



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 23rd March 2026

Term 1 Week 9

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 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

9am Holy Week Liturgy led by 6PB

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

12.30pm Big Water Walk

1.45pm Holy Thursday Liturgy led by 6JS

No Assembly today

Term 2 (10 weeks)

Mon 20th Apr - Fri 26th Jun

Tue 21st & Wed 22nd April

Year 5 Sovereign Hill Costumed School

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

I was fortunate to be able to attend the installation of the new Bishop of Ballarat last Thursday. As the ninth Bishop of Ballarat, Bishop Mark Freeman was certainly welcomed by his parishioners across the diocese.

Bishop Mark has been appointed to replace Bishop Paul Bird who officially retires after serving us since 2014. Having spent most of his life in Tasmania, Bishop Mark is keen to get to know Ballarat and the wider diocese in the weeks and months ahead.

More than 600 people gathered to welcome Bishop Mark last Thursday. Representatives from across all sectors of our Catholic communities made sure that Bishop Mark knew that his new home would be one of welcome.

As the leader of our diocese, and Director of our schools, we welcome Bishop Mark too. We pray that his presence among us may continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit who calls us to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, provide shelter for the homeless and to spread the word of God through action and word. We wish Bishop Mark well for this exciting new chapter in his life and in the life of our diocese.

God bless,



Mark Hogbin

A special Lenten fast

This Lent, let's give up harsh words and use generous ones.

Give up unhappiness: take up gratitude.

Give up anger: take up gentleness and patience.

Give up pessimism: take up hope and optimism.

Give up worrying: take up trust in God.

Give up complaining: value what we have.

This Lent, let's give up stress and take up prayer.

Give up judging others: discover Jesus within them.

Give up sorrow and bitterness: fill our hearts with joy.

Give up selfishness: take up compassion for others.



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 FJS

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

Friday 19th June

Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 3LL

Give up being unforgiving: learn reconciliation.

This Lent, let's give up words and fill ourselves with silence, and listen to others. Amen.

Villa's Water Walk

Keep those sponsorship forms going everyone. It's not long now until we gather together to walk in solidarity with the many people in our world who don't have access to clean drinking water. Knowing that we can assist a friend in need is what Lent and Project Compassion is all about!



End of Term, Start of Term...

Our first term will come to an end on Thursday 2 April at 2.20pm. Classes resume for second term on Monday 20 April. We wish you all happy holidays and a very happy Easter!

School Uniform Update

We have been able to include a puffer jacket option into the school uniform. If your child would like to wear a puffer jacket with our school logo on it, these can be purchased from Noone's uniform shop in Ballarat. It won't be too long before we begin to feel those famous Ballarat winter chills!

Student Led Conferences

We had our first round of student-led conferences last Wednesday and Thursday. It was great to see the children so confidently presenting their learning to mums, dads and carers. Our children really do cover a lot of learning in one term, and we are very proud of the effort they put into their work. It's great to celebrate our learning in such a positive way!

School Drop off and Collection

We are still encountering some difficulties around collection time each afternoon. Please note that we ask all parents to observe the following points when collecting your child each day:

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Observing all traffic rules on Fortune Street

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.



Foundation Siblings 2027

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

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.

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 1EM

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

Wednesday 9th September

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

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AUSTRALIA

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Date: 20 March 2026

Direct Phone: 0437 784 384

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Mark Hogbin
Principal
St Francis Xavier Primary School
office@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

RE: BALLARAT BEGONIA FESTIVAL SNAIL TRAIL

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your entry in the 2026 Ballarat Begonia Festival Snail Trail.

Your snail sculpture, paired with its own unique story, added a touch of magic to the festival experience. The story informed the sculpture's design, giving it a distinct identity and a special connection to your school.

Made from reclaimed materials that might otherwise have been discarded, the sculpture gave these items a new and creative purpose—beautifully reflecting the imagination and ingenuity of Ballarat's youngest artists.

Please convey my congratulations to the students at St Francis Xavier Primary School on their outstanding entry, and my best wishes to all who contributed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracey Hargreaves".

