



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 24th February 2025
Term 1 Week 5

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 (10 weeks)

Tue 28th Jan – Fri 4th Apr

Wednesday 26th February
Foundation Testing

Friday 28th February
2.40pm Assembly led by 6PB
Casual clothes day

Tuesday 4th March
Ctrl Your Scroll Parent
Information Session
5-6pm in the gym

Wednesday 5th March
Foundation Rest Day

Friday 7th March
2.40pm Assembly led by 5CC

Monday 10th March
Labour Day Public Holiday
Student Free Day

Tuesday 11th March
Student Free Day

Wednesday 12th March
Foundation at School

Friday 14th March
2.40pm Assembly led by 4KB
7-11pm SFX Mix & Mingle
on lower oval

Friday 21st March
2.40pm Assembly led by 3JT

Sunday 23rd March
10am-1pm
Garden Working Bee

Wednesday 26th March
Student Led Conferences
3.30-7.00pm

Friday 28th March
2.40pm Assembly led by 2RR

Tuesday 1st April
Student Led Conferences
3.30-7.00pm

Friday 4th April
12.40pm Assembly led by
1JS

Last day of Term 1

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear Families,

It's hard to believe we've already reached the halfway point of our first term! It feels like just yesterday we welcomed everyone back after the long summer break, and now we're celebrating this milestone together. We are incredibly proud of how well our students have settled into school life, demonstrating enthusiasm, resilience, and a commitment to making this year a positive and successful one.

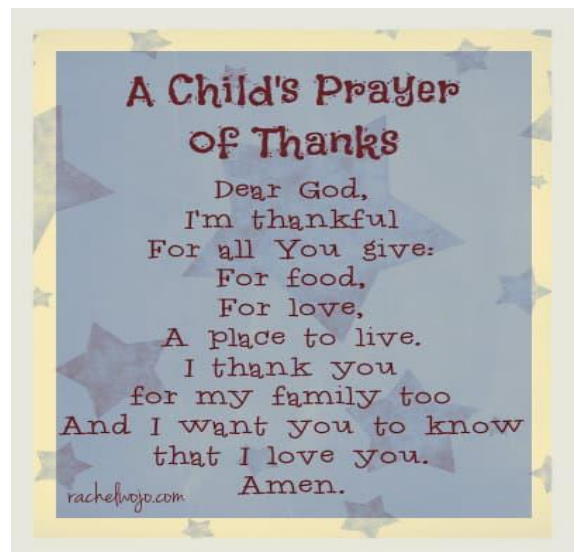
At Saint Francis Xavier School, we cherish five core values: **Respect, Compassion, Hospitality, Excellence, and Justice**. These values, inspired by the Mercy Order of religious nuns who founded our school, guide us in everything we do. Our students take great pride in the **Villa Way**, embracing these Christian values as a foundation for their daily actions. Even in challenging moments, we encourage them to hold onto these principles, striving to live with kindness, integrity, and a sense of justice.

As a family, what values do you hold most dear? How do you nurture and teach the importance of living a just and meaningful life? We know that every family has its own beautiful ways of instilling these lessons, and we feel truly privileged to witness the impact of your efforts in the way your children interact, learn, and grow each day at school.

Thank you for your ongoing support in shaping a nurturing and values-driven community.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



Term 2 (11 weeks)

Mon 21st Apr – Fri 4th Jul

Monday 21st April

Easter Monday Public Holiday - Student free day

Tuesday 22nd April

Student free day

Wednesday 23rd April

Student free day

Thursday 24th April

Student free day

Friday 25th April

ANZAC Day Public Holiday
Student free day

Friday 2nd May

Term 2 Mass

Friday 9th May

Mothers'/Special Friends'
Day Liturgy

Friday 16th May

2.40pm Assembly led by 6ZA

Thursday 22nd May

Foundation/Prep 2026
applications close.

Friday 23rd May

2.40pm Assembly led by
5SMC

Friday 30th May

2.40pm Assembly led by
4ML

Friday 6th June

2.40pm Assembly led by
3DGS

Monday 9th June

King's Birthday Public
Holiday
Student free day

Wed 11th – Fri 13th June

Year 6 Urban Camp

Friday 13th June

2.40pm Assembly led by 2TS

Friday 20th June

2.40pm Assembly led by
1EM

Friday 27th June

2.40pm Assembly led by FGJ

Friday 4th July

No Assembly

Term 3 (9 weeks)

Mon 21st Jul – Fri 19th Sep

Friday 25th July

Start of Term Mass

Friday 1st August

2.40pm Assembly led by FLP

School Photos

Thank you to all families who supported our school photos today. The children were very proud to have their photos taken and they looked splendid in their school uniforms.

