



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 22nd May 2023

Term 2 Week 5

P.O. Box 2027
Ballarat East VIC 3354
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Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 2 (9 weeks)

Mon 24th April - Fri 23rd June

Wednesday 24th May

Division Netball

Thursday 25th May

2024 Foundation
Enrolments close

Friday 26th May

Years 3-6 SFX Athletics
Carnival at Llanberris

12.40pm 1EM Assembly

Monday 29th May

Regional Cross Country at
Warrnambool

Thursday 1st June

P&F Meeting
6pm in Staff Room

Friday 2nd June

12.40pm F TW Assembly

Division Soccer

Friday 9th June

Student free day

Monday 12th June

King's birthday holiday

Tuesday 13th June

Year 6 swimming

Tues 13th & Wed 14th June

Year 2 Log Cabin Camp

Friday 16th June

12.40pm 4BW Assembly

6pm Sat 17th and 10.30am

Sun 18th June at St Alipius

Year 4 First Eucharist

Mon 19th – Thurs 22nd June

Year 6 swimming

Mon 19, Tue 20 & Wed 21

June Yrs 4/5/6 Golf Clinics

Mon 19, Tue 20 & Wed 21

June SFX Music Showcases

6pm in Gym

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 10th July - Fri 15th Sept

Mon 10th & Tues 11th July

Year 3 Camp

Friday 14th July

9.30am Mass in Gym

12.40pm 2EH Assembly

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

Welcome to Catholic Education Week! Across our Diocese we take time this week to recognise and give thanks for all that Catholic Education has provided for us over more than 150 years. From the first schools set up on the gold fields to kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and a university, Catholic education is certainly thriving in the diocese of Ballarat.

Our school certainly holds its own place in the rich story of Catholic education. Since 1902 children have been offered an excellent education at St. Francis Xavier which has provided them with the skills they require to thrive as leaders in our community. The strong education that we offer today has its foundations in the vision of the Ballarat Mercy sisters who wanted every child to experience understandings of faith, education and welcome in a school setting where the values of Mercy would guide them throughout their lives. We work towards achieving this goal today. Like those who have gone before us, we want our students to succeed in their learning as we strive to educate in faith and with a deep commitment to assisting all students to grow as leaders in our community. From the tentative little steps of the Foundation students to the strong leadership qualities displayed by our most senior students, we have much to celebrate and feel proud of at our school today.

Whether you are experiencing Catholic education for the first time, or like me can connect to Catholic education through your own school days, let's all just stop for a moment in our busy week to give thanks to God for the gift of Catholic education and for the privilege we have in being a part of it today. We have learned much from the past and we are committed to building a strong future together. How fortunate we are to be a part of something so special.

God bless,



Mark Hogbin.



Please find at the end of this newsletter Parish Bulletin; Assembly Awards; Connecting with your kids.

Year 3-6 Sports Day Are you ready for our 3-6 Sports Day on Friday? Children are required to be at Llanberris Reserve from 9.00am ready to go. Bring a coat! Parents and Friends are most welcome to come along and enjoy the day with us as we experience the fun of Sports Day together.

Senior School Netball Competition Our senior students are looking forward to a great competition day on Wednesday. Please note that all students will be required to wear the correct school sports uniform, including appropriate footwear. If your child will be wearing a beanie on the day, please aim for a plain navy blue one if possible. We are proud of our

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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 6MM 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

Mon 11th – Fri 15th Sept
Years 1 & 3 swimming

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

Mon 2nd – Fri 6th October
Years 2, 4 & 5 swimming

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

St Francis Xavier Feast Day celebrations

Wednesday 6th December
Year 4 Camp

Monday 18th December
9.30am Mass in the Gym

Tuesday 19th December
Last 2023 student day

uniform at school and we are conscious that when we take part in community events, we want to present ourselves in the best possible ways.

Winter School Uniform We have been in contact with our school uniform supplier to ensure that supplies can be available for purchase. While they have had some challenges with delivery of some components of the uniform, they are confident that all items should be available very soon. Thanks everyone for your patience.

