



# St Francis Xavier Primary School

## Newsletter

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Term 2 Week 5

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### Term 2 (10 weeks)

Mon 20<sup>th</sup> Apr-Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Jun

#### Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by FJS

**Mon 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May**  
Catholic Education Week

#### Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May

Regional Cross Country @  
Warrnambool (qualifiers  
from Division XC)

#### Friday 29<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> – Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> June

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

#### Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June

Staff Professional  
Development  
Pupil free day

#### Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June

Public Holiday-King's  
Birthday Pupil Free Day

#### Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June

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

#### Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June

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

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 3LL

#### Mon 15<sup>th</sup> – Fri 19<sup>th</sup> June

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

### On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear Families,

Did you know that next Sunday, the Catholic Church celebrates Pentecost Sunday? Pentecost is often called the “birthday of the Church” and reminds us of the special moment when the Holy Spirit became evident to Jesus’ followers, filling them with courage, joy and hope.

At school, we are invited to reflect on how the Holy Spirit is alive in our own lives — helping us to show kindness, patience, compassion and love to others each day. With the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts and minds, we are encouraged to be brave and to live with respect, service and hospitality — values that closely reflect the Mercy tradition at the heart of who we are at St Francis Xavier.

Our Mercy values come to life through our commitment to the Villa Way — a way of being that we practise each and every day at school. We talk about it often, look to it for guidance and encourage one another to live it authentically. In fact, if you ask your child about the Villa Way at home, there’s a very good chance they’ll be able to tell you exactly what it means and how they try to live it each day! As a community, may the spirit of Pentecost continue to inspire us to use our gifts to care for one another, spread kindness and compassion, and share God’s light in our homes, classrooms and playgrounds.

### Student Agency at St Francis Xavier - Schools that Listen

Have you had a chance to listen to our Villa Voices podcast yet? It’s a good one. Featuring our four Year 6 Student Agency representatives - Logan, Evie, Sibella and Xavier - it’s a great conversation about student leadership and the possibilities of voice and choice. The conversation highlights our Buddy Program and the Kilometre Club, which are marvellous examples of student initiatives - you can find the chat on Spotify.

The Villa Voices podcast is closely aligned with our commitment to Student Agency, which has been a recent DOBCEL initiative continuing to strengthen student voice and create opportunities for students to help shape their learning and school experience. Recently, our Student Agency reps attended a forum alongside students from across the Diocese, where they explored the important question: What makes a great school for all?

Through hands-on activities, discussion and collaboration, our students shared their ideas, reflected on their experiences and considered ways they can help make a positive difference within our school community. We look forward to seeing the ideas and learning from the forum come to life back at St Francis Xavier as part of this important and exciting work.



Jayne Mohr, Deputy Principal – Learning Diversity

*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 19<sup>th</sup> June**  
Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6) tbc  
2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by SCC

**Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> – Wed 24<sup>th</sup> June**  
Golf Clinics for Yr 5/6

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June**  
GWR Football @ C.E. Brown  
Reserve Wendouree

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> Jul-Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Sep

**Mon 13<sup>th</sup> July, Tues 14<sup>th</sup> &  
Wed 15<sup>th</sup> July**  
Year 6 Melbourne CYC  
Camp

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July**  
Start of Term 3 Mass  
No Assembly today

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> July**  
2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 4RR

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July**  
Casual Clothes Day - gold  
coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 3ZP

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August**  
Ballarat Catholic Primary  
Schools Athletics @  
Llanberris (selected Yr 3, 4,  
5 & 6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by FBK

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August**  
Pupil free day (to be  
confirmed)

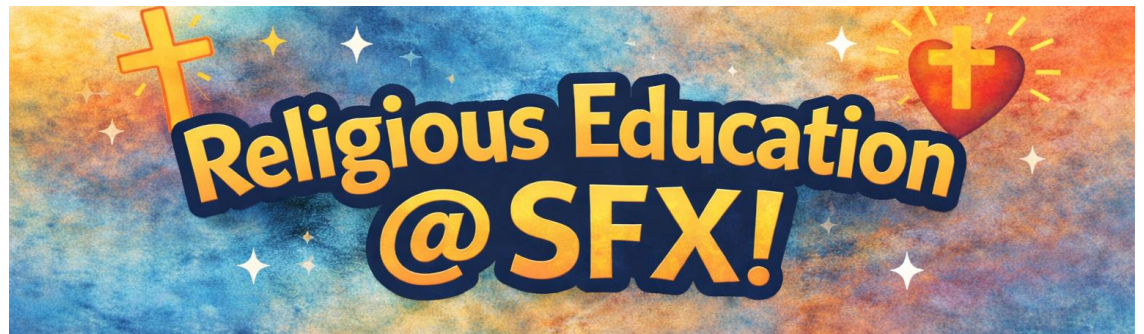
Division Basketball @  
Selkirk Stadium (selected  
Yr 5/6 students)

