



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 4th September 2023
Term 3 Week 9

P.O. Box 2027
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Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 10th July - Fri 15th Sept

Tuesday 5th September

Division Athletics @
Llanberris

Student Led Conferences

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

Friday 15th September

Last day of Term 3
2.20pm finish

Free Dress Day – Footy
Colours Day raising money
for cancer

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 (Mercy Day)
at St Alipius

Regional Athletics at
Llanberris

Friday 13th October

12.40pm 6MM Assembly

Wednesday 18th October

Division Golf at Mt Xavier
Golf Club

Friday 20th October

Grandparents' Day

Friday 27th October

12.40pm 2CJ Assembly

Free Dress Day – raising
money for Mercy Works

Wednesday 1st November

Division Cricket

Friday 3rd November

12.40pm 3NM Assembly

F-2 Junior Sports Day at
Russell Square

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

We are all enjoying some early spring sunshine this week and it's a welcome sight after a long and cold winter. At school the children are experiencing an extra burst of energy as they take every opportunity to run around in the slightly warmer air.

I'm sure that you will remember from your own school days that the playground is a great leveler. The social interactions that occur during play breaks allow children to mix socially, to problem solve and to test their skills. What might begin as negotiations around the sandpit can provide rich learning for later life when we have to negotiate our way through the workplace. Not all interactions are positive and we learn from these too. Playing fairly is a skill that everyone needs to learn along with inclusion, acceptance and tolerance. Great skills for life-long learners!

As our children learn to respectfully play together we hope that they will continue to acquire useful skills which will set them up for life. There is no problem which can't be solved, no situation that doesn't involve creative thinking and there is always an opportunity to make new friends. With a sense of optimism and resilience we know that our children will be well prepared for a successful future.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin.



A Little Spring Prayer

Lord Jesus,

May the sunlight and the rain be reminders that you are at work renewing the earth. As a God of renewal, You are ever at work in our lives, too. Open our eyes and lives to the needed changes in our lives this spring. Awaken us to new life and perspective, for we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.



Monday 6th November
Reporting & Assessment
Day – Pupil Free Day

Tuesday 7th November
Melbourne Cup Public
Holiday – Pupil Free Day

Friday 10th November
12.40pm 4CP Assembly

Friday 17th November
12.40pm F MM Assembly

Yr 3-6 Athletics Day
at Llanberris

Friday 24th November
12.40pm F GJ Assembly

Thursday 30th November
6pm Community Christmas
Gathering

Friday 1st December
12.40pm 2GH Assembly
St Francis Xavier Feast Day
celebrations

Wednesday 6th December
Year 4 Camp

Monday 11th December
9.30am Mass in the Gym

Wednesday 13th December
6pm Year 6 Graduation
In the Gym

Friday 15th December
Last 2023 student day
Normal finish time.

All Tidy & Ready for Spring



Our school grounds had a much needed tidy up last week when Rob, one of our Foundation parents was able to mow our grass for us. Thanks Rob for helping us out. Another great example of our school community in action!

Student Led Conferences

Thank you to all families who showed their support for our Student Led Conferences last week. Whether you attended at school or at home, I hope that you were proud of the work that your child has been doing at school. We will continue this week as our students share their work with you.

End of Term – Start of Term

Please note that the last day of term three will be Friday 15th September and classes will cease at 2.20pm. We will re-open for fourth term on Monday 2nd October. Happy holidays everyone!

Piano & Vocals Showcase

Congratulations to our piano and vocals students who took part in their first showcase evening last week. It was a delight to see how our students are progressing with their music tuition each week under the careful guidance of Hattie. Thank you children for a lovely and entertaining evening!



Thank-you Dads and Special People

A huge thank you to the many Dads and Special People who were able to attend our afternoon tea and Liturgies on Friday. The children love to welcome you into our school!

Please find at the end of this newsletter: Parish Bulletin; Fatherhood Redefined.



Wear a touch of green
with your school
uniform on Thursday
the 14th of September
to celebrate and
farewell Mrs Page!



Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday September 3rd, 2023 Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27

From that time on Jesus began to say plainly to his disciples, "I must go to Jerusalem and suffer much from the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. I will be put to death, but three days later I will be raised to life." Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "God forbid it, Lord!" he said. "That must never happen to you!" Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone want to come with me, he must forget self, carry his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Will people gain anything if they win the whole world but lose their life? Of course not! There is nothing they can give to regain their life. For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds. *(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation®)*

Gospel reflection: Jesus is trying to teach his friends what it means to be a disciple and that to follow him isn't always easy. Jesus asks us to follow him by loving others, but it can be hard to keep on loving others, especially if they aren't loving towards us.

