



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 1st December 2025
Term 4 Week 9

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

Monday 1st December

Last day for Reverse Advent
Calendar donations

Tuesday 2nd December

Pop Up Uniform Shop

Moving up day for whole
school

Friday 5th December

9.30am End of Year Mass
in our Gym

Tuesday 9th December

5pm Christmas Carols Night

Friday 12th December

Yr 6 Students v Staff annual
netball match

Tuesday 16th December

5.30pm Yr 6 Graduation
Liturgy

Thursday 18th December

Final 2025 day for students

Wednesday 28th Jan 2026

Classes resume for all
students

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

The Catholic Church officially began the season of Advent on Sunday. Advent marks the beginning of our preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

Over the coming weeks, all classes will explore the meaning of Advent, and many will have an Advent wreath displayed in their classrooms. If you would like to create an Advent wreath at home, your children will no doubt enjoy helping to design and assemble one.

If your family uses an Advent calendar, it's a wonderful opportunity to reflect on what we are truly celebrating as each new window is opened. You might also consider adding simple acts that express the real spirit of Christmas—the love of Jesus—through kindness and generosity. Children might set the table without being asked, do a thoughtful deed for someone who needs help, or leave a note of appreciation for a family member. There are many meaningful ways to prepare our hearts and homes for Christmas.

As we enter this special season, may your time of preparation be joyful and enriching. May your family grow in understanding of the true meaning of Christmas, and when the day finally arrives, may it be filled with blessings. Wishing you a wonderful and hope-filled Advent season.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



An Advent Prayer



*God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.*

Amen.



**St. Francis Xavier Primary School is a Child Safe School called to action through Gospel values and Mercy tradition.
Through the mission of Jesus within the Mercy tradition, we are called to action in pursuing fullness of life for all.**

Moving Up Day

We will be holding our traditional *Moving Up Day* tomorrow at school. During this time, students will spend part of the day with their 2026 teachers and classmates. While this is an exciting moment for most, it can sometimes feel a little daunting for some children as they face the prospect of change. If this is the case for your child, please remind them that moving into a new class each year is a normal and important part of school life. They will continue to be supported and cared for by our wonderful staff. A new school year brings fresh opportunities — to meet new friends, learn from new teachers, and open our minds to new experiences. It truly is a time of great excitement!

Feast Day of St. Francis Xavier

The feast day of our Patron, St Francis Xavier, will be celebrated on Wednesday 3 December. St Francis Xavier was a remarkable man, born in Spain in 1506 and passing away in 1552. He became the first Christian and the first Jesuit missionary to reach Japan — a nation that, in the sixteenth century, was largely closed to the outside world and little understood by Europeans.

His missionary journeys extended far beyond Japan. St Francis Xavier travelled to Borneo, India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Mozambique and several other regions that had not yet encountered Christian missionaries. He also worked alongside a small pioneering group of Jesuits in China, striving to share the Gospel and build connections with local communities.

The courage, faith and determination of St Francis Xavier continue to inspire us today, reminding us to be strong in our beliefs and to share God's love through our words and actions.



End of Year Mass

We will come together in the gym at school on Friday 5 December at 9.30am to celebrate and give thanks to God for another great year at Saint Francis Xavier primary school. This is a very special Mass for us and one which we always look forward to attending. Please feel welcome to come along and join us if you can. All are welcome!

Community Christmas Carols



A reminder that we will gather for our traditional Christmas Carols event on the school oval on Tuesday 9 December. Children may come in casual clothes to this event, and Carols will commence at 6.00pm. Families are most welcome to gather earlier and enjoy the food trucks and festivities on the oval from 5.00pm. See you there!

Congratulations Children!

Congratulations to all of our students who have taken on the sun-smart message so passionately for us over this term. It is great to see everyone wearing their sun hats each day and thinking about how we can be sun smart at school. Well done everyone!

End of Year – Start of Year

Classes cease for the school year on Thursday 18 December at 2.20pm. Classes resume for all students on Wednesday 28 January. Happy holidays!

