

## A Blessed Christmas

At this blessed time of the year I wish every parishioner and all of our visitors a very merry and holy Christmas. Might this be a Christmas that is safe on the roads. Might this be a Summer in which the fires don't destroy our spirit. We stand in solidarity with our neighbours. Thank you to our parish team for all of your hard work during the year, to Joyce, Maree, Joan and Emma. Thank you to Mary for the washing, and the love! Thank you to Son for the spring rolls and for your presence in the house and for becoming a companion on the road of priesthood. Something to look forward to in 2020? A new holy place will open its doors in Ararat. Glory to God! **Fr. Andrew Hayes**

### Plenary Council

Thank you to those who participated in the most recent discernment gathering. We are collating everyone's discernments over January and will submit them to the Council. There is no meeting in January. Please watch the notice board for the February date. We will also be facilitating a Plenary Discernment Group at St. Mary's Parish Primary School with the staff. One of the recent suggestions that came from the council, was to have the Gospel and a reflection inserted. This perhaps will enable us to read and reflect before Mass begins and hopefully more parishioners will take the bulletin home too.

### Plenary Council Delegates from the Diocese of Ballarat

Bishop Paul is inviting us to nominate delegates from our diocese for the sessions of the Australian Plenary Council to be held in 2020 and 2021. Copies of Bishop Paul's letter are available through parishes, through the diocesan website at [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) and are also attached. Nominations need to reach Bishop Paul by Friday, February 7, 2020.

### 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](mailto:patrick.kennedy@ballarat.catholic.org.au) for more information.

### Christmas Roster

	Facilitator	Reader	Eucharistic Minister	Welcomer	Collector	Computer
<b>Dec 24th 6pm</b>	B. Rodger	P. Gemmola M. Finch	C. McAdie	J. Clery	J. Pola	Sr. Maree
<b>Dec 25th 9am</b>	P. Lardner	P. Brady	Sr. John & G. McKendrick			
<b>Lake Bolac</b>	H. Smith	J. Higgins	John Higgins	Cleaner: Working Bee		
<b>Dec 25th</b>						
<b>Dec 28th</b>	B. Rodger	A. Reynolds			G. White	
<b>Dec 29th</b>		P. Lardner	K. Chamings & Sr. John	E. Shea	J. Crowe	R. North

### Ararat/Lake Bolac Church Calendar dates for 2020

January 31st	The Vine 1st edition 2020
February 26th	Ash Wednesday
March 1st	1st Sunday of Lent
March 17th	St. Patrick's Day—Celebration in the Parish Centre

**For Golden Gate—please look at the roster on the board.**



## Tuesday, 25 Dec 2018: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) - Mass during the Night

As we celebrate, we acknowledge the Indigenous owners of the land on which our Churches are built, the Tjapwurong people, and we respect the presence of the spirits of their ancestors among us.

### First Reading **Is 9:1-7**

*A son is given to us.*



### Responsorial Psalm **Ps 95:1-3. 11-13 R. Lk 2:11** **(R.) Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.**

- O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth. O sing to the Lord, bless his name. (R.)
- Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory and his wonders among all the peoples. (R.)
- Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise, let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy at the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth. (R.)
- With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples with his truth. (R.)

### Second Reading **Ti 2:11-14**

*God's grace has been revealed to all people.*

### Gospel Acclamation **Lk 2:10-11**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Good News and great joy to all the world:  
today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.  
Alleluia!

