



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 4th December 2023
Term 4 Week 10

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Term 4

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Tues 5th & Wed 6th Dec
Year 4 Cave Hill Creek Camp

Thursday 7th December
6pm Community Christmas
Gathering

Monday 11th December
9.30am Mass in the Gym

Wednesday 13th December
6pm Yr 6 Graduation in Gym

Friday 15th December
Last 2023 student day
3.20pm finish

Wednesday 31st January
First 2024 student day

Tuesday 20th February
9.30am Open Day/School
Alive Tour

Tuesday 27th February
9.30am Open Day/School
Alive Tour

Wednesday 6th March
9.30am Open Day/School
Alive Tour

Wednesday 27th March
9.30am & 6pm Open
Day/School Alive Tour

Dear families,

It certainly is time now to start preparing for Christmas! The children are all chatting about this special season and our classrooms are beginning to look like Christmas is just around the corner, which it is.

If you are around our school in the coming weeks, please feel welcome to drop into the Chapel for a moment of quiet prayer or reflection.

Sometimes a moment of quiet in a busy day can be its own special gift at this time of year.

In our chapel we have the beautiful nativity scene which was made for us many years ago by a great friend of our school, Mr. Henk De Jong and it really is a reminder of what Christmas is all about. Who knows? It might even provide inspiration for your children to make their own nativity scene at home.



God bless,



Mark Hogbin

It's Advent!

The Catholic Church officially began the season of **Advent** on Sunday. Advent is the time when we begin to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ. All classrooms will be

talking about Advent over the coming weeks and many will have an Advent Wreath. If you are planning on having an Advent calendar at home, remember to think about what we are really celebrating as we open up a new window each day. It is also a great idea to try to do something special which can show the true spirit of Christmas - the love of Jesus- to the world e.g. children could set the table without being asked, do a special kind deed for someone who needs it, leave a note for someone telling them how much they are appreciated, etc. Have a wonderful time celebrating this magical season!

An Advent Prayer

Creator God, we hear the glad sounds around us of people preparing for the coming of Jesus. We thank you, Jesus, for coming each year in a special way. During this month, everyone seems more loving and kind. Through prayers, help us to keep this feeling of joy all year long. God has sent you to us to know, to love and to serve you. If sometimes we forget, please help us. Amen.



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.

Transition Day

Thanks to our staff and students for such a positive Transition Day last week. The children were very excited to learn of their new class teachers and class mates. It certainly was a day of positive energy! With all classes set now for 2024, we are looking forward to a great year ahead.

Christmas Carols

We are hoping for better weather to enjoy our traditional Christmas Carols evening on Thursday at school. The food vans will be ready to commence selling food from 5.00pm and the carols will commence at 6.00pm. We expect that the evening will conclude by 8.00pm. See you there!

News from the Stork!

Congratulations to Ms. Brigid Ginnane-Smith on the safe arrival of baby Montgomery Jack Mortimer! Baby Monty entered the world on Wednesday 29th November and is already keeping his big sister Maggie entertained. Great news!



Congratulations Ms. Caitie!

Congratulations to Ms. Caitie who was married on the weekend! We wish Caitie and Patrick all the very best for a future filled with love and happiness.

Staff at St. Francis Xavier School, 2024

We are delighted to announce that the staff at our school next year will be as follows:

Classroom Teachers

Foundation: Ms. Lindy Harty, Mr. Tom Willmott, Ms. Megan Mullane, Ms. Gemma Johnson

Year 1: Ms. Jessie Simpson, Ms. Estelle McLean, Ms. Mikhaela Vranesic

Year 2: Ms. Rose Russell, Ms. Caitlyn Jans, Ms. Jacqui Stahl

Year 3: Ms. Jess Van Gaans, Ms. Carla Watson, Ms. Bec Warr, Ms. Stephanie Downey

Year 4: Mr. Michael Lawlor, Ms. Georgia Hudson, New Teacher

Year 5: Ms. Cynthia Cook, Mr. Mathew Manz, Ms. Julia Walker

Year 6: Ms. Petra Barclay, Mr. Michael Marshall, Ms. Zoe Astbury

Specialist Teachers

Visual Arts: Ms. Jacinta Molloy

Performing Arts: Mr. Dan West

Physical Education: Mr. Neville Down

Environmental Education: Ms. Olivia Hayward

Technology: Mr. Jack Ferguson

Support Teachers: Ms. Elisha Martin, Mr. Peter Mullane, Ms. Nicki McGannon

Learning Support Officers

Ms. Jacinta Waller, Ms. Bianca Tocchet, Ms. Leah Hanrahan, Ms. Karen Nunn, Ms. Brooke Van Hammond,

