



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 10th August 2026
Term 3 Week 5

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 13th Jul-Fri 18th Sep

Friday 14th August

Pupil free day
(Staff professional development day)

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

Tuesday 18th August

Bookings for Student Led
Conferences open

Friday 21st August

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1GH

Monday 24th August

9am Book Week Dress Up
Parade for Foundation,
Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6

Friday 28th August

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by FLP

Book Week Dress Up
Parade for Year 5 at the
end of FLP Assembly

Tuesday 1st September

Student Led Conferences

Wednesday 2nd September

Student Led Conferences

Friday 4th September

Interscholar 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)

6pm in the Library
Instrumental Music
Showcase by Tim's students

On the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear families,

As we approach the midpoint of the term, I am reminded of how important it is to continue building our school community in positive and meaningful ways. At this time of year, when the days are grey, the wind is crisp and the cold seems to settle into our bones, it can be worthwhile to pause for a moment and give thanks for all that we have in our lives. It is a message we share with our students every day. We know from experience that even a small amount of positive thinking can make a significant difference.

I feel incredibly fortunate to spend each day with such happy and positive young people. A walk through the playground is a wonderful reminder that there is so much goodness in the world. I see students helping one another, offering encouragement and extending the hand of friendship in countless ways. These simple acts of kindness reflect the values we strive to nurture at Saint Francis Xavier. They make me immensely proud of our students, and I am sure they do the same for you.

Across the school, we are currently focusing on the '**Bully – No Way!**' initiative. Through classroom discussions and learning activities, students are exploring how their words and actions can either build others up or bring them down. They are learning that healthy relationships are founded on kindness, respect and trust, and that these qualities are the foundation of strong friendships that can last a lifetime.

I encourage you to ask your children what '**Bully – No Way!**' means to them. Their answers may provide a wonderful opportunity for conversation at home about kindness, empathy and the importance of including others. Together, by working in partnership, we can continue to create the welcoming, respectful and joyful community that makes Saint Francis Xavier such a special place to learn and grow.



God bless,

Mark Hogbin



Thursday 10th September

6pm in the Library
Instrumental Music
Showcase by Lauren's
students, Chris' students
and our choir

Friday 11th September

No Assembly today

Tuesday 15th September

6pm Confirmation at
Damascus College

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

Can You Help?

Can you spare any time to assist us with our Milkshake Mondays or Hot Lunch Fridays? A couple of hours once or twice a term would really be appreciated. It would be unfortunate to have to cancel these services but without your support we cannot continue to provide these for our students. No training is necessary and we would welcome your support. Please contact Lisa if you can assist, or one of our office staff will happily take your details.

School Closure Day

A reminder that our school will be closed for staff professional development on Friday 14 August (this Friday). No classes will be held at school on this day.

Congratulations Ms. Hudson!

We send our congratulations to Ms. Hudson this week who became engaged recently. We were all very excited to receive the news and we wish Georgia and Evan the very best as they plan their new life together!



Wet Weather Play

We will always try to find time during the day for our children to play outside if we can. In extremely cold weather we encourage children to wear warm clothing and cover up clothes if they would like to play on the top oval or in the paddocks. In extremely wet weather we will remain indoors during break times, but we will also try to get outside whenever we can.



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 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 Kangarooobie Camp