### Gospel **Lk 2:1-14**

*Today a saviour has been born for you.*

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### Parish Prayer

Loving God, Good Shepherd of us all,  
gather us and form us into a welcoming Parish family.  
Touch our hearts with your love so that we,  
in turn, may reach out in love to one another,  
in a neighbourly community.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

### 24th/25th December 2019

#### RECENT DEATHS:

#### ANNIVERSARIES:

Doris Tognon, Fr Paddy Bushell, John Sullivan, Evie Hayes, Matthew Sullivan, Edward Mulcahy, Kath Schwab, Fr Pat Culligan, Peter Sinnott, James Sinnott, Fred Mason, Kathleen McLeod, Mary O'Neill, Shane Walls, Anne Handley, Joseph Colwell, Mary Pola, Peter Williams, Andrew Jackson, Bishop Joe Grech, Zsonella McGrath, James O'Connor, Fr. Ted Glowrey, Johanna Lannen, Winifred Hynes, Annette Mair, Bernice Clinton, Bernardino Torrecampo, Ivan Lee, Des Brennan, Dorothy Phylard

#### PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:

Barbara Tobin, Sally-Anne Horsley

Anyone in hospital wishing to have communion, please contact the office on 53525460

#### Ministry to the Sick:

Mary Cunningham—Retirement Home

E. Shea, T. Gemmola, D&M Lister, H&A Collins, J&J Crowe—Golden Gate

Sr. John—Lowe Street & Garden View Court

Other individuals in the parish to the sick at home

### Pope Francis @Pontifex.com 2019

My thoughts go especially to families, who are reunited in these festive days. May Holy Christmas be a fraternal time for everyone, one of growth in the faith and of actions of solidarity toward those who are in need.

#### Readings

**Jan 5th 2020**

**First Reading**

[Is 60:1-6](#)

**Second Reading**

[Eph 3:2-3. 5-6](#)

#### A VOCATION VIEW

Vocations are born in the family. The priests, sisters and brothers of tomorrow are being born in our local hospitals and playing in our own backyards.

**Gospel Lk 2:1-14****Nativity of the Lord—Christmas Night**

Today a saviour has been born for you.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven  
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

**Gospel Reflection**

If you were to give just a cursory glance at a collection of 'religious' Christmas cards, or even the local nativity scene, you would undoubtedly see a varied assortment of shepherds, wise men, livestock and angels gathered around the holy family in a timber structure of some sort. Even the most casual reading of Luke's account of the birth of Christ would reveal that most of the nativity figurines are missing! Our retelling of the birth of Christ tends to be an amalgamation of the Luke and Matthew versions with a bit of creative tradition thrown in for good measure. The Luke account of the nativity carries a very specific theology that runs throughout the rest of that gospel. It is a theology that places the outcast and downtrodden at the centre of Jesus' mission. In this account, Jesus is born outside the town because there is no room for Joseph and Mary within the safety of the inn. Like those he will minister to later in life, Jesus is born 'on the edge' – even outside the boundaries. Rather than the impressive 'Wise Men' of the Matthew infancy account, the witnesses to Jesus' birth in the Luke account are lowly shepherds. Unlike the somewhat romantic notion we may have of shepherds, in Jesus' time they were regarded as little better than thieves and cut-throats. All they could be trusted to do was tend sheep outside of townships and away from 'civilised' society. They held one of the lowest positions in Jewish society. The gospel writer's choice of these witnesses to the birth of Jesus is a very deliberate one that clearly announces the purpose and direction of Jesus' mission.

**Saint of the Week**

St John the Apostle, St. Nicholas, St. Wenceslas, Jesus, Noel, Brian, St. Stephen, Melchias, Balthasar, Kasper, Mary, the Blessed Virgin, Joseph **Read more on [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)**

**MASS TIMES**

**Ararat** (Immaculate Conception)

**Saturday** 6.00pm

**Sunday** 10.30am

**Lake Bolac** (St. Bernard's)

**8.30am** 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays

*2nd Sundays at Glenthompson at 8.30am*

**Weekday Masses until January 10th**

**Tues Dec 31st** 9.30am

**Wed Jan 1st** 9.30am (New Year's Day)

**Thurs Jan 2nd** Hopkins 3.30pm

**Fri Jan 3rd** 9.30am

**Ararat Office Hours over the Christmas**

**The office is shut until the 8th January 2020.**

**Normal office hours will resume then.**

The Pastoral Ministry Office in BALLARAT will be closed from Tuesday, December 24, 2019 - Thursday, January 16, 2020.