School Reunion Tour

We were visited by a group of past pupils from the graduating class of 2004 last weekend. As they toured our school, the group recalled stories of their time at Saint Francis Xavier and the many teachers who inspired them over the years. We had a great time exploring our school together.



Autumn Working Bee

We are hoping to conduct an Autumn working bee on Sunday 23 March at school. BYO shovels, rakes and wheelbarrows so that we can move a mountain of mulch around our school. Hard workers will receive a sausage or two for lunch to celebrate our efforts. See you there!

Staff News

Mrs. Maureen McLean will be taking some time away from our school this year as she enjoys a well earned spot of long service leave. Maureen will step away from St. Francis Xavier from the commencement of second term until the end of fourth term. We wish Maureen well for her adventures and look forward to her return.

Casual Clothes Day

We will have our first casual clothes day on Friday 28 February (This Friday!) We invite all children to wear casual clothes on Friday and to bring along a gold coin or two to donate to a worthy cause. Our cause for February is to **Kick Start Caritas!** By donating money toward the work of Caritas our children and families will be supporting those in our world who are in need of support. Our Project Compassion campaign will commence at the start of Lent but by jumping in early with a kick start we are hoping that Caritas will receive an extra special boost from our school. Dig deep everyone – Together we can make a big difference!



Foundation/Prep Enrolment 2026 – Existing Families

Enrolments opened for children of existing and new families who start Foundation/Prep in 2026 on Monday 10th February 2025. Parents of existing and new families who have a child to start in 2026 - please complete the '**Enrolment Application Form**' form by clicking on the following link to submit your application:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>

Please note this is an essential step for existing families in ensuring you child is enrolled in Foundation/Prep 2026. Applications close Thursday 22nd May 2025.

Ctrl Your Scroll – Parent Information Session

Friday 8th August
2.40pm Assembly led by
1GT

Friday 15th August
2.40pm Assembly led by
2MH

Mon 18th – Fri 22nd Aug
Book Week

Friday 22nd August
2.40pm Assembly led by 3LL

Friday 29th August
2.40pm Assembly led by 4JS

Friday 5th September
Fathers' Day/Special
Friends' Liturgy

Friday 12th September
2.40pm Assembly led by 5ZP

Friday 19th September
12.40pm Assembly led by
FBOK

Term 4 (11 weeks)
Mon 6th Oct – Fri 19th Dec

Friday 10th October
Start of Term/Mercy Day
Mass

Friday 17th October
2.40pm Assembly led by
FTW

Friday 24th October
2.40pm Assembly led by
6MM

Friday 31st October
Junior Sports Day
All Foundation-Year 2
students

Monday 3rd November
Student free day

Tuesday 4th November
Melbourne Cup Public
Holiday

Student free day

Friday 7th November
No Assembly

Friday 14th November
No Assembly

Friday 21st November
No Assembly

Mon 24th – Wed 26th Nov
Year 5 Camp

Thursday 18th December
Final 2025 day for students

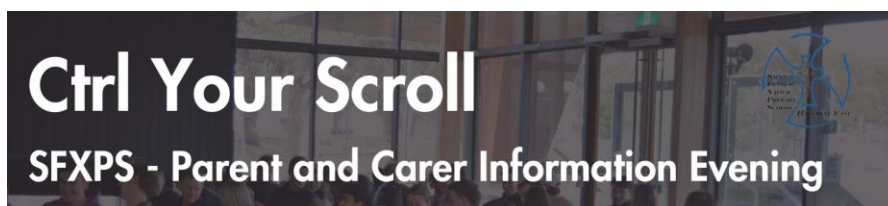
Our Year 5 and 6 students are in the Ctrl Your Scroll program, learning how to build healthier digital habits. Now, it's your turn!

Join us for an important discussion on managing screen time and fostering healthy digital habits for children. Learn practical strategies from the Ctrl Your Scroll program and discover how you can support your child in navigating the digital world. While the program focuses on our senior students, all parents are welcome. Let's work together to support mindful and balanced screen use for all children.

