

St Francis Xavier Primary School



Newsletter

Monday 16th March 2026
Term 1 Week 8

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 (10 weeks)

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Mon 27th Jan–Thu 2nd Apr

Wed 11th–Tue 17th March
NAPLAN Testing

Wednesday 18th March
Last day for Book Club
Issue 2 orders

Thursday 19th March
Student Led Conferences

Friday 20th March
Yr 5/6 Interschool Sport @ STM
No Assembly today

Monday 23rd March
5.30pm P&F Meeting

Tuesday 24th, Wednesday
25th & Thursday 26th March
6pm Yr 4 Sacrament of
Reconciliation at St Alipius

Wednesday 25th March
Regional Swimming at
Horsham (qualifiers from
Division swimming)

8.30am 2nd Hand Uniform
Shop - POP UP Shop at the
Undercover area

Thursday 26th March
Student Led Conferences
MDASA U9 Primary Schools
Swim Sports (nominated
students from F–Yr2)

Friday 27th March
Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Project Compassion
No Assembly today

Monday 30th March
Easter raffle will be drawn

Mon 30th & Tue 31st March
Year 4 Lady Northcote
Discovery Camp

Thursday 2nd April
Last day of term 1
2.20pm finish (tbc)

The Big Water Walk
12.40pm Assembly in gym

Dear Families,

Have you ever wondered how we intentionally nurture values within our school community? If you have attended one of our Friday assemblies, you have likely seen *The Villa Way* in action. Perhaps your child has even been recognised for demonstrating one of our core values through their words, actions or interactions with others.

The Villa Way is built on five guiding principles: Hospitality, Compassion, Respect, Justice and Excellence—values gifted to us by the Sisters of Mercy who founded our school more than 120 years ago. These principles continue to shape the way we live and learn together, helping to create a community where inclusion, kindness, fairness and a commitment to doing our very best sit at the heart of everything we do. More than simply school expectations, these are values for life.

Of course, living these values is not always easy. It is simple to practise them when things are going well, but their true meaning often emerges when we face challenges. Hospitality invites us to step beyond our comfort zones and welcome others, even when it may feel difficult. Compassion calls us to look beyond the surface and seek to understand the experiences of others. Respect reminds us to treat every person with dignity, even when perspectives differ. Justice encourages us to stand up for fairness and what is right, while Excellence challenges us to continually strive to be our best and to inspire those around us.

At times, the Villa Way may prompt us to think differently, act with greater kindness, and grow as individuals—and that is precisely why it is so important within our community.

Has your child shared their understanding of the Villa Way with you? If not, take a moment to ask them what it means to them. You may be surprised by the thoughtful insights they share.



God bless,

Mark Hogbin



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)

Thursday 14th May
Last day for 2027
Foundation enrolments for
existing and new families

Friday 15th May
2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 6MM

Friday 22nd May
2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1EM

Tuesday 26th May
Regional Cross Country @
Warrnambool (qualifiers
from Division XC)

Friday 29th May
Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Cystic Fibrosis

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

School Drop off and Collection

At the start of a new school year, it is pertinent to remind all members of our school community about how you can assist the supervising teachers at the start and end of each school day. At these extremely busy times you can assist our teachers by:



- Adhering strictly to the road rules when approaching or leaving the school
- Keeping pets outside the school gate
- Moving promptly to cars once you have collected your children
- Ensuring that your children are not playing under trees or at the front of the school

Our teachers are doing a great job of supervising many children at a very busy time of day and your assistance is very much appreciated.

A Prayer for Lent

Dear God,

As we continue this Lenten journey, help us to make more space in our busy lives for you. May our prayers, fasting, and acts of kindness this season bring us closer to Jesus. Strengthen us to "Unite Against Poverty," to work for justice, and to care for creation. Guide us to be beacons of hope, gratitude, and love in our school community.

We ask this in Jesus' name,
Amen.

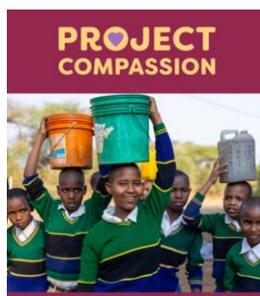


NAPLAN Yr. 3 & Yr.5

After a tricky start when the system went down across the Country, we have had a very productive week of testing with all students in Years 3 and 5. We are very proud of all students who are taking part in the NAPLAN this year. They are doing a great job!

