



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 3rd August 2026
Term 3 Week 4

P.O. Box 2027
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Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 13th Jul-Fri 18th Sep

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
(Staff professional
development day)

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

Friday 21st August

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1GH

Sat 22nd – Fri 28th August
Book Week

Monday 24th August

Book Week Dress Up Day
"Symphony of Stories"

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

Trivia Night

Wednesday 9th September

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

Friday 11th September

No Assembly today

Tuesday 15th September

6pm Confirmation at
Damascus College

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

This week marks a special time in the life of our Church and Diocese as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of Australia's first saint, Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, on 8 August.

Born in Melbourne in 1842, Mary was the eldest of eight children of Scottish immigrants, Flora and Alexander MacKillop. She spent much of her childhood in our Diocese of Ballarat, making her story especially significant to our local Catholic community.

Together with Fr Julian Tenison Woods, Mary co-founded the Sisters of Saint Joseph, a religious order that continues to serve communities throughout Australia and beyond. Many Catholic schools, including several within our Diocese, were established and nurtured by the Josephite Sisters, and Mary herself visited schools throughout the region during her travels. Her commitment to providing education for children in rural and disadvantaged communities has left a lasting legacy, with many Australians and New Zealanders fondly remembering being taught by the Josephite Sisters.

Despite facing significant challenges and opposition throughout her life, Mary remained steadfast in her faith and unwavering in her mission. Her well-known words, *"Never see a need without doing something about it,"* continue to inspire people to respond with compassion, courage and generosity.

As we celebrate the Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop this week, may we be reminded that the example of those who have gone before us continues to guide and inspire us. May we follow Mary's example by recognising the needs of others, responding with kindness, and trusting in God's call to make a positive difference in the lives of those around us.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



School Choir

Congratulations to our school Choir who participated in the Boite Schools Performance on Saturday. Well done students and thank you to Mr. West and Ms. Harty who gave of their time to make this happen. A great effort!

Thursday 17th September
School Disco

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 4ZA

Friday 13th November
2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 2TS

Friday 20th November
2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 6JS

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

Parents & Carers – We Need Your Help!

Our much-loved Friday Hot Lunches and Milkshake Mondays can only continue with the support of our parent and carer volunteers. At the moment, we are finding it very difficult to secure enough helpers to keep these services running.

If you are able to spare even one morning each term, it would make a significant difference. You don't need to commit every week—every little bit of help contributes to ensuring these special treats remain available for our students.

If you can assist, please contact Lisa, our Parents & Friends Chairperson, or let the school office know as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, if we are unable to secure enough volunteers by Wednesday, we will need to cancel Friday Hot Lunches. Likewise, if we do not have enough helpers by Friday, Milkshake Mondays will also need to be cancelled.

As students cannot assist with food preparation, these services rely entirely on the generosity of our parent and carer volunteers. A small group of dedicated helpers has been carrying the load throughout the year, and we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing commitment. We now need a few more people to share the responsibility so these popular initiatives can continue.

Thank you for considering how you might be able to help support our school community.



ASSEMBLY DATE CHANGE: A quick update to our Term 4 assembly dates, as the original Year 6JS date clashes with the Eureka Division Cricket competition.

Year 4ZA Assembly: Friday 6th of November

Year 6JS Assembly: Friday 20th of November

We are looking forward to sharing and celebrating the students' learning with you on these new dates. Thank you for updating your calendars!



Happiness & Gratitude

This week, our Year 3–6 Read and Thrive Journal encourages students to reflect on the *glimmer highlights* in their lives. Glimmers are the small moments that bring us joy, calm, hope or connection—a smile from a friend, a beautiful sunrise, achieving a goal, or sharing a laugh with someone we love. Taking time to notice these moments helps children develop gratitude and recognise the positive experiences that happen each day.

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

No Assembly today

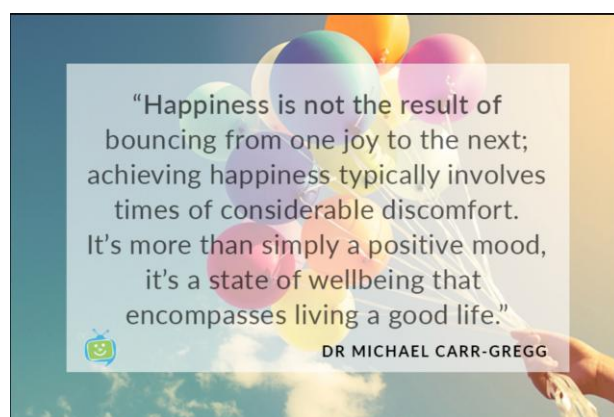
Friday 4th December
End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December
Last 2026 day for students

This week's SchoolTV edition focuses on Happiness & Gratitude, exploring how positive psychology has shown the powerful connection between gratitude and wellbeing. Research tells us that when we regularly pause to notice and appreciate the good in our lives, we strengthen new neural pathways in the brain. Over time, this helps our brains become better at recognising positive experiences, building resilience and supporting greater happiness and emotional wellbeing.

