



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Wednesday 12th March 2025
Term 1 Week 7

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

Friday 14th March

2.40pm Assembly led by 4KB

7-11pm SFX Mix & Mingle
on lower oval

Thursday 20th March

Last Book Club Issue 2
order day

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

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

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear Families,

Ballarat was certainly at its best, basking in the vibrant energy of the Begonia Festival. Events like these create lasting memories—moments our children will cherish and perhaps draw upon in the years to come.

What childhood memories do you hold dear? Maybe you recall special family gatherings, moments of celebration, or simply the joy of spending time together. Often, it's not the grand occasions that stay with us but the little moments—laughter shared over a meal, spontaneous adventures, or the warmth of being surrounded by loved ones.

One of the great joys for our teachers is welcoming students back after a break and hearing their stories. It's not always the details that matter most, but the excitement on their faces as they relive their experiences. Sometimes, it's tales of faraway adventures; other times, it's the simple joys—a barbecue mishap, an extra scoop of ice cream on a hot day, or a family game night filled with laughter. These everyday moments are the ones that shape us.

As we ease into this shortened school week, I hope you continue to embrace and create special moments with your family—today, tomorrow, and well into the future

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



A Prayer for Lent

Lord, Teach me a new freedom.

Freedom to reject comparison and to embrace uniqueness.

Freedom to cut ties with greed and to feast on love.

Freedom to abstain from overindulgence and to feast on self-control.

Freedom to leave behind selfish thoughts and to focus on the needs of others.

Freedom to fend off insecurity and to embrace grace.

Lord, at this time of Lent,

Thank you for the freedom you bring.

Amen.



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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
SSMC

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

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

A matter of deep concern

I would like to take a moment to address a recent incident involving the inappropriate use of social media by a student at St Francis Xavier who sent a threatening message to another student via the social media platform TikTok.

As soon as we became aware of the situation, we took appropriate steps in line with our school's policies and values, including contacting the parents of the students involved and ensuring the removal of the offensive material.

Our primary focus remains on education, guidance, and ensuring that students understand the impact of their online actions. In partnership with external agencies, we are actively working with the students and families involved to offer support and reinforce appropriate behaviour.

We understand that incidents like this can raise concerns, and we want to assure you that we are addressing the matter with care and diligence. As a school community, we believe in supporting students as they learn and grow, helping them navigate challenges while reinforcing positive values and responsible use of digital platforms.

We kindly ask for your support in maintaining the dignity and privacy of all students involved by refraining from sharing or discussing the video further. We encourage families to model empathy and discretion and urge you to use this as an opportunity to discuss digital responsibility with your children and reinforce the importance of respectful online behaviour.

At St Francis Xavier, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all students, both in-person and online. If you have any questions or need guidance on discussing these topics at home, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

Thank you for your partnership in fostering a positive and safe learning environment for all students.

Welcome to Fulltime School!

We welcome our Foundation students to full-time school this week. After a period of settling in to school life you are now ready to take on the challenges of learning across 5 days per week. Well done students, and welcome to full-time school!

School Closure Day

Thank you to all families for supporting our school closure day yesterday. We spent the day working with the team from Blossom Tree Psychology. Over the course of the day, we learned a lot about how we can support children and families as we all grow and learn together.

NAPLAN

Our Year 3 and Year 5 students will be taking part in the NAPLAN tests over the coming weeks. This national assessment program provides information to federal and state governments about student learning across the Country. It also provides the school with rich data regarding student learning and is used as one of many pieces of information to inform individual student progress. Best of luck to our Year 3 and 5 students who are looking forward to their NAPLAN sessions over the coming weeks.

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

Mix and Mingle



Have you purchased your ticket for our Mix & Mingle event on Friday evening? If not, It's not too late! This gathering is our welcome event for all new families (and not so new!) and is one of the many highlights of our school year. Come along and enjoy an evening under the stars at school on the lower oval and meet up with some new friends and old. See you there.

Autumn Working-Bee

Would you like to join our special Autumn Working Bee? If so, we would love to welcome you! We are hoping to spread mulch on all garden beds which will require a huge effort. BYO shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows and a willingness to move mountains. See you there on Sunday 23 March from 10.00am until 1.00pm.



Foundation/Prep Enrolment 2026 – Existing Families

Enrolments for children of **existing** and **new families** who start Foundation/Prep in 2026 are open.