14 Tuesday 4th March

5:00pm - 6:00pm

In the SFX gym



What is Ctrl Your Scroll?

Ctrl Your Scroll is a research based, youth-led program that explores the impact which our technological devices are having on our wellbeing. Our workshop facilitators draw from personal experience and evidence based research to work with participants to develop a greater understanding of these effects, whilst also providing real-life effective strategies to reduce screen time, improve wellbeing and navigate the digital world safely

What do we cover in our Parents and Carers session?



We explore how young people are using social media and their devices. We'll break down the most popular apps, how they work, the potential risks involved, and practical steps you can take to help keep your kids safe online



All of our insights, education, and strategies are built on a foundation of collaboration. We empower and help parents/guardians to initiate meaningful conversations within their families, fostering a cooperative approach to devices in the household



Research indicates that demonstrating digital habits and behaviors has a significant impact. We provide caregivers and parents with up-to-date and practical information to support their children, whilst also offering strategies for them to take control of their own device usage and set positive examples



Our presenters Tom and Xavier present a **relatable, engaging and informative** workshop designed to help families navigate the increasingly difficult online world

You are invited to the SFXPS Parent/Carer Information Evening

When: Tuesday 4 March 5:00pm - 6:00pm

Where: St Francis Xavier PS 100 Fortune St, Ballarat East VIC 3350

www.ctrlyourscroll.com.au

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday February 23, 2025 Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

“But I tell you who hear me: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who ill-treat you. If anyone hits you on one cheek, let him hit the other one too; if someone takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what is yours, do not ask for it back. Do for others just what you want them to do for you.

“If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! And if you lend only to those from whom you hope to get it back, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount! No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back. You will then have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High God. For he is good to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands — all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you. *(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)*

Gospel reflection: Jesus is telling the disciples how he wants them to be. He asks them to be good to everyone and to treat everyone as they would want to be treated.

He asks them not to judge other people, to be kind and compassionate, and to forgive those who hurt them. He also asks them to be generous- giving people love, time, friendship and kindness.

This year is a special Jubilee Year, when we are called to try to share hope with others, especially those who are poor or who are treated unfairly in our world.

Our Challenge: What gift do you think you can give to others this week?

(Adapted from CAFOD website)



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Wellbeing News

Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

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 a video that delves deep into the realm of relationships, aptly titled 'The Power of Vulnerability'.

Brene Brown studies human connection - our ability to empathise, belong and love. In a poignant, funny talk at TEDxHouston, Brene shares a deep insight from her research, one that sent her on a personal quest to know herself as well as to understand humanity.

The following [SchoolTV](#) link contains the video.

Sending cheers your way,



Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing 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.



Why do NAPLAN? NAPLAN assesses the literacy and numeracy skills that students are learning through the school curriculum and allows parents/carers to see how their child is progressing against national proficiency standards. NAPLAN is just one aspect of a school's assessment and reporting process.

Reminder 2025 NAPLAN : Begins week 7 Wednesday 12th March for children in Years 3 & 5.

Our schedule for NAPLAN is:

Wednesday 12th March Yrs 5 & 3 Writing

Thursday 13th March Yrs 3 & 5 Reading

Friday 14th March Yrs 5 & 3 Conventions of Language

Monday 17th March Yrs 5 & 3 Numeracy

Tuesday 18th Catch up sessions

Wednesday 19th Catch up sessions

Enjoy your week,



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal/Learning Enhancement

My name is Lindy Harty and I am the new Literacy Leader at SFX. This week I would like to highlight the PhOrMeS curriculum being implemented across our Foundation to Year 2 classes.



At SFX, we use PhOrMeS, an evidence-informed, decoding and spelling curriculum to teach reading, handwriting and spelling from Foundation to Year 2. PhOrMeS stands for **Ph**onology, **Or**thography, **Me**mory, **S**emantics and **S**emantics.