Gratitude doesn't mean ignoring life's challenges—it simply helps us balance them by noticing the good alongside the difficult. By encouraging children to reflect on the positive moments in their day, we are helping them develop a lifelong habit that supports both their mental health and emotional resilience.

We encourage all families to explore this week's SchoolTV resource for practical ideas and strategies to help nurture happiness and gratitude at home: <https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/newsletter/happiness-gratitude>



Later this term we will begin the

Seasons for Growth program for children who are dealing with significant life changes by:

- exploring the impact of change and loss on every-day life
- learning new ways to respond to these changes

These changes may be situations such as parental separation/divorce/ estrangement, the death or illness of a family member/friend/pet, family changes such as loss of employment or change of schools/cities.



Seasons for Growth is an 8 week evidence-based peer education program that helps children understand and cope with change, loss, and grief.

Developed by [MacKillop Seasons](#), the program uses the metaphor of the seasons to normalise grief and build resilience.

Please don't hesitate to talk to me if life circumstances have changed for your family and you would like your child to be considered for inclusion in Seasons for Growth.

Please email me at cmeneely@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

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



Sporting Schools - Term 3

SFX was fortunate to receive funding to provide 2 after school sport programs for Term 3. The positive response in such a short period of time to these programs was overwhelming.

There were close to 140 responses but unfortunately both programs have a limited capacity.

Please see below a list of the names of the students that will be participating in the programs:

Monday - Basketball (Mon Aug 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 & Sep 7)

Judd Boyd, Alfie Brennan, Odie & Vann Brooks, Zoe Cooper, Mackenzie Donnelly, Aiden & Hallie Graham, Laila Jennings, Flynn & Hudson McKay, Arthur & Harrison Madigan, Elsie & Polly O'Loughlin, Cruz & Jett Raine, Milla Rowland, Charlize Simpson, Noah Stewart, Asher & Finn Sutcliff, Kenzie & Lawrence Wilson, Christian Wright.

Thursday - Badminton (Thur - Aug 6, 13, 20, 27, Sep 3 & 10)

Lillian Armstrong, Harvey & Max Banwell, Spencer Belsar, James & Meredith Bodnar, Sienna Cardona, James & Mitchell Cycles, George Ellis, Jasper, Quinn & Scarlett Govan, Harriet & Rupert Howard, Charlie & Oscar Johnson, Layla Marshall, Lenny & Rex Owins, Shevan Perera, Austin, Cooper, Hughey & Jackson Roberts, Ava Segrott, Yael Vasserman.

Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics

We wish all of our 46 students representing our school at the Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics Carnival this Friday at Llanberris Athletics Reserve all the very best. We are proud of your commitment, teamwork, and effort in preparing for the event.

We encourage all students to do their best, support one another, and enjoy the experience. We know you will represent our school with pride, enthusiasm and positive energy.

Good luck to all of our athletes—we can't wait to hear about your achievements!

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 3:

- Week 4 - Friday Aug 7th - Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics @ Llanberris (selected students from Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 5 - Friday Aug 14th - Division Basketball @ Selkirk Stadium (selected students from Yr 5/6) **also a student free day*
- Week 8 - Friday Sep 4th - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Wednesday Sep 9th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths - Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

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 an awesome week.

Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**



Calling All Gardeners Are you a gardener, or would you like to become one? If so, we would love to hear from you. Mrs. Hayward is looking at doing some tree planting in the coming weeks and would love some creative hands to help her out. We involve the students whenever and wherever we can but sometimes we might need some big hands behind the shovel! Please contact Olivia Hayward or the office staff if you would like to become involved.

Friday the 24th July, was Schools Tree Day, a special day celebrated by schools all across Australia as part of Planet Ark's National Tree Day.

Schools Tree Day encourages students to get outside, plant trees and learn how important they are for our environment. Trees provide homes for wildlife, improve air quality, help reduce climate change, and make our school and community healthier places to live.

