



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 1st May 2023
Term 2 Week 2

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 2 (9 weeks)

Mon 24th April - Fri 23rd June

Mon 1st-Fri 5th May

Book Fair in Library
8.30-8.50am & 3-4pm

Tuesday 2nd May

9.30am School Alive Tour

Friday 5th May

12.40pm 6MM Assembly

Monday 8th May

All children to be in winter
uniform from today

Wednesday 10th May

9.30am School Alive Tour

Friday 12th May

Mothers' Day celebration

Tuesday 16th May

Division AFL

Friday 19th May

12.40pm 3GW Assembly

Wednesday 24th May

Division Netball

Friday 26th May

Years 3-6 SFX Athletics
Carnival at Llanberris

12.40pm 1EM Assembly

Monday 29th May

Regional Cross Country at
Warrnambool

Friday 2nd June

12.40pm F TW Assembly

Division Soccer

Friday 9th June

Student free day

Friday 16th June

12.40pm 2EH Assembly

6pm Sat 17th and 10.30am

Sun 18th June at St Alipius

Year 4 First Eucharist

Mon 19, Tue 20 & Wed 21

June Yrs 4/5/6 Golf Clinics

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 10th July - Fri 15th Sept

Friday 14th July

9.30am Mass in Gym

12.40pm 4BW Assembly

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

We have had such a great start to the new term! Our special Easter Mass last Friday with Fr. Jorge was very special as we came together with members of our school and parish community to celebrate, praise and give thanks. Fr. Jorge's special blessing with the Easter waters was definitely a highlight and our children were very respectful. It was the first time that we have gathered in our parish Church this year and I was very proud of the way in which all of our children conducted themselves.

It is very important that we can gather as a community to celebrate major events. Easter is the pinnacle of the church year and we have to work hard with the children to ensure that the Easter story doesn't end with the crucifixion. The most important events in Holy Week occur while we are on holidays so to recognise and celebrate the resurrection of Christ is such an important thing for us all. In this sense, we truly are the Easter People of the Risen Christ.

Did you enjoy your Easter break? I hope that everyone might have had some time to rest up and re-charge the batteries. We have a busy term ahead so let's look out for each other and enjoy each day for the blessing that it is.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin.



Welcome Back Mr. Mullane

We are delighted to welcome back Mr. Peter Mullane at school this term. Mr. Mullane is a longtime friend of our school and known to many pupils both past and present. Mr. Mullane will be working with the students in Yr. 5OH on Friday afternoons this term. Welcome home Mr. Mullane!

Volunteer Helpers Term 2 Our Parents & Friends club would love to hear from any Parents, Carers and Grandparents who would like to assist us with hot lunches, Hot Chocolates, Uniform shop etc. All that is required is a Working with Children Check and a willingness to join the team. Please let us know at the front office if you can spare some time to assist in any way. All help is gratefully appreciated. What a great way to make new friends and to get to know our school!



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.

Friday 21st July
12.40pm 1MM Assembly

Fri 28th July school closure

Friday 4th August
12.40pm 5OH Assembly

Friday 11th August
12.40pm F LH Assembly

Friday 18th August
12.40pm 6ZA Assembly

Friday 25th August
Book Week celebrations

Friday 1st September
Fathers' Day celebration

Thursday 7th September
6pm at St Alipius
Year 3 Confirmation

Friday 8th September
12.40pm 1JS Assembly

Term 4 (12 weeks)
Mon 2nd Oct - Wed 20th Dec

Friday 6th October
9.30am Mass at St Alipius

Friday 13th October
12.40pm 5JF Assembly

Friday 20th October
Grandparents' Day

Friday 27th October
12.40pm 2CJ Assembly

Friday 3rd November
12.40pm F MM Assembly

Friday 10th November
12.40pm 4CP Assembly

Friday 17th November
12.40pm 3NM Assembly

Friday 24th November
12.40pm F GJ Assembly

Friday 1st December
12.40pm 2GH Assembly

Monday 18th December
9.30am Mass in the Gym

Winter Uniform The reason for our school uniform is to ensure that our children are identified as students who belong to the community of St. Francis Xavier. This is something to feel proud of, therefore we ask that all children wear our uniform with a sense of pride. If some students choose to ignore aspects of the uniform policy, this causes resentment and disharmony for other students and families. For this reason we ask all parents to help monitor your child's interpretation of the school uniform so that there is a strong level of equality and fairness in the management of our uniform protocols.

