



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 26th February 2024
Term 1 Week 5

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 (9 weeks)

Mon 29th Jan – Thu 28th Mar

Monday 26th February

School photo day

Tuesday 27th February

9.30am Open Day

Wednesday 28th February

3.30-5.15pm Getting to know your child as a learner meetings

Friday 1st March

2.40pm Assembly led by 6PB

Wednesday 6th March

9.30am Open Day

Friday 8th March

2.40pm Assembly led by 5CC

Friday 15th March

2.40pm Assembly led by 4GH

Friday 22nd March

12.40pm Assembly led by 3JV

1.45pm-3.15pm

Colour Explosion Run 4 Fun

7pm Mix and Mingle at The North Star

Wednesday 27th March

9.30am & 6pm Open Day

Term 2 (11 weeks)

Mon 15th Apr – Fri 28th Jun

Monday 15th April

Student Free Day

Friday 26th April

Student Free Day

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 15th Jul – Fri 20th Sep

Mon 15th July

Student Free Day

Tuesday 16th July

Student Free Day

Term 4 (11 weeks)

Mon 7th Oct – Fri 20th Dec

Monday 4th November

Student Free Day

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

How is your Lent going? I am willing to admit that mine got off to a rocky start but after a few re-starts I am back on track and feeling positive about the weeks ahead.

In the Catholic Church Lent is a sacred time leading up to Easter. The season of Lent runs for forty days and culminates in Holy week when we recall the final events in the life of Jesus. During Lent we are asked to observe the three practices of *abstinence*, *prayer* and *almsgiving*. Through abstinence we are challenged to refrain from doing something that we usually enjoy and to focus that energy on reflection. Through prayer we are provided with the opportunity to grow closer to our God and through almsgiving we are challenged to think of others less fortunate than ourselves. Now you can understand why I got off to a rocky start!

In the classrooms the teachers are talking with the children about how we can all grow closer to God in many different ways. Lent is our time of reflection and preparation. Let's all make the most of Lent so that we can truly celebrate the wonders of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, just a few weeks away.

God bless,



Mark Hogbin

School Photos

We had our annual school photos taken today with MSP Photography. The ordering process was a little different this year with all orders taken online. Thanks to all our great families for supporting our school photo day. We look forward to seeing the end product on delivery day.



Foundation Enrolments 2025

Enrolments for 2025 Foundation for current families

Enrolment for 2025 Foundation students is now open. Enrolment closes Thursday 23 May 2024. The application process for 2025 Foundation (Prep) Enrolments for current St Francis Xavier families in one step:

Complete your enrolment by filling out the "City of Ballarat Expression of Interest for Enrolment" form by following the link below or using the QR Code. <https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>

You will be able to nominate St Francis Xavier as your first preference and nominate the child you are enrolling is a sibling.



SCAN ME

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.

New Families to St Francis Xavier are also required to complete the “City of Ballarat Expression of Interest for Enrolment” online and attend an Open Day Tour by booking at <https://www.sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au/enrol/open-days/>

Please note: You are not required to complete a hard copy Enrolment Form. If you have any questions please contact the school office.

School Pick and Drop Off Times

Please note that our school is open from 8.15am each morning and classes cease for the day at 3.15pm. We understand that traffic can be extremely busy at these times so we ask all drivers to be mindful of pedestrians. The children are great at obeying the traffic safety rules and we want to support them in their learning and keep everyone safe always.

Use of Phones and Smart Watches at school

A reminder to all families that mobile phones and smart watches must be handed to the classroom teachers for safe keeping at the start of each school day. In the interests of safety and privacy, children are not permitted to have smart watches and mobile phones with them during school hours.

Planning for our future pathways - Ballarat City Council’s Footpath Construction Strategy Survey

If you are interested in adding your voice to those who have already requested a footpath/bike path along Fortune Street in the past, you might like to complete the City of Ballarat’s Footpath Construction Strategy Survey <https://mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/footpath-strategy/survey> and/or contribute to an interactive map

<https://mysay.ballarat.vic.gov.au/footpath-strategy>

The City of Ballarat is developing a Footpath Construction Strategy to prioritise new footpaths within the municipality. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure that Ballarat’s footpath construction budget is spent in alignment with the community’s needs and aspirations for footpath use. The Strategy will focus on the construction of new footpaths as well as sealing existing unsealed footpaths across the municipality.