To celebrate the day, our Raising Rarity team planted a new tree here at St Francis Xavier. Every tree we plant is an investment in the future, helping to create a greener, healthier school for the students who will come after us.



Olivia Hayward, Environmental Education Teacher

- **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**
\$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 time 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 and come and learn next Monday at our Milkshake Monday. *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.
- **SAVE THE DATES:** **Trivia Night – Friday 4th September**
 School Disco – Thursday 17th September
- **DONATIONS/PRIZES needed**
As part of our Trivia night, we run a silent auction as well as a Raffle on the night – if you are able to assist with a Donation/Prize, please reach out to a member of our P&F or leave your donation in the office.
- **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**
The P&F relies on volunteers each and every week to help pack Hot Lunches and assist with Milkshake Mondays.

Your class rep shares the volunteer sign up link in your class chat on a regular basis. The links cover the entire term, allowing you to choose a date that suits you well in advance.

Unfortunately, we are finding it increasingly difficult to fill all volunteer spots each week. Without enough volunteers, we may need to reduce or change the frequency of these much-loved treats for our children.

If you have an hour or 2 spare, please consider signing up for a shift. Every volunteer makes a real difference, and your support helps ensure we can continue to offer these special treats for our children, please don't think oh someone else will do it – we are a large community and if each family volunteered once or twice a year it would ease the constant request for volunteers.

Attachments

ASSEMBLY AWARDS 31st July 2026 Hosted by 3ZP Theme: Compassion

We treat others the way we would like to be treated.

Compassion means to feel the suffering of others and to help ease that suffering.

We show compassion to others because Jesus teaches us how to care.

FLP	Jake Sullivan and Dhiyenka Guneitileke	4RR	Sahesi Kariyawasam and Oscar Kersley
FJS	Curtis Slade & Ollie Shillito	4ZA	Cooper Roberts & Louie Davies
FBO	Remi Grant and Alby Whittlam	4KB	Harvey Kersley & Fletcher Hipke
FTW	Paliswa Shrestha and Imogen Ruxton	5CC	Hudson Ryan and Alora Warren
1GH	Mackenzie Wilson and Elsie Atkinson	5LD	Harry Logan and Sophie Olechnowicz
1EM	Maya Ryan and Harriet Howard	5ML	Indie Shillito and James Bodnar
1GT	Chloe Allan and Louis Dreher	6PB	Emily Crough and Kayden Finley
2GJ	Max Yates and Sophie Morvell	6JS	Cleo Roney and Miah Cooper
2MH	Luna Stand and Ada Mason	6MM	Finya Najera-Hinko and Macklin Smith
2TS	Flossie Bourke and Max Banwell	EE/Sci	3LC
3LL	Daulat Singh-Gill Tilly Van Langevelde	PA	Sam Norris and Jet Rivett
3JT	Lilly Armstrong & Zach Wilson & Aurorah Rivett (Justice - last week)	VA	Harriett Walshe, Birdie Toohey & River Harney (3ZP)
3ZP	Skyla-Jade Slack & Zephyr Swanson	PE	Lola Troon & Arpan Shrestha
		Tch	Damilare Baruwa (4RR) and Sophie McNeill (6MM)
Principal's Award: Kayden Finley for showing compassion when he saw that another student was being treated unfairly.			

Ministry District Newsletter

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A - August 2nd, 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.

Safeguarding Officers: Ballarat East Parish – Emily Clarke 5331 1816; Bungaree & Gordon Parishes – Cathy Prunty 0437 505 517

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES

Tuesday August 4th	10.00 am	St. Brigid's Ballan
Wednesday August 5th	11.00 am	Mercy Place Ballarat East (Anointing)
Friday August 7th	10.30 am	Funeral Mass Cecelia Fletcher St. Alipius' Ballarat East
Saturday August 8th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East (Feast of Mary Mackillop)
WEEKEND MASSES - 19 TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		
Saturday August 8th		Sunday August 9th
5.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am Buninyong Bungaree
6.00 pm	Springbank	10.30 am Ballarat East Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Cecelia Fletcher, Dinny Morrissy

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Joseph Barbara, Con Clifford, Annie Crawley, Clare

Creaney, Scott Depoy, Maura Duke, Jack Everard, Sylvia

Finlayson, Sam Galea, Joseph Gerada, Mary Lee, Tess &

Bill Maguire, Eily Mahoney, Celie Mullane, Brendan Nihill,

Michael Patmore, Maureen Rolls, Frank White, Marie Wright

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Owen Widdison, Richard Wade

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 55: 13

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Matthew 14:13-21



NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 19:9, 11-13

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:22-33

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.

