



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 16th February 2026
Term 1 Week 4

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 (10 weeks)

Mon 27th Jan–Thu 2nd Apr

Monday 16th February
5.30pm P&F Meeting in
Staff Room

Tuesday 17th February
Shrove Tuesday

Wednesday 18th February
9am Ash Wednesday
Liturgy in school gym

Thursday 19th February
Division Swimming at BALC
(nominated Yr 4, 5, 6
students)

Compulsory meeting at
St Alipius Church for
parents of children making
Sacrament of Reconciliation
10.30am or 6pm

Friday 20th February
SFX Athletics Day at
Llanberris (ALL Year 3, 4,
5 & 6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 2GJ

Sat 21st & Sun 22nd Feb
Enrolment Masses for
children making their
Sacrament of Reconciliation

Monday 23rd February
School photo day

Friday 27th February
2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 3JT

Friday 6th March
Pupil Free Day Literacy PD

Monday 9th March
Public Holiday–Labour Day
Pupil Free Day

Friday 13th March
2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 5ML

7pm–11pm Mix & Mingle
on lower oval

Wed 11th–Tue 17th March
NAPLAN Testing

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

According to our Catholic tradition, we commemorate the beginning of Lent this week. At a special prayer service on Wednesday, our children will receive ashes on their foreheads as a sign of repentance. Known as **Ash Wednesday**, this day marks the beginning of forty days of reflection, repentance and almsgiving, as we enter the most sacred time of the Church year. At the conclusion of Lent, we will celebrate Easter—but that is still a little way off.

Why do we mark our foreheads with ash on this day? It is an ancient custom with its roots in the earliest days of Christianity. The ashes are a public symbol of repentance, our human mortality, and a spiritual commitment to prepare our hearts for Easter. They are made from the palms blessed on last year's Palm Sunday, linking this ritual to our shared Christian story and tradition. While we do not wear the ashes for forty days, we do use this time to reflect more deeply on the role faith plays in our lives.

In classrooms across the school, staff will be teaching the children about the meaning and importance of Lent. Students may be challenged to give up something they enjoy or to take on an additional act of kindness or service. A focus on thinking about and acting for the poor in our community and in our world will guide our learning and actions throughout these forty days.

During Lent, we are all invited to step away from the comfort of the familiar and enter a brave and sacred new space. This can be a big challenge for little people—but we know they are more than ready to meet it.



God bless,

Mark Hogbin



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Thursday 19th March

Student Led Conferences

Friday 20th March

Interschool Sport at STM
(Year 5/6)

No Assembly today

Wednesday 25th March

Regional Swimming at
Horsham (qualifiers from
Division swimming)

Thursday 26th March

Student Led Conferences

MDASA U9 Primary Schools
Swim Sports (nominated
students from F-Yr2)

Friday 27th March

No Assembly today

Mon 30th & Tue 31st March

Year 4 Lady Northcote
Discovery Camp

Thursday 2nd April

Last day of term 1
2.20pm finish

12.40pm Assembly
in school gym

Term 2 (10 weeks)

Mon 20th Apr-Fri 26th Jun

Tue 21st & Wed 22nd April

Year 5 Sovereign Hill
Costumed School

Friday 24th April

Start of Term 2 Mass

No Assembly today

Friday 1st May

Division AFL @ CE Brown
Reserve Wendouree
(selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
school gym led by 4KB

Friday 8th May

2pm Mothers/Special
Friends Liturgy

No Assembly today

Monday 11th May

Division Cross Country @
Fed Uni (selected Yr 3, 4, 5
& 6 students)

Friday 15th May

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 6MM

Friday 22nd May

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1EM

Year Ahead Meetings – Thank you!

We would like to send out a big “THANK YOU!” to all parents & friends who were able to attend our Year Ahead meetings last week, and our Foundation sessions throughout the day. We hope that you have gained a richer understanding of what your child’s class will be up to this year. Special thanks to our teaching staff who worked so hard to make the evening worthwhile.

Travel around our school

Please be mindful of the road rules when approaching or leaving our school. We have double lines in front of our school for a reason. This ensures the safety of all members of our community. Any driver who crosses the double lines is breaking the law and endangering the lives of our students. When approaching the school please drive up to the turning point (marked by a big white cross on the tree) before turning to park in front of the school. Please also keep in mind that the staff car park is not a general parking area but for use by staff only.