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK’S GOSPEL- Sunday February 25, 2024 Second Sunday of Lent (Year B)

Gospel: Mark 9:2-10 Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain, where they were alone. As they looked on, a change came over Jesus, and his clothes became shining white—whiter than anyone in the world could wash them. Then the three disciples saw Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus. Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, “Teacher, how good it is that we are here! We will make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” He and the others were so frightened that he did not know what to say.

Then a cloud appeared and covered them with its shadow, and a voice came from the cloud, “This is my own dear Son—listen to him!” They took a quick look around but did not see anyone else; only Jesus was with them.

As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has risen from death.” They obeyed his order, but among themselves they started discussing the matter, “What does this ‘rising from death’ mean?” (*Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation*)

Gospel reflection: On the mountain the disciples saw Jesus’ true loving self shining like the rays of the sun. If we listen to Jesus and spend time with God in our hearts, we too can let our true light shine brightly -for example, we could be kinder to other people, or extra helpful. In the period of Lent, we spend extra time praying and we think about how we can help other people, and in this way let our true light shine out from inside us.

Our Challenge: God asks us to be kind and generous to others and treat them as we would like to be treated. What will you do to try and live more as God wants? Could you bring a coin for your CARITAS box to help someone less fortunate than you?



Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader

What a great turnout for our first session of Getting to know your child as a Learner. Thank you to all those who could make it. It happens again this week on Wednesday night.

Getting to know your child as a learner Wednesday 28th Feb 2024


Getting to know children as learners is a crucial aspect of their educational journey, and building strong relationships is the foundation for understanding their unique learning styles, interests, and challenges. As teachers, we value the partnership between school and home to create a supportive and enriching environment for your child. Any insights you can share about your child's interests, strengths, and areas where they may need additional support will greatly contribute to our efforts in fostering their academic and personal growth.



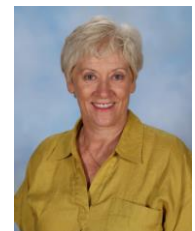
Our classroom teachers are looking forward to this opportunity. If you haven't already signed up, please do so. The process to sign up is through your PAM account. These meetings provide seven minutes of dedicated one-on-one time for parents/carers and teachers to meet.



NAPLAN 2024 is not far away for our Year 3 and Year 5 students. Please put these dates into your calendar. NAPLAN 2024 for SFX children will be from 13th March - 25th March. Over the next couple of weeks the classroom teachers will be providing the children with practice sessions so they are very familiar with the layout and expectations of what they will need to do on the scheduled test days. If you are aware that your child will not be at school during this time please let your teacher know ASAP.

 NAPLAN Testing Timetable 2024					
	Wednesday 13th March	Thursday 14th March	Friday 15th March	Monday 18th March	Tuesday 19th March
9.10am - 10.30am (Block 1)	Year 3 Writing	Year 5 Reading	Year 5 Numeracy	Year 3 Numeracy	Catch up session
11.50 am – 1:00pm (Block 2)	Year 5 Writing	Year 3 Reading	Year 3 Conventions of Language	Catch up session Yr 5 Writing	Yr 3 Writing Catch up sessions (Other)
1.50pm - 3.00pm (Block 3)		Year 5 Conventions of Language		Catch up sessions (Other)	Catch up sessions (Other)

Enjoy your week,



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal / Learning Enhancement

You may have seen a new report from the Grattan Institute that shows a third of Australian children can't read proficiently. Grattan Institute Education Program Director and report lead author, Dr Jordana Hunter, said Australian education has failed these children. "In the typical Australian school classroom of 24 students, eight can't read well," she said. "It's a preventable tragedy – the reason most of those students can't read well enough is that we aren't teaching them well enough."

[The Reading Guarantee: How to give every child the best chance of success](#), surmises that the cost to Australia is \$40 billion to support those today's poor readers throughout their lifetimes. Students who struggle with reading are more likely to fall behind their classmates, become disruptive, and drop out of school. They are more likely to end up unemployed or in poorly paid jobs. A key cause of Australia's reading problem is decades of disagreement about how to teach reading. But the evidence is now clear.

