

ANNUAL GATHERING OF BALLARAT DIOCESAN PASTORAL SUPPORT GROUP

Once again a very happy and successful assembly (25 in number) of our Ballarat Diocesan Pastoral Support Group took place at Halls Gap from Sunday, October 25 until Tuesday, October 27. This year the group welcomed some new faces from Horsham, Port Fairy, Merbein, Colac and Ararat. Members enjoyed the comfort and tranquillity of the Pinnacle Holiday Lodge with our hosts, Barry and Mimie.

Sunday evening saw a gentle moving into the spirit of the gathering where members reflected on the reason for attending and a time to listen to each other's story.

On Monday we were privileged to have Sr Veronica Lawson rsm as our guest speaker. Veronica led us on a 'study tour' of a journey of mercy referring much of her input to her newly published book "The Blessing of Mercy". How appropriate for us as we prepare to begin *The Jubilee Year of Mercy* which commences on December 8. Veronica captured us with her presentations and highlighted the link between the Year of Mercy and Pope Francis' *Laudato Si*. She led us to a wide vision of the word 'mercy'. We are now *au fait* with all the Hebrew and Greek words for mercy!! Indeed a very profitable and learning time for us all.



We were delighted to welcome our Bishop, Paul Bird, who arrived back in Ballarat from Port Pirie on Sunday and then drove to Halls Gap on Monday morning to spend time with us. For this sharing of his time we are very grateful.

The evening meal on Monday at the Quarry Restaurant was a true celebration of our time together.

Tuesday morning was a time to make plans for our gathering in 2016. The organising group for the gathering will arrange details and guest speaker.

The gathering closed with prayer, anointing and blessing as we thanked God for our time together in the beautiful surrounds of Halls Gap.

Clare Arundell





Photos:

Top photo: Kathlyn O'Brien, Veronica Lawson, Marlene van Nieuwkerk, Kaye Stringer, Carmel Giles.

*Middle: Mary Bishop, Bishop Paul Bird, Linden Horsman, Mary Doran, Barbara May;
Clare Arundell, Mary Doran;
Pam Barlow, Kaye Stringer, Marion McDonald.*

*Bottom: Marlene Van Nieuwkerk, Jacinta Rice;
Barbara May, Pat O'Brien;
Maree Holt, Helen Murphy.*