



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 17th August 2026
Term 3 Week 6

P.O. Box 2027
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Phone: 5331 6311

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 13th Jul-Fri 18th Sep

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

Thursday 3rd September

Last day for Book Club 6 orders

Friday 4th September

Interscholar Sport (Yr 5/6)
Fathers/Special Friends Day Liturgy

2pm Afternoon Tea in Gym

2.40pm Family Group

Liturgies in Classrooms

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,

Our school was closed last Friday for a staff development day. It was an important day for us as we gathered to explore the spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi in the 800th anniversary year of his death.

Saint Francis of Assisi is sometimes regarded as a bit of a rock star in some circles. His life was complicated and yet his message was simple. As a young man he was supposed to continue building his family's wealth as an importer, but he chose a very different path. He chose to dedicate his life to simplicity, poverty, prayer and meditation. His family tried so hard to convince him of his duties, even kidnapping him and locking him in a cellar until he came to his senses!

However, it wasn't to be. Francis was driven by visions of a better world where all people are embraced in the love of God, and all creatures are valued for their place in an ever-evolving story of creation. His prayers for peace are recognized today as a creed for a troubled world.

We use the message of Saint Francis in many ways in school today. Through the encyclical written by Pope Francis in 2015, *Laudato Si'*. On Caring for Our Common Home, we work with the children to develop understandings that all are made in the image of a loving God. With this edict, we are then called to live a life of stewardship as co-creators of the planet. If we want to live in a better world, then it's up to us to form it. A big message for little people, but an important one, nonetheless.

Big changes can begin with little steps. Our children are learning this each day at school. By living a considered life, we can all build a healthier planet. And that is surely something worth striving for.

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

Junior Sports Day @ SFX
For F-Y2 and Yr 6 Sports
Captains

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by SLD

Friday 23rd October

Greater Western Region
Basketball (Girls A)

2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by 1GT

Wednesday 28th October

Division Golf Tournament
@ Mt Xavier Golf Club
(selected Yr 5/6 students)

Friday 30th October

Casual Clothes Day - gold
coin donations to support
MercyWorks

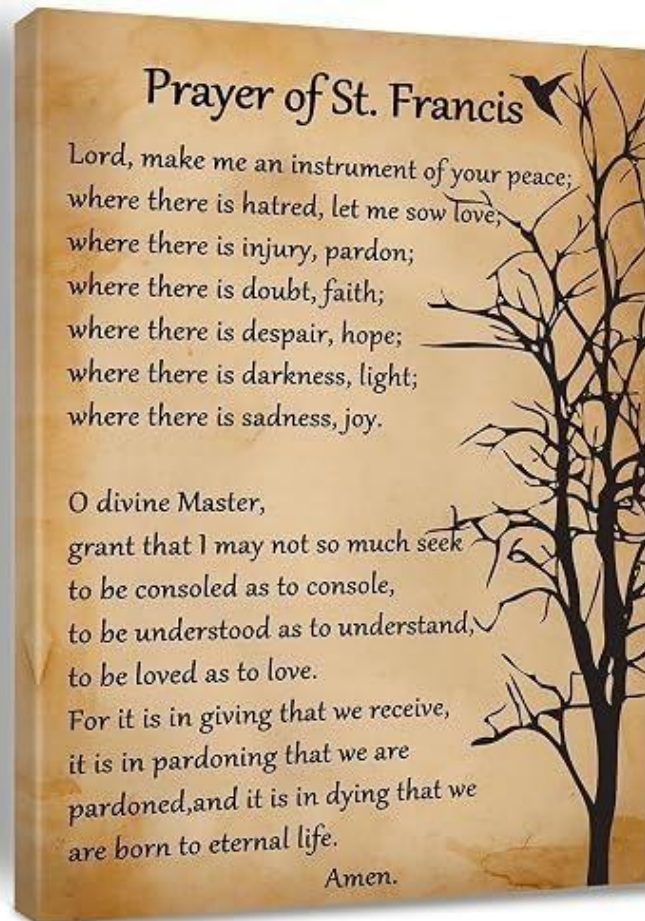
2.40pm Assembly in
School gym led by FTW

Monday 2nd November

Assessment and Reporting
Pupil Free Day

Tuesday 3rd November

Public Holiday-Melbourne
Cup Pupil Free Day



Traffic around our school

Please be mindful of all traffic when approaching or leaving our school. The peak traffic times of 8.30am and 3.15pm are very busy periods with children and adults moving around parked vehicles. By adhering to speed limits and obeying traffic rules we can all work together to keep our children and ourselves safe.



