



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 11th May 2026

Term 2 Week 4

P.O. Box 2027
Ballarat East VIC 3354
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Term 2 (10 weeks)

Mon 20th Apr-Fri 26th Jun

Monday 11th May

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

Full winter uniform to be
worn from today

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

Mon 25th – Friday 29th May
Catholic Education Week

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

Mon 1st – Thurs 4th June

Swimming Program for
2TS, 2GJ, 3LL, 4KB, 4ZA,
4RR, 5CC, 5LD, 5ML & 6MM

Friday 5th June

Staff Professional
Development
Pupil free day

Monday 8th June

Public Holiday-King's
Birthday Pupil Free Day

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear Families,



We hope all of our mums, grandmothers, and special mother figures enjoyed a lovely Mother's Day over the weekend. It was a wonderful opportunity to pause and acknowledge the care, love, and support they bring to our families and our school community each day.

Whether it was through a handmade gift, time spent together, or a simple moment of appreciation, we hope the day brought happiness, gratitude, and a chance to feel truly celebrated.

We also hold in our thoughts those in our community for whom Mother's Day may have been difficult, bringing memories of loved ones missed or times of quiet reflection.

Thank you to the families who joined us for our Mother's Day Liturgy on Friday. It was a beautiful celebration filled with warmth and gratitude, and your presence made the occasion even more meaningful.

Dear Lord,

We give thanks for the women in our world — for their strength, compassion, wisdom, and quiet generosity shown each day in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

We pray especially for mothers, grandmothers, carers, teachers, leaders, and all women who nurture and guide others with love and courage. May they know the value of their presence and the deep appreciation held for them.

We also hold in prayer women who are facing hardship, loneliness, grief, injustice, or uncertainty. Surround them with hope, peace, and the support of those around them.

May we continue to build a world where every woman is treated with dignity, kindness, and respect, following the example of Mary, whose faith and strength continue to inspire us.

**We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

With full hearts and a positive spirit, we now look ahead to another wonderful week of learning, growth, and shared experiences together.

Enjoy your week.



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal – Teaching & Learning

Tuesday 9th June

Swimming Program for
2TS, 2GJ, 3LL, 4KB, 4ZA,
4RR, 5CC, 5LD, 5ML & 6MM

Friday 12th June

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

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 5CC

Mon 15th – Fri 19th June

Swimming Program for
1GH, 1EM, 1GT, 2MH, 3JT,
3ZP, 6PB & 6JS

Friday 19th June

Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6) tbc

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 3LL

Mon 22nd – Wed 24th June

Golf Clinics for Yr 5/6

Wednesday 24th June

GWR Football @ C.E. Brown
Reserve Wendouree

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

MARK HOGBIN: Mark has finished his Camino walk and feels like a real sense of accomplishment has been achieved. Here is a happy snap of him. The Camino de Santiago is a renowned network of ancient walking routes leading to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, typically undertaken for spiritual or personal reasons. Mark also had an opportunity to visit a Jesuit church where he found a statue of St Francis Xavier. We continue to wish Mark safe and happy travels.



SCHOOL CLOSURE DAY TERM 2: Please note that in Term 2 we have scheduled a School Closure Day for Staff Professional Development on Friday 5 June. No classes will be running on this day. Staff will be participating in professional learning focused on Auslan, led by educators involved in the Auslan – Teachers as Co-Learners program in their schools.

PARKING AROUND OUR SCHOOL: As we settle into the term we ask that all drivers be mindful of children and other pedestrians when approaching or departing from school. Road rules must be followed at all times. This includes crossing over double lines and blocking the traffic flow with parking in unusual spots. Let's work together to keep everyone safe.