Year 5 Camp

Our Year 5 students spent an enjoyable 3 days away on school camp last week. Navigating their way through farm activities, beach activities and many outdoor challenges proved to be a great experience for all. Well done children and thank you to our staff who worked hard to ensure a successful camp experience for all.

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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



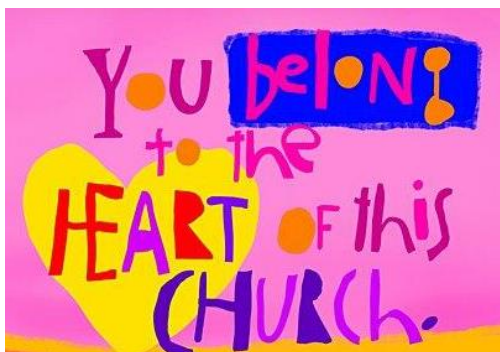
THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- November 30, 2025 First Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Gospel: Matthew 24: 37- 44 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation)

Gospel reflection: As we begin our time of Advent this week (Advent is a word from Latin that means "coming"), we are reminded that we must be ready. We prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus on Christmas day. Just as we prepare our house for Christmas by putting up the tree, decorating, sending cards and wrapping presents we also keep focused on what is at the heart of our preparations. Advent is a time to prepare not only our homes, but our hearts and minds through prayer.

Our Challenge: We are reminded that we are also waiting in hope and expectation for Christ who is to come. How can you share hope this Advent?



Invitation to our 2025 End of Year Mass

Friday December 5th at 9.30am in the SFX Gymnasium

As we come to the close of a wonderful year of learning, growth and community at St Francis Xavier, we warmly invite all families, friends and parish members to join us for our End of Year Whole School Mass. This is a cherished opportunity to gather in gratitude, celebrate our students and reflect on the many blessings of 2025.

Our Parish Priest Fr Justin Driscoll will be our celebrant.

A much-loved tradition at St Francis Xavier will again be part of our celebration. In Term One, our Year Six students welcomed and blessed our newest Foundation children. At our End of Year Mass, this moment comes full circle as our Foundation students accompany their Year Six buddies into the gym, offering a special blessing to farewell them as they prepare for the transition to secondary school. It is a beautiful moment of connection, leadership and continuity in our school community.

Everyone is welcome—whether you are Catholic, of another faith, or simply a valued part of our school community. Our Mass is an inclusive and joy-filled way to honour the year we have shared together and we would love you to join us!

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Reverse Advent Calendar Thank You!

A heartfelt thank you to all our families for your wonderful generosity in supporting this year's Reverse Advent Calendar. Your donations of pasta, pasta sauce and other essential items will make a real difference to individuals and families in our local community who need a little extra support at this time of year.

This initiative continues to reflect the spirit of Mercy that is lived out so beautifully at St Francis Xavier—giving, helping and thinking of others during the Advent season. A special thanks to our amazing P&F Team, who contributed over \$300 of items (the proceeds of their recent Santa Photo donations). Thanks also to Jim Houlihan for always being ready to give a hand and delivering the many heavy boxes for distribution.

What a wonderful community we have! Thank you for spreading kindness and hope- together, we are making a meaningful impact.

"Love and hope do much for the giver as the receiver"



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



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End-of-Year Reports

We are pleased to advise that your child's End of Year School Report will be available for download from the Parent Access Module (PAM) on Tuesday, 16 December. These reports provide a clear overview of your child's learning and achievements throughout Semester Two.

School reports are a school-wide process where teams have read each other's reports prior to release and then Leadership reviews reports to ensure they are accurate and consistent across the school. This process helps maintain high standards, supports professional accountability, and ensures that every family receives a report that reflects their child's learning, progress, and achievements in a meaningful and respectful way. We commend our teachers for their professionalism and thoughtful, accurate personalised comments. We encourage you to read the report with your child, discuss the feedback, and take the opportunity to celebrate their efforts and successes throughout the 2025 school year.



St Francis Xavier Primary School Ballarat East Parent Access Module

Login

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



Success!



[Forgot Password?](#)

[Sign In](#)



We are looking forward to a wonderful Moving Up Day tomorrow as we welcome our new children and our 2026 Foundation cohort. We also wish our Year 6 students all the very best as many attend their respective secondary school transition programs.