Saint Oscar Romero was someone who tried to love people as Jesus did. He was an Archbishop in a country called El Salvador, where at the time a few families were very rich and owned lots of land, but most people were poor and earned very little. People became angry at this unfairness, but the rich were so powerful if people complained they were put in prison or even killed. Romero stood alongside his people and continued to speak out against injustice even though he knew it was dangerous. Saint Oscar Romero is remembered for his courage, his faith and above all his great love for people who were poor. He still inspires people today to speak out for what is right and work with people who are poor.

Our Challenge: How will you show your love for others, even when it's not easy? *(Adapted from CAFOD website)*



Sacrament of Confirmation:

This week we pray for many of our Year Three Students who are receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. As a part of their Religious Education lessons, the children have been learning about how Catholic Christians celebrate three sacraments of initiation into their faith (namely Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist).

We welcome Fr Jorge who will be coming to visit their classes this week and we wish the children involved all the best this Thursday evening.

Congratulations on your Baptism

Over the weekend, seven children from our school were presented to the St Alipius Parish and received the Sacrament of Baptism. Congratulations to Orion, Sienna and Bryron Morton and to Jackson, Austin, Cooper and Hughey Roberts.



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

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.

Curriculum News



Student Led Conferences

Student Led Conferences began last Wednesday and are on again tomorrow night. There was definitely a buzz around the school last Wednesday with children pleased with their efforts, families proud to see what their child/ren have been learning and teachers in amazement of the progression of every child.

Please be sure to make your Student Led Conference booking via PAM if you haven't already done so. Our teachers and children are very much looking forward to this valuable and informative time with you!

Enjoy your week,



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

Wellbeing News

It was fabulous to see so many Dads and Special People participating in our liturgy last Friday. I hope you had a wonderful weekend celebrating the special men in your lives.

As society changes, the role of fathers is also shifting- my own Dad probably saw his role in our family as predominantly a breadwinner and disciplinarian. Most of the parenting advice in the 1980's was skewed towards mothers as primary caregivers and there was a lack of recognition of the role men played in their children's development.

Thankfully this is changing. Over the past few decades, research has shown us that dads (and other male role models like teachers, coaches, church leaders, uncles, grandpas, and more) matter- their positive impact cannot be understated.

Research also tells us that dads (and those other male role models) are stepping up and presenting a positive and active presence in their children's lives.

Attached is an article by Justin Coulson celebrating the place of Dads and Special People in our children's lives.

Kind regards,

Christine Meneely, **Wellbeing Leader**

Sport/Physical Education News

Eureka Division Athletics:

Congratulations to the following students that have qualified and will be participating at Tuesday's Eureka Division Athletics at Llanberris: Hudson McGrath, Jed Hynes, Archer Spackman, Mitchell Kane, Pippa Dalton, Nate Toohey, Jake Cheeseman, Ash Norris, Felicity McGrath, Ivy Pearce & Olivia Green. We wish you all the best in your event/s and hope that you have a great day

Swimming Program

In week 10 of this term, our Yr 1 & Yr 3 students will be participating in a one week Aquatic and Water Safety program at BALC. We wish them well and hope they learn a lot and have lots of fun. Years 2, 4 & 5 will be participating in Week 1 of Term 4. Please refer to the PAM note for more details.

Golf Tournament

Following last term's golf clinics, Tony Collier has selected the below students for the Term 4 tournament: Rhys Bell, Angus Burbidge, Jed Hynes, Evie Staley, Charlie Kersley, Nicholas Green, Billy Cheeseman, Hudson McGrath, Edward Lloyd, Alfie Sosinski, Lachlan Patterson, Adele Marson, Mitch Kane, Beau Hanson, Archer Spackman, Pippa Dalton, Stella Reus, Braxton Buntsma, Olivia Klein, Monty Harrison, Jack Elliot, Xavier Kersley, Leo Thorp, Rafter Castles, Alex Hocking, Ash Norris, Jake Cheeseman, Mackenzie Burbidge, Jack Gertz, Jack Fraser, Nate Toohey, George Britt, Ella Lunn, Zach Kennedy, Xavier Staley, Abe Sosinski, Felicity McGrath, Julian Simpson, Wentworth Campbell & Evie Knowles.

The tournament will be held at Mt Xavier Golf Club on Wednesday October 18th. More details to follow.