WELCOME TO BISHOP PAUL

Bishop Paul will celebrate Masses at Dunnstown, Ballarat East and Buninyong this weekend while Fr Shaiju is on annual leave. Welcome and thank you Bishop Paul.

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO SHARON & SUE DALY

Both Sharon and Sue have contributed greatly to the faith community of St Michael's Springbank and the parish of Gordon. Sharon's service has included preparation of the music and powerpoint presentations at Springbank Masses, while Sue has been a Parish Coordinator and member of the Leadership team. Prior to their departure from the area, there will be an opportunity to say thank you and farewell at the 6.00pm Mass at Springbank on Saturday August 8th with supper to follow.

LITTLE FEET, BIG FOOTPRINTS

Year 6 students from the Catholic schools of Ballan, Clarkes Hill, Creswick, Daylesford and Gordon will gather at St Brigid's Ballan on Tuesday August 4th as part of the LFBF program. Mass (anticipating the Feast of St Mary MacKillop) will be celebrated at 10.00am with all St Brigid's students and staff with parishioners welcome to participate and stay for the morning tea following that will be provided. The Year 6 students will then spend time with Fr Justin exploring the Principles of Catholic Social Teachings.

CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

In the lead up to Saturday August 15th there will be opportunities to celebrate Mass in anticipation of the Feast of Assumption of Mary. These will be on Tuesday August 11th at 9.00am at St Mary's School Clarkes Hill, Wednesday August 12th at 11.00am at Mercy Place Ballarat East and Thursday August 13th at 10.30am at St Brigid's Ballan. There will be a Vigil Mass on Friday August 14th at 5.30pm at St Brendan's Dunnstown and Mass at St Alipius Ballarat East at 9.30am on Saturday August 15th.

PRAYING WITH POPE LEO

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is an international movement and each month the Pope puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholics around the world to join him in prayer. "The Pope Video" forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network www.thepopevideo.org. Prayer for August – For evangelisation in the city - that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness, we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community.

ADDRESSING ANTISEMITISM – Training for Catholics

"Antisemitism: Why does it still persist in Catholic preaching and teaching 60 years after Nostra Aetate?" Prominent biblical scholar Prof. Amy-Jill Levine will address this question in a (free) one-hour online seminar on Tuesday, August 4, 2026. This internationally-organised seminar will take place at 11.30pm Melbourne time, and registration will ensure you receive a link to the video recording. The seminar is the second in a three-part series, "Ancient Texts for our Troubled Times", organised by Bat Kol International. To view a recording of the previous session or for more information and bookings, visit the Bat Kol International website <https://batkolinternational.org/>.

RETREAT OPPORTUNITY

On August 22nd, Anna Schlooz will be conducting a retreat at Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Centre in Wendouree. The retreat will run between 10 am and 5pm and will invite participants to prayerfully experience selected Gospel Meal stories where Jesus gathered with friends and strangers alike. The retreat explores mindful living, gratitude, companionship, and the sacredness of our experiences whilst being mindful that Christ can be at the table with us in our contemporary world. There is no cost for this retreat and materials and meals are provided. You are asked to BYO journal and bible. Contact Anna for more information or to register no later than August 17th. Email: ecomyriad@gmail.com

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

UPCOMING DATES - AUGUST

Tuesday 4th

10.00am

Little Feet Big Footprints Year 6's
Ballan

Thursday 6th

10.00am & 5.30pm

Baptism Preparation

Mary Glowrey Rooms - St. Pat's Cathedral

Tuesday 11th

9.00am

Mass with St Mary's Clarks Hill

Wednesday 12th

7.30am

Ballarat East Finance Council meeting

4.00pm

Communion Ministers Formation @ Damascus

Thursday 13th

11.30am

RCIA Inquiry at Ballan

Thursday 27th

5.30pm

Ballarat East Pastoral Council meeting

7.00pm

Bungaree Parish Leadership Team meeting

CATHOLIC EARTHCARE SEASON OF CREATION GATHERING 2026



Caritas Australia and Catholic Religious Australia warmly invite you to participate in the Catholic Earthcare Season of Creation Gathering 2026, "Listen, Reflect, Act", a national online event on September 3-4, 2026. The gathering offers inspiring keynote presentations and practical workshops to help participants deepen their faith and respond to the call to care for our common home. Parishioners can register individually for \$20.00. Learn more and register: www.caritas.org.au/soc-gathering

CARING GROUP

The Caring Group will meet next Friday, August 7th in St. Alipius Hall at 2pm. Everyone is welcome to come along for a cuppa and a chat. Please bring a plate.

