



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 15th December 2025
Term 4 Week 11

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 4 (11 weeks)

Mon 6th Oct – Fri 19th Dec

Tuesday 16th December
5.30pm Yr 6 Graduation
Liturgy in our Gym

Thursday 18th December
12.40pm Assembly in Gym
Final 2025 day for students
2.20pm finish

Wednesday 28th Jan 2026
Classes resume for all
students

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

We've made it to the end of another wonderful year!

On behalf of the staff at Saint Francis Xavier Primary School, I want to sincerely thank you for your support throughout 2025. Your help with classroom projects, homework, dress-up days, hot chocolates, hot lunches, Zooper-Doopers, excursions, camps, and so much more has been genuinely appreciated by our staff and students. Together, through words and deeds, we have continued to build a strong and faith-filled Christian community. Thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge our remarkable staff, who work tirelessly to meet the needs of every child. Their dedication, professionalism and care are evident in their daily interactions across the school. To our office team, support staff, maintenance crew and teachers — thank you for the many ways you contribute to the life of our school.

And to our students: you are the reason our school exists. You inspire us, challenge us, and bring joy to our work each day. You have worked hard, grown in so many ways, and truly earned your holidays. Thank you for all you bring to our community.

As we conclude the year, I wish every member of our school community a joyful and peaceful Christmas. May the blessings of the Holy Family be with you at this special time. May your days together be rich in love, and may your summer break be filled with rest, fun and adventure.



God bless,

Mark Hogbin



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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.*

End of Year – Start of Year

Classes cease for the 2025 school year on Thursday 18 December at 2.20pm. Classes resume for all students (Foundation - Year 6) on Wednesday 28 January 2026. Happy holidays!



Making a Scene at Christmas

Have you visited the Bridge Mall recently? If not, call in to the 'Making a Scene at Christmas' shop and have a look at the Christmas nativity scenes on display. Some of our children have enjoyed making their own Christmas nativities this year so this is a great opportunity to have a look at some nativities from different countries around the world. Pop in and enjoy some beautiful Christmas scenes for free!

Events at Bondi Beach

This morning at our regular school assembly we prayed for those people affected by shocking incidents in Sydney on the weekend. As part of our commitment to our mercy values and our desire for peace, I encourage all families to remember the Jewish community in your prayers. We will keep our peace candle burning in the chapel this week and invite any members of our community to drop in for a few moments if you would like to spend some time in silent prayer.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY St. Alipius Parish will hold Children's Liturgy each Saturday evening during Advent at their 6pm Mass. All children are welcome to attend. The children will be taken out after the opening prayer and will return during the Procession of Gifts. While out the children will complete an activity related to the readings for that Mass. We hope to see you there.

Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday December 14, 2025 Third Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist heard in prison about the things that Christ was doing and he sent some of his disciples to him. "Tell us," they asked Jesus, "are you the one John said was going to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing: the blind can see, the lame can walk, those who suffer from dreaded skin diseases are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead are brought back to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. How happy are those who have no doubts about me!"

While John's disciples were leaving, Jesus spoke about him to the crowds: "When you went out to John in the desert, what did you expect to see? A blade of grass bending in the wind? What did you go out to see? A man dressed up in fancy clothes? People who dress like that live in palaces! Tell me, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes indeed, but you saw much more than a prophet. For John is the one of whom the scripture says: 'God said, I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.' I assure you that John the Baptist is greater than anyone who has ever lived. But the one who is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than John.

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)

Gospel reflection: John the Baptist wants to make sure that Jesus is really the special person that he has been waiting for, so he sends some friends to check. Jesus answers them by telling them that he is the one who has come to heal the sick and to bring good news to the poor. But what does it mean to bring good news to people who are poor?

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Around the world, people have all been working for a long time to make the world a better place and to help all the people in our global family to live a good life.

There is some good news to share:

- 9% of people were living in extreme poverty in 2020. This is down from 16% in 2010 and 36% in 1990
- 74% of people have safe water to drink – up from 61% in the year 2000. (Statistics taken from the Sustainable development goals website: [United Nations](#))

This is all really good news but there is still more work to be done. We can all do something to change the world for the better and to help those who are in need.