Foundation Enrolments 2027

Do you have a child to commence school in 2027? Do you know of anyone looking to enrol their child? If so, please contact our school office staff so that we can add you to the growing list of enrolment applications. Our School Alive! Tours commenced last week for new families and our enrolment process for 2027 is well underway.

Senior School Sports

We will gather at Llanberris Athletics fields on Friday for our Year 3-6 sports day. Children may wear team colours but we ask that children refrain from coloured hair sprays or paint which tends to run into their eyes causing major discomfort. We also must be mindful that children will be required to fully participate in all activities, so clothing should not inhibit their participation. Hot lunches will not be available on Friday for children attending the sports. Children will be required to bring a packed lunch and drink bottle. Let’s all do our best and have a great day!



Do you collect your children from the undercover area?

A gentle reminder to parents who collect children from the undercover after school that we don’t allow children to play on the grass areas or to swing from trees. When collecting children after school, you can support our great staff by ensuring that your little ones don’t play in these areas. Let’s all work on safety together.



Ash Wednesday Liturgy:

This week our children will participate in an Ash Wednesday liturgy in the Gym at 9am to signify the beginning of the Catholic Church Season of Lent.



Lent is the 40 days of prayer, penance and almsgiving as we prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday. Lent for Christians is a time to focus not so much on ourselves, but on those less fortunate and those in need- both near and far away.

As always, parents and friends are more than welcome to join us in our prayer time, no matter what your faith tradition.

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Tuesday 26th May

Regional Cross Country @ Warrnambool (qualifiers from Division XC)

Friday 29th May

Division Soccer @ Ballarat Regional Soccer Facility (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in school gym led by 2MH

Friday 5th June

Pupil free day

Monday 8th June

Public Holiday-King's Birthday
Pupil Free Day

Friday 12th June

Division Netball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 5CC

Friday 19th June

Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 3LL

Friday 26th June

Last day of term 2

12.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FJS

2.20pm finish

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 13th Jul-Fri 18th Sep

Mon 13th July, Tues 14th & Wed 15th July

Year 6 Melbourne CYC Camp

Friday 17th July

Start of Term 3 Mass

No Assembly today

Friday 24th July

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 4RR

Friday 31st July

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 3ZP

Friday 7th August

Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics @ Llanberris (selected Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FBK



Sacrament of Reconciliation Reminder

For all children in Year Four or older, there is a compulsory parish meeting on Thursday February 19th for the parents of children making their Sacrament of Reconciliation this year.

There are two meetings for you to choose from, either 10:30am or 6pm at St Alipius Church. Children are not required to attend. Enrolment Masses for the children will follow on the weekend of February 21st and 22nd. Children will be presented with their books for preparation at these Masses. If you have any queries or concerns please contact Natalie or Cathy at the Parish Office on 5332 6611.

A Giant Snail!

Our school has been chosen as one of ten across Ballarat to decorate a giant snail for the Begonia Festival! Students in Year 5 will be working with Mrs. Molloy in the coming weeks to decorate this wonderful work of art in the spirit of Claude Monet and his famous water lily paintings. Be on the lookout for our own masterpiece at the Begonia Festival this year.



Friday 14th August

Pupil free day (to be confirmed)

Division Basketball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected Yr 5/6 students)

Friday 21st August

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 1GH

Friday 28th August

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FLP

Friday 4th September

Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6)

Fathers/Special Friends Liturgy (to be confirmed)

No Assembly today

Wednesday 9th September

Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths – Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Friday 11th September

No Assembly today

Friday 18th September

Last day of Term 3

No Assembly today

Term 4 (11 weeks)

Mon 5th Oct–Fri 18th Dec

Wednesday 7th October

Year 3 Day Camp

Friday 9th October

Start of T4/Mercy Day Mass

Regional Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from Division Aths-Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

No Assembly today

Friday 16th October

Division Tennis @ Ballarat Regional Tennis Centre (selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 5LD

Friday 23rd October

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 1GT

Friday 30th October

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FTW

Monday 2nd November

Assessment and Reporting Pupil Free Day

Tuesday 3rd November

Public Holiday-Melbourne Cup Pupil Free Day



MSP Photography
Ballarat
T 03 5333 5577
E ballarat@msp.com.au
www.msp.com.au

PHOTO DAY: Monday 23rd February 2026

HOW TO ORDER

Ordering online is quick and easy using the steps below!