Ms. Grace Turner, Ms. Zoe Polkinghorne, Ms. Andrea Grant, Mr. Shaun Carroll, Mr. Liam Canny, Ms. Kath Boyd

Administration Staff: Ms. Maureen McLean, Ms. Anita Houlihan, Ms. Jodie Butler, Ms. Sue Shuttleworth

Business Manager: Ms. Kerrie McTigue

Religious Education Leader: Ms. Christine Meneely

Structured Literacy Leader: Ms. Emma Hancock

Learning Diversity Leader / Deputy Principal: Ms. Jayne Mohr

Learning Enhancement Leader / Deputy Principal: Ms. Jane Clark

Principal: Mr. Mark Hogbin

Farewell Staff

At the conclusion of the school year we will say goodbye to some long standing and highly regarded staff members. We wish Ms. Ann Howard (Retirement), Ms. Cath Pearson (Long Service Leave), Ms. Belinda Wrigley (Secondment to IEU) and Ms. Hayley Quinlan (contracted staff) all the very best for their future endeavours. We will certainly miss your presence in our school and we look forward to hearing of your future adventures. Thank you all for the gift you have been to Saint Francis Xavier school.



End of Year Procedures

Classes will conclude for the 2023 school year on **Friday 15th December at 3.20pm**. This will be the last day of classes for all students. Happy Holidays!

Start of Year Procedures

The 2024 school year will commence for all students on **Wednesday 31st January**. This is the first day of term 1 and we look forward to welcoming everyone back on this day.



Our resident duck 'Quack Quack' is looking for a temporary home over the Christmas holidays and would love a vacation and maybe some company over the break. Alternatively, we would need a roster of helpers to come and see Quack Quack on a regular basis to feed and water him as well as keep the pond full.

Did you know we also have 3 goats? They are happily living in the paddocks surrounding our school, but it is time for them to find a new

home and we are looking for someone to adopt them.

If anyone is able to assist with either the care of Quack Quack or to adopt our goats, we would love to hear from you as soon as possible so we can make arrangements.



Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday December 3, 2023 First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Gospel: Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said, "Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It will be like a man who goes away from home on a journey and leaves his servants in charge, after giving to each one his own work to do and after telling the doorkeeper to keep watch. Be on guard, then, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming — it might be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or at sunrise. If he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. What I say to you, then, I say to all: watch!" *(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)*

Gospel reflection:

Advent is a time when we especially think about getting ready to welcome Jesus and we remember his birth at Christmas.

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks us to look out and keep our eyes open for what is happening around us.

Do we sometimes see people who need our help? People who are lonely? People who are sad? People who do not feel well?

What do you think Jesus would like us to do when we see people who are sad, lonely, poor or sick?

Our Challenge: What will you do next time you see or hear about someone who needs your help? How will you make sure you are ready for Jesus when he comes again?

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End of Year Celebration Mass
Monday December 11 @ 9.30am in the Gym

All families, friends and community members are welcome to join us as we celebrate the end of the 2023 school year with Eucharist. We will also be farewelling our Parish Priest Father Jorge as he is moving to take up an appointment in Western Australia.



What an amazing history!

After much searching we found our antique nativity set (it was stored carefully in a very safe place!) This gorgeous set was made by past St Alipius parishioner and school supporter Henk de Jong. Henk was born in Holland in the 1930's and was largely self-taught in the art of leadlight. He donated this special piece to the school so all children could share in the joy of the lead up to Christmas.

We have assembled this beautiful vintage piece in our school chapel as we celebrate the season of Advent. All community members are welcome to pop into the chapel and take a quiet moment out from our increasingly busy lives.



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Assessment & Reporting – Term Four

End of Year Reports via Parent Access Module (PAM)

Your child's School Report will be available for download from the PAM site on **Wednesday 13th December**. These reports have been well-prepared, well thought-out and represent your child's Semester Two achievements. Each report has been prepared by your child's class teacher, then read and commented on by a buddy teacher from within the school and finally read again by our Leadership Team. I commend the teachers for their efforts, professionalism and personalised comments. Please make some time to read the report and initiate discussion with your child/ren about what their teacher has written. And, most importantly, enjoy and celebrate your child's report and their 2023 school year!



