. It is a delight to work with them and their families and share stories of our faith while answering their many questions. The children first met late last year and will continue to meet fortnightly until Easter, when a date will be organised for them to receive the Sacraments of Initiation. Please keep these children and their families in your prayers and make them welcome at masses they can attend.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Please take home a Project Compassion box or a set of donation envelopes to aid Caritas Australia this Lenten season as they help vulnerable people around the world, now and *For All Future Generations*.

With your support, Caritas Australia has been able to assist communities to tackle poverty, food security, education, water, sanitation, and disaster risk reduction to build better futures. Together, we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow. You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available in the church foyer, by visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion, or by calling 1800 024 413.



Bishop Paul Bird CSsR will launch Project Compassion on Sunday, 19 February during the 5:00 PM mass at St Patrick's Cathedral

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our stewardship program. Your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

Collection basket – \$1,003

Presbytery and Priest support.

Envelopes, credit cards and direct debits – \$563

Parish – buildings, office, administration, grounds maintenance.

For any queries or concerns, or should you wish to join our stewardship program to support our parish, please phone our Finance Officer Kerrie on 5331 2933 or email ballaratoffice@ballarat.catholic.org.au

ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

The recent Plenary Council committed the Catholic Church in Australia to develop and commit to a culture of life-long faith formation.

For some years now, Fr. Barry Ryan and Sr. Veronica Lawson have offered regular adult theology classes. A new series begins on Wednesday, 22 February (afternoon group 1-3 PM and evening group 7-9 PM) at the Mercy Centre, 16 Gent Street, Ballarat East. This will be the first of six sessions, with the remainder as follows – 22 March, 26 April, 24 May, 28 June, and 26 July.

If you are interested, kindly send your name, mobile number, and email address to Sr. Veronica at veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au and she will provide you with further information.

EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Caritas Turkey and other Caritas agencies are responding to a series of powerful earthquakes in southeast Turkey (officially known as Türkiye) and Syria, where thousands of lives have been lost and the death toll increases by the hour. After 12 years of civil war, Syria is at breaking point and desperately needs assistance. We must act now. Your generous support of the Caritas Middle East Emergency Appeal will provide emergency relief to help people recover and rebuild from this disaster. Call 1800 024 413 toll-free or visit www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/Turkey-and-Syria-earthquake/.

BAPTISMS

Harriet Kate Whitear
Child of Jane and Nicholas Whitear

Annabelle Louise Barnes & Rose Elizabeth Barnes
Children of Aaron Barnes and Ashley Burns

The church gives faith to your children through Baptism, and you have the task to make it grow.

Pope Francis

LENTEN RESOURCES

There are a number of Lent prayer resources available from the diocese www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/pastoral/liturgy-sacraments/liturgy-resources/

RITE OF ELECTION 2023

The Rite of Election is an important part of the process of an adult who has undertaken formation on their journey to full membership in the Catholic Church community. The Rite of Election for catechumens and candidates will take place at 12:00 PM, on Saturday 25 February at St Patrick's Cathedral, with Bishop Paul Bird CSSR presiding. At the conclusion, all are invited to join the bishop in the cathedral hall for a light lunch.

MASS OF THE OILS 2023

Each year, the Mass of the Oils is celebrated on Monday in Holy Week at St Patrick's Cathedral for all parishes within the Ballarat Diocese. Representatives from each parish come forward to receive the oils which will be used during sacraments in the coming year. There is an opportunity to come together with the priests and people of other parishes with the supper in the cathedral hall following mass. This year's mass will be on Monday, 3 April at 6.30 PM.

PRAYING WITH POPE FRANCIS

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is an international movement that is more than 170 years old. Each month, the Pope puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholics around the world to join him in prayer. These intentions cover all sorts of areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope, and calling us to loving service. Praying each month 'The Pope Video' forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network – view at www.thepopevideo.org. The Pope's intention for February is for parishes: We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

LENT WITH BRUCE DOWNES

Lent is a time when we can grow closer to God and prepare our hearts for the true meaning of Easter. Be inspired, be refreshed, and be renewed! Sign up for Bruce Downes's free Lenten program and for 40 days you will receive a short, practical and inspiring video in your inbox every morning to help you make this Lenten journey more powerful and prayerful. Visit <https://BruceDownes.org/Lent23> for further information and to register.

POPE FRANCIS ANNIVERSARY

Pope Francis will celebrate the 10th year of his pontificate on 13 March. The Digital Synod has launched an online map featuring virtual candles representing people's prayers for the Pope. Visit <https://www.decimus-annus.org/site/index> to offer a prayer and light a candle.

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is asking for support to aid sisters in Kenya in building a new mother house and formation centre for their local community. Hunger, illiteracy and lack of medical provision, combined with desperately poor roads and a lack of clean drinking water make life incredibly difficult for many people in Kenya. The diocesan congregation of the Visitation Daughters of the Immaculate Heart were established to help this disadvantaged population – but to continue their work they need your help! The sisters' work includes caring for expectant mothers, acting as midwives, providing counselling, caring for the sick and looking after the elderly and orphans who are frequently abandoned by society. Your support will help these sisters to continue their mission by providing them with a permanent convent. To make an offering and learn more visit: <https://aidtochurch.org/monthlyproject>

Reflection on the Gospel

Veronica Lawson RSM

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time: Matthew 5:38–48

Today's gospel is a continuation of the Matthean Jesus' teaching on the sort of righteousness to which his followers are called in their living of the Law, namely right relationship and justice. The Law of Moses included a law of retaliation designed to make punishment for wrongdoing to persons or property proportionate to the offence (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20 and Deuteronomy 19:21). This was quite enlightened legislation at that time. In a series of striking images, Jesus invites his followers to go far beyond the strict application of the law and to embrace a new way of thinking about and acting towards those who have injured them or us.