GRATTAN
Institute



According to the Grattan Institute, the 'whole-language' approach – which became popular in the 1970s and is based on the idea that learning to read is an easy, natural, unconscious process – does not work for all students. "Its remnants should be banished from Australian schools. Instead, all schools should use the 'structured literacy' approach right through school, which includes a focus on phonics in the early years," the Grattan Institute said.

It said students should learn to sound out the letters of each word, and teachers should read aloud rich literature to their class. Once students have mastered decoding new words, they still need explicit teaching to build up their background knowledge and vocabulary, so they can comprehend what they read – the ultimate goal of reading.

If schools don't take this approach, the Grattan Institute said, disadvantaged students will be left even further behind their advantaged peers, who tend to have richer learning opportunities outside of school.

The Grattan report calls on all Australian state and territory governments, and Catholic and independent school sector leaders, to commit to a six-step 'Reading Guarantee':

1. Pledge that at least 90 per cent of Australian students will become proficient readers.
2. Give principals and teachers specific guidelines on how to teach reading in line with the evidence on what works best.
3. Provide schools with the high-quality curriculum materials and assessments that teachers need to teach reading well.
4. Require schools to do universal screening of students' reading skills and help struggling students to catch-up.
5. Ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills they need, through extra training, and by appointing Literacy Instructional Specialists in schools.

Mandate a nationally consistent Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, and regularly review schools' and principals' performance on teaching their students to read.

Here at St Francis Xavier PS, through our Structured Literacy Project, we are striving to live out Dr Hunter's call to action that "Australia needs a reading revolution". Teachers are urged by experts in the field to "transform the way we teach reading in school, so that every Australian child gets their best chance in life".

Have a great week!



Emma Egan, Literacy Leader

We're about to dive into the enchanting world of human connection and why those tiny, yet profound moments matter more than we often realise. Get ready to explore an article that delves deep into the realm of relationships, aptly titled "Love Bridges: Why Micro-Moments of Connection Matter."



Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing Leader**

Sending cheers your way,

This article was first published at Essential Kids by Maggie Dent.

Love Bridges: Why Micro-Moments of Connection Matter



Most parents would never question that they love their children wholeheartedly - even when their little darling has drawn a lipstick picture on the wall, won't eat their vegies or sleep in their own bed, or thumps their brother. Even though we might get annoyed, we still love them absolutely.

However, children don't always feel our love because 'love' is a difficult concept for children and even teens to grasp. In a way, children see love as connection - where they sense that you not only see them, but that you feel them invisibly and strongly.

Many people talk about having quality time with their children and, while that is a good thing, it might only come around once a week - or once a month in our busy society.

I am more inclined to recommend micro-moments of loving connectedness or building 'love bridges' which happen often, rather than just focusing on quality time created by an adult at a time convenient to them.

Children live in the present moment and when we come and join them, even briefly, in that amazing place it makes their hearts sing. When we can come to them and share in their childlike view of the world, children know we love them.

Many parents who have to work tell me how they struggle with feeling guilty that they are unable to spend a lot of time with their children. The same goes for those who work away from home like FIFOs (fly-in-fly-out workers) in our mining towns and those in the military services.

There are many ways, some really tiny, that build a heart connection.

I was blessed to spend hours of my childhood in the ute driving around the farm with my dad as a captive audience for my endless chatter and questioning about everything. No wonder he struggled with his hearing as he got older, however I knew I was loved.

The concept of meeting children with a specific intention to nurture connection through how we interact with them comes from Canadian developmental psychologist Dr Gordon Neufeld's work, especially his book, *Hold On to Your Kids*.

Neufeld believes so much of the way we live our lives today creates experiences of separation for our young children, rather than experiences that connect and bond us with our children, which he calls bridges. It is a different way of explaining 'attachment' or the innate need of every child to feel strongly bonded to a significant caring adult.

When this occurs repeatedly, children's trust in us is broken and the relationship will be weakened. I have renamed Neufeld's bridges "love bridges" - which build stronger heart connections with our children to ensure they feel safe and secure within their families.

If you can keep in mind that, when you are dealing with challenging behaviour in your child, your priority is to work at the relationship first and the behaviour second; this will ensure that you will be on the right track to use discipline in a way that benefits everyone. And when children feel connected they are less likely to need to act out to gain power or attention.