Friday 27th November

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

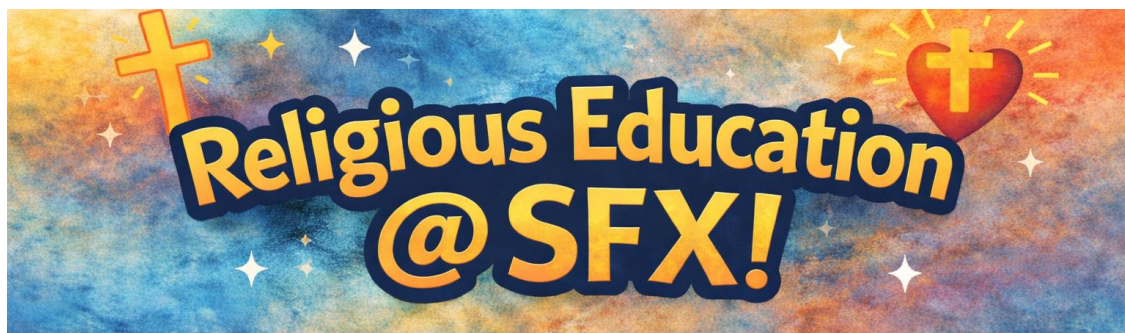
No Assembly today

Friday 4th December

End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December

Last 2026 day for students



Celebrating the Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop

Only Friday, our community gathered to celebrate the Feast of Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Australia's first saint. Staff and students came together in prayer to reflect on Mary's life of faith, compassion and service, and her enduring challenge to "never see a need without doing something about it." Through prayer, Scripture and reflection, we considered how her example continues to inspire us to create a community where every person is valued, every child can flourish, and the Gospel is lived through the way we care for one another. A special thank you to the students who helped lead our prayer with such reverence and confidence.

This Week's Gospel – Jesus Walks on the Water (Matthew 14:22–33)

In this Sunday's Gospel, the disciples find themselves caught in a storm while crossing the lake. As the wind and waves grow stronger, Jesus comes to them walking on the water. Although they are frightened, Jesus reassures them, saying, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

Peter steps out of the boat and begins to walk towards Jesus. But when he focuses on the storm around him instead of Jesus, he begins to sink. Jesus reaches out his hand, catches him and reminds him to trust.

This Gospel reminds us that challenges and uncertainty are a part of life, but we never face them alone. Like Peter, we are invited to keep our eyes on Jesus and trust that he is always there to guide and support us.

A message for families:

On 15 August, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. Mary's life was one of complete trust in God. Even when she faced uncertainty, she responded with faith and courage.

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.

Together with this Sunday's Gospel, we are reminded that trusting God doesn't mean life will always be easy. It means we can face life's challenges knowing that God walks beside us.

A family reflection:

When have we needed courage to face something new or challenging?

Who are the people who help us feel supported when life feels uncertain?

Our challenge for the week:

Choose one way to be a source of courage for someone else this week.

- Encourage someone who is finding something difficult.
- Offer help to a friend or family member.
- Trust God through prayer when you are feeling worried.

Small acts of courage and kindness help us become the hands of Christ for others.

Fullness of Life for All Relationships and Sexuality Education Program.

St Francis Xavier Primary School is committed to working in partnership with families and caregivers in all aspects of your child's education.

This week, families will receive an email containing information about the *Fullness of Life for All Relationships and Sexuality Education Program*.

Comprehensive relationships and sexuality education provides age-appropriate, accurate information about the body, relationships, consent and personal safety. It promotes inclusion, reduces stigma, and empowers students with knowledge and skills that support their wellbeing.

Parents and caregivers play a vital role by reinforcing family values, answering questions, and building trusting relationships with their children. Ongoing conversations at home help young people feel supported, confident and comfortable seeking guidance when they need it.

By combining the *Fullness of Life for All* program with open family dialogue, we aim to provide a consistent, respectful and supportive foundation for our children's health and wellbeing.

If you would like to view the full lesson scope and sequence, or if you have any questions about the *Fullness of Life for All* program, please don't hesitate to contact your child's classroom teacher.



Michael Marshall, **Religious Education Leader**



A great week of Seesaw posts last week with a remarkable 543 student posts, 524 visits by families and 179 comments. Seesaw provides families with real-time snapshots of learning happening at school. These posts give children an opportunity to share their learning and achievements with their families, creating positive conversations at home about what they are learning, thinking and doing at school.

We encourage families to take a few moments to look at Seesaw posts together, celebrate your child's learning and ask questions. These simple conversations strengthen the connection between home and school and help children see that their learning matters.