PhOrMeS: Word Reading and Spelling follows the evidence base in teaching decoding and spelling at the whole-class level in the following ways:

- Decoding and Spelling are taught together within the same lesson.
- Systematic, Synthetic Phonics is used from Foundation to Year 2 to teach early decoding and spelling.
- Children are taught the most common sound-letter relationships and explicitly taught how to blend those sounds together to read words and segment those sounds to spell words.
- Phonemic Awareness is taught explicitly to Foundation children focusing on blending and segmenting sounds.
- Children are taught to read and spell a small selection of high-frequency, 'irregular' words (referred to as Weird Words) to ensure they can begin reading simple decodable texts from an early stage of their education.
- Children are taught to break long, multisyllabic words into smaller chunks (syllables) to decrease working memory demands.
- Lessons follow a sequence of explicit teaching with a gradual release of control (learning goal, concept development, modelling and guided practice). At SFX we refer to this as the 'I do', 'We do', 'You do', 'Do it Again' model.

- Interleaved daily, weekly, monthly and termly review is built into each lesson.
- Spelling is taught across many years and with layers required to achieve strong spelling skills (i.e. phonics, orthographic spelling rules, morphology, etymology).
- Explicit, Direct Instruction, which is based on Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction are embedded within the lessons.
- Children are supported and/or extended within daily lessons.
- Handwriting is explicitly taught.



Lindy Harty, **Literacy Leader**

Sport/Physical Education News

Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day

Last Tuesday's Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day at Llanberris was a magnificent event, with students, staff, and families all coming together to celebrate athleticism, teamwork, and school spirit. The day was filled with lots of energy, colour and fun. It was great to see all students having a go, trying their best and having fun!

Athletics Day is a wonderful showcase of the determination, talent, and spirit of our students. It was an amazing event for everyone involved and a huge thank you to everyone who participated, supported and helped make the day a success!

I am currently collating the scores from the day and look forward to announcing the winning House at next week's Monday morning assembly.





Division Swimming

Last Friday we had 10 students participating at the Division Swimming Sports at BALC. A big congratulations and well done to Albert S (Yr 4), Noah R, Kayden F, Levi C, Olivia F, Emily B (Yr 5), Isabelle S, Amelia S, Haddie M & Lachlan D (Yr 6). Every student should be extremely proud of their efforts on the day. Congratulations to Amelia who finished 3rd overall in the 11y Girls 50m Freestyle to qualify for the Regional event later in the term.

2025 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 8 - Friday Mar 21st - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Wednesday Mar 26th - Regional Swimming @ Horsham (qualifiers from Division swimming)
- Week 9 - Thursday Mar 27th - MDASA U9 Primary Schools Swim Sports (nominated students from F - Yr 2)

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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 Mr Down or Mr Carroll or drop them into the office.

Have an amazing week.



Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator

P&F News

Mix & Mingle – Join us for a night under the stars, mingle with fellow parents & make new friends

Friday 14th March 2025

SFX Lower Oval

Tickets can be purchased on Flexi Schools

Any questions please speak to Lisa Clark from the Parents & Friends or

email sfxpsc@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

SFX
Mix & Mingle

Join us for a fun night out under the stars! Meet fellow parents and make new friends!

Friday 14th March 2025

SFX Lower Oval

7pm - 11pm



Tickets: \$25

includes drink on arrival, grazing table/fingerfood & live music

Purchase your tickets on Flexi schools

Easter raffle donations welcome – please drop them into the office

Tuition Raffle - \$1500 off your school fees

To be drawn at mix & mingle

Purchase tickets via QR code or <https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2025fees>

Any questions please speak to Lisa Clark from the Parents & Friends or email sfxpsc@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au



The poster features a light grey background with a large white speech bubble in the center. At the top, the text '2025 SFX TUITION RAFFLE' is written in a bold, dark red font. Two blue-outlined illustrations of banknotes are positioned on either side of the speech bubble. Inside the speech bubble, the text 'Win \$1500 off your school fees' is written in a bold, blue font. Below the speech bubble, on the left, is the text 'Buy tickets NOW' above a QR code. On the right, a white rounded rectangle contains a list of ticket prices: '1 ticket \$10', '3 tickets \$25', '5 tickets \$35', and '8 tickets \$50'.

Hot Lunches Reminder

Hot lunches every Friday, order on Flexi Schools before 10am on a Thursday.

Zooper Doopers – Fridays at 2nd break \$1

WANTED – Second Hand St Francis Xavier Primary School Uniforms

If you have any clean second hand uniform items that you would like to donate to our Uniform Shop, please bring them into the school office. Thank you.