Cover-Up Clothes With the onset of wet weather it's time to bring along your cover-up clothes if you are playing on the top oval. This is really important if we want to be able to play on the oval at this time of year so let's all work together to ensure that we can enjoy our play spaces together.

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday May 21, 2023 The Ascension of our Lord (Year A)

Matthew 28:16-20 Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to meet him. They saw him and worshiped him, but some of them doubted. Jesus came to them and said: "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. "I will be with you always, even until the end of the world."

Gospel reflection: The important part of this story was the sending out of the disciples. Imagine Jesus saying to them something like 'I've done my bit now you go and do the same'. Jesus wanted his disciples to love one another, to be united with each other, to be together and work together for a better world.

What sort of things might we do if we are united? We might spend time together, be at peace with each other, listen to each other and help each other. We would want what is best for the other person – loving one another as much as we love ourselves.

Perhaps you have a favourite book and could read it to your little brother or sister? Someone lonely who might appreciate a visit or call?

Do you have any other ideas? How else could we come together with others?

In a special letter called *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis asked us all to join together to care for our earth and for each other. *Watch this animation to find out more about Laudato Si':* <https://cafod.org.uk/education/primary-teaching-resources/laudato-si-for-children>

Our Challenge: What could you do to become more united - or 'at one' - with other people and our Earth?



Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader

Curriculum News

Semester One Formal Reports Teachers are in the process of gathering and updating data to assist with writing their Semester One reports. Research shows that children are more likely to perform better when school and families work together. Our formal reports are another opportunity for us to foster our school-home partnership with you. You will receive a formal written report for your child/ren on the last day of this term via the Parent Access Module (PAM). This report will provide feedback about your child's progress and achievement in accordance with the Victorian Curriculum.



The Semester One Formal Reports will include:

1. A Religious Education comment detailing your child's Semester One learning outcomes and opportunities in alignment with our Awakenings Core Document

2. A personalised written comment to celebrate your child's achievements, particularly in relation to their Personal and Social Learning
3. A personalised comment to identify your child's Next Steps in Learning to ensure future success and growth
4. Level of attainment in the form of a dot on a continuum for the learning areas explicitly taught in Semester One and in accordance with the Victorian Curriculum Achievement Standards:
 - English (Reading & Viewing, Writing, Speaking & Listening)
 - Mathematics (Number & Algebra, Measurement & Geometry, Statistics & Probability)
 - Visual Arts
 - Performing Arts
 - Health and Physical Education
 - Science
 - Technologies
 - Humanities
 - Capabilities (Ethical, Personal and Social, Critical and Creative Thinking and Intercultural)



National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) is a wonderful initiative supporting reading and children's literacy. The official story time book for 2023 is *The Speedy Sloth* written by award-winning picture book author Rebecca Young and illustrated by award-winning children's book illustrator Heath McKenzie. NSS is a vital campaign that aims to engage children of all ages to read and enjoy books while teaching them the value of literacy. *The Speedy Sloth* is a delightful story of **COURAGE, TENACITY, PARTICIPATION** and



CELEBRATION of all WINNERS! Spike is proud to run her own race!

Here at St Francis Xavier Primary school, all children are invited to join us in our library for this special event on **Wednesday 24th May at 11:00am**.

Have a great week.

Jane Clark, **Deputy Principal – Learning Enhancement**

Wellbeing News

Sometimes I get to the end of the day and realise I've hardly even looked at my kids!

I've basically just shuffled them from breakfast, to the bus, to sport, to homework and then to bed. Then the guilt sets in! We know connection is so important, but then life gets in the way and it seems hard to fit everything in!

Fortunately making meaningful connections with your children don't have to be time consuming or require preparation- we can have "mini-connections" throughout the day while driving them to school, standing in line at the grocery store or when they are hanging around in the kitchen wondering what's for dinner.

Find what works for you and your family -Dr Matt Sanders (Positive Parenting Program) suggests trying to spend small amounts of time with your child- as little as one or two minutes- frequently throughout the day.

Time that is special to your child might be when they approach to tell you something, show you something important, ask a question or involve you in their activity.

When these moments occur and you are not occupied with something important, try to stop what you are doing and be present with your child for just a short time.