If you have an existing account, please use those login details. Once logged in, you will be able to add additional children and place sibling photo orders.

Step 1

Click on the link below to access your ordering portal.

<https://stfrancisxavierballarateast-vic.msp.photos>

If you are new to the school, please follow Step 1 and Step 2.

Step 2

Click 'Sign in with Student Details'

[Sign in with Student Details](#)

Enter your child's surname and date of birth. You will be prompted to create an account. Please note that sibling photo orders must be placed by **Midnight on Sunday 22nd February 2026, to be included in student family list, that is sent to the school early on photo day.**

The portal does not have a cut off ordering date, however any orders placed more than 7 days after photo day will no longer be at the bulk discounted price and will revert to the standard pricing cost.



Curriculum News

What wonderful sessions we had at our Year Ahead Meetings last week for our Yrs 1-6 classes. Thank you to our families for the strong support shown to our school community.

Our staff are currently reflecting on the new format, and we are equally keen to hear from families about their experience. If you would like to share your feedback, please feel welcome to email me at jclark@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au.

The best way for us to continue to grow and improve is by working together in partnership.



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Friday 6th November
Eureka Division Cricket @
Alfredton Reserve (selected
Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 6JS

Friday 13th November

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 2TS

Friday 20th November

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 4ZA

Wed 25th-Fri 27th Nov
Year 5 Kangarooobie Camp

Friday 27th November

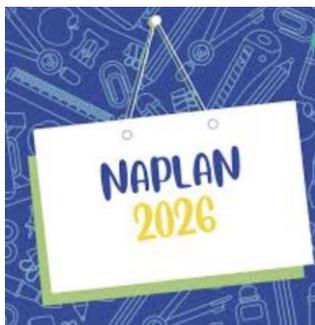
No Assembly today

Friday 4th December

End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December

Last 2026 day for students



NAPLAN 2026

NAPLAN will commence on **Wednesday 11 March**. While the official testing window spans two weeks, at SFX we aim to complete all assessments by **Tuesday 17 March**, with a few additional days scheduled for catch-up sessions if required.

If your child will be absent or if these dates present a conflict, please notify your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible.

These assessments provide a snapshot of your child's progress in literacy and numeracy and are one part of our overall understanding of their learning.

Teachers will be providing opportunities for students to become familiar with the format of the tests prior to the assessment days to ensure they feel comfortable and confident

Families can support their child by maintaining normal routines, speaking positively about the experience, and reassuring them that NAPLAN is just one part of their learning journey.

Encouraging a calm and confident mindset helps children approach the assessments feeling secure and supported.

Thank you for your support in ensuring a smooth and settled testing period for our students.

Seesaw – Celebrating Learning Together

As we settle into the new school year, you will begin to see many learning posts shared on Seesaw. These posts provide a wonderful snapshot of real-time learning happening in your child's classroom.

We warmly encourage you to take a moment to leave a positive comment on your child's posts. Students genuinely enjoy reading messages from their families — it gives them a real boost and reinforces the value of their efforts.

Your engagement helps strengthen the home-school partnership and shows children that their learning is important and worth celebrating.

We look forward to sharing many special learning moments with you throughout the year.



Week of February 8 – February 15 at St Francis Xavier Primary School - Ballarat East



243

New Student Posts



89

Comments

Enjoy your week.

Jane Clark, **Deputy Principal – Teaching & Learning**



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Wellbeing News



A NOTE FROM MS MENEELY

Welcome to Week Four of our term!
How special was it to see our Foundation students walk so proudly into Mass with their Year 6 buddies to begin our school year?
At St Francis Xavier we want every child to have that sense of belonging and to know that our school is even better because of their contribution.

RIGHTS, RESILIENCE AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS (RRRR) PROGRAM

This term we are focussing on the topics of Emotional Literacy and Personal/Cultural Strengths. Emotional Literacy helps students to learn how to be aware of, understand and use information about their own emotions and the emotions of others. Personal and Cultural Strengths helps students to learn how to recognise and understand their own and others' strengths and positive qualities, and how to identify how the values and strengths they learn from their family and culture help them to treat others with respect.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT.....