Working Bee – join us for SFX working bee
Sunday 23rd March 2025
Followed by a sausage sizzle
BYO gloves, shovels, rakes & wheel barrows
Any questions please speak to Lisa Clark from the Parents & Friends or
email sfxpsc@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

SFX

Working Bee

Come and help tidy up our school & mulch the garden beds

Sunday 23rd March 2025

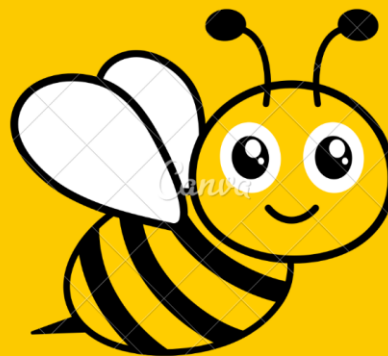
10am - 1pm

Followed by a sausage sizzle

Please bring gloves, shovels, rakes & wheelbarrows

Everyone welcome!
More hands make light work

Any questions,
Please contact Lisa on 0412 647 737
or
sfxpsc@sfxballarat.edu.au



Faith communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarkes Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon and Springbank

Ministry District Newsletter

Priests Frs Justin Driscoll & Matt Restall

Ballarat East Parish
Cathy Prunty and Natalie Gleeson
03 5332 6611
ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au
Tuesday – Friday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Bungaree and Gordon Parishes
Aileen Toohey
0492 903 409
bungaree@ballarat.catholic.org.au
gordon@ballarat.catholic.org.au
Tuesday – Thursday 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

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Tuesday – Thursday 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Our parishes are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults
Child Safety Officers: Ballarat East Parish – Emily Clarke; Bungaree & Gordon Parishes – Aileen Toohey

7th Sunday of the Year (C)

23rd February 2025

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday Feb 25 th	5.30 pm	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
Wednesday Feb 26 th	11.00 am	Mercy Place (All Welcome)	
Thursday Feb 27 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
	10:30 am	Funeral mass for John Quick Ss Peter and Paul's Buninyong	
Friday Feb 28 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
Saturday Mar 1 st	9.30 am	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses			
Saturday Mar 1 st - Vigil		Sunday Mar 2 nd	
6.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Ballarat East Gordon
6.30 pm	Dunnstown	10.30 am	Buninyong Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Lavinia Mary Spiller, Anne Kane, Patrick Shanahan, John Quick

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Jack Gittings, Laurie Mullane, Joan Shannon

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Pat Burvill, Elaine Conlan, Socorro De Chavez, Joan Egan, Evelyn Farrugia, Patricia (Patty) Gannon, Lyla Geary, Michelle Hall, (baby) Mia Hanrahan, John Healy, Sarah McLachlan, Thelma Keating, Carole Simmons, Owen Widdison

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Ballarat East Parish:

Rose Consignano, Judith Glaubitz, Martin McGettigan, Dianne McKeegan, Claire Stewart.

Bungaree Parish:

Damian Ryan & Chris Frawley (Bungaree), Barry Sheehan & Dianne Reynolds (Dunnstown), Dom Prendergast, Maurice Mahar & Marty Forbes (Clarkes Hill).

Gordon Parish:

Sue Daly & Brendan Maher (Springbank), Joan Bourke & Shane Carey (Gordon), Mark Conlan & Jim Leahy (Ballan).

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN OUR PARISHES

Saints Flexible Learning (Bakery Hill & Bungaree), St Brigid's Ballan, St Alipius' Ballarat East, St Francis Xavier Ballarat East, St Mary's Clarkes Hill, St Patrick's Gordon, Damascus College Mt Clear & Dunnstown, Emmaus Mt Clear.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Casserole Night
February 28th 6 pm – Ss. Peter & Paul's,
Buninyong

Baptism Preparation
March 6th 10.00 am or 5.30 pm
Mary Glowrey Hall – St. Patrick's Cathedral

SS. PETER & PAUL'S SOCIAL NIGHT

Ss. Peter & Paul's are hosting a Casserole/ Salad Night on Friday February 28th 2025 at 6.00pm at St Peter & Paul's Church Hall in Buninyong.

\$15 covers all wine beer and soft drink. Any profit to parish funds. Please bring a casserole or salad to share. All welcome.