Villa's Big Water Walk

Our children are busily collecting sponsors for our Big Water Walk event to be held in the last week of term. We encourage all children to try to attract a sponsor or two so that they can engage in rich conversations with others about how we can help people in our world who are less fortunate than ourselves. When the children take part in this activity for CARITAS they will be walking in solidarity with others and hopefully raising awareness of the plight of so many people in our world who cannot share in the privilege of having access to clean water. You might know of the work of CARITAS through Project Compassion which is a major awareness raising campaign in our school during this time of Lent.



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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
2.20pm finish

Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations to support Ballarat East Vinnies group

12.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FJS

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

Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations

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

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

Casual Clothes Day - gold coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by FLP

Friday 4th September

Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)

Fathers/Special Friends Liturgy (to be confirmed)

No Assembly today

Mix & Mingle



What a great evening we had on Friday! It was terrific to see our school families gather for a few hours to enjoy good company, fine food and beautiful music. Thanks to all families who were able to support this event. Thanks also to our staff who could attend, and to our wonderful Parents & Friends committee who made this event happen. It was a top night out!

Foundation/Prep Enrolment 2027 – Existing and New Families

Enrolments for children of **existing** and **new families** who start Foundation/Prep in 2027 are open. Parents of **existing** and **new families** who have a child to start in 2027 - must complete the 'Enrolment Application Form' form by clicking on the following link to submit your application:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-expression-of-interest-form/>

Please note this is an essential step for existing families in ensuring you child is enrolled in Foundation/Prep 2027. Enrolments close 14th May 2026

Curriculum News



NAPLAN Update

Our students have done a wonderful job participating in their NAPLAN assessments last week and today. We have been very proud of the calm and positive way they have approached each test and the effort they have shown.

Tomorrow marks the final day of the scheduled class tests, with the following couple of days set aside for any catch-up sessions that may be required.

Thank you to our families for your support and encouragement at home. It makes a real difference in helping our children feel confident and prepared.

Great job everyone!



Student-Led Conferences at SFX

This week - (week 8) and week 9, we look forward to hosting our **Student-Led Conferences**. This is a valuable opportunity for your child to share their learning, showcase their work and discuss their goals with you.

During these conferences, students take the lead in guiding the conversation about their progress, achievements and next steps. Teachers will support and facilitate the discussion where needed.

Bookings are now open through **School Interviews**. You will have received an email from our school office with the link and code to use. If you have not yet scheduled a time, please log in and secure your booking.

Each conference runs for **12 minutes**, with a short transition time between families. We strongly encourage all families to attend, and student participation is essential.

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

Footy Colours Day - gold
coin donations to support
Fight Cancer

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

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
MercyWorks

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

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

Why Student-Led Conferences?

For parents/carers: An opportunity to see your child's learning firsthand, rather than simply hearing about it.

For students: A chance to take ownership of their progress and develop confidence in speaking about their learning.

For teachers: More meaningful and focused conversations that strengthen the home-school partnership.

For our community: A shared commitment to supporting every child's growth and success.

Questions You Might Ask

To support the conversation, you may wish to ask your child:

- What are you most proud of this term?
- Where have you improved the most?
- What did you find challenging?
- Did you achieve your goals? Why or why not?
- What would you like to focus on next?
- How can we support your learning at home?

This format strengthens **student voice** and reflects contemporary research around **Assessment as Learning**.

If you would like to discuss matters without your child present, please contact your child's teacher to arrange a separate meeting at a suitable time.

Please note: Student Led Conferences are held on **THURSDAY nights** this semester unless your class has made an alternative time which you will have been made aware of.

Enjoy your week.



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal – Teaching & Learning

School Closure Day – Structure Literacy Staff Professional Learning

On our recent School Closure Day (Pupil-Free Day), staff spent time deepening their understanding of Cognitive Load Theory and how it impacts the way students learn and retain information.