Cr Tracey Hargreaves
Mayor
City of Ballarat

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

Wed 25th-Fri 27th Nov

Year 5 Kangaroo Camp



Preparing for Holy Week



As we move towards the end of term, we begin to enter one of the most important times in the Church year — Holy Week. This is a special time where we remember the final days of Jesus' life, leading to Easter.

Throughout this week, we also acknowledge significant moments in our faith. On March 25, we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation, when Mary said "yes" to God's call. On March 28, many families may take part in Earth Hour, a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for God's creation. Finally, on March 29, we celebrate Palm Sunday, marking the beginning of Holy Week.

These moments invite us to pause, reflect and prepare our hearts for Easter.

This Week's Gospel – Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11:1–45)

In this Sunday's Gospel, we hear the powerful story of Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus arrives, Lazarus has already been in the tomb for four days. Despite this, Jesus calls him out, and Lazarus walks free.

Before this miracle, we are told that Jesus wept. This reminds us that Jesus shares in our sadness, our struggles and our grief. He understands what it means to feel loss.

This Gospel is a story of hope. Even in moments that feel dark or final, Jesus brings new life. During Lent, we are reminded that God is always at work, bringing hope, healing and new beginnings, even when we cannot yet see it.

A message for families:

As we approach Holy Week, we are invited to think about where we might need hope or new beginnings in our own lives.

Just as Jesus brought Lazarus back to life, we are reminded of small changes. Kindness, forgiveness, and courage can bring new life to our relationships and our communities.

A family reflection:

When have we experienced a "fresh start" or new beginning as a family?

How can we bring hope or encouragement to someone else this week?

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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

Our challenge for the week:

Choose one small action this week that brings hope to others.

- Reach out to someone who may need support
- Offer forgiveness or a fresh start
- Do something kind without being asked

Small actions, done with love, can bring new life to those around us.



Holy Week

All our parents, friends and community members are warmly invited to join us as we remember the events of Holy Week. For Catholic Christians, this is a most sacred time when we remember Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Our Year 6PB class will lead us on **Monday March 30th at 9am**, with our Foundation classes excited to be sharing a special song.

On **Thursday April 2 at 1:45pm**, we will conclude our term with liturgy led by Year 6JS.



Casual Clothes Day – Friday 27th March

We will be holding a Casual Clothes Day on Friday 27th March.

Students are invited to wear casual clothes and bring along a gold coin donation (or more) to support a very important cause.

All money raised will go towards **Caritas Australia's Project Compassion**, supporting vulnerable communities around the world with access to clean water, food, education and opportunities for a better future.

As we journey through Lent, we are reminded that compassion is not just something we talk about — it is something we live. This day is a great opportunity for our students to take action and make a real difference.

This also links closely with our upcoming **Big Water Walk**, helping students understand the challenges many people face each day just to access clean water.

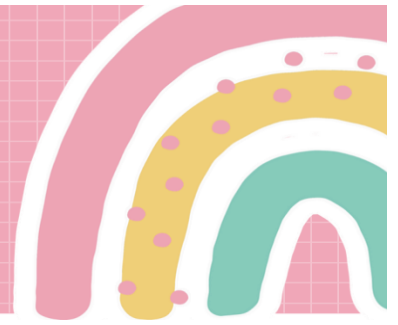
Let's dig deep and show what our SFX community can do — together, we can make a real difference.



Michael Marshall, **Religious Education Leader**

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Wellbeing News



WEBINAR: **Dr Billy Garvey- Mental Health First Aid**

DATE: **Tuesday March 24, 2026**

TIME: **7:30 pm**



I'm a big fan of the work of developmental paediatrician Dr Billy Garvey in children's wellbeing. A free webinar is planned for Tuesday March 24 discussing **Early Signs, Early Support: Mental Health First Aid for Children and Teens**. In this insightful talk, Dr Billy Garvey will explore the principles of Mental Health First Aid, equipping parents and professionals with essential skills to recognise and respond to early signs of mental health challenges in children and teens. The session emphasises early intervention, effective communication, and creating supportive environments that promote positive mental wellbeing.