Parents of **existing** and **new families** who have a child to start in 2026 - must 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.

Enrolments close 22nd May 2025

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday March 9, 2025 First Sunday of Lent (Year C)

Gospel: Luke 4:1-13

Jesus returned from the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit; and was led by the Spirit into the desert, where he was tempted by the Devil for forty days. In all that time he ate nothing, so that he was hungry when it was over. The Devil said to him, "If you are God's Son, order this stone to turn into bread." But Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Human beings cannot live on bread alone.'"

Then the Devil took him up and showed him in a second all the kingdoms of the world. "I will give you all this power and all this wealth," the Devil told him. "It has all been handed over to me, and I can give it to anyone I choose. All this will be yours, then, if you worship me." Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him!'"

Then the Devil took him to Jerusalem and set him on the highest point of the Temple, and said to him, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down from here. For the scripture says, 'God will order his angels to take good care of you.' It also says, 'They will hold you up with their hands so that not even your feet will be hurt on the stones.'" But Jesus answered, "The scripture says, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

When the Devil finished tempting Jesus in every way, he left him for a while.

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)

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Gospel reflection: What do you remember from the reading today?

Jesus goes out into the desert for 40 days to be alone and to pray. 40 is a special number in the bible and means for a long time. Jesus is trying to become closer to God, to listen to what God is asking him to do and to find strength for his work of spreading the good news.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent. Lent is a time when we try to be a bit like Jesus in the desert. We spend 40 days trying to come closer to God, so that we are ready for Easter. We try to pray more and share more. We try to think less about ourselves and more about other people – our neighbours at home and around the world. We try to care for our common home and the other-than-human

Our Challenge: How can we be in right relationship with God, with each other and with our Earth? (adapted from CAFOD website)



Christine Meneely, **Religious Education Leader**

Wellbeing News

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

SchoolTV Special Report: Social Media & Comparison Culture



Young people today are growing up in a world where exposure to other people's lives is constant. Through social media and other platforms, they are regularly presented with curated highlights - from flawless photos and academic milestones to the latest fashion trends and fitness achievements. This continuous stream of idealised content fuels what is known as comparison culture, where self-worth is often measured by how someone stacks up against others.

For children and adolescents, who are still figuring out who they are, this culture can be particularly damaging. Constantly comparing their appearance, achievements, or social standing to friends, influencers, and even strangers can lead to unrealistic expectations and a skewed sense of self-worth. This relentless need to measure up can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and anxiety - undermining both confidence and emotional wellbeing.

It's vital that parents and caregivers understand how deeply comparison culture can influence a child's self-perception and sense of value. Left unchecked, it can foster perfectionism and a dependence on external validation, where a 'like' or comment becomes the measure of their worth.

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The good news is families have a powerful role to play in helping young people navigate these challenges. This Special Report will help you empower your child to build the resilience and confidence needed to navigate today's comparison-driven world and embrace their own unique path.

Here is the link to our Special Report:

https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-social-media-comparison-culture-au



Sending cheers your way,

Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing Leader**

Curriculum News



This week begins our NAPLAN for our YRs 3&5 students. Below is a timetable of when each session will be taking place.

	Wednesday 12th March	Thursday 13th March	Friday 14th March	Monday 17th March	Tuesday 18th March	Wednesday 19th March
9:10am 10:20pm (Block 1)	Year 5 Writing (42 mins)	Year 3 Reading (45 mins)	Year 3 Conventions of Language (45 mins)	Year 5 Numeracy (50 mins)	Catch up session	Catch up session
11.50 am 1:00pm (Block 2)	Year 3 Writing (40 mins)	Year 5 Reading (50 mins)	Year 5 Conventions of Language (45 mins)	Year 3 Numeracy (45 mins)	Catch up session	Catch up session
1.50pm - 3:00pm (Block 3)				Yr 3 Catch Up Writing	Catch up session	Catch up session

Enjoy your week,

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



Enhancing Structured Literacy Learning with Ochre Education Units

Our school is excited to implement the **Ochre Education Literacy Units** for students in Years 3 to 6. These high-quality resources, developed by education experts, provide a structured approach to reading, writing, and language development.

Each term, students will engage in in-depth novel studies, allowing them to explore rich storytelling while developing critical thinking skills. These units also strengthen **grammar, spelling, and vocabulary**, ensuring students build strong literacy foundations. With clear, engaging lessons and comprehensive support materials, these units help all students become **confident readers, expressive writers, and lifelong learners**.