We explored the three key elements that we draw upon when we think: the environment, working memory and long-term memory. Long-term memory is where our memories are stored and includes memories of life events (episodic knowledge), factual information

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

Friday 27th November
Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
Ballarat East Vinnies group

No Assembly today

Friday 4th December
End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December
Last 2026 day for students

(semantic knowledge) and memories of processes (procedural knowledge). Importantly, long-term memory acts as an almost unlimited internal store of information.

Working memory, however, is where our thinking takes place, and its capacity is quite limited. Research suggests it can only hold around four to seven pieces of information at one time. When students think about new information and connect it to what they already know, this helps move the learning from working memory into long-term memory where it can be stored and accessed in the future. Staff explored how this understanding can influence the way we design learning in the classroom, including the importance of *“cutting the fluff”* so students can focus on the most important knowledge and concepts.

We were also fortunate to have Sarah Siakew, DOBCEL Educational Officer - Literacy, share her knowledge about OCHRE resources and the importance of intellectual preparation when planning for learning. Sarah provided a thought-provoking and informative session.



Lindy Harty, **Literacy Leader**



WEBINAR: Understanding Anxiety and Depression to Foster Resilience

DATE: Wednesday, 18 March 2026

TIME: 7:30 pm

This presentation forms part of a broader webinar series designed to strengthen mental health literacy across school communities.

Join international experts Dr Emma Woodward and Dr Joe Stammeijer as they share valuable insights into recognising early signs of concern and practical approaches to supporting the wellbeing of young people.

Topics in this session will include:

- Understanding Anxiety and Depression
- Recognising Early Signs
- Supporting Neurodivergent Children

Click here to find out more and register! [Understanding Anxiety and Depression](#)

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.

Our **READ AND THRIVE JOURNAL FOCUS** this week looks at Harmony Week.

Harmony Week is a time to recognise and celebrate Australia's incredible cultural diversity. It's about inclusiveness, respect and ensuring that everyone feels a genuine sense of belonging. This year's theme, "Belonging," connects beautifully with our school values at St Francis Xavier. Both remind us of something very powerful — that every child deserves to feel seen, valued and included. When we celebrate Harmony Week we are saying:

- You are welcome here.
- You matter.
- You belong.

As a parent or caregiver, you can engage your children in discussions about multiculturalism and encourage them to ask questions. Promoting a more harmonious and inclusive society can help children grow up with a greater appreciation for the richness and diversity of Australia's cultural landscape.

This School TV Report hopes to instill positive values and create an opportunity to start a conversation with your child about understanding diversity and multiculturalism.



Here is the link to this Special Report

http://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-celebrating-harmony-week-au



Christine Meneely (**School Counsellor and Wellbeing/ MHIPS Leader**)
Contact me on : cmeneely@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Sport/Physical Education News

Term 2 After School netball

SFX is looking forward to once again entering teams in the BNA Primary School after school netball season in Term 2.

- The season is 8 weeks long and all competitions are on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.
- Game times are 4pm / 4:50pm / 5:40pm.
- Great for beginners or those with experience

Please respond to the communication correspondence that was sent last week to express your child's interest or contact me if you have any questions.

Interschool Sport

This Friday is an exciting day for our Year 5 and 6's as we take part in an afternoon of sports and activities with the senior students from St Thomas More primary school. Our Yr 6's will travel to St Thomas More, while our Year 5's will play host to their Yr 5's. All students will participate in various sports such as netball, football, basketball as well as other great activities. These days are a wonderful opportunity to meet and make new friends, play a sport that you may not have played before and to visit other schools in Ballarat.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 8 - Friday Mar 20th - Interschool Sport @ STM (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Thursday Mar 26th - MDASA U9 Primary Schools Swim Sports (nominated students from F - Yr 2)

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Term 2:

- Week 2 - Friday May 1st - Division AFL @ CE Brown Res, Wendouree - (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 4 - Monday May 11th - Division Cross Country @ Fed Uni (selected students from Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 6 - Tuesday May 26th - Regional Cross Country @ Warrnambool (qualifiers from Division XC)
- Week 6 - Friday May 29th - Division Soccer @ Ballarat Region Soccer Facility (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 8 - Friday June 12th - Division Netball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Friday June 19th - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)

Have a fabulous week.



Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator

P&F News

- **P&F Meeting** – Monday 23rd March 2026 – 5.30pm
- **EASTER RAFFLE IS NOW LIVE** – See attached flyer – tickets available for purchase via QR code or <https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2026-easter>
We are also taking Easter Raffle donations please – *please drop them into the office at your earliest convenience*
- **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
- **Zooper Doopers** – Fridays at 2nd break - \$1
- **2nd Hand Uniform Shop - POP UP Shop** – Wednesday 25th March 2026 – at the Undercover area from 8.30am
We have quite a lot of Winter stock in preparation for Term 2 at an affordable price – all items \$5 -\$10
- **RYANS IGA COMMUNITY REWARDS Program**
For the months of March & April 2026 – St Francis Xavier Primary School has been selected to participate in the **Ryan's IGA Community Rewards program** at the **Pleasant Park store** – corner Sturt & Pleasant St
If you are in the area, pop in and collect your groceries and put your tokens in our token box.



SFX Easter Raffle

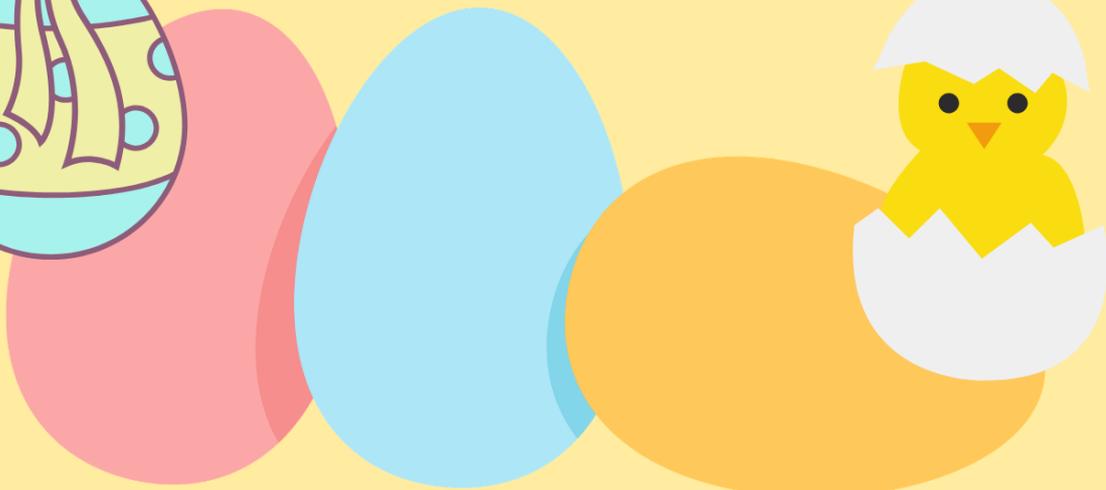
SCAN HERE AND BUY TICKETS NOW



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



<https://rafflelink.com.au/villa2026-easter>



*drawn Monday 30th March

Attachments

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 13th March Hosted by 5ML Theme: Hospitality

We welcome and include others.

Hospitality means welcoming other people to a home, business or school.

We show hospitality because Jesus teaches us to include everyone and show them they are welcome.

FLP	Oliver McMaster and Essie Thomas	4RR	Paddy Quinlan and Paityn Grant
FJS	Harry Ryan & Mila Bridges	4ZA	Freddy Dreher & Nic Taylor
FBO	Noah Kielty and Arthur Madigan	4KB	Fletcher Hipke & Angus Morley
FTW	Mia McMahon and Archer Smyth	5CC	Jameson Campbell and Alora Warren
1GH	Jax Nelson and Ivy Mitchell	5LD	Harper Phelan and Ned Kersley
1EM	Dez Richardson and Lily Martin	5ML	Maddison Little and Connor White
1GT	Maddy Baxter and Winston Broadbent	6PB	Finley Rolfe and Anna Marson
2GJ	Sophie Morvell and Kit Blomeley	6JS	Miah Cooper and Nixon George
2MH	Harper Fedke and Georgia Little	6MM	Sibella Moore and Evie Answer
2TS	Arpan Shrestha & Stella Hipke	EE/ Sci	Archie Gerdtz for his work around the school yard and beautiful memorial for Benson.
3LL	Emme Cavanagh & Frankie Richards	PA	Max Yates and Jasper Govan for their wonderful focus
3JT	Meredith Bodnar and Charlie Ryan	VA	Keeva Humphries & Noah Osciak
3ZP	Evy Faull & River Harney	PE	Aria Steinman & Nate Quinlan
		Tch	
Principal's Award: Darci Prebble for assisting a younger student when they needed a friend			

