



# St Francis Xavier Primary School

## Newsletter

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024  
Term 3 Week 8

P.O. Box 2027  
Ballarat East VIC 3354  
Phone: 5331 6311  
Fax: 5331 8337

Email: [principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au)

### Term 3 (10 weeks)

Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Jul – Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Sep

#### Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September

Student Led Conferences

#### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September

Book Club 6 Orders last day

#### Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September

2.40pm Assembly led by  
4BO

#### Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September

Student Led Conferences

#### Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September

2.40pm Assembly led by  
3DW

#### Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September

Free Dress Day: Footy  
Colours/Sporting Colours

### Term 4 (11 weeks)

Mon 7<sup>th</sup> Oct – Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Dec

#### Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October

Start of Term/Mercy Day  
Mass

#### Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October

2.40pm Assembly led by 2JS

#### Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October

2.40pm Assembly led by  
1MV

#### Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November

2.40pm Assembly led by  
5JW

#### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November

Pupil Free Day

#### Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November

Melbourne Cup Holiday  
Pupil Free Day

#### Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November

2.40pm Assembly led by 6ZA

#### Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November

2.40pm Assembly led by 2RR

#### Wed 27<sup>th</sup> & Thurs 28<sup>th</sup> Nov

Year 5 Camp

### In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

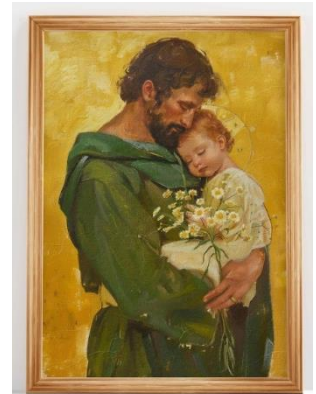
Dear families,

It was great to be able to gather as a school community in two different ways last week. Our students were very excited to welcome our fathers and special friends to school on Friday as we gathered for a brief get together before heading off to the classrooms for a special liturgy. Then on Friday evening we came together for a wild night of trivia and games! Our Parents & Friends committee works tirelessly throughout the year to raise funds and create events for our school. With a target set last year to raise enough funds for a new adventure playground we have also set our sights on shade sails to protect our children over the warmer months ahead. It is immensely satisfying to know that we have just about achieved our goals!

When we come together for events like these, we create something very special in our school. Getting to know other parents helps to build a sense of community which is so important. Busy lives mean that sometimes we don't allow ourselves the opportunities to reach out and form new friendships. Let's hope that your involvement in activities such as what we have experienced this week has provided for you the chance to meet a new face or two.

God bless,

Mark Hogbin



**Trivia Night** We had an amazing evening on Friday night with many teams competing to bring home the honour of winning table at our huge Trivia night. The P&F committee made sure that everything ran smoothly, and a good time was certainly had by all. Thank you to all families for supporting the event and to our very generous local businesses for sponsoring prizes on the night. Thank you! Our Parents and Friends committee always welcomes your participation and involvement in our meetings and events. Please consider this as your invitation to become actively and constructively involved in the life of our great school.



**Footy Thanks** We offer a huge thanks to the dedicated team of parents and staff who supported the sausage sizzle at Mars Stadium last weekend. It was a true Ballarat Footy day, but the efforts of our team ensured great profits for our school. Well done to our hard workers – You are worth your weight in gold!



## Religious Education News

### **THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday September 1st, 2024 Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)**

#### **Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

Some Pharisees and teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus. They noticed that some of his disciples were eating their food with hands that were ritually unclean — that is, they had not washed them in the way the Pharisees said people should. (For the Pharisees, as well as the rest of the Jews, follow the teaching they received from their ancestors: they do not eat unless they wash their hands in the proper way; nor do they eat anything that comes from the market unless they wash it first. And they follow many other rules which they have received, such as the proper way to wash cups, pots, copper bowls, and beds.)

So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law asked Jesus, “Why is it that your disciples do not follow the teaching handed down by our ancestors, but instead eat with ritually unclean hands?”