The **Literacy Block** for Years 3 to 6 includes:

- **Daily Review** – is designed to be a fast-past, rapid retrieval of previously taught content. Students have the opportunity to practise skills and recall knowledge they have previously mastered.
- **Literacy Skills** – Develops handwriting, reading fluency, and typing skills.
- **English Block** – Focuses on text-level reading, vocabulary, sentence-level writing, and text-level writing.

Ochre’s **Reading Spine** was developed through a rigorous, intentional process of selecting high quality literature for students to engage in. It features a balance of new and established works selected for their rich content and ability to build students’ background knowledge. These texts represent excellent examples of genre and style, aligning with curriculum requirements while fostering a love of reading. The novel is the focus text for **developing reading comprehension**. The themes and content from the novel are then used as a foundation to guide vocabulary, sentence and text-level writing instruction. The novel may be different to the genre students will learn to write in. For example, in the novel/literature study for Matilda, students will be writing a narrative and also a persuasive text.

This term, students in Years 3 to 6 are studying the following:

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
<p>Matilda by Roald Dahl</p>  <p><i>A literary classic chosen for its text complexity and challenging ideas and issues.</i></p>	<p>Kensuke’s Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo</p>  <p><i>This text explores the full spectrum of emotion with rich vocabulary, language and text structure. Selected for its diverse representation and global perspectives.</i></p>	<p>War Horse by Michael Morpurgo</p>  <p><i>This text introduces students to themes of the power of compassion and the enduring strength of true friendship.</i></p>	<p>Rivet Boy by Barbara Henderson</p>  <p><i>A historical fiction that draws inspiration from real events centred around the construction of the Forth Bridge, with intricate details from the Victorian era and notable figures of the time.</i></p>



Lindy Harty, **Literacy Leader**

MDASA U/9 Encouragement Swimming Sports

This event is available to all students who will be 9 years old and under as at 31/12/2025. It is being held in the 25m pool at the Ballarat Aquatic Lifestyle Centre on Thursday March 27 from 7pm. For further information and details on how to enter please refer to the PAM notification

Term 2 - Ballarat Netball Association - After School Netball

SFX is looking forward to entering teams in the BNA Primary School after school netball season in Term 2. - Season is 8 wks long starting Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th May - Teams are entered under the SFX name and coached by parents - There is a Yr 3/4 and a Yr 5/6 competition - Competitions are Tuesday's or Wednesday's - Term 2 is participation only, no finals - Game times 4pm / 4:50pm / 5:40pm - Great for beginners or for those with experience Please see PAM notification for options. Expressions of interest close Friday April 18

2025 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 8 - Friday Mar 21st - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6) - TBC
- 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 3)

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 a fantastic week.



Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator

P&F News

- **Mix & Mingle – don't forget to purchase your tickets on Flexi Schools for Mix & Mingle to be held on the lower oval at school this coming Friday night – tickets can also be purchased on the night if you miss out purchasing them on Flexi schools**
- **Tuition Raffle – to be drawn at Mix & Mingle – don't forget to purchase your tickets for \$1500 off your school fees**
- **Working Bee – Sunday 23rd March – all welcome**
- **2nd Hand Uniform Pop up shop – Wednesday 26th March 8.30am**
- **Zooper Doopers – Fridays at 2nd break \$1**
- **Hot Lunches reminder – Hot Lunches every Friday, order on Flexi Schools before 10am on a Thursday.**
- **Easter Raffle is now live – donations still being accepted – to be drawn Monday 31st March**