So how can you build love bridges with your children?

- Wink at children, make funny faces, give them high fives or thumbs up - non-verbal messages of connection.
- Parents can give small symbols to hold onto in their absence like kisses in the child's hands.
- Create a unique bedtime ritual... "I love you more than..."
- Send them rainbows when you are away.
- Create a small jar of captured kisses.
- Create an imaginary giant protector/guardian angel to watch over your child.
- Have a picture of you with your child in a locket or plastic sleeve they can keep in their bag.
- Record readable stories or bedtime rituals on smartphones if you're away.
- Take small bites out of their toast or a bite out of their sandwich.
- Leave notes or funny pictures in their lunchbox or on the bathroom mirror.
- Create moments of lightness and laughter often.
- Hide special messages around the house when you go away.
- Spontaneously join them in drawing or colouring in.
- Join them on the couch randomly to watch their favourite show.
- Engage in spontaneous hugs, cuddles and tickles.

Children who feel loved through a strong heart connection will feel safer and more secure in their world - even after they have been disciplined or sanctioned for breaking boundaries or being mean and unkind. They will also be calmer and this allows them to behave better and learn better.

The more micro-moments of connection we add in our homes, the happier everyone will be. So step over the pile of washing, ignore the unanswered emails and go build some love bridges with your kids - it is never too late!

As an adolescent told me once: "I would prefer it if my parents opened their hearts more than their wallets."



EXCITING NEW FREE RESOURCE!

Because parenting doesn't come with instructions, SchoolTV is a wellbeing resource implemented at our school to help support you in the challenges of modern-day parenting relating to youth mental health and wellbeing. Parenting is a learning journey and SchoolTV supports families by providing credible information from trusted sources with practical strategies to help alleviate some of the challenges being faced by young people today. Watch video interviews with leading wellbeing specialists and browse a library of resources. Each topic is accompanied by factsheets, podcasts, books, articles, apps and other videos.

This award-winning resource helps families build relationships, foster connections, enable understanding and break down barriers to navigate a pathway towards better mental health and wellbeing for young people. It will assist you in starting those conversations on topics that can sometimes be awkward or difficult to tackle. Parents and caregivers are the greatest influence on a young person's life and SchoolTV focuses on empowering confident parenting.

Each week in the newsletter we will highlight an area you may like to explore further. Click on the link to discover SchoolTV today! [SchoolTV](#)

Christine Meneely, **School Counsellor**

Sport/Physical Education News

Sovereign & Eureka Swimming Meet

We will be proudly represented at this Friday's District Swimming Event at Eureka Pool by Milla A, Mila S, Olivia K, Morgan M, Lachlan P, Braxton B, Hugh F, Mitch K, Haddie M, Amelia S, Olivia F & Levi C. We wish these students all the best and look forward to hearing how they all swim.

Midlands District Primary Schools Swimming Sports - 9 yrs & Under 25m Encouragement Meet *CHANGE OF DATE

Please note that due to operational issues at the Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre, organisers have had to change the date of this Meet to **Thursday 14th March**. All times for the Meet remain the same. The closing date for entries will now be Monday March 4. Please see PAM notification for more details. For those that have indicated YES, could you please let me know which particular events your child would like to compete in.

Yr3 - 6 Athletics Day

Perfect Ballarat conditions greeted us last Friday at Llanberris for our Yr 3-6 Athletics Day. From sprinting to long jumping, all of the students showcased their athleticism and sportspersonship in every event. A huge thank you and well done to all of the students for the way they participated and got into the spirit of the day, to the teachers for their enthusiasm and assistance and to all of the families and friends that came along to cheer and support the students and make the day a great success.

I have been busy collating all of the scores and will post the results in next week's newsletter.

Kilometre Club

All students are invited to join our Kilometre Club which will continue this Wednesday. The Kilometre Club will be conducted every Wednesday morning, during the first break. Students and teachers meet outside the gym on the top oval for an 11:05am start. The Kilometre Club will consist of a continuous 20 minute walk, jog or run around a 250m loop.

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Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.

Teachers and Students who wish to participate are reminded to bring their runners and a drink bottle each Wednesday.