Week of August 2 - August 9 at St Francis Xavier Primary School - Ballarat East



543 New Student Posts



179 Comments



Week 8 of this term your child(ren) will be showcasing their school work and discussing learning goals with you through their Student-Led Conferences. During Student – Led Conferences, your child will lead the discussion with you about their school work, while teachers will help direct conversation.

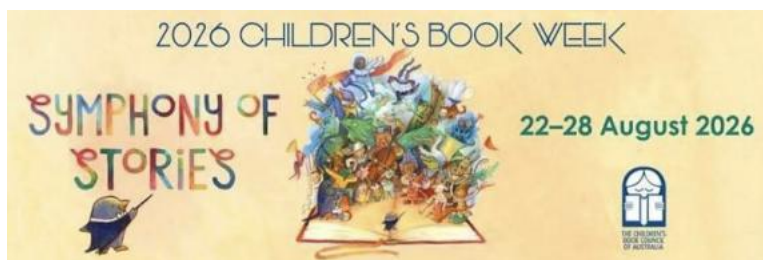
Each Student-Led Conference will run for 13 minutes, and **we strongly encourage all families to attend**. Please note that **children are required to be present** at these sessions. We look forward to positive and meaningful Student-Led Conferences that highlight and celebrate each child's achievements.

Bookings for Student Led Conferences will be open next TUESDAY 18th August.

Enjoy your week!

Jane Clark, **Deputy Principal – Learning & Teaching**





The SFX Book Week celebrations will begin in **Week 6** with an exciting opportunity for our Year 5 and 6 students to work with visiting author, David Lawrence.

David is a comedy writer and performer who has written numerous shows including Hamish & Andy, Comedy Inc. and Talkin' About Your Generation. His books Fox Swift, Ball Stars, Maxi the Lifeguard series. Through humour and engaging sporting themes, David's books explore important topics such as bullying, inclusion and racism in Schools. During his visit, our Year 5 and 6 students will participate in an interactive writing workshop where they will learn how to create and develop their own narratives.

This year Book Week celebrations will include two special dress-up events!

Book Week Dress-up Parades

Monday 24th August

Students in Foundation, Year 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 students are invited to come dressed as their favourite book character and join our Book Week Dress Up Parade on Monday at 9am. We can't wait to see the creativity and enthusiasm as we celebrate a share love of reading and stories. Families and friends are welcome to attend!

Friday 28th August

As the Year 5 students who will be away on their SEED Day on Monday, so they are invited to wear their Book Week costumes on Friday where they will parade at the end of FLP Assembly. Families and friends are most welcome.

We look forward to celebrating a 'Symphony of Stories' across our school. More details to follow next week about 'The Great Book Swap' and other events happening in Book Week.

Week 6		
Wednesday 19th August	Author Visit - David Lawrence Year 5 and 6	
Week 7		
Monday 24th August	Dress up Parade - Foundation, Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.	Storytime in the library Second break - Mr Hogbin
Tuesday 25th August	The Great Book Swap Foundation, Year 1 and 2 Undercover - First Break	Storytime in the library Second break - Mrs Meneely
Tuesday 25th August	Author Visit - Ben Sanders Years 3 and 4	

Wednesday 26th August	The Great Book Swap Year 3 and 4 Undercover - First Break	Storytime in the library Second break - Ms Harty
Thursday 27th August	The Great Book Swap Year 5 and 6 Undercover - First Break	Storytime in the library Second break - Mrs Clark
Friday 28th August	'Symphony' Celebrations with our Music Students Year 2 / 3 building steps Dress Up Parade - Year 5	Storytime in the library Second break - Mrs Mohr
Week 8		
Thursday 3rd September	Something Special! Book Week Performance Foundation, Year 1 and 2	

Lindy Harty, **Literacy Leader**





The Power of Sleep

As parents, we know that life can feel incredibly busy. Between school, homework, sporting commitments, family activities and the many demands of everyday life, evenings can quickly become full, making it easy for bedtimes to creep later than planned. Yet one of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the opportunity for a good night's sleep.

