



St Francis Xavier Primary School

Newsletter

Monday 17th February 2025
Term 1 Week 4

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

Email: principal@sfxballarat.catholic.edu.au

Term 1 (10 weeks)

Tue 28th Jan – Fri 4th Apr

Tuesday 18th February

Athletics Day at Llanberris
All Years 3-6 students

Wednesday 19th February

Foundation Testing

Year Ahead Meetings

Years 1, 3 and 4

Friday 21st February

No Assembly

Monday 24th February

School photo day

Wednesday 26th February

Foundation Testing

Friday 28th February

2.40pm Assembly led by 6PB

Wednesday 5th March

Foundation Rest Day

Friday 7th March

2.40pm Assembly led by 5CC

Monday 10th March

Labour Day Public Holiday
Student Free Day

Tuesday 11th March

Student Free Day

Wednesday 12th March

Foundation at School

Friday 14th March

2.40pm Assembly led by 4KB

SFX Mix & Mingle

Friday 21st March

2.40pm Assembly led by 3JT

Sunday 23rd March

10am-1pm

Garden Working Bee

Wednesday 26th March

Student Led Conferences
3.30-7.00pm

Friday 28th March

2.40pm Assembly led by 2RR

Tuesday 1st April

Student Led Conferences
3.30-7.00pm

In the Land of the Wadawurrung People

Dear Families,

There is so much happening in the world right now, and at times, it feels like everything is moving at an overwhelming pace. I have to admit that I am struggling to keep up with global events at the moment. One minute, peace agreements are being signed, and the next, they are unravelling. World leaders are meeting behind closed doors to address pressing issues, and I sometimes wonder whose interests are truly being served.

Last week, Pope Francis called on all Christians to join in prayer for peace. He encouraged us to unite in spirit as a symbol of hope for all nations and to foster a global shift in thinking. It's a big ask, but I believe in the power of collective prayer, so I'll be taking part—and I invite you to do the same.

As a small act of solidarity, we will place a peace candle in our school chapel this week. This candle will serve as a reminder of our support for those in need of our prayers. If you would like to take a moment for quiet reflection, you are more than welcome to stop by. While I can't promise that the chapel will always be silent amidst the busyness of school life, I have no doubt that even in the noise, our prayers will be heard.

God bless,



Mark Hogbin



A Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.



Taken from the Peace Prayer of St. Francis.

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Friday 4th April

12.40pm Assembly led by
1JS

Last day of Term 1

Term 2 (11 weeks)

Mon 21st Apr – Fri 4th Jul

Monday 21st April

Easter Monday Public
Holiday - Student free day

Tuesday 22nd April

Student free day

Wednesday 23rd April

Student free day

Thursday 24th April

Student free day

Friday 25th April

ANZAC Day Public Holiday
Student free day

Friday 2nd May

Term 2 Mass

Friday 9th May

Mothers'/Special Friends'
Day Liturgy

Friday 16th May

2.40pm Assembly led by 6ZA

Thursday 22nd May

Foundation/Prep 2026
applications close.

Friday 23rd May

2.40pm Assembly led by
5SMC

Friday 30th May

2.40pm Assembly led by
4ML

Friday 6th June

2.40pm Assembly led by
3DGS

Monday 9th June

King's Birthday Public
Holiday

Student free day

Wed 11th – Fri 13th June

Year 6 Urban Camp

Friday 13th June

2.40pm Assembly led by 2TS

Friday 20th June

2.40pm Assembly led by
1EM

Friday 27th June

2.40pm Assembly led by FGJ

Friday 4th July

No Assembly

Term 3 (9 weeks)

Mon 21st Jul – Fri 19th Sep

Year Ahead Meetings

Thank you to our Year F, 2, 5 and 6 families who were able to attend the Year Ahead meetings last week. These are great opportunities to meet the teachers and to hear about what is planned for the children this year. This week the parents of children in Yrs. 1, 3 and 4 will have this rich opportunity. See you there!