We look forward to seeing lots of students there.

2024 Sport Dates

Please see below a list of the dates we currently have for various sporting events for Term 1.

Term 1:

- Week 5 - Friday Mar 1st - District Swimming @ Eureka Outdoor Pool (nominated students from Yr 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 6 - Friday Mar 8th - Regional Swimming @ Horsham (qualifiers from District swimming)
- Week 7 - Thursday Mar 14th* (please note change of date) - Midlands District Primary Schools Swimming Sports - 9 yrs & Under 25m Encouragement Meet
- Week 8 - Friday Mar 22nd - Interschool Sport ALL Yr 5/6 v STM/ST AL @SFX*TBC

Have a wonderful week everyone.



Shaun Carroll, *SFX Sport Coordinator*

Community News

**CALLING
JUNIOR
FOOTBALLERS!**

**U/9, U/11 & U/13
PLAYERS NEEDED**

**CONTACT US NOW:
NBJFNC@gmail.com**



25 February 2024
Second Sunday of Lent
This is my son, the beloved

St Alipius
parish

▶ **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
 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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

MASS TIMES

St Alipius
 Tuesday – Friday 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 5

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: Laurie Mullane, David William Quinn

Anniversaries: Joan Shannon

Unwell: Socorro De Chavez, Pam Hill, Peter McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan, Eleanor McMahon, Shelley Pawang, Carole Simmons

PARISH TEAM

Parish Administrator
 Fr Concord Bagaoisan, 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.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

PROJECT COMPASSION

This year, Project Compassion brings you the stories of three resilient women: Ronita from the Philippines, Leaia from Samoa, and Memory from Malawi. While from three different corners of the world and facing vastly different challenges, they are all united by one dream: to create a better world for all future generations. Learn about these women and how Project Compassion helped them here:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/10823301/video/885560092>

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes, by calling 1800 024 41, visiting www.caritas.org.au/project-compassion, or scanning this QR code.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Baptism Preparation

10:00 AM or 5:30 PM, 7 March, St Pat's Hall

BAPTISM PREPARATION

Before children under the age of seven are baptised in our parish, their parents need to attend an information session, which will next be held on Thursday 7 March at 10 AM or 5.30 PM (choose one) in the small hall at St. Patrick's Cathedral. No registration is required. For further information please call the parish office.

MERCY PLACE VOLUNTEERS

Mercy Place is seeking volunteers for a range of roles. Volunteers might spend time one-on-one with residents, taking them for walks in the garden, going on bus trips, reading a book or newspaper, helping them in the garden, or just having a chat. The hours are organised to suit the volunteer. If interested, please see the flyer in the church foyer for more information.

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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

Supporting our parish priests	\$1,020
Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc.	\$378.20

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

CARING GROUP

The Caring Group will meet at 2:00 PM on Friday 1 March in the parish hall. Everyone is welcome to come along for a cuppa and a chat. Please bring a small plate.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER (WDP)

WDP is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome all to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. The theme this year is "I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love," based on Ephesians 4:1-6. Our Christian sisters invite the global church to pray for peace, justice, and freedom for every individual irrespective of nationality, religion, or origin.

World Day of Prayer services in Ballarat and Creswick this year on Friday, 1 March as follows:

10:00 AM	St Bridgit's Catholic Church 96 Inglis Street, Ballan
10:00 AM	St Peter's Anglican Church 1307 Sturt Street West, Ballarat
2:00 PM	St Mary's Anglican Church, Birchip
6:00 PM	St Paul's Anglican Church 3 Humffray Street, Bakery Hill
7:00 PM	St John's Anglican Church 103 Napier Street, Creswick

MASS OF THE OILS

The Mass of the Oils will be held at 11:30 AM on Monday 25 March at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat. Lunch, displays and music afterwards in the Hall. All welcome. This year the Mass of the Oils will be live-streamed at <https://youtube.com/live/SdivlIKiHsS?feature=share>

PALM SUNDAY PEACE WALK

The focus of the Palm Sunday Walk for Justice and Peace this year is on the impact of war where people have been forced to flee to seek places of refuge within their own country (internally displaced) or as refugees and asylum seekers to other countries. The program will commence at 10:30 AM at the Parliament Gardens, Spring Street/Albert Street, Melbourne, with an interfaith segment and prayers for peace, followed by speeches/presentations from 11:00 AM and the Palm Sunday 'Walk for Refugees' concluding by noon.

SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORT

A copy of the annual report from the Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission is available from the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/social-justice/

150 ANNIVERSARY PRAYER

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness, we have received all the gifts we enjoy.

As we mark the 150th anniversary of our Diocese of Ballarat, we give thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us.

We recognise the communities who have lived on this land from ancient times. We honour the Aboriginal peoples, here for tens of thousands of years. We honour those who came from overseas and settled here before our diocese began. Yet our anniversary shines a special light on our years as the Diocese of Ballarat, a community of communities from the Murray to sea.

We remember those who have gone before us, those who laid the foundations of our parish and school communities and our social services and health care.

We acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of our history. We celebrate the achievements, and we ask pardon for the failures to live our Christian faith to the full.

May this anniversary year be a season of renewal for our diocese. Inspired by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist, may we follow the example of Jesus and the guidance of your Holy Spirit.

May we reach out in humble service, welcoming all and caring for all creation. May we grow in love day by day. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

BAPTISMS

Elizabeth Njoki Devine

Child of Kennedy Wainaina and Belinda Devine

Chet Wylie Brooks

Child of Mathew and Paige Brooks

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

Pope Francis

COMMISSIONING MASSES

On Pentecost Sunday, the Parish will commission new and recommission existing liturgical ministers, including readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, PowerPoint operators, musicians, sacristans, and welcomers. Information on how to sign up to continue or start volunteering in one or more of these ministries, and what the tasks involve, will be provided in the coming weeks, continuing this week with the art and environment ministries.

ART AND ENVIRONMENT

The many volunteers who clean our churches, tend the gardens, and set up visual displays for masses, such as the Advent wreathes, nativity scenes etc., are perhaps the least visible ministry, yet their work is so prominent. There isn't a formal roster for these tasks, and the work is done by very few people, so volunteers are needed.

POPE'S MESSAGE FOR LENT

Pope Francis' Lenten message is focused on God's call to leave behind the bonds of slavery with the title, "Through the Desert God Leads us to Freedom", which is from the Book of Exodus (20:2). Read the message at www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/len/doc/uments/20231203-messaggio-quaresima2024.html or view it at <https://youtu.be/zXPPVtpHBM?t=408>

WISDOM AT THE CATHEDRAL

You are invited to a one-hour session in the Wisdom at the Cathedral series at 7:00 PM on Thursday 29 February. Fr Bill Lowry will discuss *Discerning God's Will in Your Life*, including the processes employed by the saints and the Lord himself in discerning the Father's will for their lives. The venue is the MacKillop/Glowrey rooms and entry is by donation. A cuppa will follow. Contact Fiona Bradley at fionalouisebradley@gmail.com for additional information.

LENT RESOURCES

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

MISSION: TRANSFORM LIVES

Communities in Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Pacific are looking for qualified and experienced Australians from all sectors to share their skills with those who have had little opportunity for formal training. You too will learn and grow within a most welcoming community. Experience the joy as you assist in changing lives. Learn more at <https://palms.org.au/> or ph. 02 9560 5333. Join the Mission webinar on 5 March from 6.00 PM – 6.30 PM. Details: <https://palms.org.au/event/global-development-webinar/>. Join the two-week tour to Timor-Leste on 6 May at <https://palms.org.au/encounters/timor-leste-cultural-encounter/>.

EASTER CHOCOLATE

Catholic Earthcare asks us to purchase brands that use sustainably sourced cocoa. Look for logos like these on the packaging.



Call to Listen

Gospel reflection by Veronica Lawson RSM

2nd Sunday in Lent: Mark 9:2–10

The wilderness was the geographical and key symbolic focus of last week's gospel story. This week, the focus is a mountain.

Wilderness and mountain remind us that God's Earth itself is the locus of mystery and grace, the place of Earth-divine encounter.

The mountain, like the wilderness, links Mark's story of Jesus with the story of the Israelites.

Moses' encounter with God on the mountain of Sinai was a defining moment in the life of the people: the Israelites entered into covenant with God at this mountain and received the Law that was to guide their lives as a people.

