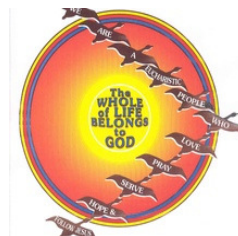


# St Columba's Parish

28 & 29 December 2019



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

Presbytery: Phone 5332 4324

## Focus on the Scriptures Feast of the Holy Family Year A

The time between Christmas and New Year is often family time, a good time to think about what family means. We try to connect with and enjoy the company of those with whom we have family ties, especially those who are alone or struggling in some way. Many parents value the extra time they are able to spend with their children over this period.

The first two readings for today narrate and reflect on the family story of Sarah and Abraham, of God's promise to give them a child, and of the fulfilment of that promise in the most unlikely of circumstances. The wonder of God's ways and the need to trust in God are at the heart of their story. At the same time, there is humour reflected in Abraham's choice of name for their son: "Isaac" means "he laughed". Does Abraham detect God's humour in providing a son for an elderly couple? Does he laugh for sheer joy at the birth of the child who will hold the traditions of the past and the hopes of the future? Whatever about this, the family story of Sarah, Abraham and Isaac foreshadows the even more extraordinary family story to be found in today's gospel.

Luke depicts Mary and Joseph as observant Jews bringing their child to the Jerusalem Temple in accordance with the ritual requirements of the Law, even if the Law actually applied only to the woman who had given birth and not to the man. Two prophetic figures, Anna and Simeon, recognise God's saving and redemptive purpose at work in the presence of this child who is presented in the Temple. Luke insists that Mary and Joseph have fulfilled the demands of the Law before they return to their home in Nazareth.

Growing up in Nazareth in the care of Mary and Joseph, the child Jesus grows to maturity, is filled with wisdom and God's favour is with him. Luke's summary statement introduces us to the wonderful world of a grace-filled family home. It invites us to ponder the wisdom that both Mary and Joseph had to share with their child. They taught him to pray and told him the stories of his people. They filled him with wonder at the goodness of God and of God's creation. They mediated the grace and favour of God and watched him grow and gain the strength he needed for life. They allowed him the freedom he needed to develop his own personality and to find his own Spirit-filled way on the earth. Finally, they had to let him go so that he might follow a path that was beyond their imagining when they brought him to the Temple in fulfilment of the Law. In other words, they did what so many parents would want to do for their children. Veronica Lawson RSM



**Recent deaths:** We commend to God: **Jean McMahon** (Funeral Friday Jan 3rd 11.00 am)

**Anniversaries:** We remember:

<b>This WEEKEND</b>	<b>SATURDAY 28th December</b>	<b>SUNDAY 29th December</b>
WELCOMER	Tim Fithall	Helen Linane
COMMENTATOR	Eileen van de Laar	Judy Brown
FIRST MINISTER OF THE WORD	Volunteer	Audrey Brown
SECOND MINISTER OF THE WORD	Trish Simmons	Bruce Chapman
GIFTS	Tom & Greta Kelly	Carmel King
MINISTERS OF EUCHARIST	Ruth Marquand, Maureen Eddy, + Volunteer	Kathy Bennetts, Judy Brown, Margaret Martino
OVERHEADS	Trish Simmons	Sharon de Beer
SACRISTAN	Maree Phelan	Josie Crowe

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## Prayer for Plenary Council

*Blessed are you, God of all creation.  
 You have given us life and light and all the wonders of the world.*

*You have sent your Son Jesus to be our Saviour and your Holy Spirit to be our guide. As we prepare for the Plenary Council, we ask you to come into our hearts with your Son and Holy Spirit.*

*Come to us and make your home in us. We pray for our local community, for the people of our diocese and for the Church throughout Australia.*

*May your wisdom show us the way, for your word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.*

*Come and fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love, that we may live by your Gospel and share your good news with all we meet.*

*Holy Mary, Mother of our Saviour, pray for us. St Mary MacKillop, pray for us. Amen*



**Plenary Council 2020**  
 Listen to what the Spirit is saying...

## Nominations for Delegates

Bishop Paul is inviting us to nominate delegates from our diocese to attend the sessions of the Australian Plenary Council to be held in 2020 and 2021. Copies of Bishop Paul's letter are available in the foyer via [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au). Nominations need to reach Bishop Paul by **Friday 7th February 2020**

## Collections: 21st/22nd Dec

Presbytery: \$ 698.50  
 Parish: \$ 1,211.50

## 24th/25th Dec

Presbytery: \$ 1,994.10  
 Christmas Appeal: \$ 1,288.95

**Thank You!!!**

**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](mailto:ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or [wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au)