Our Challenge: How will you try to be like Jesus, helping others and bringing good news to people who are poor?
(Adapted from CAFOD website)

A Message of Thanks

As we come to the end of the school year, I want to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Religious Education Leader at St Francis Xavier over the past 4 years. It has been an honour to walk alongside our students, staff and families in faith—celebrating liturgies and Masses, nurturing children’s spiritual growth and helping to build a community centred on the life and love of Jesus.

In 2026, I will be moving into a new role as the Mental Health in Primary School Leader. I am very excited for the opportunity to support the wellbeing of our children and to contribute to this important work within our school.

I am delighted to welcome Michael Marshall as our new Religious Education Leader. Michael brings fresh energy and a deep commitment to Catholic education. I know he will be warmly embraced and supported by our community and I wish him every blessing as he begins this next chapter in his career.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of my journey in this role. It has been both a joy and a privilege. Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a safe school holiday break.



Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader
MHIPS Leader (Mental Health in Primary School Leader)

Curriculum News

Seesaw Posts:

Keep an eye out for our final Seesaw posts for the year! Last week was a busy one, with plenty of updates added to your child’s journal. I encourage you to take some time to browse through these posts and celebrate all the wonderful moments and achievements from 2025.

Week of December 7 - December 14 at St Francis Xavier Primary School - Ballarat East



501
New Student Posts



99
Comments

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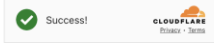


Login

Please login with your credentials, as supplied by your school.

Email Address

Password



[Forgot Password?](#)

[Sign In](#)

Semester 2 Reports will be released tomorrow Tuesday 16th December at 4:00pm

I encourage you to take the time to read the report thoroughly and discuss the feedback with your child. Most importantly, take this opportunity to celebrate your child's efforts and successes throughout the 2025 school year.

Teaching and Learning

As the year draws to a close, I would like to sincerely thank our parents and carers for the vital role you play in supporting your child's learning journey. Learning is most successful when school and home work in partnership, and here at SFX we truly value the trust, encouragement and collaboration you provide throughout the year.

Your ongoing support—through conversations at home, fostering curiosity, and engaging with school learning opportunities—strengthens each child's confidence and growth. Together, we continue to nurture a love of learning and support every child to reach their potential.

I wish all our families a joyful and restful Christmas and a safe holiday break. I look forward to continuing our strong learning partnership in the year ahead.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

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



Wellbeing News

Child Safe Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

As the school year grows nearer to the end and festivities of cultural and holy celebrations begin, day to day operating can become a little harder for both adults and children who have difficulties with public environments, sensory nervousness or coping with change.

Everyone is getting tired, connections may become strained and demands appear larger. Throw into the mix the end of school commitments (not to mention whose turn it is to host Christmas) and no wonder you feel exhausted already!

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

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Work out what is significant to your family and plan your activities around these things - by aiming our attention on what's big, we reduce the unnecessary demands which come with "filler" activities or stuff that doesn't line up with your principles.

The following [SchoolTV link](#) contains some information about the podcast Radio Headspace and the episode focus of 'Mindfulness as Self-Care'. If you click 'listen' you can check in with yourself, by using this short meditation by Headspace. By clicking the above link, it will take you to the SchoolTV website where you can listen to the podcast!

This is my final wellbeing note for the year and for my time in this role. I want to say a heartfelt thank you to the whole SFX community - students, parents and staff - for the support, trust and warmth you have shown me. Being part of your children's wellbeing journey has been a true privilege. I leave this role with a full heart, so grateful for the connections made and the growth I've witnessed in our young people every day.