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> August**  
2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 1GH

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August**  
Casual Clothes Day - gold  
coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by FLP

**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.



### A Time of Mission and Action



As we continue through the Easter season, we are reminded that our faith is not something we keep to ourselves, it is something we are called to live and share with others.

This week we celebrate Laudato Si' Week, with the theme "From Hope to Action." It invites us to move beyond simply hoping for a better world, and instead take real steps to care for our common home.

We also look ahead to Catholic Education Week in the Ballarat Diocese, a time to celebrate all that makes our school community so special.

### This Week's Gospel – The Ascension (Matthew 28:16–20)

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus gathers his disciples and gives them an important mission. He tells them to go out into the world and share his message of love, hope and peace with others.

Before he leaves them, Jesus reassures his disciples with these powerful words: "I am with you always."

The disciples are sent out with hope, but they are also called to act. This connects strongly to the message of Laudato Si' Week. Our faith calls us not just to believe, but to live in ways that make a difference.

### A message for families:

On May 24, we honour Mary Help of Christians, the patroness of Australia, who reminds us of the importance of trust, courage and responding to God's call with action.

### A family reflection:

What is something we hope for in our world?

What is one small action we can take as a family to make that hope real?

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**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September**  
Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)  
Fathers/Special Friends  
Liturgy (to be confirmed)  
No Assembly today

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September**  
Division Athletics @  
Llanberris (qualifiers from  
BCPS Aths – Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September**  
No Assembly today

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September**  
Last day of Term 3

Footy Colours Day - gold  
coin donations to support  
Fight Cancer

No Assembly today

**Term 4 (11 weeks)**

Mon 5<sup>th</sup> Oct–Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Dec

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October**  
Year 3 Day Camp

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October**  
Start of T4/Mercy Day Mass

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

No Assembly today

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October**  
Division Tennis @ Ballarat  
Regional Tennis Centre  
(selected Yr 5/6 students)

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 5LD

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**  
2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 1GT

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October**  
Casual Clothes Day - gold  
coin donations to support  
MercyWorks

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by FTW

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November**  
Assessment and Reporting  
Pupil Free Day

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November**  
Public Holiday-Melbourne  
Cup Pupil Free Day

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

2.40pm Assembly in  
School gym led by 6JS

## Our challenge for the week:

Turn one hope into action this week.

- Care for the environment in a small but meaningful way
- Help someone without being asked
- Choose kindness in a challenging moment

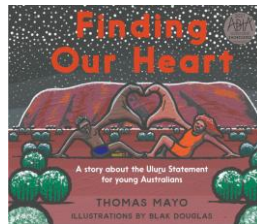
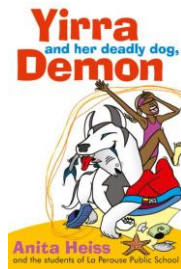
Small actions, done with love, can change the world.



Michael Marshall, Religious Education Leader

## Curriculum News

### Literacy Focus - Year 3



In Year 3, students are building their understanding of Aboriginal language and culture through the texts *Yirra and Her Deadly Dog, Demon* by Anita Heiss and *Finding Our Heart* by Thomas Mayo. Students are exploring the purpose and structure of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural narratives and developing an appreciation of storytelling as a way of sharing knowledge, culture and connection.

Check out our Book Snapshot today to give you an insight into what the Year 3's are focusing on. You might like to check out the links to the history of Indigenous Flags.



Lindy Harty, Literacy Leader

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 2TS

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November

2.40pm Assembly in School gym led by 4ZA

Wed 25<sup>th</sup>-Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Nov

Year 5 Kangaroo Camp

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November

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

No Assembly today

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December

End of Year Mass

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December

Last 2026 day for students

# Yirra and her Deadly Dog, Demon by Anita Heiss



ST FRANCIS XAVIER  
PRIMARY SCHOOL | BALLARAT EAST

Year 3

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

Yirra has a dog, Demon, who is notoriously poorly behaved. He runs away frequently, he knocks people over, he sprays sand on people, he chases cats, and he takes things from Yirra's house and hides them. Yirra's family has had enough of the dog with the constant mess and stress he causes. Yirra is told that she needs to train Demon but she struggles to find someone who can do it. A boy she has a crush on at school, Matt, offers to help her as his cousin is a dog trainer. Yirra eventually gets Demon trained and is relieved to have a calm and well-behaved dog.