Have they been given a buddy yet?
Foundation classes have Year 6 buddies and Year 2 have Year 4 buddies. Our Year 1, 3 and 5 classes work together with the Year 3's learning from the Year 5's how to be a great buddy and then using their new skills to support the Yr 1's.

READ AND THRIVE JOURNAL FOCUS

Our Read and Thrive Journal topic this week focuses upon Building Healthy Habits. One of the most important factors for children is SLEEP. Sleep is vital to a child's overall development and is as important as diet and exercise. Children who do not get enough sleep show increased levels of aggressive behaviour, are less attentive and are much less active.
In this edition of SchoolTV, parents will learn about the importance of sleep and how sleep deprivation can have adverse effects on a child's health and wellbeing. Here is the link to your Edition
<https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/newsletter/sleep>

COMMUNITY NEWS

This one caught my eye for practical reasons. As an avid reader, it is sometimes difficult to get to the library during the week. Good news! [Ballarat Libraries have extended their opening hours](#) at several branches, giving locals more flexibility to study, work or just find a quiet corner to read. Early mornings and later evenings should now be easier to plan around, especially for anyone juggling work and family life. It's a small shift, but one that makes using our libraries fit better around real schedules!

CONTACT DETAILS



cmeneely@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day

This Friday is an exciting day for our Year 3 to 6 students as we have our Athletics Day at Llanberris Athletics Reserve. There will be lots of colour, lots of energy and lots of excitement and we can't wait to see all of the students celebrating each other's success and earning points for their House by having a go, doing their best and having fun!

A reminder that students are to be taken directly to the venue for a 9:20am start, and are to be collected at 2:30pm. Students are to bring lunch, snacks, water bottle, HAT and sunscreen.

Please note that there will be NO HOT LUNCHES delivered to Llanberris.

For all information please refer to the PAM notification.

Division Swimming

On Thursday we have a strong squad of swimmers participating in the Division Swimming competition at the BALC. We wish *Noah R, Levi C, Kayden F, Emily B, Olivia F, Mitchell B, Imogen S, Louie E and Harvey K* all the very best for their events.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 4 - Thursday Feb 19th - Division Swimming @ BALC (nominated students from Yr 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 4 - Friday Feb 20th - SFX Athletics Day @ Llanberris (ALL Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 students)
- Week 8 - Friday Mar 20th - Interschool Sport @ STM (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Wednesday Mar 25th - Regional Swimming @ Horsham (qualifiers from Division swimming)
- Week 9 - Thursday Mar 26th - MDASA U9 Primary Schools Swim Sports (nominated students from F - Yr 2)

Have a tremendous week.



Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator

P&F News

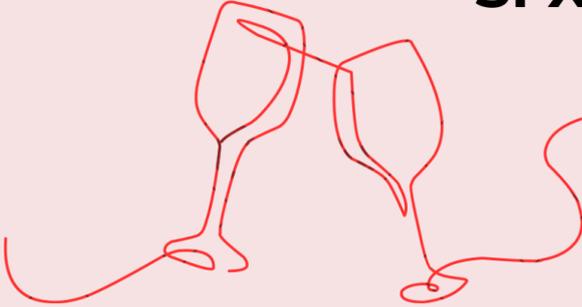
- **P&F Meeting** – Tonight Monday 16th February – 5.30pm in the Staff room – everyone welcome
- **Mix & Mingle** – Friday 13th March 2026
Join us for a night out under the stars! Meet fellow parents and make new friends!
SFX Lower Oval 7pm – 11pm
Book your Tickets via Flexi Schools \$25 – *includes drink on arrival, finger food & music*
- **TUITION RAFFLE**
WIN - \$1,500 OFF Tuition Fees – Raffle – tickets available via QR code
or <https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2026fees>
- **Hot Lunch Reminder** – Hot lunches every Friday, place your child's order on Flexi Schools before 10am
Thursday – no late orders will be taken – Volunteers needed to help pack – sign up available in your class chat group
Note: No Hot lunches available this Friday for Senior Sports Carnival at Llanberris – P&F will supply each child with a Zooper Dooper at the Sport Carnival