SCHOOL UNIFORM: From this week full winter uniform is expected to be worn. We are also pleased to introduce the St Francis Xavier puffer jacket, now available as part of the uniform for \$67. **All uniform items can be purchased from Noone on Armstrong Street.**

FOUNDATION 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

Please note: **Foundation/Prep 2027. Enrolments close 14th May 2026 this week!**

REMINDER ABOUT OUR PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT:

As part of the DOBCEL school community, St Francis Xavier Primary School follows important guidelines designed to keep our students safe and supported. One of these is our Parent Code of Conduct, which outlines expectations for all members of our school community. A recent update to this document includes guidelines around photographing children at school events. In line with our Child Safety Standards, parents are now asked to only photograph or film their own child. If you'd like to include other children in any photos or videos, you must first gain consent from their families. We understand this may be a change from past practice, but it reflects best practice for keeping all our students safe. This will particularly apply to assemblies, excursions, and camps, where group photography has been common in the past. We kindly ask all families to support this approach and help us

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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)

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

maintain a safe and respectful environment for every child.

This is a slide which we will be using as a reminder.



Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

ANZAC DAY - Foundation

To continue our Inquiry Unit, *Family History*, we are exploring the reasons behind celebrations and commemorations. This Thursday and Friday, we will be continuing our discussions about Anzac Day and the heroes who fought to protect our country.

As part of this week’s learning, the children will be making Anzac biscuits. The ingredients used will include flour, oats, sugar, desiccated coconut, butter, golden syrup, and bicarbonate of soda.



We had these costumes sitting at the front of the room just to ‘hook’ the children in. The dress was an actual dress that a nurse wore during the war.

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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

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



We made ANZAC biscuits



Then we read the book 'Anzac Ted' and made this art piece.

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Literacy Learning in Year 2

Over the last couple of weeks Year 2 students have been reading the City of Light by Julia Lawrinson and will move their focus this week to the book, Curiosity: The Story of A Mars Rover. These texts explore the changes to space exploration over time, looks at how earth is a planet in the solar system. The students will be learning how to write an information text

In Inquiry the students have been studying about technology changes throughout history. Their excursion to Sovereign Hill last week provided the students with a wonderful opportunity to gather information, ask questions and make links with their learning in English and Inquiry. What a powerful way to build background knowledge for writing information texts. We invite you to delve a little deeper into the book City of Light through our “Book Snapshot” into what the Year 2 students are reading, writing and learning about.




Lindy Harty, Literacy Leader

We invite you to explore our Book Snapshot to see what Year 2 students are reading, writing and learning about. Make sure the check out the questions prompts to get the conversations flowing!

City of Light

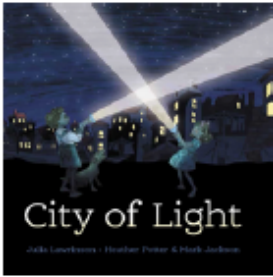
by Julie Lawrinson



ST FRANCIS XAVIER
PRIMARY SCHOOL | BALLARAT EAST

Year 2

At St. Francis Xavier Primary School, we believe a love of reading grows when school and home work together. This book snapshot is designed to help you connect with your child's learning—through classroom experiences, conversations, and shared stories at home. By reading together, talking about books, and making time for reading each day, you play a vital role in building confident, capable readers.



STORY SNAPSHOT

City of Light tells the story of a family living in Perth in 1962, during the exciting time when astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth. As Glenn's spacecraft passes over Australia, the people of Perth want to show their support for the mission. Families turn on every light in their homes to help their city shine brightly in the night. The narrator shares how her family, neighbours and the whole community come together to take part in this special moment.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Two children (a boy and a girl) these characters are curious and imaginative, wondering if the astronaut will be able to see them from space.

John Glenn - a real historical figure whose journey as an astronaut orbiting Earth in 1962, inspires the children's idea and the whole community action.

The people of Perth - the wider community becomes a collective character. Families, neighbours, and the whole city join in by turning on their lights. Showing cooperation, excitement and a sense of shared purpose.

RESPONDING IN CLASS

Year 2 students will identify differences between narratives and historical narratives. They will write simple and compound sentences using conjunctions (and, but, so, or). Oral language will develop through explaining ideas, discussion, and justification. Students will write about two related ideas and use vocabulary linked to the texts.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- How have communication tools changed over time?
- Have you ever felt connected to someone even though they are far away?
- How do you think families in the past used to hear news or learn new information?
- How have the changes in technology made it easier to communicate?
- Have you seen something at a grandparents house that is different to what you have at your house? (TV, computer, radio, phone, washing line?)
- What did you learn about John Glenn?
- How did you think John Glenn felt when he saw the lights from space? Why?
- Can you find Perth on a map of Australia?
- How could you help someone in your community?