## MAIN CHARACTERS

**Yirra** – The main character, a spirited young Aboriginal girl who is learning about herself, her family and her culture.  
**Demon** – Yirra's lively and loyal dog who often causes mischief but is always by her side.  
**Nan** – Yirra's grandmother, who teaches her about Country, culture, stories and family connections.  
**Yirra's Mum and Dad** – Supportive family members who want Yirra to learn from her experiences.  
**School Friends and Classmates** – Characters who help explore themes of friendship, bullying and belonging throughout the story.

## WRITING

In class, students will be learning about sentence types and how to use the conjunctions because, but, and so. They will write a factual recount about the creation and ownership of the Aboriginal Flag.

## THEMES

This text explores:

- Identify and Belonging
- Connection to Country
- Friendship and Loyalty
- Resilience and Growth
- Culture and Storytelling
- Family and Community

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Questions to extend thinking...

- What did this story teach you about kindness or belonging?
- Why is it important to learn stories from different cultures and communities?
- What does the story teach us about resilience?
- How do pets or animals help people feel safe and supported?
- If you could ask Yirra one question, what would it be?
- Can you think of another story with a brave main character? How are they similar?

You may like to view these resources and learn about:

[Flags of First Nations Peoples](#)  
[Australian Aboriginal Flag History & Colours](#)  
(Click on the links to access)

## IF THEY LOVED THIS, TRY...

**Demon Guards the School Yard** by Anita Heiss (Sequel)  
**Bindi** by Kiril Saunders  
**Young Dark Emu** by Bruce Pascoe  
**Our Home, Our Heartbeat** by Adam Briggs  
**From little things big things Grow** by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody

# Wellbeing News

“In a world where you can be anything, be kind.” I’ve always loved this quote.

Kindness doesn’t just happen by chance — it’s something we nurture, model and make space for in our everyday lives. Our children learn kindness not only through what we tell them, but through what they experience and observe around them. When children are treated with kindness, they begin to understand how powerful it can be and why it matters.

Sometimes kindness is found in the smallest moments — offering a genuine compliment, letting someone with fewer items go ahead in the supermarket queue, helping someone who is struggling to carry something, or simply taking the time to notice another person. As parents and caregivers, these everyday actions quietly teach our children empathy, compassion and respect.

Kindness can also mean encouraging inclusion — inviting everyone to join in, making space for others, and helping children understand the importance of making others feel valued and connected.

Genuine kindness is one of the greatest gifts we can help foster in our children. Imagine the difference we could make if we all committed to a small act of kindness each day. Let’s start a Kindness Revolution together!



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

### Eureka Division Cross Country

What a brilliant day we had at Fed Uni last Monday for the Eureka Division Cross Country event! Perfect conditions set the scene for an outstanding day of competition, with all of our students giving their absolute best out on the course. We are incredibly proud of the determination, sportspersonship, and resilience shown by every student.

Well done to all students for achieving some outstanding results and congratulations to the runners that have qualified for the Regional event in Warrnambool later this term.

A big thank you to staff, supporters, and families for your support and energy!



### After-school Netball

Well done to the over 40 students that have taken to the netball courts this term representing SFX at Llanberris Netball Centre as part of the BNA After-school netball competition. The feedback from the players and parents is that all students are developing their skills and teamwork and most importantly having fun together.

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## 2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 2:

- 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**



## **P&F News**

- **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



## Attachments

### ASSEMBLY AWARDS 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026 Hosted by 6MM Theme: Excellence

We show our personal best. Excellence means being the best person we can be.

We always try our hardest, even when it's difficult, just like Jesus did.