Jesus answered them, “How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you! You are hypocrites, just as he wrote: ‘These people, says God, honour me with their words,

but their heart is really far away from me. It is no use for them to worship me, because they teach human rules as though they were God’s laws!’ “You put aside God’s command and obey human teachings.”

Then Jesus called the crowd to him once more and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand, there is nothing that goes into a person from the outside which can make him ritually unclean. Rather it is what comes out of a person that makes him unclean. For from the inside, from a person’s heart, come the evil ideas which lead him to do immoral things, to rob, to kill, commit adultery, be greedy, and do all sorts of evil things; deceit, indecency, jealousy, slander, pride and folly – all these evil things come from inside a person and make him unclean.”

*(Gospel taken from Good News Translation)*

**Gospel reflection:** Jesus became angry with the Pharisees- he said that they were just following their traditions without really thinking about God. For Jesus it was very important for people to really show love for God in all their actions.

What traditions do we have for how we worship God and to show that we believe? We go to Mass on Sundays and on other special days, we say our prayers, we might wear a cross around our necks. These are all important, but do you think they are enough?

What do you think Jesus would say to someone who went to church every week, but who was mean to other people? Do you think they would be showing their love for God in their actions?

At our school each month, we raise money on free dress days to help people who are poor or for organisations that need our support. As one of our Mercy Leaders said, “It might take a while, but we can make a difference in the world.”

**Our Challenge:** How can we show love for God in both our words and our actions? *(Adapted from CAFOD website)*



#### **Sacrament of Confirmation:**

This week we pray for many of our Year Three Students who are receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. As a part of their Religious Education lessons, the children have been learning about how Catholic Christians celebrate three sacraments of initiation into their faith (namely Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist). Confirmation (the renewing and confirming of their baptismal promises) is a sacrament of empowerment, giving recipients the strength to follow Jesus and to become involved in the mission of the Church.

We wish the children involved all the best this Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening.

**Date for next Free Dress Day-** Footy Colours/Sporting Colours - Friday September 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Recent Staff Professional Learning- Our Mercy Story



At our Staff Meeting last week, we were fortunate to have Sr Berenice Kerr speak to us about the long history of our school. Sr Berenice is an educator, an author and has a local wealth of knowledge regarding our Mercy story. Through history, storytelling and art she was able to connect us more deeply to our Mercy charism and the courage of those who have gone before us. She presented us with a beautiful picture of Mary, the Mother of Mercy and helped us to reflect on why our Mercy values are so important to us here at St Francis Xavier. We thank Sr Berenice for her generosity and expertise.

It was wonderful to see so many **Father's and Special Friends** joining us last Friday for our afternoon tea and liturgy. The children were very excited to join with their family groups; and I thank our amazing teachers for inviting and welcoming everyone to celebrate in their learning space. The smiles on everyone's faces said it all!



Our fabulous PR Team helping out on Father's and Special Friend's Day



Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader

*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.*



**Student Led Conferences Weeks 8 and 9 Term 3 2024**

**Bookings are now open on PAM.**

Week 8: Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 3:30 onwards

Week 9: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 3:30 onwards

**Student - Led Conferences at SFX:** Your child(ren) will be showcasing their schoolwork and discussing learning goals with you through Student-Led Conferences this week and next week.

During Student – Led Conferences, your child will lead the discussion with you about their school work, while teachers will help direct conversation and support.

**Bookings for these conferences are open on PAM now! If you haven't already done so please go in and book.** These meetings will last for 12 minutes, with a few minutes change over for each conference. **We encourage all families to attend.** Children must attend these meetings!

We have several goals for holding conferences using this format:

- For parents/carers – you will get to see rather than simply being told about your child’s progress
- For students – students will take more responsibility for their learning
- For teachers – teachers to have more meaningful and impactful conferences with you
- For all – maximise our time together, create ways to partner with one another to support student success.

**Questions to ask your child at Student - Led Conferences**

Here are some questions for you to ask your child during their Student – Led Conference. These are suggestions, so please look them over and pick a few that you may like to ask!