Sleep is so much more than simply feeling rested. It plays a vital role in children's growth, learning and emotional wellbeing. A good night's sleep helps children concentrate, manage their emotions, strengthen their immune system and have the energy

they need to embrace each day. Along with healthy eating and regular exercise, quality sleep provides an important foundation for children to thrive.

When children don't get enough sleep, they may find it harder to focus, regulate their emotions, solve problems and navigate friendships. They can become more irritable, less resilient and have lower energy levels, making everyday challenges feel much bigger than they really are. While it may seem like sleeping in on weekends will make up for lost sleep, consistent sleep routines throughout the week are far more beneficial.

This week's **SchoolTV** edition explores the importance and power of sleep, the impact sleep deprivation can have on children's health and wellbeing, and offers practical strategies to help families build healthy sleep habits at home.

You can access **The Power of Sleep** edition of SchoolTV here:

<https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/newsletter/sleep>

I encourage you to take a few moments to explore this valuable resource. Even small adjustments to bedtime routines can make a big difference to a child's learning, wellbeing and overall happiness.

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



Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics

Last Friday, some of our talented athletes represented our school at the Ballarat Catholic Primary Schools Athletics event at Llanberris Athletics Reserve.

45 Students from Years 3 to 6 competed against other Catholic primary schools from around Ballarat in a range of exciting track and field events, including High Jump, Shot Put and hurdles.

It was fantastic to see our students giving every event their best effort. There were some great performances, but even more importantly, our athletes showed determination, teamwork, encouragement and good sportpersonship throughout the day.

A big congratulations to everyone who represented our school. You should all be very proud of your efforts and the way you represented our school.

We would also like to thank the staff and families for your wonderful assistance and support on the day.





Division Basketball

Congratulations and good luck to the 30 students that have been selected in the SFX Basketball teams that are participating in the Eureka Division Basketball tournament at Selkirk Stadium & Minerdome this Friday. All players are training hard and we look forward to seeing our teams in action.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 3:

- 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 a magnificent week.



Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator

- **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 7th August 2026 Hosted by FBK Theme: Hospitality

We welcome and include others.

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

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

FLP	Eden Toohey and Hugo Davis	4RR	Sutton Answer and Arlo Troon
FJS	Cooper Crumpton & Lacey Newton	4ZA	Oakley Smith & Devon McCartin
FBO'K	Willow Begbie and Quinn Govan	4KB	Pippa Bourke & Jimmy Faull
FTW	Oscar Toohey and Mia McMahon	5CC	Maya Skewes and Charlie Quarrell
1GH	Noah Stewart and Henry Sertori	5LD	James Cyples and Molly Lewis
1EM	Elijah Harwood and Flynn Warr	5ML	Daisy Howard and Byron Morton
1GT	Louie Kersley and Lyla Quick	6PB	Christian Wright and Sadie Ruxton
2GJ	Nate Quinlan and Alina Osciak	6JS	Ella Crumpton and Xavier Foster
2MH	Harper Gilbertson and William Nicholls	6MM	Sophie McNeill and Isla Johnson
2TS	Callum Purtell & Harlee Answer	EE/Sci	Byron Morton, Isla McLean, Tilly Dridan, Will Mumford, Chelsea Tiley, Lacey Newton
3LL	Matilda Walshe and Maya Mookhoek	PA	Milla Richardson and Chloe Wilson 6PB
3JT	Ted Gleeson & Olive Anderson	VA	Noah Kielty and Arthur Madigan (FBOK)
3ZP	Marco Pietrantuono & Alex O'Reilly	PE	5CC
		Tch	Bob Nunn (2TS) and Thiago Motta Crespo (4KB)

Principal's Award:

Oscar Kersley, Harrison Madigan, Arlo Troon, Damilare Baruwa, Freddie Brown, Harvey Kersley for making time to put all the sports equipment away without being asked just like we spoke about at Monday morning assembly.