Senior School Sports Day

The children are busily preparing for their big sports day next Tuesday 18 February at Llanberris. As always, a high energy day is assured as children from Years 3 - 6 compete for points on the day. All families are welcome to attend for all or part of the day and children may be collected from the venue at the conclusion of events if the classroom teacher is notified. Children may choose to wear a splash of team colour on this special day.

Morning access to the top oval

We have been trialing a change to the way that we interact before school over the past week. Instead of the children playing only on the lower oval area before school, we have opened the top oval for children to enjoy before school. I am delighted to be able to share with you that our students are playing very well each morning and enjoying the extra space. Well done children. We are proud of you!

Parking around our school

Our school can become extremely busy between 8.15-8.45 and between 3.00pm and 3.45pm each day. During drop-off and pick-up times, it is extremely important that we follow the rules and observe the flow of traffic around our school. Please do not cross over double lines, always drive up to the white cross in the tree before turning, be vigilant when reversing your car and please don't use the staff car park as a rendezvous point for your children. When we are all mindful and follow the rules, then our children will learn how to negotiate traffic safely.

School photos

We are aware that our current suppliers, MSP photography have altered the way that they communicate with families about school photos. In an effort to make sure that their communication is consistent we have relayed communications through the see-saw app which all parents can access. Our school photo day will be on Monday 24 February and orders are placed online. Children will be required to be in correct summer uniform on this day please regardless of any sports or other activities.

Student toilets

As part of our commitment to child safety we ask any parents visiting our school to please refrain from using the student toilets. We have toilets available for adults in the main building. If required, please call by the front office and we will point you in the right direction.

Staff News

Mr. Lawlor has indicated his desire to complete his tenure at our school at the end of first term. Mr. Lawlor commenced at our school in 2024 and has taught Year 4 since then. We wish Mr. Lawlor all the best for his next adventures and thank him for his time with us. A replacement teacher will be sought in the coming weeks.

Friday 25th July

Start of Term Mass

Friday 1st August

2.40pm Assembly led by FLP

Friday 8th August

2.40pm Assembly led by
1GT

Friday 15th August

2.40pm Assembly led by
2MH

Mon 18th – Fri 22nd Aug

Book Week

Friday 22nd August

2.40pm Assembly led by 3LL

Friday 29th August

2.40pm Assembly led by 4JS

Friday 5th September

Fathers' Day/Special
Friends' Liturgy

Friday 12th September

2.40pm Assembly led by 5ZP

Friday 19th September

12.40pm Assembly led by
FBOK

Term 4 (11 weeks)

Mon 6th Oct – Fri 19th Dec

Friday 10th October

Start of Term/Mercy Day
Mass

Friday 17th October

2.40pm Assembly led by
FTW

Friday 24th October

2.40pm Assembly led by
6MM

Friday 31st October

Junior Sports Day
All Foundation-Year 2
students

Monday 3rd November

Student free day

Tuesday 4th November

Melbourne Cup Public
Holiday
Student free day

Friday 7th November

No Assembly

Friday 14th November

No Assembly

Friday 21st November

No Assembly

Mon 24th – Wed 26th Nov

Year 5 Camp

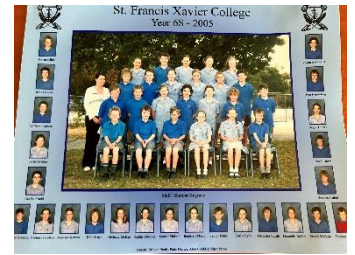
Thursday 18th December

Final 2025 day for students

News from our past pupils



We were visited by a group of past pupils on the weekend. The Year 6 class of 2005 were celebrating their 20 year reunion and a tour of the school was high on the agenda. Our visitors were amazed at the changes to our school over that time and their stories of past adventures at Villa were very entertaining!



Parents & Friends news

We had a terrific Parents & Friends meeting at school last week. It was great to welcome new and old friends to the meeting and much positive discussion was had regarding events for this year. Stay tuned for more things to come and remember, you are always welcome to attend our meetings, we would love to see you there.