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

4th Sunday of Lent Year A – 15th March, 2026

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday March 17 th	11.00 am 11.00am	Mercy Place St Patrick's Gordon	
Wednesday March 18 th	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
Thursday March 19 th	11.00 am	St Patrick's Cathedral Ordination & Installation	
Friday March 20 th	9.30 am 9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East St Michael's Bungaree	
Saturday March 21 st	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses – 5 th Sunday of Lent			
Saturday March 21 st		Sunday March 22 nd	
6.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Buninyong Gordon
6.30 pm	Clarkes Hill	10.30 am	St Alipius Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Brian Kershaw

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Anne Bernadette Cheeseman, Joseph Cini, Kay Cocking, Leo Davies, Megan Dunn (McGuigan), Carmel Doherty, Jack Ford, Des Frichot, Noreen Griffin, Pat Kennedy, Lillian, Kevin and Jack Meiklyohn, Mona Nihill, Jack Papworth, John Reddie, Joan Shanahan, Doreen Torpy.

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Elaine Conlan, Irene D'Arcy, Evelyn Farrugia, Patricia (Patty) Gannon, Michelle Hall, John Healy, Thelma Keating, Sarah McLachlan, Carole Simmons, Darren Vukmirovic, Troy Watson (Steenhuis family), John White, Owen Widdison.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAMS

BALLARAT EAST PARISH:

Rose Consignano, Jan Cosgriff, Judith Glaubitz, Martin McGettigan, Dianne McKeegan.

BUNGAREE PARISH:

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

GORDON PARISH:

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

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

CHANGE OF MASS TIME THIS WEEKEND

Just a reminder that due to the Ballan Autumn Festival Masses are different this Sunday. Mass at Ballan is at 9am and Gordon at 10.30am

COLLECTIONS

St Alipius' & Ss Peter & Paul's	
Weekend of 7 th & 8 th March	
Supporting our priests	\$1,084
Supporting our Parish	\$311

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

PILGRIMAGE OF THE MIGRANT JUBILEE CROSS – EVENING PRAYER

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office have invited the Diocese of Ballarat to host the Migrant Jubilee Cross, which has been travelling around Australia since late last year. This pilgrimage offers an opportunity for the Catholic Church in Australia to continue to mark the celebration of the Jubilee of Migrants in October 2025 and acknowledge and celebrate the faith, gifts, contributions, and resilience that migrant communities bring to our local Church and the world. The Cross will be at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat from March 31 – April 5, 2026 and all are welcome to attend Evening Prayer on Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat at 7.00pm. The Cross will then move to the Sunraysia Parish from April 6 –12. Read more about the Cross at <https://acmro.catholic.org.au/jubileecross/>

RESPECT BALLARAT: BALLARAT

FOUNDATION GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The Ballarat Foundation in partnership with Respect Victoria, with the support of the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Ingrid Stitt, has announced the recipients of 11 grants to support the work of Respect Ballarat. Amongst the 11 grants awarded is **St Alipius Parish Ballarat East and Parishes of the Ministry District**, with its project *Faith Communities Focusing on Prevention: Building Respectful Communities*, \$95,600. This project aims to build capacity by creating opportunities for those in faith communities to reflect on where the drivers of gendered violence might be being perpetuated, and how they might be a proactive part of prevention, considering prevention of gendered violence in a way that is grounded within their spiritual, theological and community traditions. This project is auspiced by **Catholic Social Services Victoria** who will work in collaboration with our Parishes and the many faith communities of the Greater Ballarat region that will include churches, faith-based schools, social services, health-care agencies of Catholic and all Christian denominations and other faiths. Our parishes have been part of the **Ballarat Prevention of Violence Faith Network** that has been meeting over the past 18 months with members from McAuley Community Services for Women, CatholicCare Victoria, St John of God Hospital Ballarat, St Vincent de Paul Society, Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Ltd., Jesuit Social Services, Anglican Church Australia, the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and St Alipius Parish (represented by Fr Justin).