School Closure Day

Thank you to all families for supporting our school closure day last Friday. Our final school closure day for the 2026 school year will be held on Monday 2 November when our staff will be working on assessment and reporting.

Squishy Toys

We have recently had several incidents involving popular squishy toys breaking and leaking while at school. Unfortunately, some of these toys contain unidentified substances that may cause irritation or harmful reactions if they come into contact with the skin, eyes or mouth.

For the safety and wellbeing of all our students, we are asking that the latest range of squishy toys remain at home and not be brought to school. We appreciate your support in helping us maintain a safe environment for all children.

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 Kangaroo Camp

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

No Assembly today

Friday 4th December
End of Year Mass

Thursday 17th December
Last 2026 day for students



We're very excited about our upcoming **Instrumental Music Showcase evenings!** These events are an informal opportunity for children who learn an instrument at St Francis Xavier to share their learning with their families and friends, with an encouraging audience and the support of their music tutor!

Families involved in our instrumental music program are asked to keep an eye on their emails and seesaw for further information!

Tim's students will share their learning on Wednesday September 9, and Chris and Lauren's students, along with our choir, will share their learning on Thursday September 10.



Year 3's BIG BREAKFAST DOMINO CHALLENGE for Vinnie's

Every Box Makes a Difference! 



OUR GOAL

This term, our Year 3 students are partnering with St Vincent de Paul (Vinnies) to collect boxes of breakfast cereal for local families experiencing hardship. Each box donated will become part of our spectacular Big Breakfast Domino Challenge before being donated to Vinnies. Together, we'll create an incredible domino line that shows how many small acts of kindness can make a big difference.



WHY A CEREAL DRIVE?

Breakfast gives children the energy they need to learn, concentrate and thrive at school. Research shows that children who eat breakfast are more likely to concentrate, remember what they learn and actively participate in class. Sadly, rising living costs mean that not every family can afford nutritious breakfast foods. Cereal is nutritious, easy to prepare, has a long shelf life and can provide many breakfasts for a family.



LIVING OUR FAITH

In RE, we are learning about **Unity**—discovering that when people work together, they can achieve far more than they could alone. Just as every cereal box is needed to complete our domino line, every person's contribution helps build a stronger, kinder community.

Many Year 3 students are preparing for Confirmation, learning that God's Spirit calls us to live with courage, generosity and compassion. This project is a practical way for us to put our faith into action by caring for others.



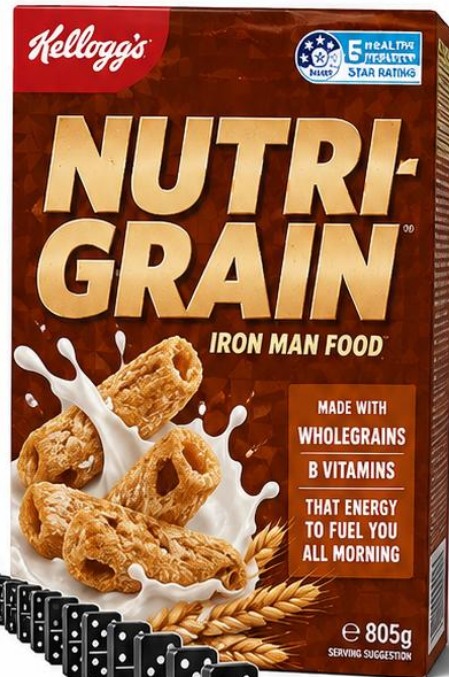
THE DOMINO EFFECT

Each cereal box represents one act of kindness. When the boxes are lined up together, they become a powerful symbol of **Unity**—showing that many small acts of generosity can create something extraordinary. Just as one domino starts a chain reaction, one act of kindness can inspire another, creating a ripple effect throughout our school and wider community.



HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

Families are invited to donate one (or more!) unopened boxes of breakfast cereal.



TOGETHER, WE CAN:

-  support local families through Vinnies
-  provide nutritious breakfasts for children
-  show the power of Unity and community
-  live the message of the Holy Spirit through service and compassion
-  make a real difference—one box at a time.



THE BIG BREAKFAST DOMINO FALL!
WEEK 8 • MONDAY, AUGUST 31ST,
AT ASSEMBLY!

Together with Vinnies, we can make a BIG difference! 



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 MONDAY 17th August. Please follow the process below to make your bookings.

Today you would have received an email from school with a link and code to use to log in for our Upcoming Student Led Conferences. This is completed through School Interviews platform.

School Interviews – Booking Process:

1. Visit schoolinterviews.com.au/code
2. Click on 'Make a Booking'
3. Put in the event code: **87myu**
4. Follow the instructions to make your Student Led Conference time



Week of August 9 - August 16 at St Francis Xavier Primary School - Ballarat East



212 New Student Posts



72 Comments

Looking forward to our Book Week celebrations next week.

Enjoy your week!

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





The Great Book Swap!

Let the Stories Play On

Sharing Stories, Caring for Our Common Home



Inspired by Pope Francis' message in *Laudato Si'*, 'The Great Book Swap' is a wonderful way to care for our common home while sharing the joy of reading. Instead of buying new books, students are invited to bring along **one or two** fiction or non-fiction books in good condition.

For every book donated, students will receive a Book Swap Token to exchange for another book during their class's allocated Book Swap session.

For example, a Year 4 student will bring one or two books that would be suitable for other Year 4 students. They will receive a token for each book donated and then their token(s) to choose a different book to take home! By giving books a new home, we reduce waste, make the most of our resources, and help foster a love of reading across our school community.

Start searching your bookshelves for some well-loved fiction and interesting non-fiction books ready for a new reader. Remember don't bring them to school until **Week 7!**

Together, we can share stories, care for creation, and celebrate Book Week in a meaningful way. We can't wait to see all the wonderful books finding new readers during 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





Every Week is *Bullying No Way* at St Francis Xavier

Throughout Term 3, our school has been intentionally preparing for **Bullying No Way Week** by sharing a series of messages during our weekly assemblies. Rather than focusing on bullying for just one week of the year, we want our students to understand that at St Francis Xavier, **every week is *Bullying No Way* week**.

Each week we have explored a different aspect of bullying, including what bullying is (and what it isn't), the importance of using our words and actions kindly, how to be an upstander rather than a bystander, the impact of online behaviour, and the power each of us has to make our school a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

One of our key messages has been that **bullying is when someone repeatedly uses their power to deliberately hurt another person who finds it difficult to stop it**. We have also been reminding students that while some people may use their power to hurt others, every one of us can choose to use our power to include, support and show kindness.

These conversations are helping to build a shared understanding across the school and reinforce that creating a culture of respect, empathy and belonging is everyone's responsibility. Small actions—inviting someone to join a game, speaking kindly, standing beside a classmate, or asking an adult for help—can make a big difference.

We encourage families to continue these conversations at home by asking your child what they have been learning about bullying, kindness and being an upstander. When schools and families work together with consistent messages, we can help every child feel safe, valued and connected.

Together, let's continue to show that **every week is *Bullying No Way* week**.



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



Division Basketball

SFX was proudly represented by 4 magnificent teams at last Friday's Eureka Division Basketball competition at Selkirk Stadium and the Minerdome, taking on various other primary schools from across the local area.

All teams showed fantastic teamwork, determination and sportspersonship throughout the day in all of their matches. Our students worked hard on the court, encouraged one another and represented our school with great pride.

There were some exciting games, plenty of great passes, shots and defensive efforts, and lots of smiles along the way. Most importantly, the students supported each other and demonstrated what it means to be part of a positive team.