1. What are you most proud of?
2. It makes me proud to see that ....
3. Can you tell me more about ...
4. I can tell that you improved in ....
5. What did you find challenging this term?
6. Did you reach your goals? Why/Why not?
7. What can we do together at home to support your learning?

We have deliberately formed them as Student – Led and not 3 – Way Conferences. Highly Effective Catholic Primary Schools promote Student Voice. Student – Led Conferences are identified as a significant way of developing Student Voice. The latest research and evidence around Assessment as Learning supports this.

If a parent/carer needs to have a conversation with the teacher not in the presence of the child in regards to other matters, this needs to take place at another time. Contact can be made with the class teacher requesting further time if needed.



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal / Learning Enhancement

### Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

It was amazing to see so many Dads and Special People taking part in our liturgy last Friday. I hope that you all had a great weekend celebrating the important men in your lives. As society adjusts, the role of fathers is also changing - my own Dad probably saw his role in our family at the turn of the century as essentially a 'breadwinner' and 'enforcer'. Most of the parenting recommendations in the past were jagged towards mothers as the dominant caregivers and there was a lack of acknowledgment of the role men played in their children's growth. Thankfully this has changed. Over the past few decades, studies have shown us that dads (and other male role models like teachers, coaches, church leaders, uncles, grandpas and more) matter - their positive force cannot be muted.

Research also tells us that dads (and those other male role models) are stepping up and featuring as a positive and effective presence in their children's growth.

Attached is a link to the [St Francis Xavier SchoolTV Website](#) where there is a Special Report: Celebrating Father's Day.

Sending cheers your way.



Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing Leader**

## Sport/Physical Education News

### Division Athletics

All of the best to the following students that have qualified and will be participating in various events at next Thursday's Eureka Division Athletics: *Nellie Cheeseman, Miah Cooper, Pippa Dalton, Abbey Dwyer, Olivia Farrell, Jed Hynes, Remi James, Isla Johnson, Mitch Kane, Sam Norris, Lilly Rice, Jackson Roberts, Eliza Simpson, Amelia Sordello, Archer Spackman, Sofia St Louis & Alexis Toohey.*

Good luck to all of the students and staff that will be involved in sporting finals that continue this weekend!

### Term 3 Calendar:

- Week 8 - Friday Sep 6th - Interschool Sport ALL Yr 6 @ St James
- Week 9 - Thursday Sep 12th - Division Athletics @ Llanberris (qualifiers from BCPS Aths- Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)

### Term 4:

- Week 1 - Monday Oct 7th - Friday Oct 11th - Swimming Program Yr 1 & 2
- Week 1 - Friday Oct 11th - Regional Athletics @ Llanberris (Qualifiers from Division Aths- Yr 3, 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 3 - Friday Oct 25th - Golf Tournament @ Mt Xavier Golf Club (selected students from Yr 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 4 - Wednesday Oct 30th - Eureka Division Cricket @ TBC (selected students from Yr 5/6)
- Week 4 - Friday Nov 1st - Junior Sports Day @ Russell Square (All students from F - Yr 2)
- Week 6 - Friday Nov 15th - Interschool Sport ALL Yr 5/6 v St Alipius

### 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, Mr Carroll or drop into the office.

Have a wonderful week.



Shaun Carroll, **SFX Sport Coordinator**

**1<sup>st</sup> September 2024**

**Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*"The just will live in the presence of the Lord."*

**St Alipius**  
*parish*

▶ **SS PETER & PAULS**  
701 FISKIN ST  
BUNINYONG 3357

▶ **ST ALIPIUS**  
82 VICTORIA ST  
BALLARAT EAST 3350

▶ **PARISH OFFICE**  
84 VICTORIA ST  
BALLARAT EAST 3350  
PH 5332 6611  
OPEN TUE – FRI  
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

[ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au)  
[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballarata-east/](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballarata-east/)