Check it out here: [Mental Health for Children with Dr Billy Garvey](#)

Our **Read and Thrive Journal** topic this week focuses upon the importance of Healthy Eating. Encouraging kids to have a healthy body image in childhood can lay the foundations for good physical and mental health later in life.

A recent study highlighted that body image is one of the top three concerns for Australian youth. Over half of girls in high schools have tried to lose weight. One-third of teenage boys wanted to be thinner and another third wanted to be larger. Children need to understand that their body shape and size is not a reflection of their health or success. In this edition of SchoolTV, parents will learn how to encourage their child to have a positive body image and why it is so important to their mental health.

Here is the link to your Edition <https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/newsletter/body-image>

Have a great week!

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



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Villa's Big Water Walk 2026:



On the last day of this term, Thursday April 2nd, the children of Villa will take part in 'Villa's Big Water Walk!' Our goal is to raise \$6000 to provide a 25,000 litre water tank and collection point for a school in Tanzania.

Read these letters from our Year 3 students. See if they can persuade you to join in this extremely worthwhile cause!

Dear Dad,
I strongly believe you should donate money to Tanzania. Firstly, it's clear that everyone needs fresh, clean water to survive, but many Tanzanian people don't so that is why we should donate money. Secondly, only 40% of the people of Tanzania have access to clean water so if we donate \$6000 then more than 40% of the people in Tanzania will have clean water. Thirdly, kids in Tanzania have to walk 30 minutes, three times a day, to get water. They will miss out on school and everyone has a right to learn. Surely it is clear that you should donate money now for Villa's Big Water Walk for Tanzania so we can be a good neighbour and help 1000 students.
From Emme Cavanagh 3LL

Dear Family,
I strongly believe that we should help Tanzania get access to fresh water. Like us, we have free water, but Tanzania does not. That is why we should help Tanzania. Firstly, I think we should help Tanzania because it reminds me of the Villa Way because Villa is a kind and helpful school. If we help Tanzania because we are a helpful and caring school we all will be helpful and caring people. We will walk in solidarity so we

Dear Family,
I definitely think people in Tanzania should all be able to access fresh water. To support Tanzania we need to raise \$6000. Firstly, I think that it is horrible to miss education for over 30 minutes. It is a really bad thing, especially if you have a big dream. Secondly, everybody should get fresh water, 40% of people in Tanzania don't have access to fresh water. Thirdly, when they are at school they are really tired and dehydrated. Sometimes they get really sick and have to stay home. Finally, as a whole entire school we need to raise \$6000 for the poor kids in school. Please donate to Tanzania.
From Cruz Raine 3ZP

Dear friends and family,
I absolutely believe that you should donate to Tanzania. Tanzania does not have access to safe drinking water. Firstly, 40% of people are not so lucky. So we need at least \$6000. Please donate to us so we can help get a whole water tank for an entire school! Isn't it bad for their education if they just have to miss out on school so they can go and get water for their families. Sisilia doesn't have the best childhood as she has to walk to get water for 30 minutes every day! Secondly, this isn't fair so we are going to do the same thing on our top oval so we know just what it feels like. They would be so happy if they could have water like we have.
Love from Polly O'Loughlin 3ZP

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can know how hard it really is for Tanzania to walk to get water even though it might be dirty water. Thirdly, to make sure we have fully helped Tanzania we need you to help us raise \$6000 to get Tanzania a 25,000 litre water tank for fresh water!! Please help raise money for Tanzania so they have a wonderful life. Everyone has a right to have access to fresh water. Would you like to have to walk 30 minutes just to get dirty water, cause I wouldn't! That is why we are doing the Water Walk just for Tanzania and that is why I want to do the Big Water Walk at Villa. That is why it is so important that we help everyone to have access to fresh water. I hope that we can help Tanzania get maybe even two 25,000 litre water tanks for fresh water.

From Theo McAdam 3LL

Dear Mum,

Can you please help the people in Tanzania. I reckon it's only fair if everyone gets clean water for their families. Imagine having to walk 30 minutes, three times a day, to get water!