Ministry District Newsletter

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A - August 9th, 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 11 th	9.00 am 9.30 am	St. Mary's Clarke's Hill St. Alipius' Ballarat East
Wednesday August 12 th	11.00 am	Mercy Place Ballarat East
Thursday August 13 th	10.30 am	St. Brigid's Ballan
Friday August 14 th	9.30 am 5.30 pm	St. Alipius' Ballarat East St. Brendan's Dunnstown
Saturday August 15 th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East
WEEKEND MASSES - 20th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		
Saturday August 15 th		Sunday August 16 th
5.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am Ballarat East Gordon
6.00 pm	Dunnstown	10.30 am Buninyong Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Nina Cassar, Thomas Clifford, James Donegan, George Duso, Anne and John Field, Frank Graham, George Hamm, Tom Jeffrey, John McCarty, John McCormack, Brodie Toohey.

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Owen Widdison, Richard Wade

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 19:9, 11-13

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:22-33



NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 56:1, 6-7

Rom 11:13-15, 29-32

Mt 15:21-28

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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 Clarks 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.

INTER-CHURCH TRIVIA NIGHT 'Let's Get Quizzical!'

Friday August 21

Buninyong Uniting Church hall

Tables of up to 5 people

Arrive at 6pm to share your BYO dinner

Trivia starts at 7pm -

BYO snacks/supper

Drinks will be provided - tea| coffee | hot chocolate
| soft drinks

(NB. This is an alcohol-free event)

0429 261 954

DIOCESE OF BALLARAT SEASON OF CREATION MASS

Friday, August 21, 2026

The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission warmly welcomes everyone to attend this year's Diocesan Season of Creation Mass on Friday, August 21, 2026 at St Joseph the Worker Church, Red Cliffs at 9.30am. Join us as we gather to celebrate integral ecology, our shared stewardship of the earth and ecological justice. Bishop Mark Freeman will celebrate this Mass. BYO picnic lunch will follow the Mass. Please bring along your lunch, chairs or blankets to share in community fellowship in the Cathedral of Creation. For those unable to attend, the Mass will be livestreamed at <https://cvt.live/season-of-creation-mass>

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

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: PARISH CO-ORDINATOR Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Wendouree

Applications are invited from suitable candidates for the position of Parish Coordinator at Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Wendouree: 10 hours per week – ideally covering Wednesday, Thursday & Friday; Based in the Wendouree Parish Office at Gillies Street North. Applications close Monday, August 17, 2026 at 5.00pm. Position description and application information is available from the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/our-diocese/employment/>.

VENEZUELA EARTHQUAKE SUPPORT

Caritas Australia are supporting the current situation in Venezuela where two powerful earthquakes have struck. Communities are shaken, homes destroyed, and families devastated. Your Donations are welcome and needed. Please donate through the website <https://www.caritas.org.au/venezuela> or you may want to start a fundraiser through the Caritas Compassion Hub: Fundraise with Caritas Australia! | The Compassion Hub <https://fundraise.caritas.org.au/venezuela>

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

UPCOMING DATES - AUGUST

Tuesday 11th

9.00am

Mass with St Mary's Clarkes 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

CLOSURE OF ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, CLARKES HILL

During this past week the decision to close St Mary's Primary School, Clarkes Hill at the conclusion of the 2026 school year was announced. Many have been aware of the challenges facing the school, particularly its declining enrolments. The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires a minimum enrolment of 11 students for school registration. Opened in 1946 as a Catholic School of the Bungaree Parish, St Mary's Clarkes Hill has served the community through the dedicated service of teachers and staff including the Presentation Sisters, Sisters of Mercy and many lay women and men including Clare Scanlon (Principal) and all current staff. On Tuesday August 11th Mass will be celebrated at St Mary's at 9.00am in anticipation of the Feast of the Assumption – parishioners of our parish are warmly invited to attend.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PEPLow HOUSE

As part of Homelessness Week 2026, this past week CatholicCare Victoria acknowledged the beginnings of Peplow House in 1975 to provide accommodation, support and pathways to independence for men experiencing homelessness. A Journey to Home exhibition, with stories of resilience and transformation was held joining the conversation about the future of homelessness support in Ballarat.