Sending cheers your way,

Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing Leader**

Ministry District Newsletter

Priests Frs Justin Driscoll & Shaiju Mathew
 Ballarat East Parish
 Cathy Prunty and Natalie Gleeson
 0437 505 517
 ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au
 Jackie Wrigglesworth (Finance Officer)
 5337 7128
 Jackie.wrigglesworth@ballarat.catholic.org.au
 Tuesday – Friday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Incorporating the faith communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarkes Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon and Springbank

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 – Cathy Prunty

3rd Sunday of Advent Year A – 14th December, 2025

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday December 16 th	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
	1.00 pm	Emmaus School Mass – @ Emmaus	
	5.30 pm	St Francis Xavier Graduation Liturgy	
Wednesday December 17 th	11.00 am	Mercy Place (All Welcome)	
	1.00 pm	St Alipius School Mass – St Alipius' Church	
	6.00pm	St Michael's Bungaree (CLC)	
Thursday December 18 th	10.30 am	St Brigid's Ballan	
	11.00 am	Calvary Kirralee	
Friday December 19 th	9.30am	St Alipius' Anointing & 2 nd Rite of Reconciliation Bungaree Anointing Mass & Morning tea	
Saturday December 20 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses next weekend 4 th Sunday of Advent			
Saturday December 20 th		Sunday December 21 st	
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

Bernie O'Shannassy, James Werndly

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Anna Ridsdale, John Glaubitz, Ronald D Graham,

Patrick Green, Roma Barry, Brian Barry, Sheila

Veronica Gregory, Kathleen Hall, Marie Graham,

Pleasance Conroy, Pam Hill

Those who are Unwell

Daren Vukmirovic, Irene D'Arcy, Troy Watson

(Steenhuis family), Elaine Conlan, Evelyn Farrugia,

Patricia (Patty) Gannon, Michelle Hall, John Healy,

Sarah McLachlan, Thelma Keating, Carole Simmons,

Owen Widdison



The Third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. We take a pause in the season's quiet anticipation to rejoice in the nearness of Christ. The word Gaudete means 'rejoice', reminding us that even in waiting, joy is possible because God's promise is already unfolding.

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

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve, Wednesday December 24th

- 4.00pm Mercy Place, Ballarat East
- 5.30pm St Brigid's, Ballan
- 6.00pm St Alipius', Ballarat East
- 6.30pm St Peter's, Clarke's Hill
- 7.00pm St Michael's, Springbank
- 7.30pm Ss Peter & Paul's, Buninyong
- 9.00pm St Alipius', Ballarat East

Christmas Day, Thursday December 25th

- 9.00am St Brendan's, Dunnstown
- 9.00am St Alipius', Ballarat East

New Year's Day Solemnity of Mary

Vigil Mass (Wednesday 31st December)

- 6.00pm St. Alipius', Ballarat East

Morning Masses (Thursday 1st January)

- 9.00am St. Michael's, Bungaree
- 9.00am Ss. Peter & Paul's, Buninyong
- 10.30am St. Brigid's, Ballan



OLHC PARISH WENDOUREE CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

OLHC Parish Wendouree volunteers are hosting a free lunch on Christmas Day in the Parish Hall, 480A Gillies Street North, Wendouree from 12.00noon – 2.00pm (meal at 12.30pm). Bookings are essential as seating is limited, ph. 0491 029217.

CHRISTMAS CHEER AT GORDON

Join us for some Christmas cheer following the 9am Mass at St. Patrick's Gordon on Sunday December 18th. Everyone is welcome.

CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY (CLC)

Members of the Ballarat Christian Life

Communities will be gathering at Bungaree at 6.00pm on Wednesday December 17th for Mass with Fr Justin followed by a shared meal.

Parishioners are welcome to join the CLCs for Mass in St Michael's Church.

ANOINTING MASS

An Anointing Mass and 2nd Rite of Reconciliation will be held at St Alipius' Church on Friday 19th December at 9:30am. Morning tea will follow in the hall. We would welcome a plate of morning tea to share if you are able to bring one along. If you or someone you know needs a ride to the Mass please call the Parish Hub to arrange this.

GOD'S WORD BOOKS FOR SALE

We have copies of God's Word Daily Reflection books available to purchase. These books are \$20 each. The books contain the readings of the day for 2026, weekdays and Sundays, as well as daily reflections on scripture. The books are available at the parish hub.

SVDP RAFFLE UPDATE

This weekend December 13th and 14th will be your final opportunity to purchase tickets in our Christmas Raffle. The raffle will be drawn on Monday and winners will be notified. Please note that cards and calendars will be available until Christmas unless sold out. Appeal Envelopes will be available until the end of January.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

This coming week sees the 2025 school year come to a close. We congratulate staff and students from the many schools in our parish on all that they have achieved throughout this year. Congratulations to students who have recently graduated from their respective schools. May your futures be bright. We wish you all well for the Christmas season and pray that you have a safe and happy holiday.