FLP	Jake Sullivan and Eden Toohey	4RR	Sahesi Kariyawasam and Ted Answer
FJS	Fred Bromley & Isla McLean	4ZA	Tom Maher & Rory Dunne
FBO	Audrey Needham and Quinn Govan	4KB	Oskar Olszewski & Violet Toohey
FTW	Imogen Ruxton and Noah Mookhoek	5CC	Paddy Ludbrook and Jack Quinlan
1GH	Lenny Sullivan and Elsie O'Loughlin	5LD	Ben Walshe and Livia Pietrantuono
1EM	Lula Blomeley and Eden Vanderkley	5ML	Keeva Humphries & Freddie Lynch
1GT	Chloe Allan and Joe White	6PB	Hannah Firth and Remi James
2GJ	Elle Needham and Nate Quinlan	6JS	Mollie Arnts and Lucy Bromley
2MH	Hugo Bromley and Audrey Giles	6MM	Nellie Cheeseman and Noah Rice
2TS	Sophie Quinlan and Jed Phelan	EE/ Sci	Sahesi Kariyawasam and Matilda Bell- for enthusiastically assisting with maintaining our school garden beds.
3LL	Penelope Carrick Lance Humphries	PA	Finley Rolfe and Kayden Finley for excellence in their songwriting.
3JT	Zahli Kingston and Nevon Thuse	VA	Finya Najero-Hinko, Winnie Harrison, Paddy Dwyer, Evie Answer (6MM)
3ZP	Remy Hansen & Hazel Martin	PE	Eddie Waldron, Milla Kingston
		Tch	Piper Swayn (3ZP), Tommy Just (2TS)
Principal's Award: Elsie O'Loughlin for being so caring and thoughtful towards another student who was using crutches.			

# Ministry District Newsletter

The Ascension Year A – May 17<sup>th</sup>, 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 19 <sup>th</sup>	11.00 am	Mercy Place Ballarat East	
Wednesday May 20 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Thursday May 21 <sup>st</sup>	9.30 am	St Brigid's Ballan	
	10.30 am	Ss Peter & Paul's Buninyong	
	11.00 am	Estia Mt Clear	
Friday May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	9.30 am	St Alipius' Ballarat East	
	11.00 am	Loreto College	
Saturday May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses - Pentecost			
Saturday May 23 <sup>rd</sup>		Sunday May 24 <sup>th</sup>	
5.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Buninyong Gordon
6.30 pm	Clarks Hill	10.30 am	Ballarat East Ballan

### WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

#### THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Margot Kyatt, Peter Salmon, Maria Sosic

#### THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Alice Carey, Peter Davies, Mary Dowling, Lyla Geary,  
Anna Maria Greene, Keith Holmes, Jim Keating, Brian  
Maher, Jack Murphy, Kathleen Reynolds, Nell Wise

#### THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Owen Widdison, Richard Wade

### THIS WEEK'S READINGS

#### The Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11

Eph 1:17-23

Mt 28:16-20

### NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

#### Pentecost

Acts 2:1-11

1 Corinthians: 13:3-7, 12-13

John 20:19-23

## UPCOMING DATES

May 21<sup>st</sup>

St Vincent de Paul Festival Mass

10.30 am

Ss Peter & Paul's Buninyong

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Ballarat East Pastoral Council Meeting

5.30 pm

Parish Hub

May 22<sup>nd</sup>

Loreto College Principal Commissioning Mass

11.00 am

Loreto College

May 24<sup>th</sup>

Gordon Parish Confirmation

9.00 am & 10.30 am

Gordon & Ballan Masses

May 28<sup>th</sup>

Bungaree Parish Leadership Team Meeting

7pm

St. Brendan's Dunnstown

## BAPTISMS

St Patrick's Gordon

Maxwell Heath Anthony Joyce

Son of Heath and Emma

Sofia & Yhollanda Burbergs

Children of Luke and Melissa

Ss Peter & Paul's Buninyong

Myla Grundy

Daughter of Aaron and Letitia

Eddie John, Louie Thomas and Josie Rae

Kitchen

Children of Daniel and Sarah

## MINISTRY DISTRICT SOCIAL GATHERING

On Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> May. Everyone is most welcome to attend. We look forward to seeing many people from our ministry district on the night. Rides can be organised where needed. Contact the parish office if you would like a ride.

## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

**THE BALLARAT SINGERS**  
Including  
Cathedral Organist, Leigh Askew

**START 2.00 PM**

**ECHOES OF FAITH**

**CHRISTCHURCH ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL**  
49 LYDIARD STREET SOUTH, BALLARAT

**SATURDAY 23 MAY 2026**

A Celebration of Heritage Hymns within the Ballarat Heritage Festival  
Entry at the door by donation  
All proceeds will support The Cathedral Music Program.