Update on the Basketball Courts

Our basketball courts have had to undergo some mighty repairs over the summer break. Shifting ground and surface damage was discovered after work commenced on replacing the old wire fencing. While the workers have been diligent in trying to meet our deadlines, it looks like we may have to be a little patient for another week or two while the first stage of works is completed. Hopefully, it won't be too long before the courts are accessible again and the children can once again enjoy playing ball games on the courts.

Foundation/Prep Enrolment 2026 – Existing Families

Enrolments open for children of existing and new families who start Foundation/Prep in 2026 on Monday 10th February 2025. Parents of existing and new families who have a child to start in 2026 - please complete the '**Enrolment Application Form**' form by clicking on the following link to submit your application:

<https://dobcel.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/enrolments-application-form/>

Please note this is an essential step for existing families in ensuring you child is enrolled in Foundation/Prep 2026. Applications close Thursday 22nd May 2025.

PHOTO DAY IS COMING



MSP Photography
Ballarat
T 03 5333 5577
E ballarat@msp.com.au
www.msp.com.au

PHOTO DAY: Monday 24th February 2025

HOW TO ORDER

Ordering online is quick and easy using the steps below!

If you have an existing account, please use those login details. Once logged in, you will be able to add additional children and place sibling photo orders.

Step 1

Click on the link below to access your ordering portal.

<https://stfrancisxavierballarateast-vic.msp.photos/>

If you are new to the school, please follow Step 1 and Step 2.

Step 2

Click 'Sign in with Student Details'

[Sign in with Student Details](#)

Enter your child's surname and date of birth. You will be prompted to create an account.

Please note that sibling photo orders must be placed by **Midnight on Sunday 23rd February 2025, to be included in the student family list, that is sent to the school early on photo day.**

The portal does not have a cut off ordering date, however any orders placed more than 7 days after photo day will no longer be at the bulk discounted price and will revert to the standard pricing cost.



Religious Education News

THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL- Sunday February 16, 2025 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Gospel: Luke 6:17, 20-26

Jesus and his apostles went down from the mountain and came to some flat, level ground. Many other disciples were there to meet him. Large crowds of people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal towns of Tyre and Sidon were there too. These people had come to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their diseases. All who were troubled by evil spirits were also healed. Everyone was trying to touch Jesus, because power was going out from him and healing them all.

Jesus looked at his disciples and said: God will bless you people who are poor. His kingdom belongs to you!

God will bless you hungry people. You will have plenty to eat!

God will bless you people who are now crying. You will laugh! *(Gospel passage taken from Contemporary English Version)*

Gospel reflection: Why do you think Jesus said these things?

Jesus doesn't want us to think that the only way we can be happy is to have lots of money and all the best toys and latest stuff.

Jesus loves all people, but he has a special love for people who are poor, hungry, sad or picked on and he asks us to be the same. We are called to do what we can to help all people in our world. What do you think we can do to help people who are poor, hungry, sad, or treated badly by others?

We can share what we have, we can comfort them. We can stick up for them and try to change the world to make it fairer for all people.

Our Challenge: What will you do this week if you see someone who is sad, hungry or hurt?

(Adapted from CAFOD website)



Christine Meneely, Religious Education Leader

Wellbeing News

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

SchoolTV Special Report: The Wellbeing Barometer - 2025



The Wellbeing Barometer survey is an invaluable tool for schools, providing critical insights into the mental health and wellbeing of young people. This annual survey identifies areas of concern, highlights resilience and adaptability in students and emphasises the importance of preventative strategies to promote positive outcomes.

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Participation in this survey is strongly encouraged, as it offers a comprehensive view of students' experiences, challenges and achievements. By capturing a detailed understanding of young people's experiences, the survey supports a tailored approach to enhancing their mental, emotional and social wellbeing. It helps to identify strengths and areas for improvement, as well as pinpoint opportunities for early intervention.

The survey is part of an ongoing longitudinal study and I encourage you to take a few moments to complete the survey for each of your children. Responses remain anonymous and should be based on your observations over the last 12 months. By working together, we can reduce the long-term impact of mental illness and make a meaningful difference to the lives of our young people for a brighter future.

