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Child Safe Church The Parishes of St Columba's & Our Lady Help of Christians (including Learmonth, Lexton, Miners Rest and Waubra) 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 Parish website or on the foyer notice board. If you have any concerns whatsoever—please contact the Parish Office, Fr. Marcello or one of the Safe Guarding Officers at ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au or wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au

More notices:

Catholic Social Services 2020 Conference – Early Bird Registration Early bird registrations are now open for the CSSV Conference, "Serving Communities with Courage and Compassion" to be held from February 26-28, 2020 in Melbourne. For more information and to register go to <https://www.css.org.au/> Serving-Communities

National Pastoral Ministry Conference Save the date for the National Pastoral Ministry Conference, July 9-11, 2020 at St Mary Star of the Sea College, Wollongong, "Alive in the Spirit". The Conference is coordinated by the NSW Association of Pastors, Pastoral Associates and Parish Workers (NAPPA) collaborating with the Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN). Keynote Speaker is Leisa Anslinger from the USA and a National Leader in StrengthsFinder work and in Parish Engagement & Stewardship. For further information contact Lisa Bright, email lisa.bright@parracatholic.org or ph. 0448 652720. Flyer on noticeboard



Parishes of St Columba's and Our Lady Help of Christians

Communities of Ballarat North, Learmonth, Lexton, Miners Rest, Waubra, Wendouree



306 Gregory St, Ballarat North Phone: 5331 1012

Email: ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Parish Web: ballarat.catholic.org.au (Select parish)

School Web: www.scballarat.catholic.edu.au

Presbytery: Phone 5332 4324

480a Gillies Street, P O Box 192 Wendouree Phone: 5339 2302

Email: wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Parish Web: ballarat.catholic.org.au (Select parish)

School Web: www.olhcwendouree.catholic.edu.au

School Phone: 5339 4726

Parish Priest: Fr Marcello Colasante

Assistant Priest: Fr Sajan Mathew

Visiting Priest: Fr Gary Jones

Staff at St Columba's

Pastoral Associate: Judith O'Sullivan

Wed—Friday 9:00am -1:00pm

Staff at OLHC

Parish Co-ordinator: Maree Roache

Wed- Friday 9:00am—1:00pm

Safeguarding Officers

St Columba's: Peter Marquand

OLHC: Maree Roache

Mass times: St Columba's

Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm

Sunday: 10:00 am

Tuesday: 11:00 am Hailey Hse

Wednesday: 9:30am

Mass times: OLHC

Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm

Sunday: 8:30 am Rural

10:00 am OLHC

Tuesday: 6:00 pm School

Thursday: 11:00 am Kelaston

Friday: 10.00 am

Readings for next weekend:

Is 7:10-14

Ps 23: 1-6 r 7.10

Rom 1:1-7

Matt 1:18-24



15 December 2019 ~ Third Sunday in Advent (A)

Focus on the Scriptures

The third Sunday of Advent used to be called Gaudete (be joyful) Sunday. It provided a mid-term break within a period of austerity or penance in preparation for Christmas. Advent is no longer celebrated as a penitential period, but rather as a reflective time of expectation and hope. The invitation to rejoice nonetheless remains part of the Advent liturgy: it is certainly present in the first reading: "the desert shall rejoice and bloom ..." (Isaiah 35:1-6, 10).

Today's gospel passage is full of questions. John sends his disciples to Jesus with a question: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another? Jesus responds by directing them to the evidence: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." He adds a comment about those who take no offence at him: they are blessed. He then turns to the crowds with a series of rhetorical questions about their motivation for going out to John in the desert. His words to the crowds conclude with an identification of John as God's prophet and messenger, his own precursor. He pays an extraordinary tribute to John, but leaves the reader puzzling about the final statement: the least in the kin-dom is greater than John.

John's imprisonment is a sobering reminder of what can happen to those who are faithful to their mission. As Matthew's Jesus will attest, John is no reed shaken by the wind. This could well be a subtle reference to Herod Antipas' choice of the reed as a symbol on the coins commemorating the founding of Tiberias. Herod has arrested and imprisoned John and later will have him put to death on specious grounds. John is not a fickle reed like Herod, but steadfast and strong.

The reader knows that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah or God's Anointed One. John is checking it out. He clearly has contact with disciples whom he sends to Jesus with the question about his identity. Is Advent over or not? The answer to John's question is to be found in what they hear and see. The restorative and healing activity of Jesus is realising the Messianic dream of the prophet Isaiah (first reading). In a sense, Advent never ends: the women and children brought into our own cities as sex slaves can attest to this, as can those who remain in the limbo of Nauru and Manus Island. We might well pray: "Strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees" in the face of such challenges. The Christ, the Anointed of God, lives on in the community and the community is called to bring the saving power of God, the joy of the Gospel, to a troubled world.