- **Zooper Doopers** – Fridays at 2nd break - \$1
- **2nd Hand Uniform Shop** – our Second Hand Uniform shop has a lot of good quality second hand uniforms at an affordable price – all items \$5 with the exception of woollen jumpers & tunics which are \$10 -if you require any extra Uniform items please see the ladies in the office and they can assist you – we will be holding a Pop up shop in the next few weeks as well
- **We are on the hunt for Easter Raffle donations please** – *please drop them into the office at your earliest convenience*

SFX
Mix & Mingle

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

Friday 13th March 2025
SFX Lower Oval
7pm - 11pm



Tickets: \$25

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

Purchase your tickets on Flexi schools

2026 SFX TUITION RAFFLE



**Win \$1500 off
your school fees**

Buy tickets NOW!



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

Attachments

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 13th 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	Luka Ross and Dhiyenka Gunetileke	4RR	Damilare Baruwa and Imogen Sordello
FJS	Tilly Dridan & Will Mumford	4ZA	Cooper Roberts & Eliza Vallance
FBO	Maddison Daly and Kingston Pitman	4KB	Pippa Bourke & Harvey Kersley
FTW	Oscar Toohey and Harriett Curtain	5CC	Maya Skewes and Hudson Ryan
1GH	Eva Ludbrook and Finn Tongs	5LD	Milla Rowland and Levi Dreher
1EM	Alfie Mason and Ryker Kermeen	5ML	Daisy Howard & Noah Osciak
1GT	Marley Gull and Jacob Walker	6PB	Chloe Wilson and Sienna Block
2GJ	Alina Osciak and Harvey Banwell	6JS	Olive Lenaghan and Cleo Roney
2MH	Rex Owins and Ada Mason	6MM	Ella Uljanic and Emily Bone
2TS	Maple Toohey and Bob Nunn	EE/ Sci	Xavier Morris & Maddie Purtell
3LL	Theo McAdam Amayah Moore	PA	
3JT	Annie Ludbrook and Jasper Rolfe	VA	River Fedke (4RR) Lance Humphries (3LL)
3ZP	Patrick Lenaghan and Polly Meade	PE	Louis Kersley (1GT), Vann Brooks (1EM)
		Tch	Willow Begbie (FBOK) Kit Blomely (2GJ)
Principal's Award: Noah Rice for looking out for other people and caring for all in our school community			

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

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A – 15th February, 2026

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday February 17 th	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
Wednesday February 18 th	Ash Wednesday – See Mass times below		
Thursday February 19 th	11.00 am	Calvary Kiralee	
Friday February 20 th	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
	11.00 am	Mercy Place	
Saturday February 21 st	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses – 1 st Sunday of Lent			
Saturday February 21 st		Sunday February 22 nd	
6.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Buninyong Gordon
6.30 pm	Dunnstown	10.30 am	Ballarat East Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Marianna Basar, Ann Mossop, Pat Myers, Frank White

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Tricia Cosgriff, Eily Mullane, Mick Butler, Patrick Shanahan, Catherine Donegan, St. Anne Forbes RSM, Laurie Mullane, Cecilia Haintz, Ellie Walsh, Diane Johnson, Tom O'Loughlin, Brian Boyle.

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

John White, 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.

ASH WEDNESDAY MASS TIMES

Vigil Mass Feb 17 th	6.30pm	Dunnstown
Wed 18 th	9.30am	Ball't East
	9.15am	Gordon
	10.30am	Ballan
	6.00pm	Buninyong

In preparation for Ash Wednesday, parishioners are invited to place palms from Palm Sunday 2025 into the baskets in the foyers of the churches which will be burnt to become ashes for 2026!

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

PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Weekend of February 7 th & 8 th	
Supporting our priests	\$1025
Maintenance of parish buildings	\$273

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

LITURGY NOTES FOR LENT

“Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter” (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar #27). *“Lent is marked by two themes, the baptismal and the penitential. By recalling or preparing for baptism and by repentance, this season disposes us, as we more diligently listen to the word of God and devote ourselves to prayer, to celebrate the paschal mystery. The music for liturgy during Lent should reflect the baptismal and penitential characteristics of the season. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy # 109).* Lent is the season where God’s mercy and compassion is so eloquently presented in the Lectionary readings. Lent invites us to pare back and to strip away all but the essentials, both musically and in every other way. These are our Forty Days of desert retreat, of unadorned clarity, of musical simplicity and starkness.