Here is the link to our Special Report: https://sfxballarat.catholic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-wellbeing-barometer-2025-au

Sending cheers your way,



Gemma Johnson, **Wellbeing Leader**

Curriculum News



What a great first night of Year Ahead meetings we had last week. Many thanks to the wonderful support which was shown by our parent body. Thank you.

Looking forward to seeing families who have children in Years 1,3, & 4 for their Year Ahead meetings this Wednesday night at 5PM-6pm.





Year Ahead meetings

PURPOSE:

The purpose behind the Year Ahead Meetings is intended to give Parents/Carers general information about the teacher/s, learning opportunities and the classroom organisation for the year. Year Ahead meetings provide an essential opportunity to build strong relationships at the start of the school year. These meetings foster teamwork among staff and ensure that everyone receives the same important information, helping to establish a shared understanding of goals and expectations. By facilitating connections between the school and home, these meetings also allow Parents/Carers to see where their child will be learning and who will be teaching them. Ultimately, these meetings play a key role in setting the tone for a successful year ahead, with open lines of communication and a unified approach to supporting students.

Following the general session, each class will go back to their room to meet and greet and provide Parents/Carers with a Getting to know your child sheet to complete allowing for more personalised written information for the class teacher.

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The meeting should help all families:

- Get a clear idea of what their child/ren are learning and doing in class
- Promote high standards for student work
- Gain skills to help their children at home
- Get an understanding of what successful learning looks like
- Discuss how to improve student progress

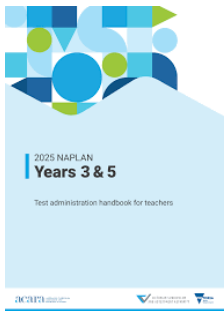
Year 1 will meet in the foyer of the Mother Xavier Flood building

Year 3 will meet in the foyer of the new building

Year 4 will meet in the library

See you Wednesday night.

Reminder 2025 NAPLAN: Begins week 7 Wednesday 12th March for children in Years 3 & 5.



Jane Clark, Deputy Principal/Learning Enhancement

Sport/Physical Education News

Term 1 - Sporting Schools Thank you for all of those that responded and expressed an interest in your child/ren being involved in a Term 1 Sporting Schools program. The response was extremely positive with many many names but unfortunately not all can participate this Term. Should we receive funding for future Terms, and your child/ren missed out this term, please try again and we will endeavour to give all students the opportunity to participate.

Please see below the list of students that **WILL** be participating in AFL on the following Mondays after school
- February 17, 24, Mar 3, 17 & 24

Eddie Anderson, Greyson & Winston Broadbent, Noa Cavanagh, Xavier Foster, Aiden Graham, Paityn Grant, Eddy Heinrich, Laila Jennings, Lachy & Tommy Just, Harrison Madigan, Noah & Will McGregor, Lenny & Rex Owins, Jed Phelan, Noah Rice Jimmy & Patrick Robinson, Riley Smith, Lawrence Wilson & Connor & Lachie White.

Please see below the list of students that **WILL** be participating in TENNIS on the following Thursday's after school
- Thursday February 20, 27, Mar 6, 13 & 20

Olive Anderson, Imogen Curtain, Parker & Rome Davis, Ivy & Shirley Dorning, Jasper & Scarlett Govan, Eliza Hanrahan, Harriet & Rupert Howard, Ailbe Kirby, Ivy, Lola & Ruby Miles, Ellyse, Harvey & Isabelle Slater, Evangeline Spiers & Chloe & Ella Wilson.

Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day This week we will be conducting our Yr 3 - 6 Athletics Day to be held at Llanberris Athletics Reserve. Students have been practicing their field events at school over the past couple of weeks and are looking forward to putting their skills on display. Please note students need to be dropped off at the venue. Students can be collected from the venue if their classroom teacher has been advised or return to school on the bus if school has been advised. For all information please refer to the PAM notification.

Division Tennis Well done to Betsy & Cleo (Yr 5) and Ivy & Evie (Yr 6) who participated in last week's Division tennis tournament. In very hot conditions all girls played some great tennis and had heaps of fun. Well done girls!