Firstly, everyone has a right to fresh water so can you please help donate. It doesn't matter how much, it could be only five or an extraordinary hundred dollars. We just need a little bit and you know every cent counts!

Secondly, we have to be good neighbours just like the Good Samaritan when he helped the man and he barely knew him, he just helped him anyway. We should do the same for Tanzania which would be really fair don't you reckon? We should all walk in solidarity with 40% of the world who don't have clean water and we should raise money for them. In conclusion, it would be extraordinary if we could do it. A whole tank would be awesome!

From Harvey Mason 3LL

Dear Family,

I strongly believe that if we raise \$6000 to support Tanzania we could get them a 25,000 litre water tank and water collection point for a village.

Firstly, in Tanzania not everyone has access to safe drinking water. They have to walk 30 minutes, 3 times a day to get water and it is not always safe water.

Secondly, to be a good neighbour, even if you don't know them you can still help. If we follow the Villa Way we can be like the Good Samaritan.

Lastly, if we walk in solidarity we can help the 40% of people that don't have access to clean water to drink.

In conclusion, everyone needs access to fresh water so please help us raise \$6000 for Tanzania.

From Amaiyah 3LL

Dear Family,

I strongly believe that everyone in Tanzania must have clean water. Let's help Tanzania! You must be wondering why? To get a water tank.

Firstly, clean water keeps families very healthy and safe. It keeps diseases away. People are struggling to survive. Imagine if you lived in Tanzania and you were drinking dirty water, would you like that?

Secondly, there was once a girl named Sisilia. She had to carry a big bucket of water three times a day in 30 minutes, that is 90 minutes a day. I don't think you will like that! Please donate to Caritas Australia!

Thirdly, no one likes to get sick and have diseases. So if anyone got sick that would be bad for your health. We really need to donate to Tanzania.

Everyone in Tanzania should have clean water. Even if you donate just a little bit of money, it still helps. Help people in Tanzania thank you!

From Daisy Whittlam 3JT

Dear Family,

I strongly believe that everyone in Tanzania must have fresh water to live their best life. You definitely need to be donating to Project Compassion.

Firstly, clean water helps children stay healthy. Children should have fresh water or else they will be getting diseases. If children keep getting diseases they will be missing their education.

Secondly, schools in Tanzania should have fresh water so they don't have to be missing one hour and thirty minutes collecting unsafe water. If you keep having to collect water for one hour and thirty minutes your back will paining.

Thirdly, we can make a real difference together by raising as much money as we can for Tanzania so that they can have a 25,000L water tank that has fresh water, no one in Tanzania will be having diseases. Finally, people in Tanzania should not be drinking water from rivers because the water is dirty. People in Tanzania should deserve fresh water.

From Mayomikun Baruwa 3JT

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.

MDASA Under 9 Swimming event

This Thursday we have seven students participating in the MDASA U/9 swimming event at the BALC. We wish Teddy B, Hudson W, Harriett H, Harry J, Louie E, Tom S, Audrey G & Khloe N all the best for their events on Thursday evening

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 9 - Thursday Mar 26th - MDASA U9 Primary Schools Swim Sports (nominated students from F - Yr 2)

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



Science & Environmental Education News

The tail end of eel season on the Wadawurrung calendar brings milder temperatures to Ballarat, making it the perfect time to work with native seedlings. We are fortunate to have the City of Ballarat's Indigenous plant nursery nearby, home to thousands of native seeds and an impressive number of young plants almost ready for their new homes.

On a beautiful Wednesday morning, a group of SFX students and I were lucky enough to learn from experts as we explored fascinating facts about seeds, how to sow them, pricking out seedlings, and propagation.

Under the expert guidance of Lloyd and Theresa, students carefully pricked out *Dichopogon strictus* (chocolate lily — yes, they really do smell like chocolate, and there is even a vanilla-scented variety!) and *Brunonia*. They then propagated gardenias and grevilleas with impressive skill and confidence.



Afterwards, we enjoyed a lovely morning tea and the chance to connect with students and staff from St James Parish Primary, Mount Clear College, St Alipius Primary and Wendouree Primary. This workshop was part of a series organised by ResourceSmart Schools through their Community of Practice.