THANK YOU



CatholicCare
VICTORIA

The CatholicCare
Victoria team extends

its heartfelt gratitude to your parish community for your contribution to the Bishop's Christmas Appeal. As the recipient of the \$5,000 donation from the Bishop's Christmas Appeal proceeds, your generosity and compassion will help us to continue supporting families, individuals, children, young people and the elderly, in our community. We are the Catholic Church's mission in action and we empower people to live their life to the full. Our services range from supporting people who need help accessing aged care services, and remaining independent at home, those that are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness; and those that are experiencing challenges with their mental health, or with relationships in their family. When families breakdown, we are there to ensure both parents and children have the support they need for their wellbeing and future. We have many services available in the Ballarat region and across Victoria. If you or someone you know needs support, please call 1800 123 228 or visit our website at www.catholiccarevic.org.au. Without the support of the parish communities like yours, we would not be able to continue our mission to build thriving communities, where everyone belongs. Together, we are making a positive difference in the lives of people every day.

RECONCILIATION PREPARATION

Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will begin in the parish with a Parent Information Session on Thursday March 6th. These meetings are compulsory for parents wishing to have their child receive the sacrament for the first time. Meetings will be held in the parish hall at 10.30 am and 6pm on this day. This sacrament precedes the preparation for the Sacrament of Eucharist which will in Term Two. If you are aware of anyone who would like to know more about this program, please ask them to contact the parish office.

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS TIMES

This year the season of Lent begins on March 5th. A number of Ash Wednesday Masses will be said across the Ministry District. Times are as follows:

Vigil Mass:	6.30 pm	Dunnstown
Wednesday:	9.15 am	Gordon
	9.30 am	Ballarat East
	10.30 am	Ballan
	11.00 am	Mercy Place
	6.00 pm	Buninyong

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS (WWCC)

A recent status check for our Working with Children Checks indicates that some parishioners have cards which have expired, while others have new cards which we have yet to witness. It is important that all WWCC are up to date. Please contact the parish office as soon as possible if you are unsure of the status of your Working with Children Check. Thank you.

ECUMENICAL WORLD DAY OF PRAYER, FRIDAY MARCH 7TH

St Paul's Uniting Church Ballan, 10.00am
Brown Hill Uniting Church, 10.00am
Skipton St Uniting Church Redan, 2.00pm
Ballarat Central Uniting Church, 5.00pm

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Supporting our priests: \$923
Maintenance of parish buildings: \$383.60
Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our parish. Your generosity is appreciated.
Counting team this week: No. 2

BAPTISMS

Oliver Jordy, Charlie Jac, Quinn Pippy
& Harry Mac McMaster
Child of Simon and Sachja McMaster

EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Due to a change made by Google to the sending of emails to Gmail accounts, we have had some difficulty with the sending of our bulletin in recent weeks. If you have not received your emailed copy of the bulletin in the past couple of weeks, please call the office and let us know.

BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM – ONLINE STUDY

The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) is a growing initiative to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere, online. This low-cost (\$50usd) online study and formation for employed or volunteer lay workers in parishes is available through our partner, Dayton University. The next Cycle begins March 10. There are 37 subjects to choose from – find one that interests you! Registrations are open now. Scan the QR code for more information or email djurdia.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 5337 7121.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & AT RISK ADULTS

The parishes within our ministry district are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults. As part of our commitment volunteers are asked to have a Working with Children Check (WWCC), which lasts for five years before needing to be updated. Along with the WWCC, we also ask our volunteers to complete a Safeguarding module. This module is different to the WWCC in that its aim is to educate volunteers so that they might recognise people who are at risk. We also have nominated Child Safety Officers within our parishes. At Ballarat East this is Emily Clarke, Principal at St. Alipius' School. Emily can be contacted through the school office. In the parishes of Bungaree and Gordon the Child Safety Officer is the Parish Co-ordinator, Aileen Toohey.

RCIA

St Alipius Parish is currently preparing four candidates (baptised) and catechumens (unbaptised) to be confirmed in the Church at Easter.

Beris, Iris, Vicky and Braydon have been accompanied over recent months by members of the parish community and on Saturday were part of a Retreat Day with Presentations and Testimonies from Parishioners.

The Rite of Naming for the RCIA will take place at the Vigil Mass this weekend.

The Rite of Election for catechumens and candidates will take place on **SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025 at 12.30pm in St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat.** The presider will be Bishop Paul Bird CSsR. Everyone is welcome to attend this ceremony. Please keep them in your prayers as they journey together to deepen their faith and seek Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life for us all.