BAPTISMS

St Michael's Springbank

Kaden Lee Simpson
Child of Justin and Casey

St Alipius' Ballarat East

Hunter and River Peters
Children of Wyatt and Evangeline

Alfie Joel Williamson
Child of Joel and Emily

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>

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU

At the 6.00pm Vigil Mass at Springbank this weekend, Sharon and Sue Daly will be farewelled from the Gordon Parish. Supper will follow Mass. 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. Thank you and farewell.

*Thank
you*

Why did you Doubt?

Reflection on the Gospel

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

(Matthew 14:22-33)

Veronica Lawson RSM

Our beautiful planet is presently battered by waves of life-threatening weather events: the summer heat in Europe has already taken many lives and it seems that there is little prospect of change in direction without drastic human intervention. Our church is likewise "battered by the waves". Over its two millennia history, countless church members have died for their faith, while others have been and are being denied the freedom to practice their religion. In recent decades, it has been "battered" by terrifying waves of its own creating. Only God can bring order out of the chaos and God works through the courageous witness and action of faith-filled disciples.

In today's gospel, Matthew writes of Jesus astride the waves like the God of Israel in the Book of Job (9:8). In Israel's mythology, the sea represents chaos. To walk on water is to have power and authority to bring order out of the chaos. Matthew presents Jesus as exercising the power of God over the potentially destructive chaos. Jesus makes his claim to divine power explicit in words that echo God's words from the burning bush: "It is I" (literally "I am"). He tells the frightened disciples to take heart and not to be afraid. Peter, leader of the group, continues to doubt. He asks for a sign and is then prepared to take a risk in order to come to Jesus on the water. He begins to falter when he takes his eyes off Jesus and focuses instead on the threatening wind. Jesus reaches out his hand to rescue Peter. In a lovely gesture, Jesus takes him by the hand and holds him firmly in his grip. Jesus names Peter's hesitation as a response of limited faith.



Matthew weaves the story of Peter into an earlier story from Mark's gospel. We can only speculate on the reasons for this. Were Matthew's communities going through hard times? Were they battered by the waves of conflicting loyalties as they found themselves excluded from Pharisaic Judaism? Was the pressure of separation from the synagogue too great for some, even for those in leadership? This is a telling story for anyone who exercises leadership at any level in the church. It is a reminder to us to keep our eyes firmly fixed on the source of hope in times of struggle and uncertainty and on the crucial issues that face our planetary home.

Finally, this story invites us to consider the threatening waves created by the violence of war, by cold and heat, by fire and flood, and by food insecurity. The members of the human community, which is largely responsible for the climate crisis, must join hands to save what can be saved. The growing commitment to renewable energy provides a contemporary image of a saving hand reaching out to Earth communities that are in danger of being submerged by flood, overwhelmed by hunger and violence or destroyed by scorching heat.



APPLICATIONS OPEN: MON 4 MAY 2026
APPLICATIONS CLOSE: FRI 14 AUGUST 2026

BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP

When families are in crisis, disaster strikes or financial disadvantage is overwhelming, keeping kids in school and on track to succeed can be challenging, if not impossible. Around the world, 124 million children and youth are out of school. We believe that a brighter future starts with an education and giving a child the opportunity to thrive at Damascus College is the aim of the Bright Futures Scholarship.

Established in 2018 the Damascus College Bright Futures scholarship sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy (John Thirsk Estate), Fr Brendan Davey and Damascus College, is for the purpose of supporting students and families who are experiencing financial or personal disadvantage, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice activities and contribute to their local community, but may not otherwise be able to afford a Catholic education.

This scholarship is awarded annually to one incoming Year 7 student for 50% tuition relief, and is awarded for the duration of a student's enrolment at Damascus College (maximum of 6 years).

To be considered for this scholarship, applicants must meet the selection criteria requirements overleaf.

A bit about the scholarship benefactors...