UPCOMING DATES

Tuesday December 16th
1.00pm Emmaus Primary School Mass

Wednesday December 17th
1.00pm St Alipius' School Mass
6.00pm CLC Mass at St Michael's Bungaree

Friday December 19th
9.30am Bungaree Anointing Mass
9.30am St Alipius' Anointing Mass and 2nd Rite of Reconciliation.

VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The cost-of-living crisis has reached a worrying new low. 3.3 million people in Australia are currently living in poverty (that's more than 1 in 8). People are skipping meals so they can afford to feed their kids, pay their rent and keep the lights on. Others are desperately searching for a safe couch to sleep on. Thousands of families have reached out to Vinnies for the first time in recent months, while others are now regularly relying on short-term relief to survive long-term. Without urgent support, many people risk being trapped in a long-term cycle of poverty and disadvantage. Donations can be made to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal at <https://donate.vinnies.org.au/christmas-appeal>

MAKING A SCENE AT CHRISTMAS

Making a Scene for Christmas is a display of over 600 Christmas nativity sets from over 80 countries. This display can be found at 16 Bridge Mall at the corner of Coliseum Walk. The display is open between Monday 1st December until Wednesday 24th December on weekdays 10am – 4pm and Saturday's 10am – 2pm. Come along and look at this amazing collection and learn the stories behind them.

BAPTISMS
Esme Kathryn Orchard Daughter of Jessie
Ella Mae Leman Daughter of Joel and Abbey
Ivy May Meddings Daughter of Scott and Katrina

SIMBANG GABI MASS TIMES FOR 2025

Simbang Gabi is a Filipino Christmas tradition and it is also the spiritual preparation for Christmas and commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a series of nine Masses on the days leading up to Christmas, which will be held at St James' Church Sebastopol. Mass times are: Monday, December 15 at 7.00pm; Tuesday, December 16 at 7.00pm; Wednesday, December 17 at 7.00pm; Thursday, December 18 at 7.00pm; Friday, December 19 at 7.00pm; Saturday, December 20 at 7.00pm; Sunday, December 21 at 7.00pm; Monday, December 22 at 7.00pm; Tuesday, December 23 at 7.00pm and dinner. Please bring a plate to share. If you have any questions/need further information, please contact Fr Eladio, ph. 0450 017 007 or Dion, ph. 0427 876 553. All welcome to attend.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Children's Liturgy of the Word continues at our 6pm Mass this weekend. Children who will be participating in the Liturgy of the Word are invited to join Fr. Justin at the Advent Wreath for the lighting of the first Advent candle. Following this the children will be accompanied to a room at the side of the church.

INTRODUCING POPE LEO XIV: HIS STORY AND AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION

A book has just been published – *Introducing Pope Leo XIV: His Story and Australian Connection* – which tells the story of these visits to Australia. Many photos taken during these visits are also included. In word and image, we meet the man – Fr Bob Prevost – who a decade later would become Pope. Published by St Pauls Publications, the book is available from Catholic bookshops or direct from St Pauls Publications <https://secure.stpauls.com.au/strathfield/introducing-pope-leo-xiv-his-story-and-australian-connection.html>

COLLECTIONS

The figures below are for last weekend.

Supporting our priests: \$1002

Supporting our parish: \$313.40

Thank you to all who contribute to our parish.

Your generosity is appreciated.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This Christmas, we are inviting Australians to "be a light in the darkness" for families who are living through the trauma of war, displacement, and poverty. The intensity of the conflict in Ukraine has increased and more people are experiencing displacement and poverty. But with your support, we can bring hope to these families. Our partner, Caritas Ukraine are on the ground working hard to prepare food kits, emergency shelter kits and psychosocial assistance to families facing adversity. Donate today

at www.caritas.org.au/christmas-appeal or click or scan the QR code.