Congratulations

Well done to Sonny (Yr 3) & Arlo (Yr 1) who have both been selected for the West Ham United Australia National soccer camp on the Gold Coast from 17th Sept - 21st Sept. This is a wonderful achievement and we wish you all the best.

Good luck to all of the students that will be playing in football, netball and soccer finals over the coming weekends.

2023 Sports Dates

Term 3:

- Week 9 - Tuesday Sep 5th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris
- Week 10 - Mon Sep 11th - Fri Sep 15th - Yr 1 & 3 Swimming Program

Term 4:

- Week 1 - Mon Oct 2nd - Fri Oct 6th - Swimming Yr 2, 4 & 5
- Week 1 - Friday Oct 6th - Regional Athletics @ Llanberris
- Week 3 - Wednesday October 18th - Division Golf @ Mt Xavier GC
- Week 5 - Wednesday Nov 1st - Division Cricket
- Week 5 - Friday Nov 3rd - F - 2 Junior Sports Day @ Russell Square
- Week 7 - Friday Nov 17th - SFX Yr 3 -6 Athletics Day @ Llanberris

If your child has achieved recent sporting success or a significant sporting achievement, please feel free to contact myself, Nev Down or your child's classroom teacher so that we can celebrate and commend their efforts.

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 marvellous week.



Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**



Indigenous Literacy Day celebrates and promotes the revitalisation and preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages now and for future generations of Indigenous children.

This year we will be celebrating 'Indigenous Literacy Day' at St Francis Xavier Primary School with classes invited to join a live event. You may like to join the live stream with your little people, broadcast live at 10:30am on Wednesday 6th September, or watch it later once it is available on-demand until the end of 2023.

On Thursday 7th September we are pleased to announce that Aunty Joy Oldaker will be visiting our school library, to read some of this year's shortlisted First Nations themed books from The Children's Book Council of Australia's 2023 Awards to our Junior School.

Please see the live stream event details below:

2023 Indigenous Literacy Day

Celebrating Stories, Cultures and Languages

REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN

Wednesday 6 September 2023

Please click [here](#) for Indigenous Literacy Day banners, tiles and posters.

REGISTER here: [Indigenous Literacy Day \(sydneyoperahouse.com\)](https://indigenousliteracyday.com.au/sydneyoperahouse)

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) is proud to present a 15-minute film celebrating Indigenous Literacy Day with stories and songs from remote Communities, hosted by the Sydney Opera House.

Following the film, viewers are invited to stay online for a 45-minute livestream celebration directly from the Sydney Opera House, with a star-studded team of ILF Ambassadors - Jessica Mauboy, Justine Clarke, Gregg Dreise, Josh Pyke and more!

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THE FILM

"Would you cuddle up with a jurru? Do you have a tjikiwan dog at home? And what would you do if you saw a sneaky Kyemba?" asks ILF ambassador Jessica Mauboy.

Jump on a virtual plane to Barunga in the Northern Territory, Rubibi (Broome) in north Western Australia and Weipa on the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, to find out!

This is your chance to journey across the country into First Nations storytelling and learn some new words in Kriol, Yawuru and Thaynakwith languages.

You'll join a group of young, talented songwriters with their ILF mentor Justine Clarke, for a special performance of their song, Shordi Krik, at the Barunga Festival in the Northern Territory. Find out why life is sweet at Shordi Krik.



Jacinta Molloy & Sarah Page
RAP Leaders



SFX Official School Beanies

Our stylish and warm official SFX school beanies are here!! Available to purchase from the office for \$25 while stocks last, then available from Crocker's Ballarat.

Second Hand Uniform Shop We currently have a large supply of second-hand items available for purchase. If you would like to check what is in stock and buy, please call into the front office. New items are available to buy from Crockers.



Did you know we pack out over 10,000 hot lunches a year for our little people, make almost 3,000 cups of Hot Chocolate and cut the tops off even more Zooper Doopers! Now we need YOUR HELP! VOLUNTEERS are the life line of the P&F!

It could be Mothers, Fathers, Aunts, Grandparents, Uncles - even your neighbour, (as long as you have a working with children check) you can help us support our school community!

Sparing 45 minutes even just ONCE throughout the year on a FRIDAY from 11.15am to 12pm packing hot lunches or a MONDAY for hot chocolates 10.30-11.30 would make a massive difference.

If you have ever wondered what we do and a little unsure how you could help, feel free to get in touch with the P&F.