THEMES

This text explores:

- Small actions make a big difference
- Community and togetherness
- Hope and inspiration
- Connection across distance

Students will build knowledge about Earth as a planet in the solar system, recognising patterns in the changing positions of the sun, moon, and stars in the sky and space exploration. They will explore changes in technology and communication over time.

IF THEY LOVED THIS, TRY...

Here We Are: Notes for Living on Planet Earth by Oliver Jeffers

Flood by Andrea Beaty

Deadly Science - The Solar System by Australian Geographic

Flat Stanley in Space by Jeff Brown

Wellbeing News

I hope you all had a lovely weekend celebrating Mother's Day with your children and the special mother figures in your lives.

Mother's Day is a sensitive topic to write about- while it is a day of joy and delight for many families, it can be a day of pain, trauma and sadness for others.

Death, infertility, miscarriage, estrangement, divorce, co-parenting and illness all bring challenges to this day. Reach out and seek support if this day was difficult for you.

THINKING OF YOU



I was reading about the history of Mother's Day and was really struck by its beginnings. Anna Jarvis created the day to honour her own mother, who worked tirelessly to improve conditions for families in her community. The fact that only four of her thirteen children survived to adulthood is a powerful reminder of the challenges many mothers faced.

Mother's Day was never meant to be about gifts—it was about peace, remembrance and recognising all that mothers do. It's interesting to think about how much the day has evolved.

While it's still a lovely time to show appreciation, maybe it's also a chance to reflect on the realities for mothers and caregivers today—mental health, the juggle of parenting and work/life balance. So many give so much of themselves, often putting their own needs last. Perhaps the message we need to share is simple: you matter too.

Mother's Day is not only a celebration, but also a reminder of the vital role mothers and caregivers play in shaping the wellbeing of children—and in turn, our communities.

Here is a link to a special Mother's Day report:

https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/celebrating-mothers-day

Have a wonderful week!

Christine Meneely (School Counsellor and Wellbeing/ MHiPS Leader)

Contact me on : cmeneely@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au



Eureka Division Cross Country

We have a very strong squad of 40 students from Years 3 to 6 that are excited for the Eureka Division Cross Country at Fed Uni this Monday. The course is a 1km loop over different surfaces and finishes with a challenging uphill section. Some students will run 2 laps while the older students will test themselves over 3 laps. Cross Country is part of the School Sport Victoria interschool sports pathway, where successful runners can progress from Division to Region and then State level competitions. We wish all of our students all the very best for their event as they represent our school with determination, resilience and great sportspersonship.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 2:

- 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 7 - Monday June 1st - Thurs June 4th - Swimming Program - students from 2TS, 2GJ, 3LL, 4KB, 4ZA, 4RR, 5CC, 5LD, 5ML & 6MM
- Week 8 - Tuesday June 9th - Swimming Program - students from 2TS, 2GJ, 3LL, 4KB, 4ZA, 4RR, 5CC, 5LD, 5ML & 6MM
- Week 8 - Friday June 12th - Division Netball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Monday June 15th - Friday June 19th - Swimming Program - students from 1GH, 1EM, 1GT, 2MH, 3JT, 3ZP, 6PB & 6JS
- Week 9 - Friday June 19th - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6) - TBC
- Week 10 - Monday June 22nd - Wednesday June 24th - Golf Clinics - students in Yr 5 & 6
- Week 10 - Wednesday June 24th - GWR Football @ C.E. Brown Res, Wendouree

SFX Football Jumpers, Singlets & Netball dresses/bibs

If you have any SFX Football jumpers, singlets or netball dresses/bibs at home could you please return them to Mr Down or Mr Carroll or drop them into the office.

Have a great week.

Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator



Environmental Education News

On Thursday the Raising Rarity team enjoyed a fantastic excursion to the Ballarat Botanic Gardens to learn more about the endangered species *Leucochrysum albicans* subspecies *tricolor*, which we will soon be growing as part of the Raising Rarity program.

Despite the chilly weather, students showed great enthusiasm and curiosity throughout the afternoon. They discovered the importance of protecting rare and threatened native plant species, and gained valuable knowledge about the habitat, lifecycle, and conservation of this beautiful Australian wildflower.

Students represented our school wonderfully, asking thoughtful questions and embracing the outdoor experience with positivity and resilience. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world conservation work, and we are excited to continue our involvement in the Raising Rarity program back at school.

We would also like to extend a huge thank you to Tash and Meg from the Melbourne Botanic Gardens for sharing their knowledge and expertise with us, and for planning such an engaging and informative afternoon. We all left feeling well equipped, inspired, and enthusiastic about the exciting work ahead of us in the Raising Rarity program.

Olivia Hayward, Environmental Education Teacher



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.

- **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
- **Milkshake Mondays** continue Monday at first break
\$1.50 for a milkshake & freckle/or marshmallow
The P&F are looking for anyone who would like to learn how to run Milkshake Mondays – they will then be put on a rotating roster to co-ordinate Milkshakes a few times each term so that we are not reliant on the same 1 or 2 people running this each week – if this is something you would like to do please contact Lisa on 0412 647 737. *Please don't think that someone else will sign up so I don't need to – if we cannot get the volunteers to co-ordinate this each week we will not be able to run this and then the Children miss out.* We will also require 5 additional volunteers to assist each week via sign up in your class chat.
- **Uniform Shop** Did you know our Second Hand Uniform shop is always open? Please see the ladies in the office if you wish to look at any items in our Second Hand Uniform shop, or reach out to a member of the P&F to help you with any of your Uniform needs.
All items in the Second Hand Uniform shop are between \$5 and \$10.
- **RYANS IGA COMMUNITY REWARDS Program** For the months of May & June 2026 – St Francis Xavier Primary School has been selected to participate in the **Ryan's IGA Community Rewards program** at the **Mount Clear store**
If you are in the area, pop in and collect your groceries and put you tokens in our token box



Ministry District Newsletter

6th Sunday of Easter Year A – May 10th, 2026

Incorporating the faith communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarke's Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon & Springbank

Priests: Frs. Justin Driscoll & Shaiju Mathew

Staff: Cathy Prunty (Parish Co-ordinator)

Finance: Jackie Wigglesworth

Natalie Gleeson (Admin Assistant)

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Email: Jackie.wigglesworth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Phone: 0437 505 517

Phone: 5337 7128

Our parishes are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES

| Weekday Masses | | | |
|---|---------------|--|-------------------------|
| Tuesday May 12 th | 11.00 am | Mercy Place Ballarat East | |
| Wednesday May 13 th | 9.30 am | St. Alipius' Ballarat East | |
| Thursday May 14 th | 10.30 am | Ballan | |
| | 11.00 am | Mecwacare Canadian | |
| Friday May 15 th | 9.30 am | St Alipius' Ballarat East St Michael's Bungaree | |
| Saturday May 16 th | 9.30 am | St. Alipius' Ballarat East | |
| Weekend Masses – 6 th Sunday of Easter | | | |
| Saturday May 16 th | | Sunday May 17 th | |
| 5.00 pm | Ballarat East | 9.00 am | Ballarat East Gordon |
| 6.30 pm | Dunnstown | 10.30 am | Buninyong Ballan |

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Carol Forster, Murt Somers

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Mary Bettes, Joan and Brian Blood, William Borchert, Mary Therese Conroy, Keith & Doris Eastwood, Stan Maher, Albert Henry Jarvis, Ray & Mary Smith, Iala Wise