MARY MACKILLOP MASS

On Tuesday 4th August at 10am St Brigid's School have a Mass for the Feast of Mary Mackillop. Parishioners are welcome and are invited to stay for morning tea following Mass.



Happy birthday to Dunnstown parishioner, Nell Leonard. Nell celebrated her 90th birthday on Friday. Congratulations Nell.

BAPTISMS

Ss. Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

Hallie & Lenny James
Children of Matt & Esse

Charlie Sculley

Child of Benjamin & Erryn

St. Brigid's, Ballan

Maddison & Abigail Burns
Children of Jarrad & Jessica

MEMBERSHIP OF DIOCESE OF BALLARAT CATHOLIC EDUCATION LIMITED (DOBCEL) BOARD COMMITTEES

Expressions of interest open

Expressions of interest are now open for membership of the DOBCEL Board Committees, offering an opportunity for individuals to contribute their skills, experience and passion for Catholic education in support of our school communities. We welcome expressions of interest from staff, parents and other community members who may be interested in serving on the Catholic Identity & Mission Committee, Assurance & Risk Committee or Finance Committee. Applications close Friday, September 18, 2026. <https://www.dobcel.catholic.edu.au/expressions-of-interest-dobcel-board-committees>

Food as Gift of our Gracious God

Reflection on the Gospel

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

(Matthew 14:13-21)

Veronica Lawson RSM

Forty-five million people are presently at risk of acute hunger on account of the Middle East conflict (WFP 28/06/26). At the same time, the number of people living in extreme poverty numbers some 830 million, approximately ten per cent of the global population, down from nineteen per cent in 1990. Encouraging as the improved statistics may be in this case, it is still a fact that almost three quarters of a billion people have less than \$US1.90 per day to meet all their basic needs for food, shelter and security. At the same time, the gap between rich and poor is widening dramatically. My country Australia, for instance, wastes enough food annually to fill the Melbourne Cricket Ground nine times over (www.dcceew.gov.au). It is difficult for us in our affluent society to imagine the plight of so many in the war-torn and earth-quake affected countries of our world. It is virtually impossible for us to get inside the desperation of parents in Gaza or Myanmar watching their children die from starvation.

What has this to do with our gospel reflection? In the first reading from Isaiah, God tells the "thirsty": "Listen and delight in rich food.... Incline your ear, and come to me; listen that you may live". Isaiah is here reminding his hearers that food is a gift from God. The gospel reading from Matthew tells a story of hungry people "hearing", following Jesus and enjoying an abundance of life-sustaining food. In other words, Matthew presents Jesus as the one who makes Isaiah's prophetic dream a reality for those who hunger and thirst, both literally and figuratively.



The passage echoes key aspects of Israel's history. Jesus retreats to a "desert" place, recalling the experience of God's people in the wilderness of Sinai. Those who follow Jesus find life-restoring food in the desert, just as God provided manna for the hungry Israelites in the Sinai desert. Jesus has compassion for people struggling with disease and thirsting for the means to live. In biblical terms, compassion is always accompanied by action for restorative justice. Jesus heals the sick and creates a structure for the sharing of resources. Faced with a hungry crowd, the disciples offer a simple solution: "Send them away." Sending the desperate away has, sadly, been part of our national response to countless asylum seekers hungering and thirsting for life and security. Jesus refuses such a solution and invites his disciples instead to take some personal responsibility for the situation. The gospel invites us to attend to food security in our world and to address ways of meeting the new Sustainable Development Goal of eliminating poverty and hunger by 2030. Keeping ourselves informed on the issues might be one place to begin. Another might be to check supplies before shopping for more food and to ensure that we waste not even a scrap of the food which we receive as gift of a gracious, compassionate God.

ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE BALLARAT

YEAR 7 2028 ENROLMENT



KEY DATES

- **Open Afternoon (Tours & Activities) :** Thursday, 8 October 2026
- **Year 7 Enrolment Interviews:** September/November 2026 and March 2027
- **Enrolment Applications Close:** Friday, 5 February 2027
- **Scholarship Applications Close:** Friday, 19 February 2027
- **Scholarship Testing:** Saturday, 27 February 2027

APPLY NOW

stpat.vic.edu.au



Character, Compassion, Community