BAPTISMS

Hughie Robert Edmends
Son of Allister and Amy

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Brian and Monica McKeegan, married at St Michael’s Springbank 60 years ago this month! We also remember the 60th wedding anniversary this month of Leo (deceased) and Margaret Tuddenham, married at St Peter’s Clarks Hill.

Congratulations to Ballan residents and parishioners Bert and Norma Jarvis, married 70 years ago on February 11th 1956. Bert and Norma will receive a blessing at St Brigid’s Mass this Sunday.

MASS OF THANKSGIVING TO MARK THE RETIREMENT OF BISHOP PAUL BIRD

The Diocesan Liturgical Commission invites people of the diocese to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the retirement of Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, to be held on Monday, March 2, 2026 at St Patrick’s Cathedral Ballarat at 7.00pm. Supper will follow in the Hall. The Mass will be livestreamed – link to be advised.



Grampians
Health
Ballarat

Seeking Volunteers | Pastoral Care

Are you:

- **comfortable listening** to people with views and beliefs different than your own?
- able to **listen to and support people** to identify where they find meaning, belonging, and a sense of connection and purpose?
- able to commit 2.5 hours per week?

What Pastoral Care Volunteers do?

We recognise that admission to hospital, and the experience of serious illness, often challenges people to reassess their attitudes to life, their values, relationships, and beliefs.

Pastoral Care Volunteers (PCV) provide support to patients and visitors of all beliefs and faiths, including those who have no religious beliefs.

PCV are allocated to a hospital ward and offer emotional support by providing a Listening Ear to and arranging access to specific faith-based support at the request of patients and visitors.

We will support you by providing you with:

- training prior to starting as a pastoral care volunteer
- ongoing support and opportunities for professional development

If you are interested or want to explore further

- Please ring Paul Ryan, Grampians Health Ballarat on 5320 8634
- email Paul at paul.ryan@gh.org.au



RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

At Masses this weekend the Rite of Naming of the adult Catechumens and Baptised Candidates will take place in preparation for the Rite of Election celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral at 12.30pm on Saturday February 21st – all parishioners are welcome!

At St Brigid's Ballan the catechumens - Marcus Ruthen and Samantha Hodge and our baptised candidate - Jasmine McIlvena will have their names formally enrolled, while at St Alipius Parish the catechumens - Simon Passalick, Katie Powell, Tegan Morrison, and Ken Spedding and the baptised candidates - James Thompson and Libbi Bennett (Buninyong) will have their names enrolled. We pray for our catechumens and candidates.

MORNING TEA AT SS. PETER AND PAUL'S

It has been decided that due to the fall in helper numbers to assist at morning tea, we will now hold morning tea once a month rather than after every 10.30 mass. Beginning in March, morning tea will be held after the 10.30 am mass on the first Sunday of the month. If you would like to assist with providing morning tea, please leave your name and number at the Parish Office and we will be in touch.

Thank you for your understanding.

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF THE NINTH BISHOP OF BALLARAT – UPDATED NOTICE

The ordination and installation of Fr Mark Freeman as the next Bishop of Ballarat will be at held on Thursday March 19, 2026 at 11.00am at St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat. Due to limited seating capacity in St Patrick's Cathedral, attendance at the Mass is via invitation and Entry Card. Entry to the Cathedral will be via Entry Card only. The Mass will be livestreamed – link to be advised. There is the opportunity to view the livestream in St Patrick's Cathedral Hall. Please register your interest to attend the livestream in the Hall by providing your name and email address to Julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Boxes and envelopes for Project Compassion are available in the foyers of all our churches. Please consider taking either of these home for the Lenten

UPCOMING DATES

Wednesday Feb 18th
Ash Wednesday – See front page of bulletin for times

Thursday Feb 19th
Parents Meetings – Reconciliation Preparation
St. Alipius Hall 10.30 am or 6pm

●
RCIC
Parish Hub 4pm

Saturday Feb 21st
RCIA Rite of Election
St. Patrick's Cathedral 12.30 pm

Saturday & Sunday Feb 21st & 22nd
Enrolment Masses for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

●
Monday Mar 2nd
Thanksgiving Mass for Bishop Paul Bird
St. Patrick's Cathedral
7.00 pm

2026 ROUNDTABLE ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY SESSIONS

Venue: Mercy Centre Ballarat East (Gent Street entrance). Dates: February 24, March 24, April 21, May 18, June 18, August 19, September 15, October 13, November 17. Times: Afternoon sessions: 1.30pm - 3.00pm; Evening sessions: 7.00pm -8.30pm.

