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**Next Centralised Baptism Preparation Session**  
Parents planning to have their child baptised are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Session. Next sessions are at the MacKillop and Glowrey Rooms, St. Patrick's Cathedral Hall, 3 Lyons St South, Ballarat, **Thursday, May 2, 2024.** You may attend either the 10.00 am or the 5.30 pm session.

**“Learn about your food”**  
*Did you know? Discovering more about food helps you eat meals that are better for the planet. Learn if your snack grew on a tree or comes from a farm. How did it end up in that wrapper?*

**Child Safe Church** The Parishes of St Columba's, St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat and St John the Baptist Beaufort follow the Child Safe Standards outlined by the Victorian Government and we also implement procedures and standards as directed by the Ballarat Diocesan Office. You can download our Code of Conduct and Child Safety Policy from the Diocesan or Parish website or on the foyer notice board. If you have any concerns whatsoever—please contact the Parish Offices, one of our priests or Safe Guarding Officers at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/>

**Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace in Ukraine:** I ask you to pray the Our Father for peace in Ukraine, now and throughout this day. **Our Father...**

Let us ask the Lord to grant that the country may grow in the spirit of brotherhood, and that all hurts, fears and divisions will be overcome. We have spoken about the Holocaust. But let us think too that [in Ukraine] millions of people were killed [1932-1933]. They are a people who have suffered; they have suffered from hunger, suffered from much brutality and they deserve peace.

May the prayers and supplications that today rise up to heaven touch the minds and hearts of world leaders, so that dialogue may prevail and the common good be placed ahead of partisan interests. Please, no more war.



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\*Interest rates subject to change. View current rates on the [CDF website](http://www.catholicdevelopmentfund.org.au).



Parishes of St Columba's and St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat

Communities of Ballarat North, Ballarat Cathedral, Beaufort

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) (select Parish)

**Office:** 306 Gregory St, Ballarat Nth **Phone:** 5331 1012  
**Email:** ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

**Office:** 3 Lyons St South, Ballarat **Phone:** 5331 2933  
**Email:** ballarat@ballarat.catholic.org.au

**School Co-Principals:** Shaun Mohr & Bambi Afford  
**School Phone:** 5332 4894

28th April 2024 ~ 5th Sunday of Easter Year B

Staffing

**Administrator:**  
Fr Edward Moloney  
**Assistant Priests:**  
Fr Francis Kureeckal MST  
Fr James McKay

**Finance Officer:**  
Bernadette Prestwood

**St Columba's Parish Coordinator:**  
Lia Andanar Yu  
Wed-Friday 10:00am – 2:00pm

**Safeguarding Officer:**  
Peter Marquand

MASS TIMES (This week)

**St Columba's**  
Sunday 10.00 am  
Wednesday 10.00 am

**Beaufort**  
2nd & 4th Sunday 8.30 am

**Readings for Next Weekend**  
Acts of the Apostles 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48  
Ps 97: 1-4 R.see v.2  
1 John 4:7-10  
John 15:9-17



Focus on the Scriptures

**Limbs and Leaves and Sap of the One Vine or Vineyard** Life's experiences teach us that, as members of the Earth community, we cannot make it on our own. We need one another, other living beings, the sun, the soil, the water and everything else that formed from exploding stars in the distant past. The gospel reading reminds us that as baptised Christians we are not just intimately interlinked but that the source of our unity is the Risen Christ. As limbs and leaves and sap of the same vine, we simply cannot survive in isolation.

The vine image picks up one of the most potent biblical images for God's relationship to the people of Israel. It is an image of life and growth, of colour and vibrancy. It holds the promise of a life-sustaining grape harvest that is ultimately transformed into wine, the biblical symbol for joy. Our gardener God brought Israel "the vine" out of Egypt (Psalm 80:9). For the prophet Isaiah, Israel is also a vineyard planted and nurtured by God (5:1-7; 27:3). For Jeremiah, Israel is the choice vine "of fully tested stock" planted by God (2:21).

The Johannine Jesus makes the claim: "I am the true vine/vineyard" and God is the "vinegrower". Jesus wants to distance himself from the ostentatious artificial golden vine that adorned the entrance to the sanctuary. He goes further: "I am the vine/vineyard and you are the branches". The potency of this image resides in the fact that a vine without branches is inconceivable. It draws us into the mystery of the mutual interchange of life between us and the risen Christ, into the mystery of God. It also invites us to acknowledge our interconnection with the whole of the Earth community, to nurture the wonderful biodiversity of our planet, and to accept the inevitability of "pruning" if we are to "bear fruit" and "become disciples".

"Pruning" can take various forms. A chance encounter, a sudden inspiration, a word from a friend, an unexpected illness, a confronting story: any such experience can bring us to our senses and serve as a "pruning" device. The first reading for today recounts the story of Saul of Tarsus who is "pruned" quite dramatically through his encounter with the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus. He is transformed from persecutor to defender of Christ and Christ's followers. Saul becomes a disciple and "bears much fruit". The Greek-speaking Christian Jews are suspicious, even murderous, when he tries to preach the gospel among them. Peace ensues, however, and the movement takes hold in the regions where Jesus had first preached the gospel. It is worth reflecting on the cultural diversity that characterised earliest Christianity and the tensions that had to be resolved between different language groups or groups of different ethnic origin for the gospel to flourish and bear fruit. John's gospel is written against the backdrop of such "pruning" within the early communities. Sometimes the requisite "pruning" is hearing respectfully a point of view that differs from one's own.

~Veronica Lawson RSM

**Responsorial Psalm: (R.)** I will praise you, Lord, in the assembly of your people.  
**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Live in me and let me live in you, says the Lord; my branches bear much fruit. Alleluia!