- Full winter uniform may be worn from Day 1 of Term 2.
- For the first 2 weeks of Term 2 we will be in a transition phase for Uniform. Children are permitted to be in either Summer or Winter Uniform.
- From **Monday 8th May** (Week 3) all children are expected to be in Winter Uniform.

Sibling Enrolments 2024 If you have a child to enrol in Foundation in 2024 at St. Francis Xavier, please ensure that you lodge their information on the Catholic Education website as soon as possible. This information will secure a place for your child but without it we cannot guarantee that places will be available.

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>
Expression of Interest forms close 25th May 2023.

Please find at the end of this newsletter: Parish Bulletin; Learning to take on challenges.

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday April 30, 2023 Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Gospel: John 10:1-10 Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: the man who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who goes in through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him; the sheep hear his voice as he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out. When he has brought them out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. They will not follow someone else; instead, they will run away from such a person, because they do not know his voice."

Jesus told them this parable, but they did not understand what he meant.

So Jesus said again, "I am telling you the truth: I am the gate for the sheep. All others who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever comes in by me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life — life in all its fullness. *(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)*

Gospel reflection: Jesus tells us a parable in which he is the gate which takes us to God. Can you remember what Jesus says, right at the end of today's gospel? Jesus says, "I have come so that you might have life – life in all its fullness."

Living life to the full doesn't mean having all the latest toys or the coolest clothes or the biggest house. It means being the best person that we can be, living our lives well and having the chance to use all our gifts and talents for the good of all. Let's live our life to the fullest – doing all that we can to be the best people we can be and using our gifts and talents for the good of others.

Our Challenge: What will you do to live life to the full and help others do the same?

SAVE THE DATE Mother's and Special Friend's Liturgy

A special invitation will be coming home this week about our Mother's and Special Friend's Liturgy on Friday May 12, 2023.

We look forward to seeing you at 1:45pm in the Gym for afternoon tea, followed by our Family Groups liturgy at 2.30pm



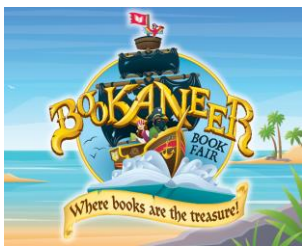
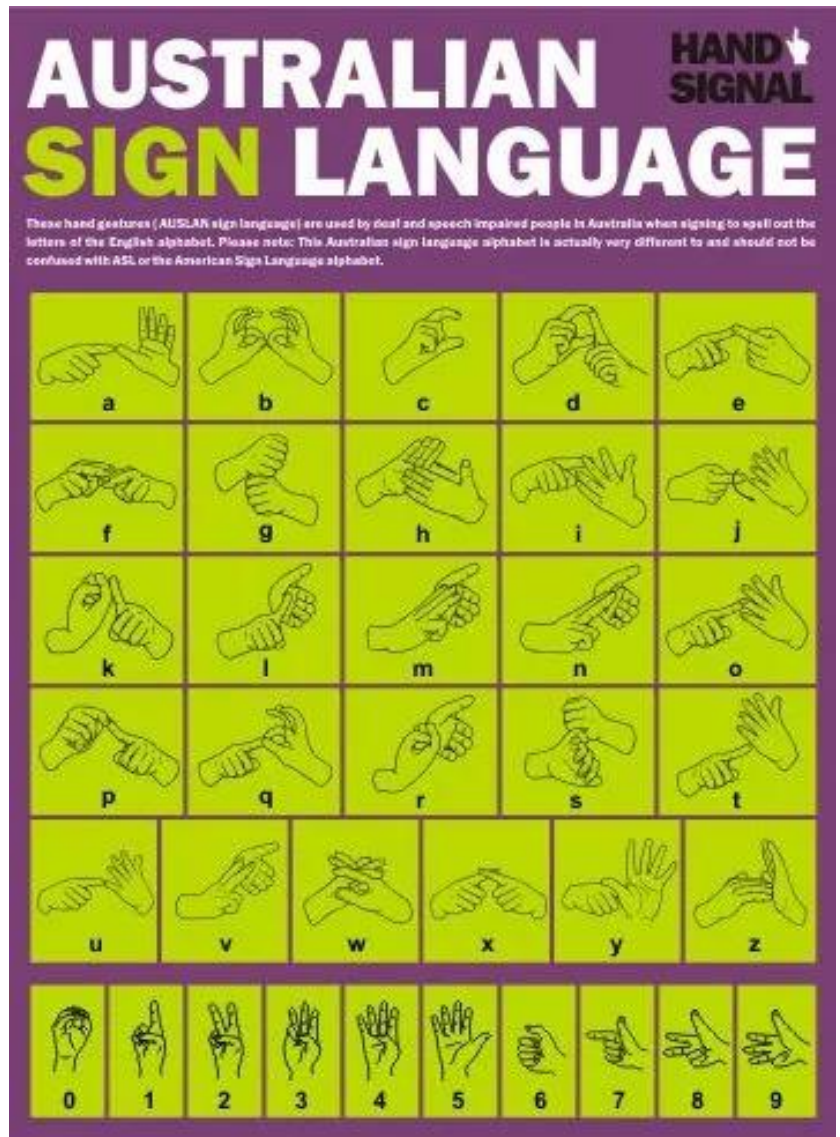
Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader

Auslan begins today!

Last Monday our whole staff participated in a Professional Development Day about Auslan. Chantelle Stacey our Teachers as Co learners Language Assistant presented at this Ballarat Diocese meeting.

Chantelle begins assisting Teachers in their classrooms this week as we launch our LOTE (Languages other than English program here at St Francis Xavier.

Please ask your children about what they have learnt words / expressions / games and experiences they are learning about. We are all excited about this new journey together.



Book Fair: We are also very excited to finally say the Book Fair is on! The Book Fair provides children with the opportunity to explore literature and select books of interest. The Book Fair is a great way to celebrate reading within our community with hundreds of fun, engaging and affordable books for the children to discover. Children have visited the library and made a Wish List.

Book Fair dates: Monday 1st - Friday 5th May
Shopping hours: 8:30am- 8:50 am & 3:00-4:00pm

Special activities: Maze activity, Word Find, Story writing, Colouring activity, Guessing Game.
Location: Our school LIBRARY



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal – Learning Enhancement

Have a happy week.

Wellbeing News

During our Social and Emotional Learning this term, we are focusing on the topics of Positive Coping and Problem Solving.

Problem-solving skills are an important part of the coping repertoire. Whether it's a toy-related conflict, a tricky math equation or negative peer pressure, children of all ages face problems and challenges on a daily basis.

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.

As parents or teachers, we can't always be there to solve every problem for our children! In fact, this is not our job!
Our job is to teach children how to solve problems by themselves.

When children tackle problems on their own or in a group they learn valuable skills, such as looking at challenges from a fresh perspective, negotiation, patience and time management.

The classroom program provides a number of learning activities to develop students' problem-solving skills. The activities in the program assist students to develop their critical and creative thinking skills, and to apply them to scenarios exploring personal, social and ethical dilemmas. Typically, children who learn effective problem solving skills are happier, more independent and more confident in their ability to cope with adversity.

Here are some tips for coaching your children in problem-solving:

- Give your children opportunities to play with others. Playgroups, playdates and games help children learn to play well together and practise positive alternatives to fighting.
- Step in with ideas as soon as you see that children are finding it hard to work things out. For example, 'Remember to share', or 'Can you think of a way that you can both have a turn?'
- Talk things over later. With older children, working out a blame-free solution afterwards will make the fight less likely to happen again. For example, 'How could you have handled it so that both of you got to use the tablet?'
- Help children find ways to express upset or angry feelings through calm words or positive activities. For example, water play, painting and playdough help younger children express feelings. Older children might find that kicking a ball or playing music helps.
- Teach and model the social skill of 'respectful disagreeing'. This involves saying something that you can both agree on, then saying what you don't agree on. For example, 'I agree that Grandma gave you the book for your birthday, but I don't think it's fair to stop your sister reading it if she asks politely'.