Preparing for 2024

This week teachers will be handing over important information to your child's 2024 class teacher to further enhance your child's transition to their new learning environment. Each child's Student Profile is updated, with great professional discussions and learning taking place in these sessions in preparation for 2024.

We thank our children, teachers and families for their positivity and commitment to ensuring our children transition with success and a positive mindset.

Structured Literacy Methodology (Emma Hancock)

As part of our commitment to the DOBCEL Structured Literacy Project throughout 2024 and beyond, students will be guided through intentionally sequenced instruction in Phonology, Orthography, Morphology & Etymology, Syntax and Semantics. These elements are underpinned by The Simple View of Reading (SVR), a widely-accepted theoretical model by Gough & Tunmer (1986) that explains Reading and Comprehension as a product of Decoding (or Word

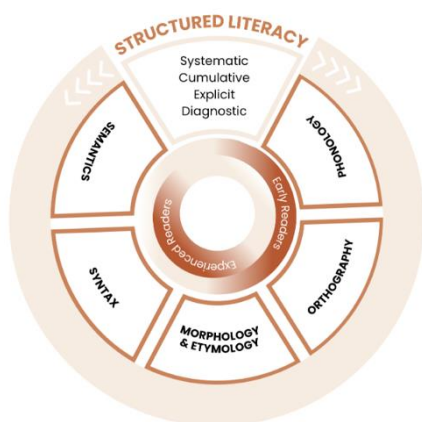


"The general application of the SVR to the study of reading has been extensive, and it has served as the guiding assumption for much research since it was proposed."

Lonigan et. al 2018

Recognition) and Language Comprehension. [Click here to watch a short explainer on SVR](#). The research is clear that we must provide systematic, cumulative, explicit and diagnostic instruction in both decoding and language comprehension.

In order to align our classroom instruction to the most recent Science of Reading research, teachers will be working from a collaboratively designed and regularly reviewed Foundation to Year Six Scope & Sequence that strategically orders instruction in the five elements of Structured Literacy.



Phonology	The study of the sounds in spoken English
Orthography	The alphabetic code of written English
Morphology	The study of units of meaning in English words
Syntax	The correct use and order of words in sentences
Semantics	The comprehension of language

Instruction for early readers focuses heavily on the first two elements, with limited focus on the other elements. As our readers gain more skills and experience, the focus of instruction shifts gradually and purposefully towards the final two elements.

Stay tuned for next week's instalment where the structure of our revised SFX Literacy Block will be unpacked for you!

I hope everyone has a terrific Week Ten!



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

Wellbeing News

As the school year grows closer to the end and festivities of cultural and religious celebrations begin, day to day functioning can become a little harder for both adults and children who have difficulties with social environments, sensory sensitivities or coping with change.

Everyone is getting tired, relationships may become strained and demands seem many.

Throw into the mix the end of school commitments (not to mention whose turn it is to host Christmas) and no wonder you feel exhausted already!

It is worthwhile to think about how we can reduce the demand of day to day activities to ensure we don't completely deplete our energy.

Work out what is important to your family and plan your activities around these things- by focussing on what's important, we reduce the unnecessary demands that come with "filler" activities or things that don't align with your values.

The following information from Raising Children considers the importance of self-care for parents. Attending to priorities such as sleep, good nutrition, regular exercise and relationship building will ensure we have some petrol in the tank for the weeks ahead!

[Wellbeing for Parents and Caregivers](https://raisingchildren.net.au/for-professionals/mental-health-resources/parent-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/for-professionals/mental-health-resources/parent-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Kind regards,

Christine Meneely, **Wellbeing Leader**

2024

Term 1:

- Week 3 - Thursday Feb 15th* - District Tennis @ BRTC
- Week 4 - Friday Feb 23rd - SFX Yr 3-6 Athletics Day @ Llanberris
- Week 5 - Friday Mar 1st - District Swimming @ Eureka Outdoor Pool

Term 2:

- Week 3 - Mon Apr 29th - Division Cross Country @ Fed Uni
- Week 5 - Friday May 17th - Division AFL @ Sebastopol
- Week 6 - Friday May 24th - Division Soccer @ Wendouree Rec Reserve
- Week 7 - Monday May 27th - Regional Cross Country @ Warrnambool
- Week 8 - Friday Jun 7th - Division Netball @ Selkirk Stadium

Term 3:

- Week 4 - Monday Aug 5th - Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics @ Llanberris
- Week 6 - Friday Aug 23rd - Division Basketball @ Selkirk Stadium
- Week 9 - Tuesday Sep 10th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris

Term 4:

- Week 1 - Friday Oct 11th - Regional Athletics @ Llanberris

Have a great week.



Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**



▶ **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 December 2023

First Sunday of Advent

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

Tuesday – Thursday 9:30 AM

Saturday 9:30 AM, 6:00 PM

Sunday 9:00 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th weeks)

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

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: Mary Grace Olivares, NhelJun Dimaculangan (P)

Anniversaries:

Unwell: Socorro De Chavez, Peter McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan, Eleanor McMahon, Patricia Murry, Shelley Pawang, Carole Simmons

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

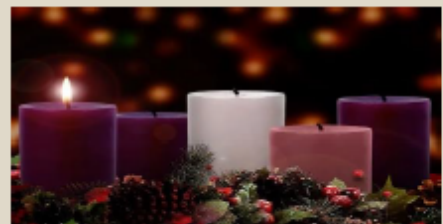
Child Safety Officer
Emily Clarke

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.



FR JORGE FAREWELL

Father Jorge's final mass with us will be on Christmas Day. He heads off on Boxing Day for the long drive across the Nullarbor to his new parish in Western Australia. Everyone is invited to join Fr Jorge for a farewell mass at 6:00 PM on Saturday 9 December at St Alipius, followed by a BBQ in the church grounds (weather dependent). This is our chance to gather as a parish to thank and say goodbye to Fr. Jorge. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. Sausages will be provided. BYO drinks.

CHURCH WORKING BEES

Thank you to everyone who came along to the working bee at St Alipius last weekend. We were able to set up the nativity scenes both in and outside the church. There are some other jobs that still need to be done, so if you have a moment during the week and would be happy to help, please contact the parish office.

It is Ss Peter and Paul's working bee this Sunday after 10:30 AM mass. Please help if you can.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Farewell Mass and BBQ for Fr Jorge
6:00 PM, Saturday 9 December, St Alipius

LITURGY ROSTER

The St Alipius liturgy roster for December and January has been emailed to volunteers. For those not on email, collect a hard copy from the sacristy. Please remember to diarise when you are scheduled and arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of mass to sign in and check that all volunteers have turned up. Thank you.

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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

Supporting our parish priests	\$850
Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc.	455.20

We invite anybody who would like to join the program to please contact the parish office.

PIETY STALL

Packs of five Christmas cards are now available from the Piety Stall for \$5.00. Columbian Calendars ARE NOW AVAILABLE for \$10.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, so masses that weekend will be as follows:

Saturday 23 December – 4th Sunday of Advent vigil
6:00 PM – St Alipius

Sunday 24 December – 4th Sunday of Advent
9:00 AM – Ss Peter and Paul's
10:30 AM – St Alipius

Sunday 24 December – Christmas vigil
6:00 PM – Children's mass at St Alipius
7:30 PM – Ss Peter and Paul's
9:00 PM – St Alipius

Monday 25 December – Christmas Day
9:00 AM – Ss Peter and Paul's
10:30 AM – St Alipius

ALTAR SERVERS

The Children's Mass at 6:00 PM on Sunday 24 December provides a wonderful opportunity for any children in the parish who are interested in participating in the mass as an altar server. If you have children who are interested, please let the Parish Office know. Training will be provided, and altar servers will have an opportunity to serve during Advent Masses with coaching, in preparation for the Children's Mass.

SVDP CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Ballarat East Conference of SVdP invites you to support their Christmas Appeal which plays a vital role in enabling the good works of the Society to continue serving the community.

Over the past six months, the Society has provided over \$5.9 million in material assistance, including food, clothing, furniture, and financial support, to families and households in need throughout Victoria. With the current cost-of-living crisis, the assistance they provide for people experiencing hardship this festive season will be needed more than ever.