RCIA FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE

The RCIA program also caters for children who are old enough to want to learn more about the church. Last weekend at 6pm and 9am Masses we met Lawrence, Halle, Millie, Arthur, Arlo, Claudia and Henry who are coming together to learn more about the Catholic faith. On their first evening together they enjoyed exploring the church and asking some great questions. In the weeks leading up to receiving the sacraments of Initiation in May, these children will work with us in the parish, but also at home with their families. Please continue to prayer for these children and their families.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA'S GAZA CRISIS APPEAL

We urgently need your support. The ceasefire means more aid can assist people in Gaza, but the need is immense and the recovery long. Gaza's people cannot recover alone. They need the support of the global community to survive and rebuild. Please donate to Caritas Australia's Gaza Crisis Appeal. You can donate online www.caritas.org.au/gaza or phone 1800 024 413.

The Way of Compassion and Love

Reflection on the Gospel – 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time C
(Luke 6:27-38)

-Veronica M. Lawson



The classic message of today's gospel is addressed to "those who are listening", those who hear, those who are paying attention. To hear, to pay attention and respond to the heart of the message that follows, namely to love your enemies and to be compassionate as God is compassionate, calls for an extraordinary expansiveness of spirit only possible in those who are totally open to the power of God's Spirit working in their lives. It is not easy to love one's enemy particularly when the enemy, the one subtly undermining or manipulating you, comes in the guise of friend. Yet, even in the face of subtle enmity, the message is clear: do not respond in kind, respond instead with love, compassion and unreserved forgiveness. It is also important to rise above the pettiness of the other and refuse to be a victim. To the one who takes away your coat, you offer your shirt as well. In this way, the real power remains with the one who is too expansive to retaliate.

Luke's late first century communities were well acquainted with the Jewish traditions that informed their faith, even if many were not themselves Jewish. The Jewish Christians in the community as well as the "God-fearers" who accepted Jesus of Nazareth as Saviour and Christos or Messiah had been introduced to the God of steadfast love (*hesed*) and womb-compassion (*rahamim*).

They believed that God was concerned about justice in the legal system (*mishpat*) and right relationship (*sedeqah*) between people and nations, ever ready to forgive those who turn away from injustice and wrongdoing.

The songs and prayers of the Jewish heritage reminded them constantly of the compassionate ways of God in their history and in their personal lives. When the Lukan Jesus tells these people to be merciful or compassionate as God is compassionate, they know what he means. They also know the cost of compassion in situations where retaliation is the more spontaneous instinct. God-like compassion remains the stance required of Christian disciples in the face of opposition and hatred, even the opposition that comes in the guise of friendship.

Compassion, forgiveness and love of enemies are rare commodities in international politics and in the resolution of global conflicts as well as in personal relationships. Sadly, the major trouble spots on our globe witness to constant retaliation and face-saving measures that harden positions and exacerbate division. There is ample evidence that hatred, fuelled by injustice, is begetting violence in many parts of our planetary home. And yet the only way to break the cycles of violence that perpetuate death and destruction is the way of compassion and love. God-like compassion requires that we, as nations and as individuals, let go of past hurts, examine our tenaciously held opinions, try to see the world from the perspective of those we mistrust and work for peace that is grounded in love. Countless troubled communities continue to yearn for such God-like compassion.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Samuel 26:2, 7-9

Corinthians 15:45-49

Luke 6:27-38

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sirach 27:4-7

Corinthians 15:54-58

Luke 6:39-45



Central Kindergarten Registration

Have you thought about kindergarten?

In Victoria, children can start kindergarten at 3 years old, which means two years of **free** kindergarten before school.

Registering for kindergarten

- Register your child from the **January of the year they turn 2 years old** for both 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten.
- Put in up to three preferences.
- Registration is free, and you can change your preferences and update your details at any time.
- Registrations for **free kindergarten** are accepted throughout the year.



For more information and to register

simply scan the QR code or visit ballarat.vic.gov.au/kindergarten

Do you have questions or need support?

Please contact Family and Children's Services

☎ 5320 5720 ✉ kindergarten@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Translation services are available.



BALLARAT NORTH UNITED SOCCER CLUB

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February
6pm
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EXIES ACRY BASKETBALL CLUB

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Girls Under 8 & 10
Boys Under 8



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For more information contact:

**Girls Coordinator - Marissa Ford
0414 852 795 girlscoordinator@exiesacmy.com**

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0400 223 887 boyscoordinator@exiesacmy.com**