It takes a bit of practice to really tune in but it can really be powerful in developing positive relationships with your child. (This strategy also works a treat for partners/ family/ friends and work colleagues too!)

Attached are some further ideas on how to achieve positive connections with your child.

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

Sport/Physical Education News

Eureka Division Football - Boys & Girls Last Wednesday in true football conditions, our Girls and Boys Football teams participated in the Eureka Division Football competition at the Sebastopol Football Ground. Our boys team finished with a mixed bag with a win, a draw and a narrow loss, while the girls had 2 wins and two losses. Both teams and every player played with outstanding effort, skill, determination and great sportsmanship. A big thank you to Ms Astbury and Mrs Grant for all of their help and support throughout the day. No doubt the highlight for the day was when Will Shorter kicked the match winning goal.

Eureka Division Netball - Boys & Girls Good luck to all teams and students competing in the Division Netball on Wednesday. We have two boys teams and two girls teams participating. Congratulations to all of the students that were selected to represent SFX:

Boys: Julian Simpson, Rafter Castles, Xavier Staley, Leo Thorp, Logan Warren, Will Shorter, Archer Spackman, Mitch Kane, Henry Robb, Jake Cheeseman, Xavier Kersley, Ash Norris, Frankie Hill, Abe Sosinski, Jack Fraser, Louis Britt, George Britt, Cooper Downes & Wentworth Campbell.

Girls: Annabelle Chalmers, Mia van Hamond, Ivy Pearce, Tayla Hiscock, Mia Maher, Felicity McGrath, Lola Roney, Abbie Gervasoni, Pearl Nicholson, Olivia Green, Charlotte Chibnall, Arabella Heywood, Sadie Wilson, Harriet Johnson, Sophie Millington, Lucy Kierce, Evie Pengelly, Evie Knowles, Josie De Lorenzo & Maebh Arnts.

Year 3 - 6 Athletics Day We look forward to conducting our Yr 3-6 Athletics Day this Friday May 25th. Please see all relevant information on PAM.

Regional Cross Country Good luck to the 11 students that will be running in the Regional Cross Country Championships next Monday in Warrnambool. We wish Hudson McGrath, Jed Hynes, Nellie Cheeseman, Archer Spackman, Mitch Kane, Pippa Dalton, Jake Cheeseman, Ash Norris, Olivia Green, Tayla Hiscock and Felicity McGrath all the very best.

2023 Sports Dates

Term 2:

- 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 great week.

Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**

Learning Technologies News

National eSmart Week 2023 - "Be your best self online!"

eSmart Schools, an initiative of the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, helps teachers, librarians and the greater community to best manage cyber risks, bullying and cyberbullying issues so students feel safer and supported.

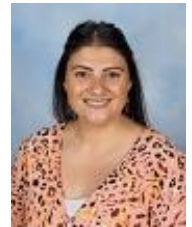
Children will be spending time in their classrooms this week learning how to become their best selves online. They will be learning about being a positive digital citizen, how to be kind online, how to report cyber bullying, and how to be an upstander.

To further support this initiative, we are asking children to add a touch of purple or yellow on Thursday to mark this annual occasion. We hope this important and prominent topic prompts some rich discussion at home with your child/ren.

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Matthew, Alex & August promoting National eSmart Week at Villa



Carla Cicchini, Learning Technologies Leader

P&F News

Term 2 P&F Update:

IGA Community rewards During the month of May, our school will be participating in the IGA Community Rewards Program. Where possible please try and support the following supermarkets, Pleasant Street, Midvale Street and Northway and place your rewards tokens in the St. Francis Xavier Primary School box. (Please note the new Victoria Street Supermarket is not part of this program as yet.)

Hot Chocolates We are once again offering hot chocolates with marshmallows for sale in the gym on Mondays for \$1.50 at first break.

We are again grateful to Inglenook Dairy for the generous donation of their delicious milk, Grounded Pleasures for the hot chocolate and So Soft Marshmallow Co for the yummy marshmallows! We require helpers (sorry no younger siblings due to OH&S) <https://signup.com/go/EQWuAaB>

Hot Lunches We are back ordering with Stewart's Bakery as our supplier and are so happy for them they have been able to re open. Orders need to be placed on Flexischools by 10am on Thursday. We are always in need of volunteers. Toddlers and younger siblings are most welcome in the gym.