Parishioners are encouraged to help continue the Society's work of helping those most in need by donating via the envelopes at the end of the pews (put into the offertory collection basket), via www.vinnies.org.au, or phoning 13 18 12. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

NATIVITY DISPLAY

To spread a Christmas message of peace, love and family, this year's "Making a Scene at Christmas" display will be spread across two locations: a shop in the Bridge Mall from Tuesday, 5 December – Friday, 22 December and at the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat archives by appointment between 20 November – 22 December, and 4– 20 January 2024. Entry is a gold coin donation. Schools can book for an educational experience. For more information, please contact Fiona Tonkin at Fiona.tonkin@ballarat.catholic.org.au.

BAPTISMS

Noah John Findlay
Child of Ashley and Christine Findlay

Mary Claire Calingasan Albalade
Child of Ace and Sheryl Albalade

Nieve Alexandra and Ryley Georgia Lever–Easten
Child of Rohan Lever and Kerry Easten

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

CHANGES TO POWERPOINT

In keeping with the Diocese of Ballarat's [Guidelines for the Use of Visual Display Systems in Liturgical Celebrations](#), starting this weekend, the parish will be using an updated template for the PowerPoint slides that are used to accompany our masses. The most noticeable change is the reduction in the number of slides to help ensure that the focus of those present at mass is on the sacred mysteries that are celebrated at the altar, not on the overhead projections. Some shorter responses will no longer be displayed, but longer prayers and the lyrics to hymns will still be provided on screen. Please note that the Gloria is not said during Advent or Lent masses.

GIVING TREE APPEAL

CatholicCare Victoria wants to give young people and their families the support they need so that they can enjoy their Christmas together rather than face tough times alone. Families shouldn't have to choose between seeking help for their kids or putting food on the table. To donate to the appeal, please visit this website: www.catholiccarevic.org.au/campaign/donate/19/giving-tree-appeal

SEMINARIAN FUNDRAISER

The Cathedral Branch of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) is hosting a cake stall outside St Pat's after each mass on Sunday 10 December. A decorated Christmas cake will be raffled, with tickets available after this weekend's masses. Funds raised will assist the Ballarat Diocese's seminarians – Simon, Channa, Lam, and Peter. Donations of cakes and produce for the stall are welcome. If you can assist by baking, donating, or helping on the day, please contact Carmel 0401 175 045 or annekav1234@gmail.com.

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 December – For persons with disabilities: We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation. Lord, hear us.

CDF MERGER

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR has made an announcement regarding the merger of our Ballarat Catholic Development Fund with the Melbourne-Sale-Bunbury Catholic Development Fund. Details are available from www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/new-era-for-cdf

DEACON ORDINATION

Seminarian Cay Trinh will be ordained as a Deacon for the Diocese of Ballarat at 10:00 AM on Saturday, 16 December at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat. All are welcome to attend.

Singers and musicians are invited to join the music group which is being formed to perform at the ordination. Practices will occur on Sunday 3 and 10 December at the Cathedral. Register your interest with Julie Boyd at julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 5337 7159.

OUR DIOCESAN NEWS

The second edition of ODC 2023 has been published. Feel free to take copies to the homebound, nursing homes, hospitals, etc., to spread the good news of the diocese.

Eyes Wide Open!

Gospel reflection by Veronica Lawson RSM

1st Sunday of Advent: Mark 13:33–37

The first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the new liturgical year.

It may seem strange to begin the church year with the parable of the watchful doorkeeper and a focus on the end or culmination of the present order of things. Is Advent not a time of preparation for Christmas, for the coming of the Christ child into the world?

In contrast with Matthew and Luke, Mark has no account of the birth of Jesus or of the events leading up to his birth.

From the very outset, Mark's interest is in the good news of Jesus the Christ and in the importance of "preparing the way" for the advent of God's reign of justice and compassion.

Our gospel reading forms the conclusion to Mark's so-called apocalyptic discourse. Apocalyptic literature emerged within Judaism in the context of crisis or persecution.

Its message was that God's coming can reverse the sufferings of the present, a hopeful message for our troubled world, particularly if we envisage multiple "comings" and not simply an end-time return.

Apocalyptic writings were intended to provide hope in the midst of disaster.

While Mark's discourse is delivered as a farewell teaching to the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, the concluding verse indicates that it is intended for a wider audience: "What I say to you, I say to all...." Like Jesus' close followers, Christian disciples through the ages are invited to stay awake, to be on the lookout, to be alert.