John Thirsk was a notable sports journalist who was cared for by the Sisters of Mercy as a result of family tragedy. The Sisters of Mercy provided John with an education and a safe place for him to return throughout his life. He considered the sisters as family and his gift to them was to enable them to provide for others the support that they offered to him. The Sisters have entrusted these funds to Damascus College.

Fr Brendan Davey grew up in Ballarat and was priest of the Diocese for over 60 years. Fr Brendan always had a great empathy for human vulnerability and valued the gift of education. Upon his death he gifted Damascus College with funds to enable Catholic education to be made available to young people who may not otherwise be able to access it.

The Bright Futures scholarship honours the Christian spirit that prevailed through the work of Fr Brendan as a priest of the Diocese and the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.



damascus.vic.edu.au

VALUE

One scholarship valued at 50% of the annual tuition fee at Damascus College, paid as one instalment at the beginning of the year. The capital expense and technology fee is included in this tuition calculation. The scholarship will be paid annually, for the duration of the award recipient's enrolment at Damascus College, which is a maximum of six years. The ongoing annual payment will be made at the beginning of a school year, and is conditional upon the recipient successfully meeting the ongoing requirements listed below.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Grade 5 student currently studying at a Primary School within the Ballarat area (50km radius from Ballarat), does not have to be attending a Catholic Primary School.
- Submitted Enrolment Application Form to Damascus College for Year 7 by the advertised deadline.

SELECTION CRITERIA

To be considered for the scholarship, applicants must meet the following selection criteria:

- Family is experiencing financial and/or personal disadvantage. Please provide evidence to support application.
- Student demonstrates involvement in volunteer, social justice, fundraising and leadership activities within the Primary School or broader community. Please provide examples.
- Student demonstrates an involvement and commitment to a faith tradition. Evidence must be provided.
- Student to choose two values to describe and give examples of how these values relate to them.
Values: Compassion, Justice, Respect, Hospitality, Service, Courage.
Student can choose to write up to 200 words for each value, submit a video or photos that describes how these values relate to them. Students are encouraged to be creative.
- One written reference, to be obtained from a community member in support of the scholarship application.

For applicants that are shortlisted, the panel will contact Primary School Principal for support of shortlisting applications.

APPLICATIONS OPEN ON MONDAY 4 MAY 2026 AND CLOSE ON FRIDAY 14 AUGUST 2026

Download the application form from the Damascus website at: damascus.vic.edu.au/enrolment/scholarships

GIVING TO BRIGHT FUTURES

As a Catholic school, Damascus College is committed to providing excellence in education, and it is our privilege to be able to offer opportunities that benefit our students and the wider community. Most important to us at Damascus is the welfare of our young people and hence the emphasis on providing an environment which is secure and safe, happy and productive.

Your generosity and commitment can help to make a real impact on the lives of our students.

Your gift allows us to support an exciting and enriching educational experience for students and can also make a difference to the causes you care about on a local and global scale. You may choose to give to fulfill your philanthropic aspirations as well as your financial plans, to honour the people you hold dear, or to strengthen and celebrate the Damascus College community. Whatever the reason, together gifts of all sizes add up to make a big difference.

Damascus College seeks to extend the Bright Futures Scholarship opportunity to more than one Year 7 student per year with your help. Proceeds raised will support this worthy scholarship fund, in order to extend its reach to multiple students each year.

If you would like to financially contribute to the Bright Futures Scholarship please call Damascus College 03 5337 2222 or visit damascus.vic.edu.au/community/giving

DAMASCUS COLLEGE ABN: 39 459 585 106

Inspired by Christ's Mercy



JUNIOR GIRLS CRICKET

Under 11s, Under 14s & Under 17s



**The BCA would love to hear
from girls interested in
playing cricket!**

Fill out our survey here:

<https://forms.gle/MXZKVoarihCYSgQVA>

If you are keen to find out
more about cricket or join a
club visit our website:

[ballaratcricketassociation.com/
female-cricket](http://ballaratcricketassociation.com/female-cricket)

womenscricketdirector.bca@gmail.com
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