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Owen Widdison, Richard Wade

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

6th Sunday of Easter

Acts: 8:5-8, 14-17

1 Peter: 3:15-18

John: 14:15-21

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

The Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11

Eph 1:17-23

Mt 28:16-20

UPCOMING DATES

- May 13th
Ballarat East Finance Committee Meeting
7.30 am
Parish Hub
*
- Gordon Parish Leadership meeting
St. Brigid's Ballan
7.00 pm
- May 14th
Ballarat East Parish Liturgy Committee
Parish Hub
5.30 pm
- May 21st
St Vincent de Paul Festival Mass
10.30 am
Ss Peter & Paul's Buninyong
*
- Ballarat East Pastoral Council Meeting
5.30 pm
Parish Hub
- May 22nd
Loreto College Principal Commissioning Mass
11.00 am
Loreto College
- May 24th
Gordon Parish Confirmation
9.00 am & 10.30 am
Gordon & Ballan Masses
- May 28th
Bungaree Parish Leadership Team Meeting
7pm
St. Brendan's Dunnstown

CAR SECURITY

Please note that in recent weeks several cars have been broken in to in the local area. When leaving your car, ensure that you have not left anything valuable in it or anything that can identify you or your home address.

BAPTISMS

- St Alipius'
Reggie Patrick Stevens
Son of Corey and Madeleine
- Florence Sue, Jimmie Norman and Isobel
Daisy Quinlan
Children of Corey and Elkie

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2026 is "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). All welcome to attend the following services in Ballarat:

- Monday, May 18 at 2.00pm: St Patricks Cathedral, corner Sturt & Dawson Streets, Ballarat
Tuesday, May 19 at 2.00pm: Peel Street Church of Christ, 37-39 Peel Street, Bakery Hill
Wednesday, May 20 at 2.00pm: St Peter's Anglican Church, 1309 Sturt Street, Ballarat
Thursday, May 21 at 2.00pm: Ballarat Central Uniting Church, 101-103 Lydiard Street South, Ballarat
Friday, May 22 at 2.00pm: Ballarat Anglican Cathedral, 49 Lydiard Street South, Ballarat.

BALLARAT VOLUNTEER EXPO



"Your year to volunteer"
St Vincent De Paul members and other volunteer organisations will be present in St Patrick's Cathedral Hall on Wednesday 20th

May from 11am – 3pm.

You are invited to come along and explore what opportunities exist that may suit you. Discover how you could make a difference in our community.

MINISTRY DISTRICT SOCIAL GATHERING

On Wednesday June 3rd the ministry district will hold a dinner as a social get together. Dinner will be at the Golden City Hotel at 6 pm. Please call the Parish Hub to put your name on the list by 29th May. Everyone is most welcome to attend. We look forward to seeing many people from our ministry district on the night.

FAMILY GROUPS

A reflection from Fred & Mary Reus

In 1989 or 1990, Fr. Peter McGrath came to St. Alipius and spoke of family groups. Forms were handed out to the congregation and filled in by those interested in being part of one.

Fred and I were keen, it was a way of getting to know a range of other parishioners, particularly older people. Interested people were divided into fourteen different groups with a range of ages. We were notified about the group we were in and given a date and time of when to meet. At our first meeting leaders were decided as was the venue for our next gathering and so it began.

Initially prayers started each get together and continued to be a big part.

Our group included several families, lots of children and a sprinkling of older couples or single people. Each of the fourteen groups evolved to suit the members.

Fred and I volunteered to be coordinators. We met with the coordinators from St. Columba's, Creswick and Daylesford, reporting on how our groups were going.

Our group met regularly, usually involving a shared meal, ideas were discussed. A weekend away was the most important event to take place in the first year.

Venues were discussed and the logistics of meal planning, activities and always Mass.

Gradually a distinct identity developed in each group. It was great as most people did not know each other well, beforehand.

It was decided in our group that leaders would change every two years.

Over the years groups in the St. Alipius' Parish fell away. There was never a common reason. It happened in other parishes as well.

Fred and I continued as coordinators, meeting at the cluster meetings.

It is a consensus that Family Groups brought people together, provided support and fun in a relaxed friendly environment. All ages were part of this. As time went on the number of groups reduced.

Sickness, deaths, lack of interest and different needs and ideas took a toll. One group remains – a strong, dynamic group, which despite many changes has survived to be a strong, supportive, welcoming, social group which still meets once a month.