Well done to our Girls A team that progressed to the Regional tournament next term, to our Boys A who just fell short in a fantastic Grand Final, the Girls B for winning their Grand Final and the Boys B that finished 2nd in their Pool.

A huge congratulations to all of our students for their efforts. A big thankyou to all of the families and friends that came along to support our teams, and a special mention to Que and Nathan for coaching on the day.

2026 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 3:

- Week 8 - Friday Sep 4th - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6) TBC
- Week 9 - Wednesday Sep 9th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths - Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Term 4:

- Week 1 - Friday Oct 9th - Regional Athletics @ Llanberris (Qualifiers from Division Aths - Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 2 - Friday Oct 16th - Junior Sports Day @ SFX (F-Y2 & Yr 6 Sports Captains)
- Week 3 - Friday October 23rd - Greater Western Region Basketball (Girls A) -
- Week 4 - Wednesday Oct 28th - Division Golf tournament @ Mt Xavier Golf Club (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 5 - Friday Nov 6th - Eureka Division Cricket @ Alfredton Reserve (selected students from Yr 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.

Ministry District Newsletter

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A - August 16th, 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 18th	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East
Wednesday August 19th	11.00 am	Mercy Place Ballarat East
Thursday August 20th	9.30 am 11.00 am	St. Brigid's Ballan Calvary Kiraalee
Friday August 21st	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East
Saturday August 22nd	9.30 am	St. Alipius' Ballarat East
WEEKEND MASSES - 21st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		
Saturday August 22nd		Sunday August 23 rd
5.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am Buninyong Gordon
6.00 pm	Clarks Hill	10.30 am Ballarat East Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

Brian Blood, Joseph Camilleri, Felice Colasante, Jim Conroy, Peter Davies, Gerry Duck, William Gleeson, Gerard Harrington, Kathleen Ledwidge, Therese Johnson, Lawrence McCartin, Velia McFall, Nicholas McGuigan, William Nunn, Bernie Powell, Brian O'Regan, Patricia Ryan, Michael Ronan, Maureen Santamaria, Con Toohey.

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Bill Burgess, Patrick Landrigan, Richard Wade, Owen Widdison

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Rom 11:13-15, 29-32

Mt 15:21-28



NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 22:19-23

Romans 11:33-36

Matthew 16:13-20

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.

DIOCESE OF BALLARAT SEASON OF CREATION MASS - updated notice

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 9.15am (please note change of start time) 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://evt.live/season-of-creation-mass>

CELEBRATING FIRST EUCHARIST

This Sunday at Gordon and Ballan Masses and next weekend at the Vigil Mass at Clarkes Hill, children who have are preparing in the Parish Eucharist Program will celebrate their first reception of the Eucharist, completing their full sacramental initiation into the Church. We welcome these children, the parents and families to our Masses and thank Therese Winter for coordinating this sacramental program, acknowledging the support of the staff of St Brigid's Ballan, St Mary's Clarkes Hill and St Patrick's Gordon.

WOLLONGONG CLERGY RETREAT

This week Fr Jusin will lead the retreat for the Bishop, Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Wollongong NSW, to be held at The Hermitage, Mittagong, with a focus on Clergy for a synodal church - walking together in the Spirit.

THANK YOU

To the many people across our Ministry District who quietly make things happen, we would like to say thank you. You know who you are, please know that we appreciate everything you do in order to keep each of our parishes running efficiently.

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

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>

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS MAGAZINE

The latest edition of the Australian Catholics is now available. Don't forget to take your copy home to read. We would ask that you also take a copy for anyone who may not be in a position to come to Mass.

THE BIG TENT

For the past year Geraldine Doogue and an inter-generational cast have developed a podcast series titled The Big Tent, hosting an honest, contemporary search that aims, in the prophet Isaiah's words, to 'enlarge the space of your tent'. The links below take you to two of the Apple podcast episodes: [Changing belief: between faith and fiction](#) & [Changing belief: faith in the bush](#).