A hopeful message for our troubled world

The disciples are told to stay awake through the four watches of the Roman night: in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, and at dawn.

The parable thus foreshadows aspects of Jesus' suffering that were to be compounded by the abandonment of his closest friends. Peter, James, and John will fall asleep in Gethsemane. While the women will remain faithful, the male disciples will disperse, and Peter will deny Jesus.

We find our own experience mirrored in that of the disciples. It is easy to lose hope in the face of overwhelming violence and even to lose focus and walk away.



Advent is about recognising our tendency to be less than vigilant and even to turn away when our presence is most needed. It is about allowing the grace of God to take hold in our hearts, keeping us watchful for the sake of those on the edge and for the sake of a regenerated Earth.

Most of us would agree that our Earth communities are in crisis. We need to be alert to causes as well as to consequences so that the cycles of violence might eventually be broken.

Our gospel asks no less of us. As I look up from my writing, I see the magpies in the yard, ever alert, rarely asleep, ready to protect their territory and their young. The creatures of the earth can remind us that "eyes wide open" is the proper stance for gospel people as well as for birds or black swans.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
ISAIAH 63:16–17, 64:1,3–8
1 CORINTHIANS 1:3–9
MARK 13:33–37

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
ISAIAH 40:1–5, 9–11
2 PETER 3:8–14
MARK 1:1–8

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 1st December 2023 Hosted by 2GH Theme: Compassion

Compassion means to feel the suffering of others and to help ease that suffering.

We show compassion to others because Jesus teaches us how to care.

F LH	F LH: Harry Toohey and Isla Easton F TW: Ruby Plover and Patrick Leneghan F GJ: Birdie Toohey and Lachie White F MM: Odie Brooks and Indi Nestor
1 JS	Jax Lodge and Angus Morley
1 MM	Max Elliot & Lachy Just
1 EM	Paddy Robinson and Banjo Nicholson
2 EH	Mitchell Bone & Byron Toohey & Percy Veal
2 CJ	Connor White and Mitchell Cyples
2 GH	Leo Dodd and Casey Hartup
3 NM	Gabriel Dunne and Xavier Morris
3 JVG	Finley Rolfe and Joe Trigg
3 GW	Olive Lenaghan and Minti Toohey
4 BW	Isabelle Slater & Hudson Rowland
4 HC	Harley Bye & Sophie Beseler
4 CP	Will McGregor and Haddie Morley
5 JF	The whole class for the mateship they showed each other on camp
5 OH	The whole class for the compassion they showed each other on camp
5 CC	The whole class for the teamwork they showed on camp
6 PB	Annabella Chalmers and Charlotte Bell
6 MM	Matt Corrigan and India Skewes
6 ZA	Pearl Nicholson & Lucy Kierce
Environmental Education	Alby (Grade 3) & Jasper (Foundation)
Visual Arts	Sam White & Matilda Walshe (FLH)
Principal's Award	Mack Smith (3BW) for showing great responsibility in caring for our school. Xavier Morris, James Bosworth and Levi Crowe (Year 3) for welcoming and looking after a new student on Transition Day this week. These children showed great compassion by being inclusive and accepting of a new person in our school.

School Procedures for the Bushfire Season

The Department of Education and Training (DET) has recently advised the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) of the revised Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR).

As a consequence of this review, St Francis Xavier School has been listed on the 2022-23 BARR and will be required to close on days with a fire danger rating listed as Catastrophic.

The following information will help us plan and prepare our school to support the safety of staff, students and the wider community.

Assessing bushfire and grassfire risk

Schools and early childhood education services are categorised based on their risk of bushfire and grassfire in line with the Victorian Education Facility Bushfire Risk Methodology and review this classification annually. To inform this classification, we have used the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) analysis informed by the Bushfire Management Overlay, Victorian Fire Risk Register, and terrain and fuel type exposure.