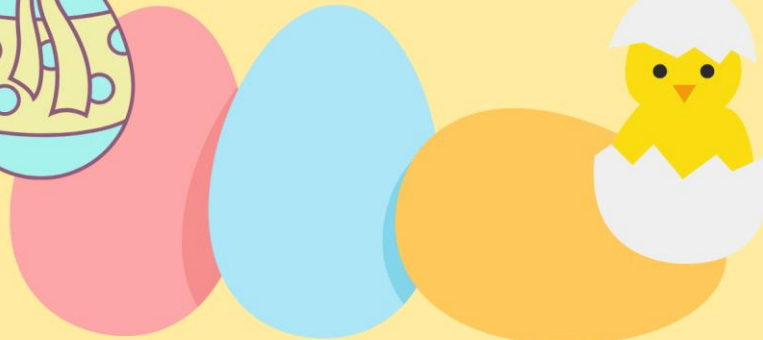
SFX Easter Raffle

SCAN HERE AND BUY TICKETS NOW



<https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2025-easter>

1 ticket \$2
3 tickets for \$5
7 tickets for \$10
16 tickets for \$20



*drawn Monday 31st March

2025 SFX TUITION RAFFLE



Win \$1500 off
your school fees

Buy tickets NOW



1 ticket \$10
3 tickets \$25
5 tickets \$35
8 tickets \$50

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

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



Attachments

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 7th March Hosted by 5CC Theme: Justice.

We make fair choices.

Justice means being the best person we can be.

We always try our hardest, even when it's difficult, just like Jesus did.

FLP	Ellyse Slatter and Elijah Harwood	4JS	Milla Rowland and Connor White
FGJ	Hudson Nicholson and Finn Tongs	4ML	Hudson Ryan and Sophie Olechnowicz
FBO'K	Daphne Reus and Nehemiah Abraham	4KB	James Cyples & Savee Thuse
FTW	Rupert Howard and AMelia Reus	5CC	Henry Flynn and Maddie Purtell
1JS	Sophie Morvell Huxson Backman	5ZP	Minka Henjak & Jackson Roberts
1EM	Maya Loader and Ada Mason	5SM	Gabriel Dunne & Chloe Wilson
1GT	Finn Sutcliffe, Flossie Bourke	6PB	Zach Cooper and Lois Cummins
2RR	Oscar Martin and Harriet Walshe	6ZA	Asha Toohey & Lachie De Lorenzo
2MH	Billy Toohey and Olive Anderson	6MM	Ava Vallance and Nicholas Hyland
2TS	River Harney and Charlotte Carter	EE	Leighton Troon and Angus Burbidge
3LL	Freddy Dreher and Nicolas Taylor	PA	Rhys Bell and Myles Youl
3JT	Eddy Heinrich and Sutton Answer	VA	Lilly Bye, Paddy Robinson, Asher Sutcliffe (3DG)
3DG	Jude Reus and Edie Giles	PE	
		Tch	Ella Crumpton & Lily Davison
Principal's Award: Sadie Buntsma for caring about our newest students each morning. Arpan Shrestha for caring for our school environment			

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 28th February Hosted by 6PB Theme: Excellence

We show our personal best.

Excellence means being the best person we can be.

We always try our hardest, even when it's difficult, just like Jesus did.

FLP	Eden Vanderkley and Peyton Hardup	4JS	Lawrence Wilson and Livia Pietrantuono
FGJ	Jax Nelson and Archie Stevens	4ML	Daisy Howard and Jameson Campbell
FBO	Riley Smith and Elsie O'Loughlin	4KB	Edie Waldron & Freddie Lynch
FTW	Teddy Veal and Evie Edgar	5CC	Olive Lenaghan and Joe Trigg
1JS	Sophie Quinlan & Mille Ryan & Max Banwell	5ZP	Evie Answer & Noah Irving
1EM	Alina Osciak and Harvey Banwell	5SM	Bonnie Giles, Hannah Firth
1GT	Will Green and Stella Hipke	6PB	Margot Castles and Myles Youl
2RR	Indi Nestor and Remy Hansen	6ZA	Elizabeth Baruwa & Riley Ponsonby
2MH	Alfie Brennan and Matilda Walshe	6MM	Elly Kane and Murphy Noonan
2TS	Nevon Thuse and Amayah Moore	EE	
3LL	Rory Dunne Hazel De Lorenzo	PA	Alfie Sosinski 6MM and Noah Chibnall 6PB for their focus and effort whilst learning the guitar
3JT	Evie Loader and Thiago Motta Crespo	VA	Rory Dunne, Arlo Troon and Hazel De Lorenzo (3LL)
3DG	Winter James and Harvey Slater	PE	
		Tch	Stella Hipke & Blake Pitman
Principal's Award: Edward Lloyd, Hamish Lloyd, James Hocking, Nick Hyland and Jed Hynes			

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

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

1st Sunday of Lent (C)

9th March 2025

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday Mar 11 th	5.30 pm	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
Wednesday Mar 12 th	11.00 am	Mercy Place (All Welcome)	
Thursday Mar 13 th	9.30 am 10.30 am	St. Alipius Ballarat East St. Brigid's Ballan	
Friday Mar 14 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
Saturday Mar 15 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses			
Saturday Mar 15 th - Vigil		Sunday Mar 16 th	
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

Pauline Prince, Max Hills, Gary Johnson, Kay Cocking, Helen Johnson

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Megan Dunn (McGuigan), 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 Consignado, 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).