**MASS TIMES**

**St Alipius**  
Tue 9:30 am  
Wed 11:00 am Mercy Place –  
parishioners welcome  
Thurs 2pm (Sam Citta  
Funeral Mass)  
Friday 9:30  
Sat 9:30 AM, 6:00 PM Vigil  
Sun 9:00 AM (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> weeks)  
10:30 AM (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>)

**Ss Peter and Paul's**  
Sunday 9:00 AM (2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>)  
10:30 AM (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>)  
Rosary – Thursday 11:00 AM  
**Mass and prayer resources**  
[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)  
Counting team 4

Our Parish is committed to the safety, well-being and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

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

**WE PRAY FOR**

**Faithfully departed:**  
Salvatore (Sam) Citta

**Anniversaries:**

**Unwell:** Socorro De Chavez  
Shelley Pawang, Peter McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan, Carole Simmons

**PARISH TEAM**

**Parish Priest**  
Fr Justin Driscoll

**Assistant Priest**  
Fr Matthew Restall

**Parish Coordinator**  
Cathy Prunty

**Administrative Assistant**  
Natalie Shannon

**Finance Officer**  
Bernadette Prestwood

**Child Safety Officer**  
Emily Clarke

**PARISH VISION**

The combined communities of St Alipius Parish reach out in the spirit of faith, hope, love, and acceptance, as God calls us to in the gospels.

**PARISH MISSION**

Our mission in the Parish of St Alipius is to actively engage and serve our combined communities, embodying the teachings of the Gospel. Strengthened in the spirit of faith, hope, love acceptance and Mercy, we strive to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment. Guided by God's call to service, we aim to build strong connections, provide spiritual nourishment, promote social justice, and offer support to individuals and families in their journey of faith. Through our dedicated interactions, we seek to deepen our relationships with God, inspire transformation, and make a positive impact in the lives of those we encounter, spreading God's love and compassion to all.

**TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION**  
SEASON OF CREATION 2024

*The firstfruits of hope*  
(Rom 8:19-25)

*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.*

## PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our planned giving program. Your generosity is appreciated.

Supporting our parish priests	\$1001
Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc.	\$518

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**PPC Meeting**  
6:30 pm, September 12th, Presbytery

**Baptism Preparation**  
10.00 am & 5.30 pm, September 5th  
St. Patrick's Cathedral Hall

**Confirmation Liturgies**  
6 pm September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>  
St. Alipius Church

## BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM

The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCFF) is a growing initiative to offer adult religious education and faith formation anytime and anywhere, online. This low-cost (\$50usd) online study and formation for employed or volunteer lay workers in parishes is available through our partner, Dayton University. Cycle 6 begins September 2. There are 40 subjects to choose from – find one that interests you! Registrations are open now. For more information email [djurdja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:djurdja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or ph. 5337 7121.

## SEASON OF CREATION 2024

In his [message for the 2024 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation](#) Pope Francis writes:

"To hope and act with creation, then, means above all to join forces and to walk together with all men and women of good will. In this way, we can help to rethink, "among other things, the question of human power, its meaning and its limits. Our power has frenetically increased in a few decades. We have made impressive and awesome technological advances, yet we have not realized that at the same time we have turned into highly dangerous beings, capable of threatening the lives of many beings and our own survival" (*Laudate Deum*, 28)"

## PREPARING FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF THE DIOCESE OF BALLARAT

Last weekend in Warrnambool, Fr Justin, Julie Boyd and Jane Collins led the final regional gathering in preparation for the Diocesan Assembly (Nov.15-16). Our parish of Ballarat East and Buninyong will now be invited to nominate two delegates to send to the Diocesan Assembly that will be held at Federation University on Friday evening November 15th and Saturday November 16th. Prior to the Assembly, delegates from parishes, clergy, religious, Diocesan Commissions, Boards and Councils, Catholic education, CatholicCare, Catholic organizations and agencies within the Diocese will be required to engage in some preparation (some will be online).