**BALLARAT HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

*Congratulations to Jan & John Cosgriff  
who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on  
Thursday.*

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

## FAMILY GROUPS

A Final Reflection – Maureen Mason

I joined my family group several years ago at a time when most of the families' children were moving on and only adults remained. This enabled us to do different things, when we met up once a month. As the years passed, so too did some of our members. At the same time everyone kept their eyes open for people new to the parish perhaps looking for a way to meet others. I am sure most people will agree that many friendships have been formed over time and these friendships have provided great support especially in troubled times which is always greatly appreciated. These days we are much older but still enjoy our regular 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday lunch together, looking forward to being together and sharing stories and meals.

## ST VINCENT DE PAUL FESTIVAL MASS AND COMMISSIONING

In his first visit to the Ballarat East Parish as Bishop, Bishop Mark Freeman will celebrate 10.30am Mass at Buninyong on Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup> for the St Vincent de Paul Festival. This will include the commissioning of the Presidents, Members, Associate Members and Volunteers of the St Vincent de Paul Society who serve through the Conferences of Ballarat East, Ballarat, Ballarat North, Sebastopol, Wendouree, Aquinas Young Vinnies (ACU-Ballarat), Ballarat Assistance Centre, Wendouree Assistance Centre, Vinnies Centres in Alfredton, Daylesford, Sebastopol, Wendouree and the Bridge Mall. The Society is also supported by members of the Mini Vinnies and College Conferences in our Catholic primary and secondary schools. Thank you to all who serve through the St Vincent de Paul Society, including the members of our own Ballarat East Conference. New members, associate members and volunteers are always welcome!

## 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.

## 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 fundraising 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.

## BAPTISM SUPPORT

Parishioners in the St. Alipius' Parish will know that we have people bringing their children to us each weekend for Baptism. Each year we baptise over one hundred children. We appreciate the way that you, as parishioners, make these people welcome. At our recent Parish Pastoral Council meeting we spoke of the desire to have parishioners who would be happy to meet with these families before the baptism as part of the preparation and then be there on the day to welcome the family and show them where to sit. If you think that this is something you would like to do, please contact the parish office for more information. Phone 0437 505 517.

## LAUDATO SI' WEEK: MAY 17 – 24, 2026

Laudato Si' Week is a celebration held annually from 17 to 24 May to mark the anniversary of Pope Francis's landmark encyclical on caring for our common home. Sponsored by the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, this global celebration unites Catholics to listen and respond together to the cry of creation, rejoice in the progress we have made in bringing Laudato Si' to life, and intensify our efforts through the Laudato Si' Action Platform as well as other opportunities for education and action. The theme for 2026 is 'From Hope to Action'.

Laudato Si' Week 2026 invites us to move from hope to action. Hope is not passive; it is lived and shared through daily decisions, community life, prayer and concrete acts of care. This commemorative year reminds us that ecological conversion grows step by step, through restored relationships, protected creation, and strengthened communities. The next chapter of Laudato Si' begins with us, wherever we are. Source: Laudato Si Week.

# A New and Different Sort of Presence

## Reflection on the Gospel ~ Feast of the Ascension

(Matthew 28:16-20)

Veronica Lawson RSM

Loss is part of the human experience and death is generally the most painful experience of loss. As violence escalates in so many places, we become more and more conscious of loss as a global reality. This loss of human life is accompanied by a catastrophic loss of species and of eco-systems, exacerbated by devastating bushfires and floods. Today's Feast invites us to face the experience of loss in a transformative way. Over Lent and Easter, we have been re-memorating the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Ascension draws us into another aspect of the Mystery, that of the presence of the Resurrected One even in his absence.

While today's gospel recounts Matthew's story of Jesus' final encounter with his disciples, it does not provide an account of Jesus' "ascension" or return to God. For that, we must turn to the first reading (Acts 1:1-11). This Lukan story presupposes a pre-scientific, three-tiered understanding of the structure of the world. In this ancient view, God is in the heavens above and the prophet Jesus, like the prophet Elijah of old, is caught up into God's presence. The Holy Spirit will "descend" upon God's people and "clothe" them with power to bring the gospel message to the ends of the earth. The vertical (up and down) movement is balanced by a horizontal movement: Jesus' family and followers who grieve the loss of their loved one are told not to keep looking up to the heavens. They have work to do: strengthened by his blessing, they are to stay in the city for the present and be empowered by the Holy Spirit



to continue the prophetic ministry of Jesus, to be witnesses to his death and resurrection. They have to face the fact that the physical loss of

Jesus means a new and different sort of presence and that they have a role to play in making him present in their world.