Veronica Lawson RSM



Responsorial Psalm: Lord, come and save us

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Alleluia!

Recently Deceased: We commend to God: Greg Roberts, Joan Richardson

Anniversaries: We remember: Shelia Gregory, Maisie Lamb, Ron Morgan, Nance Reidy

We pray: Those in need of our prayers especially Saskiah Gallagher, the sick, the homeless and those who are seeking employment, for the Plenary Council process in Australia (Listening and Discernment Phase) and our RCIA candidates

OLHC Parish Wendouree Christmas Day Lunch OLHC Parish Wendouree are hosting lunch on Christmas Day in the Parish Hall, 482 Gillies Street, Wendouree from 12.00 noon – 2.00pm. Transport is available. For bookings or further information ph. 0419 975914 or email christmaslunchwendouree@gmail.com. Volunteers requested: If you are able to assist in any way with the luncheon either in setting up on Monday December 23rd at 9.00am, driving people to and from the luncheon or with the clean-up from 2.00pm on Christmas Day, a volunteer sign-up sheet is located in the foyer of the OLHC Church. Enquiries Sandra 0438 448942

Raffle The OLHC annual raffle is being run again. Tickets will be on sale before and after Mass. \$2 a ticket. Please consider taking a book home to sell to family and friends if you are able. \$1.60 from each ticket sold will come back to our Parish. Pleaser return books with money in a named envelope, and put on the collection plate. Thank you for your support.

Young adult retreat Looking for a young adults retreat that will change your life? Registration is now open for next year's "Summer School of Evangelisation" (January 12-19, 2020). This unique event held in Bacchus Marsh will be a powerful week of encountering God, where you can experience great speakers, uplifting worship, beautiful liturgies and a vibrant community of 16-35 year olds looking to deepen their faith in Christ. Ballarat Diocese Youth Ministry is offering financial support to help cover the costs of attending this week-long camp. Anyone interested can contact Patrick on 5337-7160 or email patrick.kennedy@ballarat.catholic.org.au for more information.

Simbang Gabi is a Filipino Christmas tradition and it is also the spiritual preparation for Christmas and commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a series of nine masses on the days leading up to Christmas, which will be held at St James' Parish Church Sebastopol on Mon Dec 16 at 7pm, Tues Dec 17 at 7pm, Wed Dec 18 at 8pm (following Advent Reconciliation Service), Thurs Dec 19 at 7pm, Fri Dec 20 at 7pm, Sat Dec 21 at 7pm, Sunday Dec 22 at 7pm, Mon Dec 23 at 7pm, Tues December 24 at 2pm (Filipino Christmas Mass & Carols). The celebrant will be Fr Jorge De Chavez OSJ. All welcome. For further info contact: Connie, ph. 0449 053 647, Cynthia, ph. 0419 547 514, Sherley, ph. 5338 1266 (shop), 0417 331 756, Urbing, ph. 0419 558 965 and Dion, ph. 0427 876 533.

Christmas Rosters roster sheets are in the foyer at St Columba's for our Christmas Masses of 6pm and 8pm Christmas Eve and 9am Christmas Day. If you will be at one of these Masses please add your name to a ministry. We need your help to ensure all ministries are covered—especially Christmas Day Mass. Thank you

Giving tree once again we will be having a giving tree in the foyer of St Columba's Church. Please take an angel card from the tree and purchase a gift suitable for a male or female adult. Then wrap gift, tape the card you took onto the gift and return it to under the tree. There will also be a box for you to donate food or toiletry items. Your assistance with one or other or both these causes would be greatly appreciated.



Joan Chittister osb – Live in Melbourne in 2020 Sr Joan is an American Benedictine and Practical Theologian who embodies the voice of wisdom and experience. Her prophetic views on justice and equality, especially for women in the church, challenge those who would silence women and people at the margins. Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at the Melbourne Town Hall, 90-130 Swanston Street, Melbourne at 7.00pm. Ticket are \$25.00 each or early bird special \$20.00 each (before April 1, 2020) at www.trybooking.com/BFSNU. Flyer on noticeboard.

National Biennial Liturgy Conference Save the date for the National Biennial Liturgy Conference, March 12-14, 2020 in Parramatta, "Liturgy: Forming a Prayerful and Eucharistic Church." This conference is organised by the National Liturgical Council and National Liturgical Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and aims to provide those working in liturgical ministry in parishes, schools and other communities with enriching opportunities for liturgical education, prayerful celebration, professional networking and fellowship. Keynote presenter is sacramental theologian Fr Paul Turner STD from the USA. Visit our website for more information [bit.ly/nlc2020event]bit.ly/nlc2020event

Making a Scene at Christmas All are welcome to visit the Making a Scene at Christmas display at Ss Peter & Paul's Church Buninyong, Dec 12-15 from 9.30am – 3.00pm.

Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Program – now open for new participants A low-cost online study and formation for lay workers in parish and other ministries; employed or volunteers. Sacraments, Scripture, Youth Ministry, Liturgy, Leadership and more. Study over 5 weeks per subject. Next study cycle begins January 12. Registrations open now until December 23. More info at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or e. kim.butler@ballarat.catholic.org.au ph. 0407 523 424.

St Columba's Communion to the Home Ministry all those who take Holy Communion to the homebound—we have hampers which have been kindly donated from the school for our homebound parishioners. If you would like to collect a hamper to deliver, you can collect one from the Parish office Wednesday to Thursday 9am—1pm or Friday 9am—this week. Contact Judith if you will be unable to collect one during office hours.

Diocesan Christmas Appeal There will be an opportunity to contribute to the Bishops Christmas Appeal after Communion during the Christmas Masses, otherwise money for this appeal can be placed in an envelope clearly marked "Diocesan Appeal" can be left on the collection plate. Thank you in advance.

Advent Retreat Sunday December 15th 2.00pm – 5.00pm at St Alipius' Hall, Victoria St Ballarat East. Rachel McLoughlin and Natalie Houlihan will lead a spacious advent time of Reflections, Readings, Music, Images, Silence and ending with Spiritual Conversation circles. All are welcome to join us.

Reconciliation St Columba's Wednesday 18th December 7:00pm in the Church. All welcome. If you can assist on the night please contact Judith

Christmas Mass Times:

St Columba's: Christmas Eve 6pm & 8pm; Christmas Day 9am

Our Lady Help of Christians: Christmas Eve 7pm; Christmas Day 10am

Rural: Waubra 8.30am Christmas Day

New Year's Day Mass Times: (Wednesday 1st Jan 2020)

St Columba's: 9.30am Mass in the foyer

Our Lady Help of Christians: 9am



Collections at St Columba's

We thank you for your generous support

1st Collection (For the support of the Clergy in the Diocese) \$ 666.30
2nd Collection (Last weeks giving for up keep of Parish) \$ 922.50 Average for this financial year \$ 1,799.30

Collections at OLHC

We thank you for your generous support

1st Collection (For support of the Clergy in the Diocese) \$ 570.25 Loose money (2nd collection) \$ 86.50
2nd Collection (Last weeks giving for up-keep of Parish) \$ 1,394.05 Weekly Average this Financial Year \$ 1,438.52

SC	21/22 Dec	Sat 6pm	Sunday 10am
WELCOMER	Ruth Marquand	Dan & Mern Couotts	
COMMENTATOR	John van de Laar	Irene Monigatti	
FIRST MINISTER OF THE WORD	Ann Lacey	Terry Ranger	
SECOND MINISTER OF THE WORD	Peter Dalton	Anne Rossiter	
GIFTS	Margaret R & Anne C	Pat & Bernie Kenna	
MINISTERS OF EUCHARIST	Jennifer Adams, Trish Simmons, Maureen Eddy	Kim Butler, Mary Kennedy, Irene Monigatti	
OVERHEADS	Trish	Bruce Chapman	
SACRISTAN	Trish	Maureen	

What's coming up:

Upcoming:
Wed 18th Dec 7pm Reconciliation

Don't forget to complete the Christmas Mass Roster in the foyer! We need your help.

OLHC	21/22 Dec	Sat 6:00 pm	Sun 10:00 am
LEADER of SONG	Laureen Rhodes	Vin Dillon	
MINISTER of the WORD	John Schonfelder	Bill Jones	
MINISTERS OF EUCHARIST	Mavis McNulty, Pauline Newman, Pat Dillon + 2 volunteers	Christine Richardson, Judith Potter, Tony Bruty + 2 volunteers	
SACRISTAN	Volunteer please	Helen Rieniets	
Counters	Sue & John Calistro		
Rural Communities 8:30 am	Waubra - 15th Dec	Learmonth - 22nd	
Minister of Word:	Tony McDonald	Fon Ryan	
Minister of Eucharist :	Clare Mullane	Bev Hayward	
Church Cleaning:	Sharon & Marty Moran	Bev Hayward	

What's coming up

Upcoming:
Tues 17th School Mass for End of the year at 6:00 pm.
Wed 18th Rehearsal for Christmas Eve singing—7:00 pm in the church