To register, text Sr Veronica Lawson on 0408392297 or email veronica.lawson@mercy.org.au

BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM – ONLINE STUDY

The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) is a growing initiative to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere, online. This low-cost (\$50usd) online study and formation for employed or volunteer lay workers in parishes is available through our partner, Dayton University. The next Cycle, which begins March 9 is a short cycle of 3-week e-seminars only. There are 15 subjects to choose from – find one that interests you! Registrations are open now until March 5. email [djurdja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:djurджа.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or ph. 5337 7121.

A Charter for Reconciliation and Forgiveness

Reflection on the Gospel

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

(Matthew 5:17-37)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

We sometimes forget that Jesus was a faithful Jew who observed the Law handed down within Israel from generation to generation. Today's gospel is from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus, the faithful Jewish teacher, addresses his Jewish disciples and the Jewish crowds who gather to hear his words. The mission of Jesus is to fulfill the law ("I have come to..."), not to do away with it, and fulfilling the law is a question of "righteousness". The Greek term for righteousness, *dikaionē*, translates both the Hebrew *sedeqah* meaning "right relationship" and *mishpat* meaning "justice". The righteousness of the official teachers of the Law, the scribes and Pharisees, their manner of relating to others and their notions of justice, are judged to be quite inadequate for those who are part of God's reign, the kingdom "of heaven" in Matthew's terminology. The righteousness of Jesus' followers is to "exceed" such minimalist interpretations and expressions of the Law.

Jesus, authentic teacher and interpreter of the Law, offers six examples of the righteousness that "fulfills" the Law. Four of these examples are included in today's reading. What was heard "of old" is contrasted with what Jesus wants to say to his hearers. In the first instance, they all know that the Law forbids murder. They may not have considered the connection between unrestrained anger or murderous thoughts and murder itself. In a series of cascading sentences, Jesus presents a charter for reconciliation and forgiveness. He reminds his audience that true worship demands a forgiving heart expressed in action. He includes a fairly pragmatic reason for settling out of court: you may otherwise find yourself in prison.



There may be an implicit criticism here of the increasingly punitive legal system of the time, a reminder to us of the futility of incarceration of children and the incarceration of anyone for minor crimes.

The second example puts "lustful looking" on a par with adultery. In an age of easy access to internet pornography, this example has a particular resonance: any form of sexual depravity is destructive of right relationship. The third example on divorce is complicated by the exceptive clause, "except in the case of *porneia*". *Porneia* referred to any illicit sexual activity. Here it probably means marriages within degrees of kinship prohibited by Jews but not prohibited by Gentiles. The question seems to have arisen as to whether couples in such unions could stay together on becoming Christian. While Jesus presents the ideal (no divorce), we have to put this teaching into a broader context. Writing to the people of Corinth on this subject, Paul allows for exceptions, since "God has called us to peace". The fourth example is about swearing on oath. Righteousness eschews "fake news" and calls for honesty and transparency in everyday dealings. If the words we use are congruent with the intentions of our heart, we should not have to invoke God as a witness to the veracity of our claims.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sirach 15:15-20
1 Corinthians 2:6-10
Matthew: 5:17-37

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS 1st Sunday of Lent

Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11



Central Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten Registration is now open for 2027

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

Registering for kindergarten

- Register your child the year before they attend kindergarten.
- Registrations open January 1 for the following year.
- Select three preferences.
- Families are encouraged to register by 31 March to support placement planning, however registrations remain open year round.
- Your child may be eligible for Priority of Access, Early Start Kindergarten or additional Pre-Prep hours. Please answer all questions on the registration form.



For more information and to register
simply scan the QR code
or visit ballarat.vic.gov.au/kindergarten

Do you have questions or need support?

Please contact Family and Children's Services

📞 Call 5320 5720 ✉ Email kindergarten@ballarat.vic.gov.au

👤 In person Parent place, 39 Sturt St Ballarat. Every Thursday 9:30am-2:30pm

Translation services are available.