The gospel reading has Jesus on a mountain top where he commissions his male disciples to make disciples of all nations, literally "to disciple all peoples." He has already commissioned the women on the open road to announce the good news of the resurrection (Matt 28:10). They are to be fearless in their mission. In Matthew's final chapter, then, both men and women are commissioned to proclaim the gospel. There are other dimensions to their mission, namely to baptize in the name of the Triune God and to teach what Jesus has taught or "commanded" them. The confidence that they need to engage in this mission is the assurance that the One whom God has raised is with us to the end of time. The gospel has come full circle. In the first chapter of Matthew, an angel announces that the child to be born will be called Emmanuel, God-with-us. The last verse of the gospel invites us once more to ponder that mystery and to commit ourselves to a life-giving gospel mission.



# FREE School Holiday Program

Ballarat Primary School Students

**Build confidence, connection and capability - this school holiday.**





Since 2022, Paw Pals has partnered with local Ballarat schools to support student wellbeing through therapy dog-assisted learning.

We're excited to bring our school holiday program to Ballarat! Our free program builds on the foundation of Paw Pals with fun, engaging activities designed to strengthen peer connection, boost self-confidence, and foster independence.



thankyou so much for making me happy and making me enjoy my time !!


Past Student

-  **Free to Attend, Limited Spots**
-  **Grades 4-6**
-  **June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>  
10AM -2PM**
-  **Lucas Community Hub,  
17 Coltman Plaza, Lucas**


Activities are based on the Paw Pals Curriculum, which aligns with the general capabilities in the Victorian Curriculum.

**Applications close 12<sup>th</sup> June. Get in touch with us today to secure your place.**

**Contact: Kate Maddocks**

 **0484 366 996**

 **Kate.Maddocks@mackillop.org.au**

 **mackillop.org.au/programs/paw-pals**



This holiday program is made possible thanks to the generous support of



Mackillop Family Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Elders in each of the communities where we work.

Mackillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. We value an inclusive culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender diverse, intersex and asexual people (LGBTQIA+) have the right to be safe.









## Paw Pals School Holiday Program

# Expression of Interest (EOI)

Paw Pals has been partnering with local schools and students in Ballarat since 2022. Building on this strong foundation, our school holiday program offers fun, engaging activities that strengthen peer connection, boost self-confidence, and support students in developing greater independence.



### PROGRAM DETAILS

-  Grades 4–6
-  Free
-  June 29<sup>th</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>
-  10 AM–2 PM
-  Lucas Community Hub, Lucas
-  Max. 8 Students per Group

### KEY FOCUS AREAS

The program provides targeted activities to enhance students' **self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making**. Based on the Paw Pals Curriculum, which aligns with the general capabilities in the Victorian Curriculum. Topics include:

- **Understanding social cues** (e.g., taking turns, teamwork, problem-solving)
- **Coping with mistakes and building resilience**
- **Practice and persistence for success**
- **Mindfulness for wellbeing**, inspired by the way dogs live in the moment and spread joy


### STUDENT INFORMATION


Full Name			
Date of Birth			
School		Year Level	
Parent/ Guardian Name		Contact Number	
Email Address			

<p><b>Does your child have any additional learning or support needs?</b> <i>(Please provide details)</i></p>			
<b>SESSION DELIVERY</b>			
<p><b>How many days will your child attend?</b> <i>(Multiple days welcome up to 2)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> July <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July	<p><b>Would you like to explore 1:1 support sessions?</b> <i>(Outside of the School Holiday Program)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p><b>How did you hear about the Paw Pals School Holiday Program?</b></p>			
<input type="checkbox"/> School referral		<input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social media		<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify):</i> _____	
<b>PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT</b>			
<p>I confirm that I am the parent/guardian of the above-named student and give permission for them to participate in the Paw Pals School Holiday Program. I understand that submitting this Expression of Interest does not guarantee placement in the program, and I will be contacted regarding further details.</p>			
<p>Signature _____</p>		<p>Date _____</p>	

**Applications Close Friday 12th June | First-Come, First-Served**

**Please email completed form to**

 [Kate.Maddocks@mackillop.org.au](mailto:Kate.Maddocks@mackillop.org.au)



**Kate Maddocks**

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**Paw Pals Operations Coordinator**

This holiday program is made possible thanks to the generous support of



**CATHOLIC DIOCESE of BALLARAT**