<https://signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/9916281720121/false#/invitation>

Second hand uniform shop If you are wanting to inspect/purchase from the uniform shop, please fill out a slip at the front office and we can organise a time to meet you.

Parents and Friends meeting Our next meeting will be held on Thursday the 1st of June at 6pm in the staff rooms, all are welcome to attend.

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▶ **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

21 May 2023

The Ascension of the Lord
I am with you always

St Alipius parish

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballarata-east/

MASS TIMES

St Alipius

Tue, Wed & Thurs 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 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:

Anniversaries:

Unwell: Madeline Ballinger,
Maureen Herrera-Larios, Peter
McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan,
Carole Simmons, Kathy Townes

*Our parish is committed to all
children, young people, and
vulnerable adults' safety, well-
being, and dignity.*

*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
Bernadette Prestwood

Finance Chair
Paul O'Beirne

Child Safety Officer
Emily Clarke

Liturgy Coordinator
Fr Jorge De Chavez, OSJ
www.sapliturgy.net.au

Funeral Ministry
Carmel Flynn
stalipiusfuneral@gmail.com



FIRST EUCHARIST MASSES

As children from our parish prepare to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time, they are urged to attend our weekend masses. This gives us the opportunity to introduce the children to our community who are an important part of their journey. Please make these children and their families feel welcome in the coming weeks and keep them in your prayers. Masses for the celebration of First Eucharist will be held on the weekends of 27–28 May, 3–4 June, and 17–18 June.

LAUDATO SI' WEEK

Globally, Catholics are celebrating Laudato Si' Week from 21–28 May with the theme of "Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity" to mark the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' historic encyclical, Laudato Si': "On the Care of Creation", and to reflect on the progress we have made in protecting our common home.

To respond to Pope Francis' call, parishioners are encouraged to watch the documentary *The Letter: a message for Our Earth*. In the documentary, four young people from across the world tell of their experiences, hopes and dreams for the world that they will inherit. The film and other resources can be accessed here: <https://laudatosiweek.org/> The film can also be viewed on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rps9bs85BII

UPCOMING EVENTS

Liturgy Committee Meeting
5:30 PM, Monday 22 May, St Alipius Hall

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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

Collection: *presbytery and priest support* – \$1,104
Envelopes, credit cards and direct debits: *parish buildings, office, admin, grounds maintenance* – \$1,323.20

VINNIES WINTER APPEAL

The St Vincent de Paul Society's annual Winter Appeal will focus on older women experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Vinnies is facing an increase in the number of people seeking assistance for the first time. Donations can be made at Vinnies shops, by calling 13 18 12, or at www.vinnies.org.au/nswwinterwarmthappeal. Donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

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.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK

In this National Volunteers Week we wish to say a big thank you to all who volunteer in the parish. There are many volunteers within the parish who make a difference and many of these people are doing things that others wouldn't be aware of. Without volunteers we would be lost, so please accept our thanks and appreciation for all that you do.

VINNIES RAFFLE

Please support the St Vincent's raffle by buying tickets at St Alipius this weekend. The prize is a beautiful rug made by Sr Angela.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

Catholic Education Week will be celebrated from 21–26 May. The theme for this year is "Grace is the gift of God's presence in our lives". More information is available at dobcel.catholic.edu.au/news/catholic-education-week/

We pray: *We give thanks to God for our parish schools. Send your spirit to all involved in Catholic education. Grant that they may follow Jesus Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.*

ACU LITURGY PODCAST

The ACU Centre for Liturgy presents Australia's first liturgy podcast, which features local and international experts exploring a wide range of liturgy-related topics, including thought-provoking discussions on Catholic liturgy, liturgical music, art and architecture, liturgy in Catholic schools, preaching and more. Listen at <https://www.acu.edu.au/about-acu/institutes-academies-and-centres/acu-centre-for-liturgy/the-liturgy-channel>