Class placements will be available on PAM on Monday 1st December at 5:00 pm, ahead of our whole-school Transition Day on Tuesday 2nd December from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. We look forward to a positive and exciting start to 2026!

Enjoy your week.

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



Child Safe Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

When things are perceived to be hard, the lure to quit can be very big.

Challenge your negative thoughts

Socratic questioning is the process of challenging and changing irrational thoughts. Studies show that this method can reduce depression symptoms. The goal is to get you from a negative mindset ("I'm a failure") to a more positive one ("I've had a lot of success in my career. This is just one setback that doesn't reflect on me. I can learn from it and be better."). Here are some examples of questions you can ask yourself or your child to challenge negative thinking.

Firstly, write down your negative thoughts, such as "I'm having problems at work and am questioning my abilities."

- Then ask yourself: "What is the evidence for this thought?"
- "Am I basing this on facts? Or feelings?"
- "Could I be misinterpreting the situation?"
- "How might other people view the situation differently?"
- "How might I view this situation if it happened to someone else?"

So when your child comes home after a tough day at school, a bad play or a large loss, remind them: It's alright to quit. Quitting will forever be a choice, but not on an awful day. In my own family growing up we always had a rule that once you commit to a group, club or a period of activity, you need to maintain your end of the deal and complete what you began.

Please find attached a link to the [SFX SchoolTV Website](#) where you will find an article titled 'How to be Happy'. There is a lot of information from behavioural scientists in this article who have spent time studying what makes us happy (and what doesn't).



Sending cheers your way,

Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing Leader**

Sport/Physical Education News

Sport at SFX in 2025 Thank you and well done to all of the students that have made sport at SFX in 2025 a massive success. From tryouts and training to all of the various sports events, your commitment and dedication to proudly represent our school and to be the best you can be is inspiring for all. A huge thank you to all of the staff, families and friends that have coached, supported and cheered on all of our students and teams.

There were many highlights and achievements in 2025, some of which include:



- Amelia S making it to Regional swimming finals
- 11 students running at Regional Cross Country
- Lawrence W, Sam N, Chloe W & Nellie C running at State Cross Country
- Girls Soccer team making it to the Division Grand Final
- Boys Football team making it to the Regional Grand Final
- Girls Netball team making it to Regionals
- Girls Basketball team finishing 2nd in Division finals
- Boys & Girls Cricket teams finishing 2nd in Division event
- Rhys B & Levi C making it to Regional Golf
- 13 students competing at Regional Athletics
- 4 students running at State Athletics
- Tom K, Alex P, Jed H & Sidney P winning the Silver medal in the 4x100m relay at State Athletics



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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 a magnificent week.

Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**



P&F News

- **CHRISTMAS RAFFLE IS LIVE** – Our Annual SFX Christmas Raffle is now LIVE – please scan the QR Code to purchase your tickets! 32 Prizes to be won – some amazing prizes – don't miss out. Thank you to all the Families & Businesses who have donated prizes – we really appreciate your support – please remember to support the Businesses who have made donations
- **CHRISTMAS CAROLS** – Tuesday 9th December – 5pm – 8pm
Food Trucks & P&F Sausage Sizzle & Hot Dog stand
Pre-order Carboni's pizzas or grazing boxes – order form in the office
Special visit from Santa!
- **Uniform Shop**
Our Second Hand Uniform shop is always open, please see the office staff if you wish to have a look at any items in our Second Hand Uniform shop, or reach out to a member of our P&F to help you with any of your Uniform needs – **We will be holding another Pop Up Shop on Tuesday 2nd December – we would love if anyone who has uniforms that no longer fit be donated prior to this date!**
- **Hot Lunches**
Please note, Flexischools have updated when you are placing your child's Lunch order, you are now able to select if your child has any allergies and it will print on your child's lunch bag label, we ask that you are selecting if they have any allergies as it makes it smoother process when it comes to packing lunch orders on a Friday. Also please note cut off for lunch orders is strictly 10am Thursday mornings.
Thank you to our Co-ordinators & Volunteers who come and pack all of the children's lunch orders on a Friday!
- **Zooper Doopers - every FRIDAY in Term 4 - \$1 each available at 2nd break**

