

Reflection on the Gospel — 1st Sunday of Lent Year A (Matthew 4:1-11)

-Veronica Lawson RSM

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. It is also a time to enter into the “wilderness” and grapple with the mysteries of life in Christ. It presents us with a challenge to take stock of our lives, to see more clearly what is in our hearts and to discover what might be calling us out of our comfort zones. Today’s liturgy invites us to reflect on Jesus’ forty-day experience in the wilderness. Jesus is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and, like so many humans before and since, is “led by the Spirit” into the wilderness of life to be “tested” there. [“Tested” is a more accurate translation of the Greek than is “tempted”].

Forty is a significant number in Israel’s story: the great flood lasts forty days and forty nights; Moses spends forty days and forty nights on the mountain of God; Israel wanders for forty years in the wilderness; King David reigns for forty years; the prophet Elijah travels forty days and forty nights in the wilderness on his way to the mountain of God. Explanations of its significance vary: a round number suggesting a long period of time; a time of testing or trial; totality or fullness.

In Israel’s story, the wilderness is the place of testing for God’s people: “Remember the long way that your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness... testing you to know what was in your heart” (Deut 8:2). In Matthew’s account, the “devil” is the “tester” or “tempter”, the instrument of God’s testing. In each instance, the test is expressed in terms of Jesus’ relationship to God: “If you are the son of God....” The Matthean Jesus passes the tests that the people of Israel have failed in the wilderness of Sinai. He refuses the way of special favour from God, the way of status or self-aggrandisement. He is prepared to suffer whatever it takes to bring healing and wholeness to a broken world. In other words, he chooses the way of God’s empire or the empire “of the heavens” rather than the brutality of the Roman Empire. Jesus demonstrates that he is indeed “of God”. This testing in the wilderness foreshadows later events in the gospel such as Peter’s attempt at Caesarea Philippi to deflect Jesus from his mission and the bystanders’ challenge in 27:40 to prove he is “son of God” by coming down from the cross.

Most people of faith would agree that being “of God” right now has more than a little to do with the way we relate to all of Earth’s human and other-than-human inhabitants, the value we ascribe to Earth’s precious resources, and the respect we show for life through our responsible use of those resources. Lent calls us to reject the path of domination or greed or status so that, like Jesus, we may truly be “of God”.

ST ALIPIUS PARISH — BALLARAT EAST & BUNINYONG

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT — YEAR A, SUNDAY 1ST MARCH 2020

*Our parish is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity
of all children and vulnerable adults.*

St Alipius’ Parish Church

82 Victoria Street, BALLARAT EAST 3350

SS Peter & Paul’s Church

701 Fiske St, BUNINYONG 3357

Contact Details

Parish Office & Presbytery: 84 Victoria Street, Ballarat East 3350

Hours: 9.30am - 1.30pm Tues, Thurs, Fri

Telephone: 5332 6611

Email: ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Parish Website: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

SAP Liturgy website: www.sapliturgy.net.au

SAP Liturgy email: sapliturgy@gmail.com

Parish Priest: Fr. Jorge De Chavez OSJ

In Residence: Fr. Eladio Lizada OSJ

Parish Coordinator: Lucy O’Beirne

Finance Officer: Kerrie McTigue

Child Safety Officer: Roxanne Leed

Hall Caretaker: Gavin Maguire

Funeral Ministry: Carmel Flynn & Kathy Curran

Liturgy Coordinator: David Santamaria

Parish Finance Committee Members:

Paul Jans (Chair), Kathy Curran, Arnoud

Goossens, Tanya Hislop, Brett Holloway

Gerard McCarty & John White.

Masses This Week

5/3 Thursday 9.30am St Alipius’ Church

11.00am Mercy Place (Corbett St)

6/3 Friday 9.30am St Alipius’ Church

Weekly Events

Choir Practice: Tuesdays 6.30pm
St Alipius’ Church

Rosary: Thursdays 10.30am
SS Peter & Paul’s Chapel

Reconciliation: Fridays 11.00am &
Saturdays 11.30am St Pat’s Cathedral

Next Weekend’s Masses

St Alipius’ Church, Ballarat East Saturday, 7th March 6.00 pm

Sunday, 8th March 10.30 am

SS Peter & Paul’s Church, Buninyong Sunday, 8th March 9.00 am

Readings: Second Sunday of Lent — Year A

First: Genesis 12;1-4

Second: 2 Timothy 1:8-10

Gospel: Matthew 17:1-9

Baptisms: Oliver McGregor, Addyson Steenhuis

Anniversaries: Patrick Joseph Duggan, Kevin Punshon, Barry Ridsdale

Unwell: We pray for Kateri Byrnes, Carmel Doherty, Pat Hogan, Cathy Jones, Peter Martin, Letitia Simmons, Margie Wilmott and all who are unwell

Visit from Oblates of St Joseph International Superiors this week

Frs Jorge DeChavez and Eladio Lizada OSJ will be hosting a visit from Oblates of St Joseph superiors from Wednesday 4th to Friday 6th March 2020. Along with Jorge and Eladio, the parish warmly welcomes Fr Jan Pelczaski, Superior General of OSJ; Fr Maximo Sevilla, Councillor General of OSJ; and Fr Jayson Endaya, Provincial Superior Philippines Province.