Attached are some more great ways you assist your child to cope with challenges.

Kind regards, Christine Meneely, **Wellbeing Leader**

Sport/Physical Education News

Good Luck Wentworth Congratulations to Wentworth Campbell (6MM) who was recently selected to represent Ballarat at next month's Regional Soccer Championships. Good luck Wentworth!

After School Netball Thank you to all those that responded to the expression of interest for students wishing to participate in after school netball at Llanberris Netball Centre this term. We have 5 teams entered for the Tuesday Wednesday night competition made up of Yr 3/4 and Yr 5/6 students. Fixtures will be sent to those teams as soon as we get them.

2023 Sports Dates

Term 2:

- Week 4 - Tuesday May 16th - Division AFL
- Week 5 - Wednesday May 24th - Division Netball
- Week 5 - Friday May 26th - Year 3 - 6 Athletics Carnival - Llanberris
- Week 6 - Monday May 29th - Regional Cross Country @ Warrnambool
- Week 6 - Friday Jun 2nd - Division Soccer
- Week 9 - Mon Jun 19, Tues Jun 20 & Wed Jun 21 - Golf Clinics (Yr 4/5/6)

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**

QUERIES: CALL DOM 0417 967 621



AWESOME AUTUMN SPORTS!



TERM 2

ST FRANCIS XAVIER PS

AFTER SCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAM

WEDNESDAYS 3:25PM-4:55PM

MULTI-SPORTS (AFL, NETBALL, SOCCER & HOCKEY)



3:25PM - 4:55PM

WE COLLECT THE KIDS AFTER SCHOOL!
PARENTS PICK-UP AT 4:55PM

\$22 + GST PER SESSION



BOOK ONLINE NOW AT

KELLYSPORTS.COM.AU

WWW.KELLYSPORTS.COM.AU/GREATER-BALLARAT



▶ **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

30 April 2023

Fourth Sunday of Easter
The Lord is my shepherd

St Alipius parish

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

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

MASS TIMES

St Alipius

Mon to Fri 9.30 AM
Saturday 9.30 AM, 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 1 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 Hall

Anniversaries: Helen Ronan

Unwell: Peter McLachlan, Sarah
McLachlan

*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.*



St Alipius
Parish Community

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
TBA

Finance Chair
Paul O'Beime

Child Safety Officer
Emily Clarke

Liturgy Coordinator
Fr Jorge
www.sapliturgy.net.au

Funeral Ministry
Carmel Flynn
stalipiusfuneral@gmail.com



WELCOME BACK FR JORGE

This week we welcome Fr Jorge back to the parish after his visit to his family in the Philippines. Our thanks go to Fr Barry for celebrating masses with us last weekend.

LITURGY ROSTER

Thanks to everyone who volunteered for the May - July roster, which has been distributed via email. Copies are also available from the sacristy. Anyone who'd like to participate 2-3 times across a 3-month period for any of the ministries, please contact the parish office or complete a '[New Members](#)' form on sapliturgy.net.au.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Parish Finance Committee Meeting 5:30 PM, 2 May, Presbytery
Catholic Women's League Cathedral Branch 1:30 PM, 3 May, Mary Glowrey Room, St Patrick's
Caring Group 2:00 PM, 5 May, St Alipius Hall

PLANNED GIVING RENEWAL

We are seeking volunteers to join a planned giving program committee. Our goal is to renew and revitalise our parish's planned giving efforts and ensure the long-term sustainability of our community.

If you are interested in joining the planned giving program committee, please contact the parish office and leave your details. You will then be invited to an information session to discuss the role further before committing. We look forward to hearing from you!