We acknowledge this land's traditional owners and custodians

UPCOMING DATES - AUGUST

Thursday 27th

5.30pm

Ballarat East Pastoral Council meeting
Parish Hub

7.00pm

Bungaree Parish Leadership Team meeting
Dunnstown, Damascus @ St. Brendan's School

LONG TERM VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC REGION

THE CAGLIERO PROJECT, SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO

The Cagliero Project is an initiative of the Australia-Pacific Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco, providing overseas volunteer experiences for Australians and New Zealanders who wish to work with young people in the Asia-Pacific region. We are seeking enthusiastic volunteers for January 2027 departure. Our volunteer placements run for 6-12 months and are centered around working with young people in educational settings. We are currently recruiting for volunteers for Cambodia, Samoa, Timor Leste, Mongolia and the Solomon Islands. We use the skills and talents of our volunteers to contribute meaningfully to host communities. Rather than "helping," we walk in solidarity with young people, creating opportunities for mutual learning and growth. Cagliero volunteers work in the Salesian way, placing young people at the centre of all they do and approaching life with joy, compassion, and respect. While the focus is on those we serve, the experience is often deeply rewarding for volunteers as well.

Applications close October 31st, 2026. Send us an enquiry - www.cagliero.org.au or lhichaaba@salesians.org.au.

MINISTRY DISTRICT FINANCES JULY

	Gordon	Bungaree	Ballarat East
Parish	\$4,550.00	\$1,300.00	\$8,445.00
Presbytery	\$3,390.00		\$5,348.00

MACKA MOMENTS

Sister of St Joseph, Rita Malavisi has created over 300 youtubes aimed at teaching more about St Mary MacKillop. It has become a weekly must-view for thousands across the country. Sr Rita says what keeps the series going is that it focuses not just on the woman MacKillop was, but also on her ability to guide others in their faith. "The focus has always been on how she's followed Christ in her life, and how she can be an example." [A Macka Moment](#)

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT AUGUST 2026, "LIVING THE GOSPEL IN TIMES OF SOCIAL DIVISION"

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has released the second Social Justice Statement for this year ahead of Social Justice Sunday (August 30, 2026), "Living the Gospel in Times of Social Division". This statement invites us to see our current social climate as an opportunity to witness to the Gospel. The Church can and must be a sign of unity: a community where every person feels at home and all are encouraged to use their gifts to build a more just, peaceful and cohesive Australia. The Statement and more information can be accessed at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/service-and-agencies/welfare/social-justice/social-justice-statement-current/>. The Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission will host a webinar in November to celebrate the launch of the Statement - details to be advised.

LEADING IN A SYNODAL CHURCH: LESSONS FROM POPE FRANCIS AND POPE LEO XIV

Join the Global Centre for Catholic Leaders as we welcome Gerard O'Connell and Elisabetta Pique to the University of Notre Dame Australia to explore the unfolding synodal journey on Tuesday, August 25, 2026 from 9.30am – 12.00noon at the Sheraton Melbourne Hotel. This engaging session will provide an opportunity to consider: the driving factors for Pope Francis's synodal imagination; the seeds and inspiration for synodality; observations of Pope Leo XIV in relation to synodality. Whether you are enthusiastic, curious or new to understanding synodality, this session offers an opportunity to better understand its origins, purpose and significance for the Church today. Bookings essential, \$75.00 per person. Booking link <https://payments.nd.edu.au/LeadinginaSynodalChurchMelbourne>

Mercy Me!

Reflection on the Gospel

20th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

(Matthew 15:21-28)

Veronica Lawson RSM

The gospels are written in Greek and much of the language of the gospels has to be understood against a Greek philosophical background. Today's gospel story culminates in the healing of a "daughter" who may be a little girl or even a young woman. Her mother, the main character in the story, is known to Matthew's community simply as a Canaanite woman, or in other words an indigenous woman. To some early Christian communities, she is Justa, so that we might reasonably call her daughter Justina.