SFX CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

**32 Prizes to be won - raffle drawn
at the SFX Carols night**



Purchase
your
tickets
here





SFX

Christmas Carols

TUESDAY 9TH DECEMBER - 5PM TO 8PM



- PRE ORDER PIZZA/PLATTER BOX FROM CARBONIS (ORDER FORM IN OFFICE)
- THE PAELLA GUY
- THE DUMPLING MAN
- GELATO IS KEY
- SAUSAGE SIZZLE
- HOT DOG STAND
- POPCORN + SLUSHIES + LOLLIES
- OR FEEL FREE TO BYO YOUR OWN PICNIC (NOTE THIS IS AN ALCOHOL FREE EVENT)

Special visit from Santa



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

 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

1st Sunday of Advent Year A – 30th November, 2025

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday December 2 nd	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
Wednesday December 3 rd	9.30am	St Brendan's Dunnstown	
	11.00 am	Mercy Place (All Welcome)	
	5.30 pm	St Mary's Clarkes Hill	
Thursday December 4 th	10.30 am	St Brigid's Ballan	
Friday December 5 th	9.30am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
		St Francis Xavier School	
Saturday December 6 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses next weekend 2 nd Sunday of Advent			
Saturday December 6 th		Sunday December 7 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

Denis Dempsey, Monsignor Frank Marriott, Dulcie Ruyg

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

William (Bill) Barry, Margaret Price, Barry Mullane, Bill Mahar, Margaret Clifford, Christine Hall, Peter Begbie

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Daren Vukmircic, 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



Advent marks the beginning of the Church's new year and is a season of waiting and preparation. The season of Advent focuses on Christ's threefold coming—past, present and future. We await and prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas. We hope and give thanks for Christ's presence in us and in the Word and sacraments. We look to the future, waiting for Christ to come again. In the coming four weeks, we prepare with mounting expectation for the coming of Christ in a spirit of waiting, conversion and hope.

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

PILGRIMAGE INSPIRED BY ST PAUL

Parishioners and friends interested in joining this pilgrimage with Fr Justin proposed for mid-June 2026 through Türkiye and Greece are invited to an information evening to be held at Lifestyle Travel, 11 Armstrong St North, Ballarat on Monday December 1st at 5.00pm. The information session will provide itinerary details, costings, dates, inclusions and a Q&A. Contact Lifestyle Travel to register 5331 8277 or info@lifestyletravel.com.au

CARING GROUP

The Caring Group will meet on Friday 5th November at 2pm in St. Alipius Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please bring a small plate to share.

GOD'S WORD BOOKS FOR SALE

We have copies of God's Word Daily Reflection books available to purchase at the Parish Hub. These books are \$20 each.

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 Clarkes Hill
7.00pm St Michael's Springbank
7.30pm Ss Peter & Paul Buninyong
9.00pm St Alipius Ballarat East

Christmas Day, Thursday December 25th

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

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. Thank you to all the very wonderful volunteers for their work in making the Christmas Day lunch at OLHC so special over all the years it has been held. We welcome all those who would like to volunteer on the day - please phone 0467 683504 to register. A Working with Children Check is required for all volunteers.

UPCOMING DATES

Sunday November 30th

6.00pm Ministry District end of year dinner
Donegan's farm @ Gordon

Wednesday December 3rd

8.00am Gordon Parish Sacrament team
9.30am Mass at St Brendan's Dunnstown
5.30pm Mass with St Mary's Clarkes Hill

Friday December 5th

9.30am Mass with St Francis Xavier School
Wednesday December 10th

7.30am Ballarat East Parish Finance Meeting
9.30am Mass with St Brigid's School Ballan
5.30pm Mass with St Patrick's School Gordon