FAITH RUNS DEEP EVENT

The Unearthed event is organised by the team from Olive Tree Media who are collaborating with numerous churches from the Ballarat region to host a free event that will help uncover stories of faith in the Australian context. Media presenter Karl Faase and country music star Colin Buchanan will appear at this event. There will be an interview with artist Bindi Cole Chocka who is featured in the series, sharing part of her journey of life and faith. The Unearthed event is on Thursday, 4 May at 7.00 PM at the Ballarat Civic Hall. For more information and to book your free ticket go to Olive Tree Media website www.olivetreemedia.com.au/unearthedballarat/ or email churches@olivetreemedia.com.au

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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

CARING GROUP

The Caring Group will meet at 2:00 PM on Friday in the parish hall. All welcome. Please bring a plate to share.

VINNIES BREAD RUN

Vinnies volunteers provide bread to those in need each Monday between 7.30 and 8.00 PM. If this would benefit you or someone you know please visit the hall during this time. Please bring a bag to put the bread in.

HOLY COMMUNION ADVICE

Bishop Paul has issued the following information:

Now that the COVID pandemic is less in the news, some people have proposed reintroducing receiving the host on the tongue and sharing the chalice.

Over the past few weeks, I have consulted various people including the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Grampians Health Service, and the Head of the Infectious Diseases Department at the Alfred Hospital. These consultations have highlighted the fact that COVID infections are still a serious concern and that we can reduce the risk of infections by continuing the present provisions regarding Holy Communion.

I have concluded that it is not yet time to reintroduce the sharing of the chalice. While the reception of Holy Communion under both species of bread and wine is a fuller sign of our sharing in the banquet of Christ, we can find reassurance in the teaching of the Council of Trent that the whole Christ, body and blood, soul, and divinity, is contained under each species. So, even when we simply receive the host, we are receiving the whole Christ.

Regarding the way of receiving the host, recognising the continuing risks of the pandemic, and out of consideration for the health of all parishioners, I recommend reverent reception of the host in the hand rather than reception on the tongue.

May our Communion draw us ever closer to Christ and strengthen our love and care for one another.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul Bird

MASS COUNTS IN MAY

The annual Diocesan mass count will take place over four weekends in May.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

World Day of Prayer is observed on Sunday, 30 April 30 and is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. The purpose is to publicly fulfil the Lord's instruction to, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest" (Mt 9:38; Lk 10:2). We remember young women and men throughout our country and diocese and pray they may be open to hear and respond generously to the Lord's call to marriage, the single life, the priesthood, diaconate, religious life, societies of apostolic life or secular institutes.

OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

The first edition of Our Diocesan Community for 2023 is available in the church foyers. Please share copies with those who would be interested in knowing about things that are happening across the diocese.

CENSUS DATA

A new National Centre for Pastoral Research report provides a comprehensive snapshot of the millions of people who identified as Catholic in the 2021 Australia Census. Read more at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Media Blog

<https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/new-report-reveals-makeup-of-australian-catholic-population/#more-9486>

BAPTISMS

Jet Edward, Myah Louise & Aurorah Jean Rivett
Children of Anthony Rivett and Brooke Slater

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

Pope Francis

PRAYING WITH THE POPE

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 areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope and calling us to loving service. 'The Pope Video' forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network – www.thepopevideo.org. The Pope's intention for April - For a culture of peace and non-violence: We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by states and citizens.

VISITING PRIEST

Father Robert McCulloch will be in Ballarat on Monday 8 May and will offer mass at the Cathedral at midday. Fr McCulloch will give a presentation in the Mary Glowrey room immediately after mass and will provide an update on current events in Pakistan and beyond. A light lunch will be provided. Donation envelopes will be available. Entry – by donation. For enquiries call 0401 175 045.