Justa comes to Jesus as he moves from Jewish territory into, or close to, non-Jewish territory. In the language of liturgy, she laments loudly and persistently for her daughter, for Justina is "severely tormented by a demon". For the ancient Greeks, the antithesis of demonic possession or torment is human flourishing or well-being (eudaimonia). Eudaimonia means having a good guardian spirit as opposed to a malevolent spirit that impairs a person's well-being and sense of self. Justina's well-being is in jeopardy. Her distraught mother is an outsider to the "house of Israel" who is nonetheless familiar with Israel's prayer of lament. She is a woman alone in public space, risking ridicule and rejection to find healing for her daughter. Her plea, "Mercy me", reveals the depth of her identity with the suffering of her daughter.

The immediate response to her plea is silence: Jesus "does not answer her a word". Is he ignoring her cry for help?

Is he simply stunned, taken aback at the vehemence of her request? Is he rendered speechless by the simple fact that she would cross the boundaries of gender and ethnicity in this way? Is he in awe at her courage and faith from the outset?



All we know is that he says nothing and that the disciples tell him to send her away. He responds by defining the limits of his mission rather narrowly: he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Justa is not deterred by this rejection. She begs Jesus to help her and receives an explicit refusal in a confronting image that names his people as "the children" and her people as "the dogs". She accepts his statement as a challenge and bests him in the exchange: "even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table".

Jesus' horizons are expanded by the persistence and insight of this courageous and faith-filled woman. Justa's great faith is affirmed and her daughter is healed. Justa is vindicated and Justina restored to a state of well-being or eudaimonia. Justina has her counterparts across the globe, especially in these troubled times of widespread conflict. The challenge for us is to be Justa in our times for the sake of all in the Earth community, human and other-than-human, whose well-being or eudaimonia is impaired by illness or fear or lack of access to the means to flourish. We might well cry out on behalf of our planet, "Mercy me".

CELTIC TIGERS ARE ON THE HUNT

EOI FOR SUMMER SEASON



-  FOOTY FINISHED?
-  NETBALL DONE?
-  SOCCER WRAPPED UP?
-  STAY FIT OVER SUMMER,
COME PLAY BASKETBALL

GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER
OR FRIENDS FROM SCHOOL
& WE'LL SET YOU UP TO
HAVE SOME FUN!



**SUMMER SEASON
STARTS
9TH OCTOBER**

WHY PLAY BASKETBALL?

- ✓ Stay active & healthy
- ✓ Learn new skills
- ✓ Make new friends
- ✓ Have fun in a team environment
- ✓ Increases confidence & teamwork

REGISTER BY EMAILING - CELTICTIGERSREGISTER@GMAIL.COM



DRAGONS BASKETBALL

**SUMMER
REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN!**

EARLY BIRD | **JUST \$90** | **FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST**

WWW.DRUMMODRAGONS.COM.AU



FREE BBQ

For the love of summer...

TENNIS IS CALLING

The outdoor tennis season is coming.
Come along and let's play!

- Have a hit and meet local clubs
- Discover tennis for juniors + seniors
- Every age and stage!

Learn more at our Open Day
Sunday 13 September, 2pm - 4pm
BDTA Courts, Forest St Buninyong

PLAY TENNIS. HAVE A BALL.
More? Visit <https://bunetc.org>

Hosted by Buninyong Community Tennis Club in conjunction with the Buninyong & District Tennis Association. Play tennis for Ballan | Ballarat Lawn | Buninyong | Dunsborough | Elaine | Gardonia | Granville | Haddon | Mount Helen | Meredith | Napoleons | Navigators | Rakewood | Ross Creek | Smythesdale | Warrnup.

QR FOR MORE





The Collective Mental Health Expo & Circle of Solidarity



Join your community in
supporting mental wellbeing!



**Free community
event for Mental
Health Awareness
Month 2026**

**Thursday, October 1st,
10am - 2pm**
Enter Lake Esmond from Clayton St,
Larter St, and Lal Lal St.
Car Parking available at Canadian Lead
Primary School and along Larter St.

What to expect:
Meet new people, family fun activities,
Circle of Solidarity
food vans, coffee, free sausage sizzle
No registration needed!

For accessibility requirements contact
bmhcommunityevent@gmail.com

*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.*