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Parish Finance Council
March 13th @ 7:30 am

Liturgy Committee Meeting
March 13th @ 5 pm

2nd Rite of Reconciliation
March 18th following the 5.30 pm Mass

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting
March 20th @ 6.30 pm

DIOCESAN E-NEWS

The latest edition of e-News has been published and is available to view at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/> or you can subscribe on this page to receive future editions straight to your email address.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

We are currently considering the reintroduction of Children's Liturgy within the parish. This program has been quite successful in the past and we would love to be able to offer it again. To run Children's Liturgy we would require two adults for each session, so we are asking for an indication from anyone who may like to know more about what is involved. At this stage we would plan to have the program on Saturday evenings where children would leave the church after the opening prayer and return during the Procession of Gifts. While out children participate in a program, hearing scripture and discussing it at a level which is appropriate to them. If you would be interested in finding out more, please contact Cathy at the parish office.

BAPTISMS

Matilda Wren Sternberg
Child of Brian Sternberg and Emma Davie

Evelyn Brielle Lemasson
Child of Christopher and Cassandra Lemasson

LENTEN REFLECTIONS IN THE MINISTRY DISTRICT

Following 10.30am Mass at Ballan on Thursdays March 13th, March 20th, March 27th, April 3rd and April 10th. 10.30am. Facilitated by Dr. Rosemary Canavan, the Lenten Reflection will be guided by the framework of the *Conversation in the Spirit*. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the Gospel and readings of the week as we come together as one ministry district. All are welcome to attend.

Fr Matt will be guiding a Lenten and Easter reflection group at St Alipius every Saturday during March and April between 10.15am and 11.00am. To join, email Fr Matt at: matt.restall@ballarat.catholic.edu.au

INTRODUCTION TO THE IGNATIAN WORKOUT FOR LENT RETREAT

This Lent, become a spiritual athlete and join Tim for *The Ignatian Workout for Lent*. Each Monday he'll share audio reflections accompanied by suggestions for prayer and action. The online retreat begins this week of and continues through Easter Week.

[The Ignatian Workout for Lent: An Online Retreat with Tim Muldoon](#)

AGED CARE PASTORAL CARE INFORMATION SESSION

On Thursday March 27th there will be an information session for those who would be interested in finding out more about support the pastoral care of residents in our local aged care facilities. If you are interested in attending this session please email Fr. Matt.

matt.restall@ballarat.catholic.org.au

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Supporting our priests: \$1013
Maintenance of parish buildings: \$283.20

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

Counting team this week: No. 4

PARISH DIRECTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Parish Pastoral Council is currently looking to update the parish directory, so if you are a member of a current group within the parish please collect a questionnaire from the foyer of the church and complete it. The completed form should be dropped into the parish office by March 20th. We thank you for taking the time to help us update our parish related information.

EXECUTIVE REPORT FROM THE 2024 DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

In early 2024 Bishop Paul Bird asked the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Panel to facilitate a Diocesan Assembly as part of its 150th year anniversary celebrations. Delegates from all communities including our twenty-nine Parishes, Diocesan Agencies, Councils and Commissions, Catholic Education, Catholic Health and Aged Care, Catholic Social Services, Clergy and Religious Congregations within the Diocese were invited to attend over two days at the gathering held in November. The focus of discussion at the assembly was leadership and governance and how each can be promoted within our Diocesan communities to build a synodal, missionary church. In preparation for the assembly, there were many smaller gatherings throughout the Diocese to reflect on existing leadership within our communities and to share thoughts in a prayerful atmosphere, which followed a method of 'Conversations in the Spirit'. This process of 'Synodal Conversations' was then also the methodology adopted at the assembly.

Delegates from our Ministry District were Rachel Allen & Cathy Prunty (Ballarat East), Di Reynolds & Damian Ryan (Bungaree), Mark Conlan and Sue Daly (Gordon) as well as Frs Justin & Matt.