MOTHERS' DAY PRAYER

Loving God, we pray for our mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love, and others who show us a mother's love.

We pray for adoptive mothers and for the women who wish to give birth but experience challenges, that they know your care.

We pray for mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them.

We pray for those who wish to serve as mothers, but are not able to do so, that they know your comfort.

We pray for mothers who have died, that God may bring them into the joy of his kingdom. Amen.

SVDP WINTER APPEAL 2026

The Ballarat East Conference of SVdP invites you to join with them by supporting our Winter Appeal. This year's theme is "for more and more people homelessness is just one sudden crisis away". Each year, this appeal plays a vital role in the Society's fund raising efforts.

Parishioners are encouraged to help continue the Society's work of helping those most in need.

Please do so by donating via:

The envelopes at the end of the pews. Please place completed envelopes in the collection plate.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

BALLAN MECWACARE

All residents are now in the new building at Mecwacare Ballan with building for a growing number of residents continuing and the former aged care facility now demolished. Residents are enjoying a magnificent facility that will serve the community for many years. Pastoral care with weekly visits and holy communion and quarterly anointing are offered by our parish with special thanks to our Ballan parishioners Lloyd Lamb, Colleen Ryrie and Bridget Sims for their ministry.

FORMATION FOR COMMUNION MINISTERS

In coming weeks, the ministry district is hoping to offer some formation/renewal for Communion Ministers. This would be available to those who already participate in the ministry as well as to those who would like to become part of the ministry. If you would be interested in participating in this formation, please contact the parish office.

We are Never on our Own

Reflection on the Gospel - Easter 6A

(John 14:15-21)

Veronica Lawson RSM

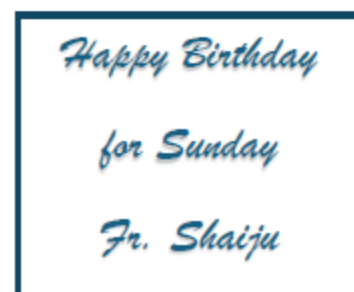
Those who defend themselves in court run the risk of being outsmarted by clever and sometimes unscrupulous adversaries. It is never a good idea to be too self-reliant even in a country with a basically sound legal system such as ours. Today's gospel implies that the disciples need a defense attorney or lawyer. Jesus has acted in that capacity for them in their struggles with the anti-gospel forces arrayed against them.

Now he is close to death and he gives them instructions that begin and end with reference to loving him and keeping his commandments. Jesus has given them a new commandment, namely that they love one another: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (13:34). Later in this discourse (15:12-14) the reader of the gospel learns what the actors in the drama already know about Jesus' commandments. "This is my commandment," says Jesus, "that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you." This is no small command, to be prepared to die for one another.

Given the opposition they are likely to face, the disciples cannot live out such a commitment on their own. Neither is Jesus leaving them "orphans" who have to fend for themselves. He will ask his "Father" to provide "another" defender or advocate who will

act on their behalf, an advocate who will always be there. This new advocate is the "Spirit of truth". As we approach the end of the Easter season, the liturgy thus points us towards Pentecost and the gift of God's Spirit.

It is good to know we are never on our own. It is also good to reflect on the capacity we have to make the love of Christ present in our world. Many of us will never find ourselves in a situation where our love is tested to the point that we have to give life for others. During the COVID crisis that ushered in the present decade, we did not have to look far to find countless people who gave their lives for others. Health professionals, cleaners, truck drivers, flight attendants, shop assistants, school teachers, lecturers, ordinary people everywhere lay down their lives for the sake of others. The gospel calls us to put the well-being of others, even their survival, before our own comfort. With life-style changes and movement of peoples precipitated by war and by the climate crisis, we find ourselves called to "lay down our lives" for the sake of our friends, humankind and other-kind, across the planet. The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) is one powerful interfaith-based avenue for action. We can, despite opposition, continue to advocate together for climate action and for those displaced by rising sea levels, by war or by persecution. With the help of the Spirit, our Advocate, we can surely rise to the challenge.



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