Our school's risk

Our school is rated as CAT 3. This means that St Francis Xavier Primary School:

- Must close on days forecast as 'Catastrophic' by the Bureau of Meteorology within our designated fire district

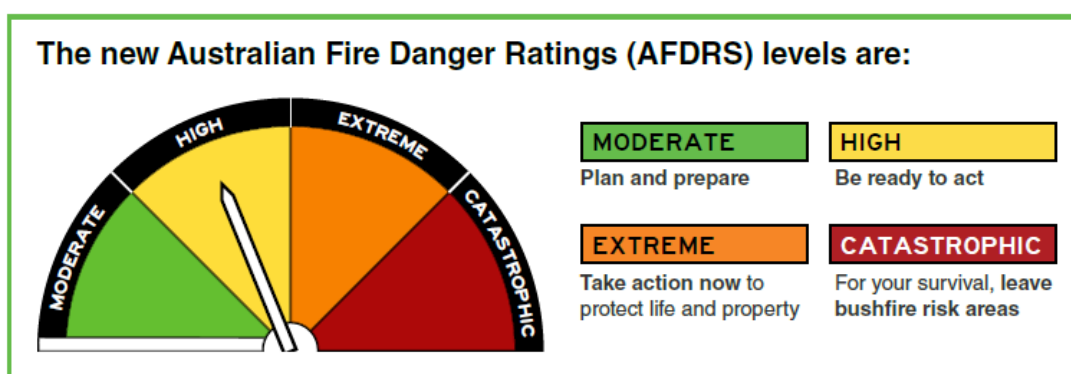
Australian Fire Danger Rating System

In September 2022, Australia introduced a new fire danger forecasting system, the Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS). A nationally consistent system will more accurately predict fire danger and produce clear, simple messages for communities. Victoria has been using a 6-tier system for fire danger ratings, from 'Low' or 'Moderate' to 'Code Red'. The AFDRS will replace the Victorian system this year and uses 4 tiers of fire danger, from 'Moderate' to 'Catastrophic'.

Fire danger ratings describe the potential level of danger should a bushfire start.

They are important because they provide people with information so that they can take action to protect themselves and others from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfires.

From September 1, Australians will have a simplified, action-oriented Fire Danger Rating System.



- The AFDRS will also introduce 'off' for those days where no proactive action is required by the community. On these days, you will still need to abide by local seasonal laws and regulations, but there is little or no risk of a fire that starts spreading in a dangerous or life-threatening way.
- The AFDRS is informed by one of Australia's largest social research projects which found that most Australians do not understand the current system, and would prefer a simpler, action-oriented set of fire danger ratings.
- The AFDRS is being implemented consistently across Australia and will mean that wherever you are across the country, you will be able to understand the threat posed on any given day and make appropriate decisions to keep you and your family safe.

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.

What can parents do?

Make sure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers. Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, by checking our website <http://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/>, and by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of the teaching staff.

If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan. You can access more information about school closures on the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) website www.cecv.catholic.edu.au.

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season, visit the CFA website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.

Community News

Queries: Call Dom 0417 967 621

The poster features a vibrant green and blue background with images of children playing sports. At the top, the Kelly Sports logo is next to the word 'Summer' in a script font. Below this, 'HOLIDAY PROGRAMME' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. The dates 'Mon 18th Dec - Fri 22nd Dec 2023' and 'Tue 2nd Jan - Wed 31st Jan 2024' are listed in bold black text. A paragraph describes the program's focus on fostering children's interests in a safe environment. Three circular inset photos show children playing. A green starburst lists items to bring. An orange oval contains the 'JOIN US!' section with program details. A '25 YEARS' anniversary logo is in the bottom left. The bottom of the poster has the website 'www.kellysports.com.au/greater-ballarat' and the text 'BOOK ONLINE NOW AT' above the website name.

KELLY SPORTS Summer

HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

Mon 18th Dec - Fri 22nd Dec 2023
Tue 2nd Jan - Wed 31st Jan 2024

At Kelly Sports Ballarat, we believe in fostering children's interests in a safe, encouraging environment. Our caring, friendly & professional staff are committed to working with kids, and receive training on behavior management techniques, first aid, and activity planning/delivery.

What To Bring:

- Suitable clothing
- A refillable drink bottle
- A hat & sunscreen
- Big packed lunch!

JOIN US!

For a Fun-Filled Holiday Program!

EASTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE BALLARAT
8am-5pm Weekdays
Kinder to Grade 6
\$60 per child per day

FOR THE LOVE OF SPORTS
25 YEARS

BOOK ONLINE NOW AT
KELLYSPORTS.COM.AU
www.kellysports.com.au/greater-ballarat