Division Swimming This Friday we have 10 students participating at the Division Swimming Sports at BALC. We wish Albert S (Yr 4), Noah R, Kayden F, Levi C, Olivia F, Emily B (Yr 5), Isabelle S, Amelia S, Haddie M & Lachlan D (Yr 6) all the best in their events and look forward to hearing how they go.

2025 SFX SPORTS DATES

Term 1:

- Week 4 - Tuesday Feb 18th - SFX Athletics Day @ Llanberris (ALL Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 students)
- Week 4 - Friday Feb 21st - Division Swimming @ BALC (nominated students from Yr 4, 5 & 6)
- Week 8 - Friday Mar 21st - Interschool Sport (Yr 5/6)
- Week 9 - Wednesday Mar 26th - Regional Swimming @ Horsham (qualifiers from Division swimming)
- Week 9 - Thursday Mar 27th - MDASA U9 Primary Schools Swim Sports (nominated students from F - Yr 2)

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 tremendous week.

Shaun Carroll, SFX Sport Coordinator



P&F News

SFX
Mix & Mingle

Join us for a fun night out under the stars! Meet fellow parents and make new friends!

Friday 14th March 2025

SAVE THE DATE



More details to come



Easter Raffle Donations welcome – Easter eggs, Easter craft (hampers, baskets to wrap them in) – please drop your donations into the office

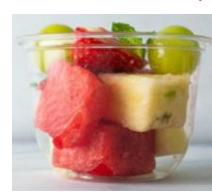


SFX Working Bee – Sunday 23rd March 10am – 1pm, followed with a sausage sizzle – please bring gloves, shovels, rakes & wheelbarrows



Hot Lunches Reminder

Hot lunches every Friday, order on Flexi Schools before 10am on a Thursday.



Zooper Doopers – Fridays at 2nd break \$1



WANTED – Second Hand St Francis Xavier Primary School Uniforms

If you have any clean second hand uniform items that you would like to donate to our Uniform Shop, please bring them into the school office. Thank you.



Faith communities of Ballan, Ballarat East, Bungaree, Buninyong, Clarkes Hill, Dunnstown, Gordon and Springbank

Ministry District Newsletter

Ballarat East Parish
Cathy Prunty and Natalie Gleeson
03 5332 6611
ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au
Tuesday – Friday 9:00 AM – 12:00PM

Bungaree and Gordon Parishes
Aileen Toohey
0492 903 409
bungaree@ballarat.catholic.org.au
gordon@ballarat.catholic.org.au
Tuesday – Thursday 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Our parishes are committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults

6th Sunday of the Year (C)

16th February 2025

MINISTRY DISTRICT MASS TIMES			
Weekday Masses			
Tuesday Feb 18th	5.30 pm	Ballarat East	
Wednesday Feb 19th	10:30	Funeral prayers – Tricia Cosgriff – St Alipius	
	11.00 am	Mercy Place (All Welcome)	
Thursday Feb 20th	9.30 am	Ballarat East	
	10.30 am	Ballan	
Friday Feb 21st	9.30 am	Ballarat East	
	9.30 am	Bungaree	
	12 Noon	Emmaus School Mass – Ballarat East	
Saturday Feb 22nd	9.30 am	Ballarat East	
Weekend Masses			
Saturday Feb 22 nd - Vigil		Sunday Feb 23 rd	
6.00 pm	Ballarat East	9.00 am	Buninyong Gordon
6.30 pm	Clarkes Hill	10.30 am	Ballarat East Ballan

WE ASK YOUR PRAYERS FOR:

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

Beverly Richardson, Tricia Cosgriff

THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME

THOSE WHO ARE UNWELL

Pat Burvill, Elaine Conlan, Socorro De Chavez, Joan Egan, Evelyn Farrugia, Patricia (Patty) Gannon, Lyla Geary, Michelle Hall, (baby) Mia Hanrahan, John Healy, Sarah McLachlan, Thelma Keating, Carole Simmons, Owen Widdison

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Ballarat East Parish:

Rose Consignano, Terresa Fletcher, Judith Glaubitz, Martin McGettigan, Dianne McKeegan, Claire Stewart.