Some centuries later, at a time of crisis in Israel's life, the prophet Elijah returned to this mountain and experienced the presence of God in the gentle breeze (1 Kings 19:10-13).

In the gospel passage for today, Jesus takes Peter, James and John up the mountain and is "transfigured" before them and "his clothes become dazzling white." In the Book of Revelation, white clothes come to symbolise the clothing of martyrs, of those who die for their faith.

Elijah and Moses, the key prophetic figures of Israel, appear and enter into

dialogue with Jesus, God's definitive prophet.

The "transfiguration" seems to point to a time in Jesus' ministry when he accepts his likely fate. If he continues to challenge oppression and injustice, he is certain to encounter opposition, even death. He struggles with that realisation in the "wilderness" and comes to terms with what it involves on this unidentified mountain.

The voice of God reaffirms the identity of Jesus

The voice of God reaffirms the identity of Jesus that was announced in the opening words of the gospel and proclaimed at his baptism in the Jordan. It calls for a response from the disciples who have ascended the mountain in his company: they are to listen to him.

In the two preceding scenes, Jesus has spoken of the suffering that he and his followers will have to face. These words are crucial to an understanding, not only of Jesus, but of what it means to follow him. They fall on deaf ears.

Peter wants to hold on to the experience of glory, to "make tents"



and settle down. He prefers not to face the difficulties involved in fidelity to the mission. But that is not the way of discipleship.

Like Jesus and his companions, we too need the occasional glimpse of final victory. We also need the courage and the good sense to return from the mountain and follow through on the path that brings life, despite the pain.

We can feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenges facing us and by the opposition we sometimes experience.

While so many lives and so many life forms are obliterated by fruitless wars and unsustainable dependence on fossil fuels, we are called to "listen" and come to terms with the costs involved in maintaining the struggle for a sustainable, safe, and peace-filled world.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS
SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT
GENESIS 22:1–2, 9:13,15–18
ROMANS 8:31–34
MARK 9:2–10

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS
THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT
EXODUS 20:1–17
1 CORINTHIANS 1:22–25
JOHN 2:13–25

Mix and Mingle Night: Lock in your babysitters Friday the 22nd of March at The North Star starting at 7pm. Tickets are \$25 which includes finger food, music and entry into the door prize.

Tickets will be available on the Flexischools this week so keep an eye out. Always a great night out and a chance to meet our teachers and other parents at the school.

Easter raffle donations: A reminder that we're organising an Easter Egg Raffle. But to make this event a cracking success, we're kindly asking for your egg-cellent donations!

Whether you're able to spare a few chocolate eggs, Easter treats, or even some festive goodies, every donation makes a huge difference! Simply drop off your donations at the school office during regular hours.

Easter Egg Raffle Tickets: Hop into the Easter spirit with St. Francis Xavier Primary School's egg-citing raffle! Grab your tickets via the QR code or the link below.



[Fundraising Raffle to Support St Francis Xavier Ballarat East rafflelink.com.au](https://rafflelink.com.au)

Tuition Raffle Tickets: Unlock the chance to save big on school fees! Enter the 2024 SFX Tuition Raffle for a shot at winning \$1500 off your fees! Grab your tickets at the links below.



[Fundraising Raffle to Support St Francis Xavier Primary School rafflelink.com.au](https://rafflelink.com.au)

Colour Run: Did you hear the exciting news? We are hosting a Colour Explosion School Run 4 Fun with @Australian

Fundraising! 🏃🏻‍♀️🤪 FRIDAY March 22nd. Our fundraiser is NOW open. Make sure you keep an eye out for your child's sponsorship booklet in their diary to get started. Here's to a

colourful 2024 🌈! There are many wonderful

prizes students can earn through their individual fundraising. If your child makes a profile before Wednesday

they WIN a Monty scented pencil 🙌.



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.

Zooper Doopers for sale at second break on Mondays.
50 cents each.

Volunteer helpers needed:

If you are able to assist, please go to <https://signup.com/go/CEdCHSb>
or scan the code below with your smartphone camera. Thank you.



The cut off for orders is 10am on Thursday.
If you are a new parent, please make sure to download the Flexi Schools app to ensure you can access and manage your child's lunch preferences.