Thursday December 11th

10.00am Ballan Mecwacare Hostel service
11.00am Ballan Anointing Mass

Tuesday December 16th

1.00pm Mass with Emmaus Primary

Wednesday December 17th

1.00pm Mass with St Alipius School

Friday December 19th

9.30am Bungaree Anointing Mass

FORMATION IN SYNODALITY

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is excited to be joining with the Catholic Theological College to provide formation in Leadership for Synodality in the Diocese of Ballarat through a bursary funded by the Therese D'Orsa Mission Fund. This formation opportunity emerged following the Ballarat Diocesan Assembly at the end of 2024. The Diocesan Assembly Report details the support for building a Synodal Church in this diocese with a prominent outcome of the Assembly being the need to provide formation for synodal leadership. Parishioners interested in joining this formation opportunity can find further information from the diocesan website

<https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/formation-in-synodality/> or scan or click the QR code



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>

VENERABLE MARY OF THE SACRED HEART GLOWREY

Pope Leo XIV has formally recognised the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Dr Sr Mary Glowrey JMJ, daughter of Victoria and missionary doctor in India. As of 21 November 2025, she now bears the title of Venerable Mary of the Sacred Heart Glowrey. This significant step in her cause for canonisation makes her only the second Australian, after St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, to be accorded this honour. Born in the Victorian town of Birregurra in 1887, Glowrey was an experienced doctor in Melbourne hospitals and private practice when she travelled to India, aged 32, and entered religious life in Guntur, located in present day Andhra Pradesh. She spent 37 years in service to marginalised women and children. Read more at the diocesan

website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/cause-towards-sainthood-advances-as-pope-raises-mary-glowrey-to-venerable/>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY GAVIN

It is not the usual thing to wish people a happy birthday on the weekly bulletin, but on this occasion we would like to say a big happy birthday to Gavin Maguire who celebrates on Saturday November 29th. Gavin is always on the move around the church, hall and parish hub ensuring that everything is as it should be and we thank you for this Gavin. We hope you have a fantastic birthday.

Making a Scene at Christmas

16 Bridge Mall

Opening Monday

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Children's Liturgy of the Word begins 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. Our thanks to Liz McCartin for co-ordinating this opportunity for children and to Sr. Kathleen Moran for assisting her. The children will return to the main body of the church during the Procession of Gifts.

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/stratfield/introducing-pope-leo-xiv-his-story-and-australian-connection.html>

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY 2025:

Next Friday is the International Day of Volunteers. Within our parish communities there are many volunteers who provide their talents and time to contribute to the mission of our church. While this day is devoted to our volunteers, we thank God every day and continue to pray for all those in our parish who continue to strive to make our parishes a place of welcome and prayer.

COLLECTIONS

The figures below are for last weekend.

Supporting our priests: \$1012

Supporting our parish: \$ 628.20

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

Y.C.W CRICKET CLUB

Former players, family and supporters of the Y.C.W Cricket Club are invited to a get together for lunch on Sunday 7th December 2025 at the Robin Hood Hotel, starting at 12pm. For further details or to book contact Terry on 0401 730 670 or John on 0409 864 080.

Invited to Find Life in Our Living

Reflection on the Gospel-1st Sunday of Advent Year A

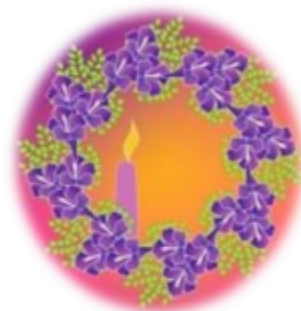
(Matthew 24:37-44)

Veronica Lawson RSM

"Where is the Life we have lost in living?" asks the Chorus in T. S. Eliot's *The Rock*. The Jesus of Matthew's gospel is implicitly asking the same question as Eliot's Chorus. He is making much the same observation as Henry David Thoreau, "Most [people] lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them." We are invited to find Life in our living and to sing the songs that are in us. We are to be agents of our own future rather than unthinking participants in the destruction of our planet. Right now, the human community is challenged in unprecedented ways to restore the life we have lost by living beyond our means and by destructively exploiting the riches of the Earth.