SORRY DAY WEBINAR

Caritas Australia invites you to their Sorry Day webinar on Thursday, 25 May from 11.00 AM – 12.00 PM via Zoom. You will hear from Uncle Widdy (#36) and Uncle Bobby (#24), two survivors of Kinchela Boys Home, one of the most notorious institutions associated with the Stolen Generations. Caritas Australia's First Australians Programs team will also speak about what truth-telling and intergenerational healing means to our partners. Register at www.caritas.org.au/sorry-day-webinar

OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

Planning is underway for the second issue with the themes of Year of the Millet, Synod of Synodality, and Plenary Council continuing. You are invited to contribute and share significant events from the parish. Send your material to odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au by Friday 2 June. Photos should be sent as separate files and permission to be published should be sought from anyone in the photos. Occasionally these photos may be used in other Diocesan publications.

BAPTISMS

Hanz Errol Caguimbal

Child of Irol and Ma
Joyline Caguimbal

Harper Annie, Lilah Joy & Henry George Goodwin

Children of Adrian Gross and Amanda Goodwin

*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 May is for **church movements and groups**: We pray they may rediscover their mission of evangelisation each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world.

THEMATIC ENVIRONMENT

The City of Ballarat is developing a Thematic Environmental History to understand the themes that have shaped the city, our buildings, commerce, services, communities, families, and social activities. This will include a review of the current extent of the heritage overlays and associated policies, as well as assess new heritage precincts and individually significant places. An invitation is open to everyone to attend a community consultation on Tuesday 30 May in the Trench Room at Ballarat Town Hall between 5:30 PM and 7:30 PM.

CHRISTIAN UNITY PRAYER

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 21–28 May, is "Do good; seek justice." (Isaiah 1:17). The Australian context is "Learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, and plead for the widow." Resources for use in Australia are provided by the NCCA Faith and Unity Commission, in collaboration with the Faith and Order Commission of the Victorian Council of Churches, and are available at www.ncca.org.au/faith-and-unity-resources.

"When we stop talking and listen, we hear that the church in Australia is built on stolen land, Indigenous land, and shares in a history of racism, massacre, abuse, stolen children, imprisonment and death in custody, and ongoing disadvantage. We hear that this legacy is really ours because we have explained, justified, or remained silent in the face of this reality. When we stop talking and listen, we make space to realise anew that we have acted in ways that deny the worth of some of God's people, equally made in God's image." Rev. Radhika Sukumar-White's sermon from the Day of Mourning service, 19th January 2020, Leichhardt Uniting Church.

VOICE WEBINAR SERIES

Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV) and Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) invite you to a series of webinars to discuss the upcoming referendum on Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and the Voice to Parliament on the following Thursdays – 25 May, 29 June 29, and 27 July from 4.00 PM – 5.00 PM via zoom. The cost is \$12.00 per session or \$30.00 for all 3 sessions. CSSV and CSSA members are free of charge. Register at www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1052799?eid=1052799&. Enquiries to Kate Stilwell – office@css.org.au

MEDITATION COURSE

The Catholic Theological College is running an online Teaching Meditation and Prayer unit over two Saturdays in June and two Saturdays in October. Develop skills to teach meditation and prayer in a variety of contexts with an emphasis on silent meditation and establishing places of silence in a contemporary context. It can be undertaken as part of a qualification or for personal enrichment. For details ctc.edu.au/study/timetable/gctm-timetable/

CWL REFLECTION DAY

The CWL Ballarat Diocese Committee invites you to a reflection day at St Mary's Warracknabeal on Wednesday 24 May starting with 10:30 AM mass, followed by lunch and a guest speaker. Please contact Frances on 0458 317 815 or Carmel on 0401 175 045.

Reflection on the Gospel

Veronica Lawson RSM

Sixth Sunday of Easter: Matthew 28:16–20

Loss is part of the human experience and death is generally the most painful experience of loss. As the confirmed death toll from Covid-19 approaches seven million, we become more and more conscious of loss as a global reality. This loss of human life takes place against the backdrop of a catastrophic loss of species and of ecosystems, exacerbated by devastating bushfires and floods. Today's feast invites us to face the experience of loss in a transformative way. Over Lent and Easter, we have been remembering his death and resurrection. The Ascension draws us into another aspect of the Mystery, that of the presence of the Risen One even in his absence.