Bungaree Parish:

Damian Ryan & Chris Frawley (Bungaree), Barry Sheehan & Dianne Reynolds (Dunnstown), Dom Prendergast, Maurice Mahar & Marty Forbes (Clarkes Hill).

Gordon Parish:

Sue Daly & Brendan Maher (Springbank), Joan Bourke & Shane Carey (Gordon), Mark Conlan & Jim Leahy (Ballan).

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WITHIN OUR PARISHES

Saints Flexible Learning (Bakery Hill & Bungaree), St Brigid's Ballan, St Alipius' Ballarat East, St Francis Xavier Ballarat East, St Mary's Clarkes Hill, St Patrick's Gordon, Damascus College Mt Clear & Dunnstown, Emmaus Mt Clear.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

RCIA for Children

February 20th 4 pm - St. Alipius

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting

February 20th – Presbytery

Casserole Night

February 28th 6 pm – Ss. Peter & Paul's,
Buninyong

SS. PETER & PAUL'S SOCIAL NIGHT

Ss. Peter & Paul's are hosting a Casserole/ Salad Night on Friday February 28th 2025 at 6.00pm at St Peter & Paul's Church Hall in Buninyong. \$15 covers all wine beer and soft drink. Any profit to parish funds. Please bring a casserole or salad to share. All welcome.

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

There are a number of Young Adult activities occurring around Ballarat at this time. If interested in being a part of something, email Fr Matt for a chat about possibilities and to be kept in the loop via text. matt.restall@ballarat.catholic.org.au

YOUNG FAMILY GROUP

Families across Ballarat are currently meeting monthly during the week for a social afternoon sport activities for the kids and food are provided. The next gathering will be mid-February. To be kept informed via email, please register your interest by emailing matt.restall@ballarat.catholic.org.au

AGED CARE PASTORAL CARE

St. Alipius Parish are looking for volunteers to visit residents and bring Holy Communion to Aged Care Facilities within the parish. If this is something you might be able to help with on a fortnightly or monthly basis, please contact Fr Matt to chat about logistics. matt.restall@ballarat.catholic.org.au

2025 SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

Dates for the 2025 Sacramental Program are now available on the Parish Website and in the foyers of each of our churches. If you know of someone who has a child seeking to prepare for Sacraments in 2025, please refer them to our website. Information will go to schools in the coming week. For further details please call the parish office.

SAINT MARY MACKILLOP'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF BEATIFICATION

Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of St Mary MacKillop's beatification with a free commemorative prayer book, "Flourish with Mary's Heart", written by the Sisters of St Joseph. The book is available at <https://www.marymackilloptoday.org.au/for-churches/prayer-book>

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS (WWCC)

A recent status check for our Working with Children Checks indicates that some parishioners have cards which have expired, while others have new cards which we have yet to witness. It is important that all WWCC are up to date. Please contact the parish office as soon as possible if you are unsure of the status of your Working with Children Check. Thank you.

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PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Supporting our priests:	\$1012
Maintenance of parish buildings:	\$548

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our parish. Your generosity is appreciated.

Counting team this week: No. 1

EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Due to a change made by Google to the sending of emails to Gmail accounts, we have had some difficulty with the sending of our bulletin in recent weeks. If you have not received your emailed copy of the bulletin in the past couple of weeks, please call the office and let us know.

BALLARAT DIOCESE LAY PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM – ONLINE STUDY

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. The next Cycle begins March 10. There are 37 subjects to choose from – find one that interests you! Registrations are open now. Scan the QR code for more information or email [djurdja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:djurja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or ph. 5337 7121.