Caring Group Meeting

The next meeting of the Caring Group will be held on Friday 6th March in the St. Alipius Hall at 10 am. This is also our Annual General Meeting. New members most welcome.

Weekly Stations of the Cross during Lent

Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm at Ss Peter & Paul's Church.

Friday mornings after 9.30am Mass at St Alipius' Church.

Mass of the Oils Participation

The Mass of the Oils will be celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral, Monday 6th April at 6.30pm. Members of the St Alipius' Parish are invited to participate in the following ministries: Usher, Reader, Presentation of Oils, Presentation of Gifts, Musician, and Member of the Choir. Please fill out your interest on the form in the foyer by Sunday 8th March and place in the tray provided. Online forms available [here](#).

Plenary Council

The next parish sessions will be held on Monday March 23 from 7-9pm, and on Tuesday March 24 from 1-3pm. (Topic will be *Joyful, Hopefilled and Servant Community*). As a diocese we are currently focussing on the topic *Open to Conversion, Renewal and Reform*. Please visit www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au for further reading. Snapshot reports are available in the church foyers.

Sts Peter & Paul's, Buninyong: Wine, Cheese & Chat

A Wine & Cheese evening will be held on **Friday 27 March** from around 5pm until around 7pm in the church hall. All very welcome. Bring friends and family and enjoy socialising with fellow parishioners. Small charge of \$5 applies to cover costs. This is hopefully the first of a number of social functions to be held during the year.

Counting Teams

This Week: **Team 9:** P. Saunders ©, M. Saunders

Next Week: **Team 10:** E. Wilson ©, C. Stewart

Parish:	Envelopes:	\$ 957.20	Presbytery:	\$ 988.00
	Loose:	\$ 300.00		
	Credit Cards:	\$ 350.00		<i>Thank you to those who</i>
	Direct Debits:	\$ 275.00		<i>contributed to the</i>
		\$ 1882.20		<i>collections last weekend</i>



First Sunday of Lent 1st March 2020



Indigenous minorities in the Philippines face regular discrimination and disadvantage. Manide woman, Shirley faced challenges supporting her children and sending them to school. With Caritas Australia's support, Shirley's life has been transformed.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help people like Shirley, and her children gain confidence and respect within their community.

Please take home a Project Compassion box and/or a set of donation envelopes available in the church foyer and support Caritas Australia this Lenten season themed "**Go Further Together**". Weekly envelopes can be placed with the Mass collection. You can also donate via the website, www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

Thank You from the St Vincent de Paul Society

We wish to thank the School Communities within our Parish and all Ballarat East and Buninyong parishioners for their support of our recent Christmas and Bushfire Appeals. As the need for our services continues to grow we are both grateful for and encouraged by your generosity.

Event: Ballarat Cares with A Hall Full of Help

Friday 27th March 10am - 3pm, St Patrick's Hall Dawson Street Sth, Ballarat. A wide range of organisations within Ballarat provide assistance and advice for those in need in our community. Enjoy a unique opportunity to discover the available help all under one roof. Free entry and sausage sizzle, coffee van on site. Information available:

Meals Programs, No Interest Loans, Mental Health Assistance, Crisis Accommodation, Utility Hardship Assistance, Migrant and Refugee Support, Legal Help, NDIS, Relationship and Parenting Support, Grief Counselling & more. Morning & afternoon information sessions for Utility Energy Support (power, gas & water).

Pastoral Care Position at Ballarat Health Services

The position is part time, 12 hours per week, with flexibility as to when these hours are worked. The successful applicant will offer pastoral care to the Catholic patients and their families at the Hospital. A position description is available from the Cathedral Parish Office on 5331 2933, email: ballarat@ballarat.catholic.org.au. Applications close on Friday March 6th.

World Day of Prayer Friday 6th March — 2020 for Zimbabwe

You are welcome to join in this world-wide prayer effort at one of the following venues:

- 10.00am: One2One Church of Christ, 121 Gillies Street South, Alfredton;
- 2.00pm: St. Matthew's Anglican Church, 204 Howitt Street, Wendouree;
- 7.00pm: Baptist Church at the Uniting Church, Buninyong
- 7.00pm: St. Andrew's Uniting Church, 130 Ballarat Road, Creswick.