ACU ONLINE PUBLIC LECTURE

The Rev Canon Dr Lizette Larson-Miller will speak via Zoom on the topic: "I am what I ritualise: identity, theology, and liturgy in a secular context" on Monday 8 May, 10.00 AM – 11.30 AM. Dr Larson-Miller is an expert liturgical scholar and is currently the Huron Lawson Professor of Liturgy at Huron University College at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada. She is also the Canon Precentor of the Anglican Diocese of Huron, and past president of *Societas Liturgica* and the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation. Her interests span liturgical history (especially late antiquity and early medieval liturgical developments), rites and rituals with the sick, the dying, and the dead, and contemporary sacramental theology and sacramentality. She holds two degrees in music, an MA in liturgical studies from St John's University (Collegeville), and a PhD in liturgical studies from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. Her most recent book was, "Sacramentality Renewed: Contemporary Conversations in Sacramental Theology" Liturgical Press, 2016. Registrations close on 5 May at www.acu.edu.au/publiclectureCfl.

ACRATH ONLINE GATHERING

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans(ACRATH) invites you to join their national online gathering "Hearts Stirred to Action - The Call of the Human Face of Trafficking" on Wednesday, 3 May. Details at <https://acrath.org.au/hearts-stirred-to-action/will>

BENDIGO REUNION

Past students at St Vincent's College Bendigo and their partners are invited to attend our 65th Anniversary and Sports Hall of Fame Dinner on Saturday, 20 May, followed by Mass and BBQ at Catherine McAuley College on Sunday, 21 May. Contact Tim Coates at 0407 403 574 or timothycoates@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE

The Catholic Women's League Ballarat Diocese Committee reflection day will be held at St Mary's Warracknabeal on 24 May starting with 10:30 AM mass, followed by lunch and a guest speaker.

Reflection on the Gospel

Veronica Lawson RSM

Fourth Sunday of Easter: Luke 24:13–35

Sheep were domesticated in Palestine some eight thousand years ago. In biblical times, shepherds would lead their sheep out to graze by day and bring them by night to a communal enclosure or sheepfold, the entrance to which was guarded by a gatekeeper. Shepherds knew their sheep and their sheep knew them. Thieves would have to scale the wall of the enclosure and watch for the chance to get away with a few of the sheep. The loss of even a few sheep was a deeply personal loss for the shepherd and the shepherd's family. Furthermore, the personal relationship between sheep and shepherd made theft a traumatising experience for the sheep. Little wonder that the biblical tradition is replete with ovine images.

In John 10, Jesus directs a parabolic image of sheep and shepherds and thieves to the religious authorities of the previous chapter. They fail to understand, mainly because they are hostile and choose not to understand. While they claim to shepherd God's people, they do not even know them and have no capacity to lead them. Jesus is, by contrast, both shepherd and gate for the sheep:

such are his identity claims. The former claim becomes explicit later in the chapter when he states, "I am the good shepherd." It follows his twice repeated claim, "I am the gate". The "I am" in these claims echoes God's self-revelation to Moses in the burning bush. Jesus contrasts the access he provides as "the gate" with the unauthorised access gained by others "who have come before" him, namely the religious authorities. They gain access to the sheepfold on false pretences and lead God's flock into pastures that fail to satisfy.

I am the good shepherd

In Psalm 23, God is the shepherd of Israel who leads the people into nourishing pastures and restores life to the depths of their *nephech* or being. *Nephech* is the Hebrew word used in Genesis 2 for the life that God breathes into all beings. God leads the people in the way of justice or righteousness. Psalm 118 sings of God's gate through which the just or righteous will enter and give thanks. As the gate to the little sheepfold, Jesus is the way into safety and the way out to life-restoring pastures. In other



words, he is the gate to abundant life. As shepherd, he monitors the movement of the sheep so that they are not tempted to stray along the paths of unrighteousness and destruction.

Finally, Jesus makes a claim about his mission: "I have come that they (the sheep) may have life and have it abundantly". This has a particular resonance at a time when so many lives are threatened by climate change and when life has changed dramatically for the whole Earth community. Abundant life for all is our deepest desire and we must search to discover what that means in uncharted territory. As usual, the gospel text is multi-layered. The images pulsate with life and energy. They invite vigilance on the one hand and hope on the other. They offer yet another way of celebrating Easter.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 2:14,36–41
1 PETER 2:20–25
JOHN 10:1–10

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ACTS 6:1–7
1 PETER 2:4–9
JOHN 14:1–12



Learning to take on challenges

Challenges are the pathway to growth. When our children habitually avoid challenges, their learning stalls. When they learn to understand, value, and embrace challenge, their learning accelerates. So, helping our children develop a healthy relationship with challenge becomes one of the most important ways we can help them become better learners.