▶ **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

3 September 2023

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

My soul is thirsting for you

St Alipius

parish

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

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

MASS TIMES

St Alipius

Mon, Tue, Wed, Thur, Fri 9.30 AM in
the Parish Hall

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 5 this week – 9:30 AM

Our Parish is committed to
the safety, well-being and
dignity of all children, young
people, and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge the
traditional owners and
custodians of this land and
pay our respects to their
elders, past, present, and
emerging.

WE PRAY FOR

Faithfully departed:

Anniversaries:

Unwell: Peter McLachlan,
Sarah McLachlan, Eleanor
McMahon, Colin McKenzie,
Patricia Murry, Carole
Simmons, Shelley Pawang

PARISH TEAM

Parish Priest

Fr Jorge Jr De Chavez, OSJ

Visiting Priest

Fr Barry Ryan

Sacramental and Parish Coordinator

Cathy Prunty

Administrative Assistant

Natalie Shannon

Finance Officer

Bernadette Prestwood

Child Safety Officer

Emily Clarke

PARISH VISION

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.

PARISH MISSION

Our mission in the Parish of St Alipius
is to actively engage and serve our
combined communities, embodying
the teachings of the Gospel.
Strengthened in the spirit of faith,
hope, love acceptance and Mercy, we
strive to foster a welcoming and
inclusive environment. Guided by
God's call to service, we aim to build
strong connections, provide spiritual
nourishment, promote social justice,
and offer support to individuals and
families in their journey of faith.
Through our dedicated interactions,
we seek to deepen our relationships
with God, inspire transformation, and
make a positive impact in the lives of
those we encounter, spreading God's
love and compassion to all.



SOCIAL GATHERING

Do you enjoy a night out? Do you like a nice meal with good company? If your answer to these questions is yes, then join us at 6:00 PM on Wednesday 13 September at the Golden Point Hotel in Main Road. The Parish has booked a space and invites everyone to come together on this night. Names will need to be to the office by no later than Monday 4 September to allow for an accurate booking. Anyone who would like to attend, but needs transport, please don't hesitate to contact the parish office as we will organise the transport for you. Looking forward to another great gathering.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Parish dinner at Golden Point Hotel
6:00 PM, Wednesday 13 September, 639 Main Road

CLERGY SUPPORT FUND

This weekend is the annual Ballarat Clergy Support Fund: Collection for Sick and Retired Priests. Creating a secure retirement future for the priests of the diocese is a duty and care in which we can all participate. Seventeen retired priests are currently supported by this fund. Some live privately, some are retired in units in Ballarat or elsewhere, and others live in supported accommodation. Contributions over \$2.00 are tax-deductible. Caring for those who care for us is the Church community's responsibility.



STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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

Supporting our parish priests	\$942
Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc.	\$433.20

Thanks to all who participate in the stewardship program for your contributions. We invite anybody who would like to join the program to please contact the parish office.

PIETY STALL

The piety stall has a range of cards and gifts suitable for Confirmation all at very affordable prices.

LITURGY ROSTER

The St Alipius liturgy roster for the October and November is being prepared. If you would like to volunteer for any of the following roles, please contact the Parish office: Altar servers, Special ministers, Readers, Welcomers, Sacristans, PowerPoint Operators, and/or taking up the Offertory gifts. If you're already on the roster and will be unavailable for any weeks during October and November, please let the office know.

CONFIRMATION

Several children are currently preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. These children have been welcomed to masses on recent weekends and are preparing at home with their families. Please pray for these children as they prepare to be confirmed at liturgies this week.

MERCY CHAPTER GATHERING

The Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Chapter would be grateful for your prayer, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, during the coming weeks as they gather for their Chapter – a time of evaluating the past and planning for the future. Venerable Catherine McAuley, pray for us.

SEASON OF CREATION

Every year from 1 September – 4 October, Catholic Earthcare Australia (Caritas and the Australian Bishops Conference) joins with Christian communities globally to celebrate the Season of Creation, to celebrate the gift of our common home. The theme for 2023 is "Let Justice and Peace Flow", drawing on the river imagery of in Amos 5:24. It challenges us to act for ecological justice, creating change and speaking out with communities most impacted by rising sea levels, biodiversity loss and other consequences of climate change. Resources for the Season of Creation are available from the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/catholic-earthcare-ballarat-diocese/season-of-creation-2023/

ONLINE LAUNCH



Caritas Australia will host an online launch of the Season of Creation on Monday, 4 September from 6.00 PM – 7.00 PM offering participants an enriching and informative experience through its Catholic Earthcare program. Scan the QR code or visit www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1086036 for details and registration information.