While today's gospel recounts Matthew's story of Jesus' final encounter with his disciples, it does not provide an account of Jesus' "ascension" or return to God. For that, we must turn to the first reading (Acts 1:1-11). This Lukan story presupposes a pre-scientific, three-tiered understanding of the structure of the world. In this ancient view, God is in the heavens above and the prophet Jesus, like the prophet Elijah of old, is caught up into God's

presence. The Holy Spirit will "descend" upon God's people and "clothe" them with power to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. The vertical (up and down) movement is balanced by a horizontal movement: Jesus' family and followers who grieve the loss of their loved one are told not to keep looking up to the heavens. They have work to do: strengthened by his blessing, they are to stay in the city for the present and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to continue the prophetic ministry of Jesus, to be witnesses to his death and resurrection. They have to face the fact that the physical loss of Jesus means a new and different sort of presence and that they have a role to play in making him present in their world.

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

The gospel reading has Jesus on a mountain top where he commissions his male disciples to make disciples of all nations, literally "to disciple all peoples". He has already commissioned the women on the open road to announce the good news of the



resurrection (Matt 28:10). They are to be fearless in their mission. In Matthew's final chapter, then, both men and women are commissioned to proclaim the gospel. There are other dimensions to their mission, namely, to baptise in the name of the Triune God and to teach what Jesus has taught or "commanded" them. The confidence that they need to engage in this mission is the assurance that the One whom God has raised is with us to the end of time. The gospel has come full circle. In the first chapter of Matthew, an angel announces that the child to be born will be called Emmanuel, God-with-us. The last verse of the gospel invites us once more to ponder that mystery and to commit ourselves to a life-giving gospel mission.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD
ACTS 1:1–11
EPHESIANS 1:17–23
MATTHEW 28:16–20

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS
PENTECOST
ACTS 2:1–11
1 CORINTHIANS 12:3–7, 12–13
JOHN 20:19–23

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 19th May 2023 Hosted by 3GW

Theme: EXCELLENCE Excellence means being the best person we can be. We always try our hardest, even when it's difficult, just like Jesus did.

Foundation	Jasper Rolfe and Matilda Walshe (F LH); Patrick Lenaghan & Daisy Whittlam (F TW); Zahli Kingston & Marco Pietrantuono (F GJ); Annie Ludbrook & Indi Nestor (F MM).
1 JS	Oskar Olszewski and Fletcher Hipke
1 MM	Edie Giles & Winter James
1 EM	Thiago Motta Crespo and Lilly Bye
2 EH	Byron Toohey and Ella Wilson
2 CJ	Mitchell Cycles and Baxter Steinman
2 GH	Bertie Stanley and Casey Hartup
3 NM	Lucy Elliot & Darci Prebble
3 JVG	Remi James and Joe Trigg
3 GW	Grace Hocking, Winnie Harrison
4 BW	Reuben Molloy and George Pearce
4 HC	Marli Ward & Charlie Kersley
4 CP	Elizabeth Baruwa and Hudson Shorter
5 JF	Charlotte Morris & Molly Danaher
5 OH	Emily Hanrahan and Monty Harrison
5 CC	Adelle Marson and Elliana Tocchet
6 PB	Harriet Johson and Rafter Castles
6 MM	Ivy Pearce and Will Shorter
6 ZA	Evie Pengelly & Augie Mason
Environmental Education	Hudson McGrath & Zara Thorpe 4CP , for the Excellence they demonstrated in their last E.E. lesson, going above and beyond in their researching their single-use and reusable items in their Redesign Challenge Project. Both students took a great deal of time to find out more about their chosen material, ensuring they knew the facts that contributed to it being either harmful or helpful to the environment. Bravo!
Performing Arts	Will Shorter & Arabella Heywood 6PB for excellence in focus and effort to their showcase song
Visual Arts	Hannah Smith and Xavier Uljanic for their excellent Josh Muir inspired art.
Physical Education	Flynn Boyd for his excellent SEPEP application. Pippa Dalton for always trying her best and striving for excellence.
Principal's Award	Isa Jones and Georgia Dundas for their excellent approach to assisting with Lost Property. They have identified and returned many items over recent weeks.