Our Parish Pastoral Council will discern the two delegates who will attend the Diocesan Assembly. Parishioners are invited to nominate other parishioners to be considered to be one of the parish delegates. Please forward your nomination to the Parish Office with the name of the person being nominated, qualities that you see in them that make them a suitable parish delegate and include your name as the parishioner nominating them.

Pope Francis is providing leadership for a synodal Church and the Plenary Council of the Australian Church has recognised that the practice of synodality requires greater transparency in decision making, with the appropriate participation of all the baptised, giving witness to the equal dignity of women and men. The Plenary Council has affirmed a culture of synodality for parishes and dioceses, where healthy and fruitful relationships between clergy and laity "recognise different but complementary charisms and opportunities for co-responsibility", and desire "consultative and collaborative approaches to governance at all levels in the Church." The emphasis on listening and discernment for a synodal Church reveals how the People of God may be more centred on Christ, build healthy and respectful relationships amongst ourselves, and be effective missionary disciples in the Spirit.

## HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!

To all who are fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers and father figures in our community we pray for you today. With our appreciation of masculinity continuing to evolve to now encompassing a broader range of attributes that embraces emotional intelligence, empathy, vulnerability, and a readiness to challenge conventional gender expectations and stereotypes. This perspective highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse expressions of masculinity in today's society.

## BAPTISMS

**Daphne Mae Ambrosy**

Child of Joshua and Skye Ambrosy

**Hunter Kenneth and Noah Joseph Grech**

Children of Daniel Grech and Billie-Jo Walker

### **“IF WE DON’T GET JESUS RIGHT, WE WON’T GET THE CHURCH RIGHT.”**

These are the words of Australian Jesuit Fr Gerald O’Collins who died in Melbourne on August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024. The reality of Jesus and the reality of the church - and how both should be interpreted and understood - were the topics of many of the writings and teachings of Fr O’Collins in Australia, the U.K. and for many years at the Gregorian University in Rome (1973 – 2006). In one of his earliest writings, a 1971 article on *The search for the historical Jesus*, he emphasized three points.

1. Jesus should not be turned into our contemporary; he lived when and where he lived. “To describe Him as a revolutionary leader, a truly secular man or the first hippie may be emotionally satisfying, but for the most part these stereotypes are intellectually worthless.”
2. We can’t really construct a biography of Jesus with the materials we have (which hasn’t stopped us from trying). “Our knowledge of Him is practically restricted to the last two or three years of His life. Even for these years very little chronology can be established. The sources we possess make it notoriously difficult to penetrate His inner life.”
3. “We need to respect the nature of the Gospels as brief testimonials of faith,” meaning they are not historical sources in the way we think of such, but at the same time they are not just the “devotional literature of the early Church.”

In 2006, Fr O’Collins was made a Companion of the General Division of the Order of Australia (AC) “for service to the Catholic Church internationally and to scholarship as a renowned theologian, academic and influential contributor to ecumenical relations.”

### **CARING GROUP**

The caring group will meet in the parish hall at 2:00 PM on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please bring a plate to share.

## **WELCOME TO BISHOP PAUL TO OUR MINISTRY DISTRICT**

As part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat Bishop Paul is visiting each of the 29 parishes of the Diocese ‘from the Murray to the Sea.’ This weekend Bishop Paul celebrates 6.30pm Mass at Dunnstown, 9.00am Mass at Gordon and 10.30am Mass at Ballan. Parishioners will then gather for lunch with Bishop Paul at the Wallace Hotel from 1.00pm. Bishop Paul has said that “*Our 150th anniversary will be an opportunity for each community throughout our diocese to remember those who have gone before us, those who have laid the foundations of our parish and school communities and the social services and health care that are provided in our diocese today. The anniversary will be an opportunity to review our history, acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses, celebrating the achievements and recognising the failures to live our Christian faith to the full. It will be a chance to take stock of where we are now and look ahead to how we can live as a truly Christian community, sharing the good news of Christ, in the years to come.*” Bishop Paul will visit the Ballarat East and Buninyong Church communities on Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday September 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **BALLARAT CLERGY SUPPORT FUND**

The Ballarat Clergy Support Fund provides for retired priests who have spent a lifetime selflessly caring for others, and who deserve a happy and peaceful retirement. The Fund is currently supporting and caring for seventeen retired priests. Over the next few years a number of priests currently in parish ministry will be moving into retirement, and will also need to be supported by the fund.