THANK YOU, BISHOP PAUL

This Thursday sees Bishop Paul's time as Bishop of Ballarat come to an end after 14 years. Our Ministry District incorporating the communities of St. Mary's Clarke's Hill, St. Michael's Springbank, St. Brigid's Ballan, St. Patrick's Gordon, St. Michael's Bungaree, St. Brendan's Dunnstown, Ss. Peter & Paul's Buninyong and St. Alipius' Ballarat East would like to take this opportunity to thank Bishop Paul for his leadership and ministry to the people of the Diocese of Ballarat during this time. Bishop Paul, may God bless and keep you as you move to retirement.

BAPTISMS
James Henry, Abigail Elizabeth and Theodore Thomas Larcombe Children of Hayden and Matilda
Cooper Bradley Duke Son of Bradley and Stacie
Olive Florence Thompson Daughter of Alan and Sarah Thompson
Lillie Jane Phillips Aaron and Marnie Phillips

UPCOMING DATES
Tuesday March 17th St Patrick's Day Mass & lunch Gordon Church & School 11.00 am
Thursday March 19th Ordination & Installation of Bishop-Elect Mark Freeman 11.00 am
March 24th, 25th & 26th First Reconciliation St. Alipius 6.00 pm
Friday March 27th Anointing Mass and 2 nd Rite of Reconciliation St Alipius 9.30am Mass

LIVESTREAMING OF THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF BISHOP ELECT MARK FREEMAN

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. The Mass will be livestreamed <https://youtube.com/live/sEkoFrdoAzc?feature=share>. 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.

Parishioners have the opportunity to gather in the library of St Brigid's school Ballan from 10.30am on Thursday 19th to view the ordination and installation via the livestream. Many thanks to Jayne Bosworth and the staff of St Brigid's for opening the school to parishioners on what is a pupil free day.

PRAYER FOR MARCH

For disarmament and peace: Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

HOLY THURSDAY WASHING OF THE FEET

As Holy Week approaches, we are in the process of planning for the various liturgies in our parishes. At last night's Liturgy Meeting it was decided that at St. Alipius' we would invite people to volunteer to have their feet washed. If you would like to have your feet washed at St. Alipius Mass on Holy Thursday, please contact the parish office.

PALM SUNDAY CRAFT SESSION

On Friday 27th March between 10am and 12pm you are invited to join us to make palm crosses for Palm Sunday in the St. Alipius' Hall. Directions will be given and fun is assured. BYO scissors. Morning tea will be provided. RSVP by Wednesday 18th March.

CELEBRATING ST PATRICK'S DAY

All parishioners and friends from across our Ministry District are invited to celebrate St Patrick's Day on Tuesday March 17th with 11.00am Mass at St Patrick's Gordon followed by lunch in the school multipurpose room.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS
4 th Sunday of Lent
1 Samuel 16:1, 67, 10-13
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 1:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS
5 th Sunday of Lent
Ezekiel 37:12-14
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45

Check your Assumptions

Reflection on the Gospel

4th Sunday of Lent Year A

(John 9:1-41)

Veronica Lawson RSM

Last week, we journeyed with the woman of Samaria from bewilderment to deep insight into Jesus' identity and mission and to a strong personal faith commitment. This week, we are invited on a faith journey with a man born blind and with the varying groups of participants in the drama. All have the opportunity of coming to faith. Ironically, the blind come to see, both physically and spiritually, while those who are gifted with physical sight remain in spiritual darkness.

In healing the man born blind, Jesus performs the sixth of eight powerful actions or "signs" in John's gospel that reveal God's power at work in Jesus and in the lives of those who seek life. The "signs" invite the reader/hearer/viewer to accept Jesus and his revelation of God and God's purposes.