INSIGHTS

Connecting with your kids



Most of us get a bit “judgey” when we see a parent staring at their screen rather than engaging with their kids at the park or the shops – or worse, in a restaurant. And if a parent publicly berates their child, it often sends shivers down our spine.

Even though we are almost all guilty of it from time to time, it’s like there’s some intrinsic mechanism inside us that loads up on guilt each time we see a parent do something that impacts or severs the connection that they share with their child. We know it’s a concern and we draw back from it – and then we remember we do it sometimes too, and the parent guilt sets in.

I think it’s because connection is not a luxury item. It’s an essential: for your relationship, for your child’s wellbeing, and for their future.

What does a positive connection between parent and child look like?

Life Education Learning Manager, Lisa Woodward, says that positive connections are all about love, caring, nurturing, and safety. “In a positive parent-child relationship, family members feel safe and connected to one another.”

“It’s also about being in the moment with your child”, adds Derek McCormack, Director of the Raising Children Network. “It’s in a day-to-day setting, having quality time with your child whenever you can. Spotting the opportunities and making the time is really important.”

And from my perspective? We run our economy on dollars, and we run our relationships on connection. If there’s no dollars in the bank, we’re financially kaput. If there’s no connection in the relationship, we’re relationally broke.

There are great benefits

The benefits of positive connections between parent and child are significant and wide ranging says Woodward.

“Children learn and thrive when they have strong, loving and positive relationships with their parents and carers, and it’s the foundation for a child’s development physically, emotionally, and socially.”

Connection also helps develop important skills needed for a child’s future. “Strong relationships set the child up for success in their lives, they are more confident and resilient, better able to regulate their emotions, make friends and connections with others, and do better at school.”

Connections will change over time

As your child develops, your relationship with them will too. This is normal. “For example, your pre-teen might no longer want you around at the park with their friends, even though your child used to love playing there with you. This doesn’t mean that the connection is not still healthy and positive,” explains Woodward.

parenting * ideas

McCormack says one of the key principles of a positive connection is communication.

When your child is younger the opportunities for communication are really there any time you want but as a child grows you will need to look out for them more actively and make time for them.

"As your child becomes a teen, communication can be more of a one-way street and involve tuning into feelings and being a support for them," he explains.

How to achieve positive connections

"Positive connections are based on time together, being present, and building trust and respect", says Woodward. For example:

Make moments together matter

Booking in "quality time" doesn't guarantee positive, bonding time. We may have the best intentions but sometimes these special times will not work out the way we had intended. Often the best conversations happen in the car, at bedtime, or when doing things side by side, like washing up or walking the dog. These moments give you the chance to communicate positive messages with smiles, laughter, eye contact, hugs and gentle touches.

Tune in to your child

Tuning in to your child and thinking about what's going on for them shows them that you care about the things that matter to them, which is the basis for a strong relationship. This could be noticing what your child is doing and commenting or encouraging them. For example, with younger children it might be talking about the Lego creation they are building, or the picture they are drawing.

Nurture trust and respect in your relationships

Be available when your child needs support, care, or help. For example: giving them a hug when they fall over. Stick to your promises. If you've agreed to help them with a school assignment, make sure you follow through.

Value your child and their opinions. This could be showing interest in the things that interest them. Or listening without judgement when they express an opinion different to yours.

Label emotions and listen

Let's say you notice your child seems upset, instead of saying - "Are you ok?", try something like "I notice you seem a bit down - do you want to talk? Or maybe we could just hang out for a while and watch a show together."

In closing

To a child, love is spelled t-i-m-e. That connection helps on a personal level but also by teaching key skills such as communication and resilience.

It's important to remember that the connection will change and evolve as children do. But at the heart of it all is communication and that your child feels safe, secure and respected.



Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson is a dad to 6 daughters. He is the parenting expert and co-host of Channel 9's Parental Guidance, and he and his wife host Australia's #1 podcast for parents and family: The Happy Families podcast. He has written 6 books about families and parenting. For further details visit www.happyfamilies.com.au.

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