TOILETRIES COLLECTION

Our local Vinnies are collecting toiletries for people in need. Please donate soap, toothpaste, or other toiletries, in the box on the Vinnies' stall. Anything you can give will be provided to someone who will greatly appreciate it.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

St Vincent de Paul, Ballarat East needs your help. Can you spare a few hours a week to assist those in need? If so, please leave your details with the Parish Office.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS

The latest edition of 'Australian Catholics' is available now in the foyers of our churches. Please take a copy to read and learn more about what's happening in various parts of our Diocese.

BAPTISMS

Orion Claude, Byron Robert
& Sienna Jean Morton
Children of Robert and Louise Morton

Jackson Tyler, Austin Ronald,
Hughy Matthew & Cooper James Roberts
Children of Greg Roberts and Louise Roberts

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

DIOCESAN ENEWS



The latest edition of e-News has been published. Scan or click the QR code to access. Subscribe to receive future e-News editions straight to your email via:

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/

VOICE CONVERSATIONS

A kitchen table conversation is a wonderful opportunity to join with others and listen, learn, and reflect on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum that will be held in the coming months. Online sessions will be held on 29 August, 11 September, and 28 September from 3.30-4.45 PM via Zoom. More information and registration details are available from

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/pastoral/aboriginal-catholic-ministry/

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.

Pope's intention for September – **For people living on the margins:** We pray for those persons living on the margins of society, in inhumane life conditions. May they not be overlooked by institutions and never considered of lesser importance. Lord, hear us.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

The Australian bishops' have launched the 2023-2024 Social Justice Statement, "Listen, Learn, Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples". Copies of the statement and resources are available from the diocesan website:

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/social-justice/social-justice-statement/

PRAYER FOR FATHERS DAY

God of kindness and compassion, we are your children, and you are Father to us all. We pray for all men who reflect your fatherly example: Those who are dads and grandads; step-dads, foster dads, godfathers and fathers-in-law; those who embrace their role as father; those who struggle with being fathers; those who are distanced from their children; those who have passed from this world; those who are coaches, leaders and mentors; those who are elders and wisdom-men of our communities. Give them all strength, comfort and peace.

SYNOD WEBINAR



The Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform, Yarra Theological Union and Garratt Publishing present "Synod on Synodality: Room for everyone in our Church" to be held on Thursday, 14

September 14 at 7.00 PM via Zoom. Leading the discussion is one of the ACBC's representatives at the Synod, Shane Mackinlay, Bishop of Sandhurst. For more details and to register, scan or click the QR code. This a free event. The convocation will be recorded and made available the week following the event. You must be registered to receive the link to the video.

Embracing the Pain

Gospel reflection by Veronica Lawson RSM

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time: Matthew 16:21–27

Most of us know leaders who take themselves a bit too seriously. Some confuse their role or title with their significance in the scheme of things. Some look for privilege and an easy life, forgetting that leadership of anything worthwhile involves hard work, misunderstanding and opposition.

The first part of today's gospel story presents Peter, who has just been declared the foundation rock of the church and given the "keys" of the kingdom or empire of the heavens, refusing to accept that Jesus' mission will involve suffering, even death.

The reader is confronted in this story with the expansive rock face at Caesarea Philippi and invited to consider the friable properties of the seemingly indestructible rock. Even rocks can be reduced to sand or gravel and a humbler mode of being.

For all its seriousness, there is something quite comical about this gospel story. Peter actually reprimands Jesus. Jesus then sets him straight in no uncertain terms. The "rock" becomes the leader of the opposition, a serious obstacle to God's purposes, a stumbling block. He is ordered back to the place where disciples properly belong, namely "behind" Jesus, "following" him.

Matthew provides a striking contrast in this section of the gospel between Peter who "rebukes" Jesus and Justina, the Canaanite woman, who respectfully and persistently implores Jesus to see from a new perspective. Peter receives a decisive rebuttal, while the woman's plea is heard, and she is praised for her great faith.

*Jesus is the teacher, and
the disciples are the
students*

Peter's impetuous outburst provides the trigger for Jesus to invite his disciples to think about what they really want.

Jesus is the teacher, and the disciples are the students who have accepted the invitation to follow him. That means living out in their lives the pattern of his life. If they want to be his followers, then they have to embrace the pain involved in his relentless program of teaching and of healing the sick and broken hearted.

They will also share the "glory". If they choose to put their own interests first, then they will surely lose themselves. It is ultimately a question of choosing life.



Peter forgets this for a while and has to be reminded to be true to what he has previously professed.