Time features significantly in the story. Jesus heals the blind beggar on the Sabbath. The Jerusalem authorities have already raised objections about Jesus' Sabbath healing activity (John 5). Once again, they object that he is failing to observe the Sabbath. They label him a sinner. Ironically, in the final authoritative analysis, it is they who "remain in their sins".

This story reminds us of the need to check our assumptions and, if necessary, to revise our thinking and action. It also reminds us to accept the fact that we can be wrong about things we have always believed. It invites us to be open to seeing differently or from a new perspective.

Jesus' disciples, the parents of the man born blind, his neighbours, the religious authorities all operate out of unchecked assumptions. For that reason, they mostly come to the wrong conclusions. Only those



willing to admit that they were mistaken have any chance of coming to faith. In the present global political climate, admitting that one "got it wrong" seems to be anathema. And yet, from a gospel perspective, it is a sign of real strength.

In the common estimation the man was blind, so that he or his parents must have sinned. Not so, according to Jesus. From the perspective of the authorities, Jesus heals on the Sabbath and is therefore a sinner. Not so, from Jesus' point of view. The man was born blind and so needs others to speak for him. Not so, say his parents, he can speak for himself. He does indeed speak for himself and quite eloquently, to the chagrin of the religious authorities. He presents them with the truth about Jesus but they refuse to accept the word of an outcast. Their reaction is violent: they drive him out. But Jesus goes in search of him and leads him to yet deeper levels of faith and understanding. You may like to read the story once more and put yourself in the place of the different characters. It seems to me that there is a little bit of each character in every one of us.



BASKETBALL HOLIDAY CAMPS

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

WEDNESDAY 8TH & THURSDAY 9TH APRIL
TUESDAY 14TH & WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL

SELKIRK STADIUM - 9AM TO 3PM

SIGN UP NOW

BALLARATBASKETBALL.COM



FREE MINERS TICKET

Free kids ticket to the Ballarat Miners when you sign up
to any day of our Power FM Holiday camp

*Actual tickets will be handed out at the camp on the day

SCAN HERE FOR
MORE INFORMATION



PHOENIX

BASKETBALL

**CALLING ALL KIDS BORN 2017–2021
WHO WANT TO LEARN BASKETBALL
JOIN OUR FREE COME & TRY DAY
LED BY FORMER PHOENIX PLAYER**

ETHAN FIEGERT

Sunday 22nd March

10:30am - 12pm

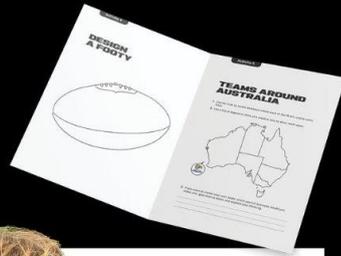
(arrival 10:20am)

Location: The Arch

(Ballarat High School Gym)



In one fun-filled day, kids will learn and play footy in a safe, inclusive environment. They'll pick up new skills, play mini-games and get creative with designing a footy or uniform. Plus have a footy goodie bag to take home.



4-7 YEAR OLDS*

Our youngest players learn footy through fun, age-appropriate games that build skills, confidence and teamwork, led by NAB AFL Auskick coaches.



7-12 YEAR OLDS

Older kids level up their footy skills through modified game play and challenging activities that build teamwork, leadership and lasting memories in a fun, energetic day.

**Kids can join NAB AFL Auskick if they are turning 5 in the calendar year (before 30th June in WA).*

BALLARAT SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

BALLARAT NORTH SESSION
TUES APRIL 7 | 9AM-3PM
C.E. BROWN RESERVE

BALLARAT SOUTH SESSION
TUES APRIL 14 | 9AM-3PM
MT CLEAR REC RECERVE



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.



Y Learn and Swim Kindergarten

OPEN EVENING

March 25, 5pm–6pm | 40 Water St, Brown Hill

For more information about Y Learn and Swim Kindergarten including kinder registration details visit ylearnandswim.org.au



the **Y**

Learn and Swim

Y Learn and Swim p: (03) 4320 0850 w: ylearnandswim.org.au e: info@ylearnandswim.org.au

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