A huge thank you to our friend Inga Hamilton for organising such a wonderful day!



Olivia Hayward, Environmental Education Teacher

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> Drawn 30th March
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

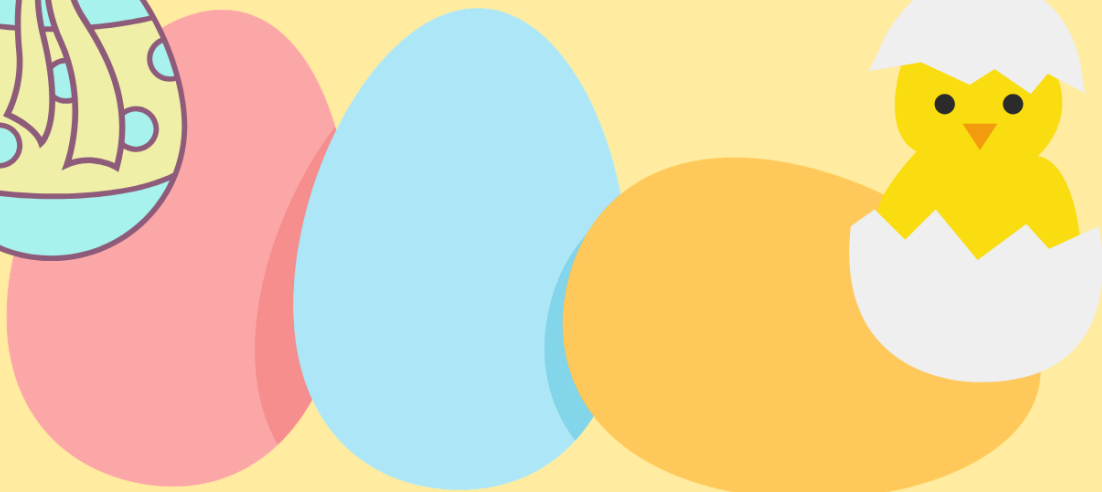
SCAN HERE AND BUY TICKETS NOW



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

Ministry District Newsletter

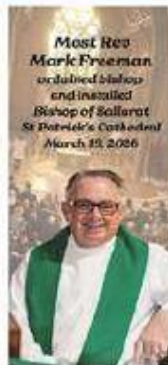
Priests Frs Justin Driscoll & Shaiju Mathew
Ballarat East Parish
 Cathy Prunty and Natalie Gleeson
 0437 505 517
 ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au
 Jackie Wrigglesworth (Finance Officer)
 5337 7128
 Jackie.wrigglesworth@ballarat.catholic.org.au
 Tuesday – Friday 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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

5th Sunday of Lent Year A – 22nd March, 2026

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday March 24 th	11.00 am	Mercy Place	
Wednesday March 25 th	9.30 am	St Alipius'	
	10.30 am	St Brigid's Ballan Anointing Mass	
Thursday March 26 th	10.30 am	Funeral Mass Sr. Pat O'Brien (St. Alipius')	
	11.00 am	Estia Aged Care Mt. Clear	
	2.00 pm	Funeral Mass Mary Borowicki (St. Alipius')	
Friday March 27 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' (Anointing & 2 nd Rite of Reconciliation)	
Saturday March 28 th	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses – Palm Sunday			
Saturday March 28 th		Sunday March 29 th	
6.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Ballarat East Bungaree
6.30 pm	Springbank	10.30 am	Buninyong Ballan



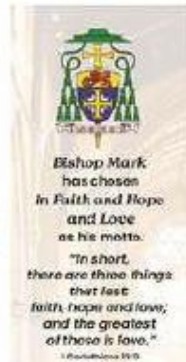
Welcome Bishop Mark Freeman

We welcome Bishop Mark Freeman as the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat and wish him well as he begins his Episcopal Ministry.

We pray that Bishop Mark may faithfully fulfil this ministry and be a genuine sign of Christ's loving presence among the people of the diocese.