We are Called to Enact the Saving Power of God

Reflection on the Gospel- 3rd Sunday of Advent Year A

(Matthew 11:2-11)

Veronica Lawson RSM



The third Sunday of Advent used to be called *Gaudete* (be joyful) Sunday. It provided a mid-term break within a period of austerity or penance in preparation for Christmas. Advent is no longer celebrated as a penitential period, but rather as a reflective time of expectation and hope. The invitation to rejoice nonetheless remains part of the Advent liturgy: it is certainly present in the first reading: "the desert shall rejoice and bloom ..." (Isaiah 35:1-6, 10).

Today's gospel passage is full of questions. John sends his disciples to Jesus with a question: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus responds by directing them to the evidence: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." He adds a comment about those who take no offence at him: they are blessed. He then turns to the crowds with a series of rhetorical questions about their motivation for going out to John in the desert. His words to the crowds conclude with an identification of John as God's prophet and messenger, his own precursor. He pays an extraordinary tribute to John, but leaves the reader puzzling about the final statement: the least in the kin-dom is greater than John.

John's imprisonment is a sobering reminder of what can happen to those who are faithful to their mission. As Matthew's Jesus will attest, John is no reed shaken by the wind. This could well be a subtle reference to Herod Antipas' choice of the reed as a symbol on the coins commemorating the founding of Tiberias. Herod has arrested and imprisoned John and later will have him put to death on specious grounds. John is not a fickle reed like Herod, but steadfast and strong.

The reader knows that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah or God's Anointed One. John is checking it out. He sends his disciples to Jesus with a question about his identity: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Is Advent over or not? The answer to John's question is to be found in what they hear and see. The restorative and healing activity of Jesus is realising the Messianic dream of the prophet Isaiah (first reading). In a sense, Advent never ends: the women and children brought into our own cities as sex slaves can attest to this, as can those who suffer the trauma of conflict in Palestine and Ukraine and Sudan. We might well pray: "Strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees" in the face of such challenges. The Christ, the Anointed of God, lives on in the community and the community is called to enact the saving power of God, the joy of the Gospel, in a troubled world.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah: 35: 1-6, 10

James: 5:7-10

Matthew: 11:2-11

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah: 7:10-14

Romans: 1:1-7

Matthew: 1:18-24

Dance Connect Play!

Tanzpro - Dance of Life for Children

with Liz



Calling Ballarat children who love to move and dance, to be creative and share stories! The program involves dance, story sharing, art, imaginary play and movements with music, curated for children.

FREE COME & TRY sessions

6-12 year olds

Tuesdays 4.00 - 5.30 pm

20 January, 27 January, 3 February

Express interest for 3-6 year olds



More info and register: ballarateastnh.org.au/classes/tanzpro

Dance! Connect! Play!

**Tanzpro - Dance of Life
for Children 6-12 yo**

with Liz

The Tanzpro program involves dance, imaginary play, and movement with music, as well as story sharing and art, all carefully curated for children.

Tanzpro is an evidence-based program that supports children developmentally with emotional regulation, empathy, relaxation, self esteem, confidence and increased skills in communication and connection, in a fun and engaging way.

Children will develop an awareness of self-perception, growing their identity and developing their self-confidence. They will learn to express their creative potential, have courage to take risks through creativity, and to respect each other and feel cared for.

This course encourages pathways to developing empathy which is a fundamental skill to foster lifelong healthy relationships.

**FREE
COME & TRY
SESSIONS**

Contact us to
book!



Where and when

Community Room #102

**Ballarat East Neighbourhood House
Barkly Square, 25-39 Barkly Street
Ballarat East**

**Tuesday afternoons in Term 1
4.00 pm - 5.30 pm**

FREE COME & TRY sessions
**20 January | 27 January
3 February**

To register, please visit:
ballarateastnh.org.au/classes/tanzpro

or call: 0422 612 052

or email:
reception@ballarateastnh.org.au



BASKETBALL HOLIDAY CAMPS

MEET AND LEARN FROM THE MINERS,
MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND HAVE FUN

USE CODE "**SUMMER**" TO SAVE 10%

TUESDAY 13TH, WEDNESDAY 14TH JANUARY

TUESDAY 20TH, WEDNESDAY 21ST JANUARY

SELKIRK STADIUM 9AM - 3PM



SIGN UP NOW

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