**Charities this Christmas for Bushfire****Victims:**

Red Cross—[www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au)

Salvation Army—[www.salvationarmy.org.au](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au)

Koala Crisis—[donate.wwf.org.au](http://donate.wwf.org.au)

Children—[gifts.berrystreet.org.au](http://gifts.berrystreet.org.au)

**Lifeline:** 131114 **Ararat Police:** 5355 1500

**Counselling service: Relationships Australia** – 1800 052 674

**Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Towards Healing** – 1800 099 340

**Sexual Assault Crisis line:** 1800 806 292

**We are a Child Safe Church—please see the notice board for further information**

**Church Toilets**

All children—Primary school age and under—must be accompanied by an adult. Thank you for your understanding.



**Sunday Dec 29th 2019**

**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph A****First Reading Sir 3:2-6. 12-14**

Whoever fears the Lord honours his parents.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 127:1-5. R. see v.1**

**(R.) Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.**

- O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!  
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.  
You will be happy and prosper. **(R.)**
- Your wife like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house; your children like shoots of the olive, around your table. **(R.)**
- Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life! **(R.)**

**Second Reading Col 3:12-21**

Concerning the Christian life in the world.

**Gospel Acclamation Col 3:15. 16**

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, and the fullness of his message live within you.

Alleluia!

**Gospel Mt 2:13-15. 19-23**

Take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt.

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**28th/29th December 2019****ANNIVERSARIES:**

Bernice Clinton, Bernardino Torrecampo, Ivan Lee, Des Brennan, Dorothy Phyland, Sr Veronica O'Brien, Bernie Moloney, Stephanie Mitchell, Jacob Pitcher, Theresa McColl, Roger Gleeson, Vincent Daly, Margaret Cochrane, Eileen Field, Fr Pat McGuire, Jessie Fleming, Sharon McMaster, Vincent Thomas, Vera Shea, Anthony Gordon, Peter Keogh

**Pope Francis @Pontifex.com 2019**

The nativity scene reminds us that God did not remain invisible in heaven, but came down to earth and became man. To set up a nativity scene is to celebrate the closeness of God, to rediscover that God is real, concrete; He is humble Love that came down to us.

**Gospel Mt 2:13-15. 19-23**

**29th Dec 2019**

Take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt.

After the wise men had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet:

I called my son out of Egypt.

After Herod's death, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you and go back to the land of Israel, for those who wanted to kill the child are dead.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, went back to the land of Israel. But when he learnt that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod as ruler of Judaea he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee. There he settled in a town called Nazareth. In this way the words spoken through the prophets were to be fulfilled:

He will be called a Nazarene.

**Gospel Reflection**

Today's liturgy celebrates the feast of the Holy Family; recognising the important role Joseph and Mary played in the life of Jesus and also celebrating the role of family in all of our lives. However, the gospel reading is the conclusion of the infancy narrative – the 'what happened next' part of the story of the birth of Jesus. Apart from the involvement of the holy family, the passage doesn't appear to have a lot of connection with the celebration of the feast of the Holy Family. This isn't really surprising as the gospels are accounts of the life of Jesus – predominantly his active ministry – and don't give many details at all of his childhood and family life. However, what we can see in the passage is that Joseph quickly adopted a role of protector of his wife and child and did all he could to keep them from harm. His family was vitally important to Joseph and he took the extreme measure of fleeing his homeland to protect them.

The passage in the lectionary skips over three verses from the gospel (16-18) that describe Herod's massacre of all boys under the age of two born in Bethlehem and its surrounds. Joseph's fears for the safety of his family were very real! Even after the death of Herod, when Joseph is advised to return to his own country, he finds that Archelaus, one of Herod's sons, is in control of Judaea. Bethlehem was in Judaea and so Joseph and his family may still have been in danger. Instead of returning home, they made a new life in Nazareth in the Galilee region.

**Saint of the Week**

Mary the Blessed Virgin, **Feastday:** January 1 **Patron:** of all humanity  
Birth: September 8, Nativity of Mary Death: August 15, Assumption of Mary **Read more on [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)**