Prayer for our New Bishop

We give thanks for the appointment of Bishop Mark Freeman as our new shepherd of the diocese of Ballarat, chosen by Your servant Pope Leo. We pray that You pour out Your Spirit upon him, filling him with strength, wisdom, and compassion to lead us in the path of faith, love, and unity. May his leadership reflect Your grace and inspire us to grow as a community in service to You. Amen.



COLLECTIONS

St Alipius' & Ss Peter & Paul's	
Weekend of 14 th & 15 th March	
Supporting our priests	\$1,153
Supporting our Parish	\$688

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

CHILDREN'S FIRST RECONCILIATION

Over the weeks of Lent children from across our churches and schools have been preparing to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. Sacramental preparation is parish coordinated, family based and Catholic school supported. This week children will celebrate Reconciliation at St Alipius Church on March 24th, 25th & 26th 6.00pm, with Reconciliation celebrated at St Brigid's Ballan on April 1st 5.30pm.

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. Instructions will be provided and fun is assured. BYO scissors. Morning tea will be provided.

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 our 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.

CELEBRATING THE SCRUTINIES WITH THE RCIA

Throughout the RCIA Period of Purification and Enlightenment there are a series of liturgical rites. On the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays of Lent the scrutinies for the Elect are held. These are scrutinies by the Elect themselves (not of the Elect by the Church), within and supported by the community, thus interior reflection in preparation by the Elect is essential. The three Gospels John's narratives of the woman at the well, the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus. For the catechesis of the Elect, they are asked three questions, each with an element of strength and weakness.

1. What have you most drunk in of Christ? For what do you continue to thirst?
2. What have you seen that you never saw before? To what do you remain blind?
3. What is most life-giving in your new intimacy with Christ? What is still dead that needs resurrection?

In addition to the scrutinies, there are Presentations of both the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Johnny Greenfield who represented the Ministry District beautifully at the Ordination and Installation of Bishop Mark Freeman on Thursday. Johnny served at the Ordination and did so with great care and respect. Johnny sat among the Bishops, Archbishops and Cardinal, with a few more responsibilities than his usual Sunday Mass at Buninyong. We are very proud of you Johnny, what a great experience for you.

HOLY WEEK ACROSS THE MINISTRY DISTRICT			
Monday March 30 th	1.00 pm	Mass of the Oils	St. Patrick's Cathedral
Tuesday March 31 st	11.00 am	Anointing Mass	Mercy Place, Ballarat East
Wednesday April 1 st	9.30 am 5.00 pm	St. Brendan's Mass First Reconciliation	St. Brendan's Dunnstown St. Brigid's Ballan
Holy Thursday April 2 nd	6.00 pm 6.30 pm	Evening Mass	St. Alipius Ballarat East St. Michael's Bungaree
Good Friday April 3 rd	10.00 am 3.00 pm 3.00 pm	Stations of the Cross Celebration of the Passion Celebration of the Passion	St. Brigid's Ballan St. Alipius' Ballarat East St. Patrick's Gordon
Holy Saturday April 4 th	7.00 pm	Easter Vigil	St. Alipius' Ballarat East St. Brigid's Ballan
Easter Sunday April 5 th	9.00 am 9.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Easter Mass	St. Alipius' Ballarat East St. Brendan's Dunnstown Ss. Peter & Paul's Buninyong St. Michael's Springbank

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Sr. Pat O'Brien RSM, Pina Caruso, Mary Sillekens, Eily Britt, Mary Borowicki, Jo Rizzo

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Fran Cooen, Leigh Conroy, Nellie Conroy, Tom Everard, Noelene Fletcher, Mary Forbes, Kathleen McGiffin, Antonia Micaloff, Sarah Molloy, Emmanuel Muscat, Dorothy Pearson, Carmel Quigley, Martin Spain.

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.