How does your child respond to a challenge?

Does your child avoid a challenge, seeking their “path of least resistance” in learning?

Or do they select the challenges they know they can do? Looking like they are working hard, but secretly avoiding mistakes by not taking on anything too challenging?

Maybe your child takes on challenges because the teacher tells them to. They follow the teacher's instructions and are led through challenging tasks.

Perhaps your child takes on challenges because they need to. They have something they want to achieve, a goal in mind. Their relationship with challenge is born out of necessity so they can reach their goal.

But imagine if your child embraced challenges. In the spirit of John F. Kennedy when he said, “we do these things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard!” Imagine if when they were given the choice of doing something hard, or something easy, they'd choose the more challenging task, because they understood that challenge is the pathway to growth.

Becoming a Skilful Learner

How our children respond to challenges is a key element of what I call Learnership™ – the skill of learning. Learnership is a skill developed over time. It helps our children (and us) to get more out of every learning opportunity. Most importantly, Learnership is something we can teach our children that helps them to thrive both in school and life.

As parents we can help our children on the path to becoming better learners, by helping them develop a healthier and more productive relationship with challenge.

Comfort Zone V's Learning Zone. What's the Difference?

The first step in helping your child develop a healthy relationship with challenge is to teach them the difference between their Comfort Zone and their Learning Zone.

We've all heard that we need to get outside our comfort zone and challenge ourselves, but how many of our children truly understand what that means?

For many people, getting outside their comfort zone means trying something new. But something new, isn't always something challenging. Very often "new" is simply an "easy thing we haven't done yet". There is little struggle involved in this type of challenge, it comes with a great deal of certainty, and confidence that we'll succeed. These challenges feel more like a task. They keep us busy, but they don't help us get better. These types of challenges are in our Comfort Zone.

To be truly challenged our children need to stretch themselves beyond their current abilities. These types of challenge feel like a problem. Unlike a task where the path to completion is easily recognised, the solution to this challenge is not immediately apparent. They leave us feeling uncertain, and they involve struggle. The challenge feels "hard". When our child feels like this, it's a good sign they are in their Learning Zone.

Being in your Learning Zone feels uncomfortable. When our children find themselves in the Learning Zone, their first reaction is often to get out of it. Suddenly anything else seems like a more attractive option. They look for distractions, seek out easy options or adopt any number of avoidance strategies.

Struggle is temporary

It's important to help our children recognise that the feeling of struggle and discomfort that comes with being in their Learning Zone is temporary. It passes. Many children believe if they are struggling now, then the next step in learning will involve even more struggle. They believe that the further they go, the more uncomfortable they'll feel. So naturally, they turn away from further struggle.

The reality is that effort is the currency of growth, and struggle is the price we pay for that growth. The reward is that what we experienced as hard today, becomes easy tomorrow. It doesn't get harder and harder and harder. It's hard, then it's easy. Then they move on, and the next step is also hard, until they make that easy. Being in the Learning Zone, and experiencing the struggle that comes with it, is not only a normal part of learning, but also an essential part of growth.

Parenting for more skilful learners

As parents we have an important role in helping our children become more skilful learners. This begins by helping them develop a healthy relationship with challenge. By teaching them that effort is the cost of growth, and normalising the struggle that comes from being in their Learning Zone, we help them become "comfortably uncomfortable" with challenge, and put them on a path of continuous growth.



AUTHOR

James Anderson

James Anderson is an international speaker, author and educator. In an educational landscape focused on teachers, James' work focuses on learners. His signature work defines Learnership™ – the skill of learning. He answers the question: What does it mean to be a skilful learner? For further information visit jamesanderson.com.au. You can also listen to James and Dr Justin Coulson discuss Learnership™ on the Happy Families podcast episode #529 (The Growth Mindset) and #559 (How to Create Skilful Learners).