This annual collection has allowed the Fund to continue to support our retired priests. Please give as generously as you can, and help us continue ‘caring for those who cared for us’.

## **ANNIVERSARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

Thank you to all who have contributed to information about our Parish for the celebration on 14 December. Interesting stories about parishioners feature delightfully but we would love some reflections on other aspects of the Parish ie, YCW, Tennis Club, God Start, RCIA, Family groups, St Vinnies, Different Ministries ie the Bereavement team. These need to be anecdotal and not very long. If they can be illustrated with photos all the better. Please deliver your contribution to the Parish Office or email it. These stories need to be in by 15 September.



# “To Hope and Act with Creation”

Gospel reflection by Veronica Lawson RSM  
Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time



From September 1 to October 4, we join with Christians across the globe in celebrating the Season of Creation. The 2024 theme, “To hope and act with creation” invites us to maintain the struggle even as we witness the devastating effects of the climate crisis. Today’s gospel recounts a legal dispute about ritual purity. Jesus demonstrates the futility of focussing attention on the things that do not matter while neglecting the weightier issues of life.

At issue for the scribes and Pharisees in the story is the failure of Jesus’ disciples to respect their oral tradition, in this instance to perform ritual washings before eating. From their perspective, the disciples are not “walking” according to the tradition of the elders. For the Markan Jesus, “the command of God” is paramount, not some distorted interpretation of it. He offers a hard-hitting counter-critique of their attitude to law. He calls them “hypocrites” and informs them that the condemnation of the prophet Isaiah was intended for them. They have so distorted God’s law, substituting their own observances for the “commandment of God” that their prayer amounts to nothing more than lip-service, their hearts are far from God, and their worship is worthless!

For Jesus, there are criteria other than such observances for determining who is clean or unclean. He has already declared a leper clean (Mk 1:41-45).

For Jesus, the “heart” is the locus of purity and impurity. For him as for all his people, the heart was the seat of the intellect and of morality as well as the seat of the emotions. In the kin-dom of God, therefore, one’s thoughts, desires, and intentions render one clean or unclean, not one’s attention to hygiene. The latter is important of course, but it is peripheral in the context being addressed in the gospel. It is worth applying the criteria provided at the end of the passage to discover whether or not our “hearts” are near or distant from our God. The real-life Pharisees of the first century were the respected teachers of God’s law. It is imperative that stories such as we find in today’s gospel are not used to denigrate the Jews or to pit Christianity over against Judaism. We have to keep reminding ourselves that time and again we are dealing with in-house debates between Jewish groups. This gospel passage invites us to look at how we deal with unfair critics who can hurt us only if we allow them to do so.

Finally, this episode, with its attention to ritual washing, raises the issue of the right use of water, that precious earth element without which there would be no life at all on our planet. We might, for instance, as part of our engagement with the Season of Creation, be more attentive to those who have no access to clean drinking water by raising our voices against projects that contaminate water supply to vulnerable communities.

## THIS WEEK’S READINGS 22<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

DEUTERONOMY 4:1-2, 6-8  
JAMES 1:17-18, 21-22, 27  
MARK 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

## NEXT WEEK’S READINGS 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Isaiah 35: 4 – 7  
JAMES 2:1 – 5  
MARK 7: 31 – 37



# OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS AFTER SCHOOL *care program*

We cater to the needs of all children and offer a range of activities including sports, games, arts and crafts, cooking, creative and expressive arts such as drama, singing and dancing, board games and puzzles and much more. We also provide healthy and delicious snacks.

For more information call 0491 743 126  
or visit [yballarat.org.au](http://yballarat.org.au)