MASS OF THE OILS 2026

All are welcome to attend the Mass of the Oils this year on Monday, March 30, 2026 at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat at 1.00pm. Afternoon tea will follow in the Hall. The Mass will also be livestreamed

at <https://youtube.com/live/zYkEoGIKJdY?feature=share>

PALM SUNDAY RALLY

The Ballarat Rural Australians for Refugees invites you to support the Refugee Advocacy Network's Palm Sunday Rally in Melbourne on Sunday, March 29, 2026. Program for the day: 1.00 pm - gather on Princes Bridge with banners and placards; 1.30pm - Solidarity walk to Birrarung Marr Lower Terrace (Angel statue); 2.00 pm - 3.30 pm - a full program of speakers and music. More information available at <https://refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au/>

UPDATING OUR UNWELL LIST

Following Easter, we will update our list of those who are unwell. If you have someone on this list at the present time and would like their name to remain, please contact the parish office. All names will be removed from the list unless we are contacted and asked to leave them on.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

5th Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

UPCOMING DATES

March 24th, 25th & 26th

First Reconciliation

St. Alipius'

6.00 pm

Friday March 27th

Anointing Mass and 2nd Rite of Reconciliation

St Alipius'

9.30am Mass

•

Palm Cross Making

St. Alipius' Hall

Following 9.30 am Mass

Monday March 30th

Mass of the Oils

St. Patrick's Cathedral

1.00 pm

2026 ROUNDTABLE ECOLOGICAL THEOLGOY SESSIONS

Venue: Mercy Centre Ballarat East (Gent Street entrance). Dates: 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

BAPTISMS

The following children are being baptised this weekend. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

Walt Auchettl

Child of

Gemma & Matt

Eric & Charlie Borg

Children of

Cheyenne & Adrian

Chloe Evelyn Boadle

Child of

Amy & Nicholas

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Palm Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14 — 27:66

Weeping with Those Who Weep

Reflection on the Gospel

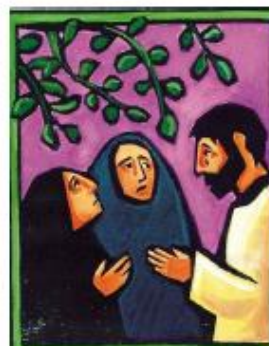
5th Sunday of Lent Year A

(John 11:1-45)

Veronica Lawson RSM

Sunday's readings touch into the most profound of mysteries, the mysteries of life and death. To hold a new born child or to see the sick restored to health is to experience the wonder of life. On the other hand, death can bring unimagined grief and pain. The conflicts in Iran, in Palestine, in Ukraine, in South Sudan, in Afghanistan and in so many other places are bringing death to hundreds of thousands of people and an extraordinary outpouring of grief. These deaths come at a time when extreme weather events continue to cause death and destruction and species loss. Death brings tears, even anger. Little wonder that "life" becomes a metaphor for transformation and new beginnings or that "death" so often signifies deprivation and loss.

The gospel reading is about the death and restoration to life of Lazarus, "the one whom Jesus loved". It is the last of the seven "signs" in John's "book of signs" that reveal the "glory" of God. It is also the greatest of Jesus' signs. It functions as a catalyst for the events that lead to his death: "from that day on they planned to put him to death" (11:53). It provides the occasion for Jesus to assert "I am the resurrection and the life" and to invite assent to that revelation of his identity. It reveals the compassion and tender heart of Jesus who weeps at the grief of Mary his friend and at the death of her brother. It also reveals the goodness in the hearts of those "Jews" sharing her grief and coming to faith in Jesus who raises the dead to life. Though the story revolves around the plight of Lazarus, Martha and Mary are the characters who, with Jesus, occupy centre stage and into whose faith journey we are invited to enter. Martha and Mary are



identified as "sisters" who live in Bethany. Are they blood "sisters" or sisters in their love of Jesus and the community around him, or both? Lazarus is Mary's sick "brother". Martha will later claim him as her "brother". Might they all be part of a little faith community in Bethany rather than biological siblings? A brief notice alerts the reader to the imminent death of Jesus: "Mary is the one who anointed Jesus with perfumed oil and wiped his feet with her tears". The reader will later discover that Mary's anointing of Jesus is "for the day of [his] burial".

As so often in John's gospel, misunderstanding and irony function to bring the actors in the drama, and to bring us as actors in the theatre of life, to new levels of understanding and faith. Right now, in the face of ongoing conflict in so many places, we are called, as sisters and brothers across the globe, to weep with those who weep. even as we open our hearts and share our resources so that some measure of "life" might be restored to those who grieve.