**Recently Deceased: We commend to God:** Mark Mugavin, Rachael Murnane

**Anniversaries: We remember:** Owen Duncan, Tony Goode, Rosa Hill, Wencelito Tan Andanar, Kathleen Richie, Denise Collins, Fr. Peter Jones SJ, Christopher Waight, Catherine Anderson, Michael Ryan, Mark Ryan

**We pray:** for all in areas of conflict, war and natural disasters, for those who are sick in our parish and all in need of our prayers.

**Appointments to Parishes** The new appointments took effect on April 10. We welcome the priests who will look after our St Columba's community:

Ballarat Cathedral Parish, **Ballarat North Parish** and Beaufort Parish

Administrator: Fr Edward Moloney

Assistant Priests: Fr Francis Kureeckal MST, Fr James McKay

*A warm welcome to Fr. Ed, Fr Francis and Fr. Jim!*

**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 Cycle 4 begins May 27. There are 30 subjects to choose from – find one that interests you! Registrations are ongoing. For more information email [djurdja.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:djurджа.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or ph. 5337 7121.

**Damascus College Ballarat Reunions** Damascus College warmly welcomes past students and staff of Sacred Heart College, St Martin's in the Pines and Damascus College to our 2024 Class Reunions. This year, we are thrilled to host "class of" reunions for:

- Class of 1984 – 40 Year Reunion Celebration – Saturday, May 18
- Class of 1994 – 30 Year Reunion Celebration – Saturday, May 18
- Class of 2004 – 20 Year Reunion Celebration – Saturday, May 25
- Class of 2014 – 10 Year Reunion Celebration – Saturday, May 25

Please note: An all-years St Paul's Reunion will be held in 2025. For further details and booking links for each class reunion, please visit <https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/community/alumni/alumni-reunions-events>. Scroll down to 2024 'CLASS OF' Reunions and click the + to view details and book your ticket. For enquiries: [connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au)

St Columba's May 5th	(next week) Sunday 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG	Terry Ranger
COMMENTATOR	Judy Brown
MINISTER OF THE WORD	Anthea Hinchey
COMMUNION MINISTER	Colleen Wakefield
DIGITAL PROJECTOR	Bruce Chapman
SACRISTAN	Barb Brown / Norah Moloney / Josie Crowe

Collections last week Thank you for your contributions  
 Presbytery: \$ 481.35 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 898.75

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*The Parish of St. Columba's Ballarat North recognises the traditional owners of parish lands. We acknowledge their ancestors with respect and we are committed to working for justice and reconciliation.*

**150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat celebrated in Masses this weekend** Bishop Paul invites parishes to acknowledge the 150th Anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat at Masses this weekend. He has invited schools to mark the anniversary during the week of April 29 to May 3, coinciding with Catholic Education Week which was brought forward for the occasion.



*Anniversary Prayer*

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have received all the gifts we enjoy.

As we mark the 150th anniversary of our Diocese of Ballarat, we give thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us.

We recognise the communities who have lived on this land from ancient times. We honour the Aboriginal peoples, here for tens of thousands of years. We honour those who came from overseas and settled here before our diocese began. Yet our anniversary shines a special light on our years as the Diocese of Ballarat, a community of communities from the Murray to the sea.

We remember those who have gone before us, those who laid the foundations of our parish and school communities and our social services and health care.

We acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of our history. We celebrate the achievements and we ask pardon for the failures to live our Christian faith to the full.

May this anniversary year be a season of renewal for our diocese. Inspired by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist, may we follow the example of Jesus and the guidance of your Holy Spirit.

May we reach out in humble service, welcoming all and caring for all creation. May we grow in love day by day. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help. Pray for us. Saint Patrick. Pray for us. Saint Mary MacKillop. Pray for us.

*Catholic Diocese of Ballarat  
1874 - 2024*

**Tea and Coffee after Mass every first Sunday of the month at St. Columba's** Our next tea and coffee is on Sunday, the 5th of May.

**Prayer for Vocations**

O Holy Spirit of wisdom and divine love, awaken in the hearts of the young, Your knowledge, understanding, and counsel. May they discover the vocation wherein they can best serve God to be of service to their sisters and brothers.

Inflame all young hearts with courage and grant them your peace. Mary, Mother of our Saviour, and our Mother, pray for us.

**Are you interested in becoming a Mercy Associate?** This group seeks to "Preserve, Nurture and Reimagine the Mercy charism", established by Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy. Members are offered a number of social and spiritual activities throughout the year. If you are interested, both women and men are welcome, please email [mercypassociates@ismapng.org.au](mailto:mercypassociates@ismapng.org.au)

**St Columba's Sacramental Program** continues with the Sacrament of Confirmation. The first preparation session is on Monday, April 29, at St Columba's School. Let's keep the children and their families in our prayers. May the Holy Spirit guide them on their faith journey.

**Praying with Pope Francis** The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is an international movement that is more than 170 years old. Each month, the Pope puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholics around the world to join him in prayer. These intentions cover all sorts of areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope and calling us to loving service. Praying each month 'The Pope Video' forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network – view at [www.thepopevideo.org](http://www.thepopevideo.org).

**Pope's intention for April – for the role of women:** Let us pray that the dignity and worth of women be recognised in every culture and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world. Lord, hear us.

**Prayer for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker – May 1**

God our Father, in every age you call us to use and develop our gifts for the good of others. With St Joseph as our guide, help us to do the work you have asked and come to the rewards you have promised. Please grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

St Columba's May 12th	Sunday 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG	Tony Beggs
COMMENTATOR	Vicki Moroney
MINISTER OF THE WORD	Min Myers
COMMUNION MINISTER	Gina Hinchey
DIGITAL PROJECTOR	Fiona Newton
SACRISTAN	Barb Brown / Norah Moloney / Josie Crowe