Relinquishing your right to compensation is one thing. Giving more of your property to one who has stolen from you is quite another. Do we take this teaching literally or do we simply embrace the spirit of non-retaliation that seems to be at the heart of this teaching? A too-easy amnesty does not always bring justice. Last week's gospel reminded us that there is to be no place for uncontrolled anger or murderous thoughts in our hearts. Both that

teaching and this seem to be about taking responsibility for how we live. Harbours anger can have disastrous consequences for oneself as well as for others. It tends to become a state of being and to skew our capacity for right judgement. What happens to us may be beyond our control. What we do with what comes our way is for us to decide. Jesus makes it clear that we have choices in the face of life's struggles. The disciple is called to assume personal responsibility and to refuse the way of retaliation.

Jesus makes it clear that we have choices in the face of life's struggles.

The final example or antithesis in the list of six that Jesus offers in the Sermon on the Mount is the most confronting of all: there are to be no limitations on love. Loving one's enemies is quite a challenge, on a personal as well as a global level. We learn the hard way that we cannot change others. We can only change our attitudes and our approaches to those who harm us in any way. Catherine McAuley, the



first Sister of Mercy, wrote that her sisters "never let the sun go down on their anger". I used to wonder how they managed that. Over recent years I have found that praying quite deliberately for those who give me a hard time or cause me grief is by far the most effective way of retaining my own peace of mind and of expelling retaliatory thoughts. For me, it is a matter of gently bringing these people to mind, of breathing in the loving kindness or *hesed* of God that suffuses the universe and of breathing it out to them. Such prayer enables me to think of them in kindly ways and act towards them without rancour, even when these sentiments are not reciprocated.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS
SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
LEVITICUS 19:1–2, 17–18
1 CORINTHIANS 3:16–23
MATTHEW 5:38–48

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
GENESIS 2:7–9, 3:1–7
ROMANS 5:12–19
MATTHEW 4:1–11

INSIGHTS

Working closely with your child's teacher this year



In my work as a presenter and educator I've visited hundreds of schools, spoken with hundreds of school leaders and worked with many educational innovators and researchers at the forefront of modern education. These people and experiences have given me valuable insights into what makes great schools tick.

Strong parent-teacher relationships are one of the hallmarks of all great schools. They're a major contributor to student success. The research into schooling across the Western world reveals that positive parent-teacher partnerships are a more significant factor in student success than parent income levels or social status.

However, parent-teacher relationships require effort and energy from both parties if they are going to really benefit children and young people.

Way to help form strong bonds with your child's teachers this year:

Knowing (building affinity)

Know – the first element – requires you to be both proactive and patient. *Proactive because you need to be willing to meet and work at maintaining relationships. Patient because it may take some time to build a working relationship.* For your partnership to be meaningful and successful you need to meet with your children's teacher(s) with the goal of forming a respectful professional relationship. Share your aspirations for your child and be willing to build the teacher's knowledge about your family.

Get to know your child's teachers' aspirations and gain an understanding of their approach and the focus they have for this particular year group. Also commit to continuing to know what's going on in the life of your child's classrooms as well as the life of the school on an ongoing basis.

Supporting (building trust)

Children need to know that you are fully behind what their teachers are trying to achieve if they are going to commit fully to learning. The best way to support your child's teacher is to trust their knowledge, professionalism and experience. Avoid the temptation to question the expertise of teachers in front of students, particularly when the teachers use methods that you are unfamiliar with. Initiate conversations with teachers around methodology to give them the chance to explain the approach they are taking.

Participating (building links to student learning)

Participation – the third element – takes into account the level of parent engagement in student learning. There's a huge body of research that points to the correlation between parent engagement in student learning and their educational success. If you want your child to improve his learning, take an interest in what he is doing. Follow school and teacher guidelines about helping at home and attend as many conferences, meetings and events involving your child as possible. This simple strategy has a significant, long-term impact.

Communicating (building relationships)

Life's not always smooth sailing for kids of any age. Family circumstances change. Friends move away. Illness happens. Mental health challenges can hit anyone at any time. These changes affect learning. Keep teachers up to date with significant changes or difficulties that your child or young person experiences so they can accommodate your child's emotional and learning needs at school.

Advocating (building loyalty)

Advocacy – the last element – means that you talk teachers and your school up rather than tear them down among children and the wider community. Teachers hold very public positions and generally work hard to build good reputations both within their school and their wider education community. Consider a teacher's reputation among the community and also with children when you discuss educational matters with others.

Building parent-teacher relationships doesn't just happen. They take good will from both sides, a commitment to setting aside the time necessary to support the home-based learning tasks that are expected, and a willingness to communicate both concerns and commendations through the correct channels.

Parent-teacher relationships – long may they prosper!



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's the author of 12 books for parents including *Spoonfed Generation* and the best-selling *Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It*. His latest release *Anxious Kids*, was co-authored with Dr Jodi Richardson.