Inspired by Christ's Mercy



Join us for Open Night

Damascus College

Thursday 30 April | 4.30pm - 6.30pm

Explore our campus, meet our students and staff,
and discover what makes Damascus College
a place where young people grow and thrive.



Registration essential: damascus.vic.edu.au

WILDCATS

BASKETBALL

**2026 WINTER
REGISTRATIONS
ARE NOW OPEN.**

SEASON STARTS APRIL

FREE STARTER PACK FOR ALL NEW U8 & U10 PLAYERS

DON'T MISS OUT!

**JOIN
NOW!**

WILDCATSBASKETBALL.AU

BALLARAT

Wildcats Basketball Club Inc
20 Eastwood St Ballarat Central VIC 3350
Info@wildcatsbasketball.au
ABN 44 592 873 432





EASTER 2026

VACATION CARE

6th - 17th April 2026

8:00am-6:00pm daily

(excludes Public Holidays)



Parents to provide morning tea and lunch for their child (unless otherwise stated) and Base 1270 to provide an afternoon snack. Besides the planned activities listed each day, children are free to choose from a variety of additional activities at Base 1270.



Monday 8 th April	EASTER MONDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY
Tuesday 9 th April	NO VACATION CARE TODAY EASTER EGGSTENDED The Easter Bunny may have been and gone but that doesn't mean that we can't have some eggstra Easter fun! Think bunnies, egg dye-dying and even some bouncing around!
Wednesday 8 th April	WAXY WEDNESDAY Everyone knows that candles are made from wax but what else can we do with wax? Let's get creative today and discover other things that we can do with wax. Secret messages, suncatchers and melty masterpieces are just some of the things that might be going home today.
Thursday 9 th April	UN-BALL-DEBAILABLE FUN! Get ready for a day full of bouncing, throwing, catching and painting. Let's practice those fine motor skills and work with each other as a team. If you can do it with a ball then there's a chance that it's happening today. So bounce on in and throw yourself into a day of BALL-istic fun!
Friday 10 th April	FIDGET FRIDAY Some like to squeeze, some like to roll, others prefer to bounce. With some supplies from the crew at Stuffers along with our own resources, we will be creating and decorating some fantastically, fun fidgets to take home.
ADDITIONAL COST OF \$25 PER CHILD MAXIMUM OF 50 STUDENTS TODAY	

Monday 13 th April	MOVE IT MONDAY Bending, stretching, running, jumping and rolling. Let's explore the different ways that we can move our body. While we are moving our bodies we will learn about how each movement benefits us.
Tuesday 14 th April	CHALLENGING TUESDAY Today will be a day of tricky tasks and critical conundrums. Remember, the most obvious answer isn't always the solution. You will need your thinking caps today as well as some help from your friends. Can you solve the problems before it's too late? Make sure your brain is fueled and ready for a day of thinking and problem solving.
Wednesday 15 th April	Showbiz Cinema Excursion Let's head to the cinema to watch a movie. What will it be??? Will it be a kind-hearted movie with an underlying message or will it be a crazy adventure to another world? Rest assured, we will find out!
Thursday 16 th April	ADDITIONAL COST OF \$22 PER CHILD MAXIMUM OF 45 STUDENTS TODAY BASE 1270 GOT TALENT Do you have a hidden talent? Maybe you have the voice of an angel or can put on the performance of a lifetime? Can you sketch a portrait or perform a magic trick? Whatever skills you have hidden away, today is the day to make them shine!
Friday 17 th April	OCEANARIUM Grab your wetsuit and snorkel and let's take a deep dive into the ocean to explore what lies beneath. What creatures and plantlife will you see? An octopus, a crab, some coral? Watch out! Don't get tangled in the seaweed!

To secure places for the Vacation Care Program, please book through Xplor. Should you have any questions, for new enrolments or any enquiries, please contact -

Phone (work hours): 0481 574157 Email: oshc@buninyongps.vic.edu.au