He is not very different from the rest of us. We too need to rethink our choices and to reorder our priorities from time to time if we want to find life.

September 1 was the World Day of Prayer for Creation. Our church, along with other churches, celebrates September 1 to October 4 (Feast of St Francis of Assisi) as a Season of Creation.

At a time when life on our planet is seriously endangered, we might attend more closely to the urgent gospel challenge of living in ways that help to sustain the life of the Earth community. We bring into our celebration those affected by the climate crisis and we pray for the insight to live in right relationship with all that is.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS
22ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
JEREMIAH 20:7–9
ROMANS 12:1–2
MATTHEW 16:21–27

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS
23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
EZEKIEL 33:7–9
ROMANS 13:8–10
MATTHEW 18:15–20



DR JUSTIN COULSON

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Fatherhood Redefined

Dads of all kinds are important contributors to families. Biological fathers, step-fathers, legal guardians, foster-fathers, grandfathers, even close family friends acting as faux fathers can all perform important roles in families. There is even a YouTuber who acts as “Dad” to 4.6 million subscribers, who turn to him for “Dadvice” about everything from how to shave a beard to how to inflate a tubeless wheelbarrow tire.

However, the benefits of having a present and involved dad go far beyond having someone around to teach wheelbarrow maintenance. In fact, Harvard family scholars Marc Grau Grau and Hannah Riley Bowles state that “The importance of engaged fatherhood is now undismissable in ways it was not in earlier decades.”

Fathers are not like mothers. Fathers parent in unique ways, which offers unique and important benefits to their families and children.

Here’s a few things dads can do to be uniquely helpful:

Take paternity leave

Fathers who take paternity leave, especially if they take at least two weeks, are significantly more likely to dedicate their time to childcare and housework, not only during their leave period, but at least until the child is two to three years old!

Be present

It seems simple, but remember that having a present father in the home is a protective factor for reducing anti-social behaviour in boys, and reducing teen pregnancy, depression, and early sexual activity in girls

Share the load

It’s highly likely that the distribution of childcare and housework tasks isn’t as even as you might like to believe it is. By stepping up and sharing the load, fathers can help close the gender gap even further, model for their children how healthy relationships function, and set expectations for their children’s future relationships.

Play

Dads play in unique ways, particularly by encouraging risk taking and exploration. The sort of vigorous, stimulating rough-housing play that dads are so great at predicts enhanced social competence, while decreasing externalising and internalising behaviour problems.

Read to the kids

Reading books together, telling stories, and singing songs to the kids are all important forms of cognitive stimulation which have established benefits for improving literacy outcomes in children. Interestingly, these benefits are more pronounced when dad does the storytelling.

Talk with the kids

Dads also engage in a unique communication style with their kids. Fathers seem more likely to use bigger words when they speak to their children. Mums keep it simple. Both forms of communication are valuable for kids, but this report from the American Academy of Pediatrics points out data showing that "at 3 years of age, father-child communication was a significant and unique predictor of advanced language development in the child but mother-child communication was not."

Engage in discipline

To discipline means to instruct, teach, and guide. Parents can effectively discipline their kids by setting limits in a way that explores what's going on, explains our reasoning for desired behaviour, and empowers kids to problem solve and come up with reasonable ways forward. Fathers are typically more authoritarian than mothers, so may need to work harder to move away from coercive and punitive discipline methods.

There's so many other things dads can do to be excellent fathers. But... here's the vital thing:

Fatherhood matters. Period. Even if dad is not in the family home. Even if dad is not married or together with mum. Even when it's not part of the 'package' deal. (Which is, by the way, ideal... but the world is far from perfect.)

In Australia, there are more than 1 million single parent families, and 86% of those families are mother-led. Additionally, data from the US suggests that 27% of non-resident fathers don't see their kids at all. That is a lot of kids who are growing up with absent fathers.

Living away from the kids does not mean that a father can't provide them with the benefits of being involved. This meta-analysis of 52 studies finds clear support that non-resident fathers can still have a positive impact on their children's academic achievement, behavioural adjustment, and emotional well-being. Being involved matters. Having a positive father-child relationship matters. Taking an interest in child-related activities matters. Spending time with the kids matters.

Mothers are not fathers. Mothers can't fill in for absent fathers; they can't provide their children with all the benefits that come from having involved and present fathers in their lives.

And fathers are not mothers. They don't parent in the same way. Instead, they provide unique, important contributions to their families; contributions that should not be dismissed or devalued.



AUTHOR

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