The Key Themes from the assembly are:

- Mission & Identity
- Relationships
- Transformation & Conversion
- Formation
- Structural Change
- Trust

The executive report can be found on the Diocesan website and the most [recent enews](#)

125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AT SPRINGBANK

St Michael's Church, Springbank, will celebrate its 125th Anniversary with Bishop Paul Bird at a Vigil Mass on Saturday, March 29, 2025 commencing at 6.30pm with a light supper to follow. All welcome.

CHOIR FOR MASS OF THE OILS 2025

Singers and musicians in the diocese are invited to join the music group which is being formed for the Mass of the Oils on Monday, April 14, 2025. Practice times are Sundays, March 30, April 6 and April 13 at 6.15pm (following 5.00pm Mass). Please contact Julie Boyd in the Pastoral Ministry Office to register your interest julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 5337 7159.

ANOINTING MASS

Volunteers are needed to help transport people to the anointing mass at St Alipius at 11:30 AM on Friday, April 11. The mass will be followed by a light lunch in the hall. Please let the office know if you can help transport people who would like to attend.

DAMASCUS COLLEGE BALLARAT 2025 REUNIONS

Damascus College warmly welcomes the Classes of 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015 to celebrate the 2025 Reunion Day! Join us as we reconnect, reminisce, and honour these milestone anniversaries on Saturday, March 29, 2025 at Damascus College, 1412 Geelong Road, Mt Clear. The day will begin with a free welcome reception from 2.00pm – 4:00pm (doors open at 1.30pm for registration). Enjoy light refreshments, drinks, a campus tour, and some simple formalities during this shared gathering, followed by a group photo. The after party for each cohort will continue at their own private individual locations from 7:00pm onwards. Full event details and tickets at

<https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/community/alumni/alumni-reunions-events>

“Power-With” rather than “Power-Over”

Reflection on the Gospel-1st Sunday of Lent Year C

(Luke 4:1-11)

Veronica M. Lawson RSM

Lent is a time for personal as well as group reflection, a time for entering into the “wilderness” or “desert place” and grappling with the mysteries of life. While deserts are often depicted as uninhabited or desolate regions, anyone who has spent time in such places knows that the desert supports a rich diversity of other-than-human life. Human retreat to the wilderness can be an opportunity to encounter God in the unfamiliar and to understand oneself in relation to the other-than-human. It can reveal to us our capacities for right relationship with God, with each other, and with the Earth. Right relationship resides in “power-with” rather than “power-over”.

In Israel’s story, the wilderness is the place of testing for God’s people: “Remember the long way that your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness...testing you to know what was in your heart” (Deuteronomy 8:2). Jesus is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and, like so many human beings before and since, is “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness to be “tested” there. [“Tested” is a more accurate translation of the Greek *peirazein* than the usual “tempted”].

The three-fold drama of the testing of Jesus in the wilderness is about the proper exercise of power and about trust in a loving God. In refusing to turn the stones of the wilderness into bread in order to satisfy his own hunger, the

Lukan Jesus demonstrates that he is not prepared to exercise power over the other-than-human Earth, even if he had the capacity to work such magic. By refusing to accept the “glory of all the kingdoms of the world”, he shows that power over the human communities of the Earth is not “of God” and that worship belongs to God alone. Finally, in refusing to cast himself from the parapet of Israel’s holiest shrine, the Jerusalem Temple, he makes it clear that he is not prepared to test the power of God to rescue him from a self-inflicted death or to use God’s holy place to such ends. The Lukan Jesus passes the tests that the people Israel failed in the wilderness of Sinai.

Adelaide priest, Michael Trainor, in a wonderfully sensitive reading of Luke’s gospel, detects three ecological ethical principles in today’s gospel reading: 1) Earth is to be cared for and treated respectfully, not ravaged through greed; 2) All ecological and environmental engagement is grounded in and enhanced by one’s communion with God; and 3) Earth’s resources are to be respected by all and not usurped as a means of power and control by one over another (*About Earth’s Child* 2012, 107-109). These principles derive from today’s gospel story as a whole with its three-fold testing and from Jesus’ three-fold response to these tests. As Earth’s people and Earth’s bounty are exploited to wage war in so many places, we pray with all our being that peace and order will prevail.

THIS WEEK’S READINGS

1st Sunday of Lent

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS

2nd Sunday of Lent

Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18

Philippians 3:17 – 4:1

Luke 9:28-36

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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.