As we begin a new liturgical year, Matthew's Jesus invites us to contemplate the ultimate realities even as we attend to the demands of the present, a "present" where over twenty per cent of the world's human community are homeless and where land-clearing has decimated the other-than-human life of the planet. The Matthean Jesus tells us to be "awake", to be "ready" all the time, not because death or the end of the world are around the corner, but because we need to recognise the multiple "advents" or arrivals of the Christ, the Human One, who calls us beyond self-absorption to Life. He offers a reminder that we are no different from our forebears who from earliest days have gone about their daily business without being sufficiently attentive to what really matters.

In our times, we have allowed thieves to break in and plunder our planet, our common home, because thieves come in guises that we fail to recognise. They so often look just like us and do the things we do.



It may be that we must first be attentive to our own ways of plundering the house that is home to all of God's creatures. We spend much of our time looking back. That has its place, since our history informs our present and helps us in shaping our future, though all the while we know with Auden that '[t]he past is foreign country: they do things differently there'. Advent invites us to look forward rather than back and to dream gospel-inspired dreams that will enable creative change in our own lives and in the life of our planet. It invites us to be awake, to be ready for any eventuality.

Dreams and visions have always been the precursors to effective and life-affecting change. We need the grace to see visions and to dream dreams that make for justice and peace and that permit us to walk more freely in the light of God's ways. We seek the grace to "see" God's word as did the prophet Isaiah in the first reading (Isaiah 2:1-5). We need to put our energy into creating life-generating systems that enable us to move forward in the paths of gospel compassion and love.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah: 2:1-5

Romans: 13:11-14

Matthew: 24:37-44

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah: 11:1-10

Romans: 15:4-9

Matthew: 3:1-12

MAKING A SCENE AT CHRISTMAS



16 Bridge Mall
at the corner of Coliseum Walk (just
near the port-hole that looks down
to the underground Yarrowee River)

From Mon 1 to Wed 24 December

Weekdays 10am – 4pm

Saturdays 10am – 2pm

Sundays closed

Mon 29, Tues 30, Wed 31 Dec 10am – 2pm

MAKING A SCENE AT CHRISTMAS is a display of over 600 Christmas nativity sets from over 80 countries.

See and smell real frankincense and myrrh.

See coins minted around the time that Jesus was born.

See cultural nativities from Australia, Africa, Asia, North & South America, & Europe (and one that went to Antarctica).

Activities for children – everyone is welcome.

A gold coin donation to cover costs will be appreciated

**ENTER TO WIN
ONE OF TWO
HANDCRAFTED
CUBBY HOUSES**

PRESENTED BY
Smith & Sons
RENOVATIONS & EXTENSIONS

**SCAN HERE
TO ENTER**

TICKET PRICES
 \$5: 1 ticket
 \$20: 5 tickets
 \$50: 15 tickets
 \$100: 40 tickets
TWO LUCKY WINNERS!

**WITH ALL
PROCEEDS GOING
TOWARD THE
BALLARAT
CHRISTMAS APPEAL**

DRAWN ON THE 10TH DECEMBER

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY

Dahlsens SINCE 1877
For the Builder.

**Ballarat East
Community Men's Shed**

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Goldfields METALWORKING

Daniel Donachie

SMOULDER



KRYAL CASTLE vacation care

Register now for fun

Join us for a fun-filled January vacation care program at Kryal Castle. Perfect for busy parents and adventurous kids, we provide engaging activities in a safe, magical environment.

At a glance

- Program hours: 9:00am–5:00pm
- Drop-off / pick-up: 8:30am–5:30pm
- Ages: Years 4–6 (approx. 8–12 years)
- Dates: Tue 20 – Thu 22 January 2026
- Location: Kryal Castle, Ballarat
- Capacity: approximately 50 places per day

What they'll do

- Knight School basics, archery coaching, potion making
- Outdoor education and orienteering quests
- Inclusion workshops on kindness and anti-bullying
- Pizza-making masterclass (on one day)
- Arena features and castle experiences throughout the day

Optional add-on: Young Leaders of the Future (Years 5–6)

Kids learn practical leadership habits, how to call out bullying safely, listening skills, time and task planning, and team leadership. Includes certificate, pledge card, one-page action plan.

Book now



Learn more



First 50 bookings:

\$89 per child,
per day

Special: buy 2 days, get the 3rd day for \$50
Leadership add-on: \$39 per child (limited places)

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