GRAMPIANS HEALTH BALLARAT ARE SEEKING PASTORAL CARE VOLUNTEERS

Are you comfortable listening to people?
Are you able to commit to 2.5 hours per week?
Using health care services, being in hospital, and experiencing illness can prompt people to seek emotional support as well as reflect upon their attitudes to life, values, relationships and beliefs. It can be a time when people explore issues of meaning, connection and belonging.
Volunteers will be supported with training prior to starting as a Pastoral Care Volunteer and opportunities for professional development and training. They are seeking to recruit volunteers to provide pastoral care support to patients and visitors of all faiths and beliefs. Pastoral Care volunteers offer support including: A compassionate listening ear & emotional support Help patients connect with their religious or spiritual resources and support (as requested).
Contact Paul Ryan, Pastoral Care Practitioner 5320 8634, 0467 297 733, pastoralcareballarat@gh.org.au

THE SYNOD AND THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH: WHERE TO NOW?

Wednesday 19 February 2025

7:30 pm AEDT

You are invited to participate in a webinar that will discuss the global Synod 2021–2024 and its implications for the Australian Church.

Presenting are two Synod participants: **Bishop Shane Mackinlay** and **Dr Sandie Cornish**. Their presentations will focus on the final session of the universal Synod in October 2024 and its report *For a Synodal Church*. They will also highlight issues such as the role of women in the Church, the diversity of opinions across the global Church, and the scope for local autonomy. A key question is how the Australian Church will implement the results of the Synod and address unresolved issues.
There will be ample time for discussion.

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.
May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.
May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

POSITION VACANT: CDF RELATIONSHIP MANAGER



Full time, permanent position based in Ballarat, leading customer support across Ballarat and Melbourne's West. Scan or click the QR code for more information and to apply.

“Say You are Blessed!”

Reflection on the Gospel – 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time C (Luke 6:17, 20-26)

-Veronica M. Lawson



“Don’t say you are lucky. Say you are blessed”, says theologian Thomas Groome as he invites his hearers to acknowledge the source of their blessings. We are unlikely to consider ourselves blessed or happy when we cannot pay our bills or put food on the table. We are likewise slow to count our blessings, much less dance for joy, when we find ourselves in tears or when we are excluded, rejected, and treated with contempt. We are more likely to consider ourselves blessed when we do not have to be constantly worried about money or food and when others treat us with respect. So why does Luke’s Jesus declare those who are poor to be happy or blessed? And why does he seem to be so hard on those who enjoy economic security and the respect of others? What does the gospel say to those of us who are somewhere in between the destitute who are declared blessed and the wealthy who are told to watch out? What does this gospel offer to those who attract neither praise nor blame? There are no easy answers to any of this, beyond the clear evidence that Luke’s Sermon on the Plain engages the theme of reversal that permeates this gospel.

Those rendered “poor” are told that the reign of God is theirs. In other words, it is a present rather than a future reality. The “poor” can at least know that they are acceptable to God in ways that may be incomprehensible to the wealthy who, in their turn, are challenged to share their wealth.

It is not much consolation for the hungry or those who weep to know that their “reward will be great in heaven” if heaven is a place enjoyed only in the afterlife. “Heaven” is better understood as a way of talking about God’s empire of justice and compassion both present and to come. Reversal is expected in this life rather than the next. Weeping is usually connected in the prophetic literature with the disasters that flow from “ungodly” decisions. In our times, there are many weeping over “ungodly” decisions in relation to war and species loss. Laughter seems a remote possibility for many displaced people of our world. We are reminded today of the gospel imperative to work and pray that war-torn and climate affected countries might once again resonate with the sound of happy laughter. Finally, our experience makes us wary of those who flatter or put us on pedestals. It is generally only a matter of time before those on pedestals fall from favour and find themselves on the receiving end of criticism or even attack. It is ultimately better to be misunderstood and to be at peace with one’s conscience in the pursuit of compassion and justice than to be the object of adulation and praise. It is only in handling life’s challenges with dignity, grace, and single-minded focus on the gospel that we find blessing or happiness.

THIS WEEK’S READINGS
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Jeremiah 17:5-8
Corinthians 15:12, 16-20
Luke 6:17, 20-26

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS
Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Samuel 26:2, 7-9
Corinthians 15:45-49
Luke 6:27-38



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