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Child Safe Church The Parishes of St Columba's & Our Lady Help of Christians (including 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

COVID Safe Plan

If you are feeling unwell or have any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough or sore throat) please do not attend Mass.

Please register with the Parish Office during office hours to attend a weekend Mass. You do not need to preregister for a weekday Mass. Please ensure you arrive 10 minutes before Mass; doors will be locked prior to commencement. Contact tracing is required for all Masses.

Ensure that you maintain appropriate physical distancing at all times (1.5 metres).

A face mask must be worn at all times whilst visiting the Church (your face mask may be removed when consuming Communion or reading, but must be worn again immediately afterwards).

Please use the hand sanitiser available upon entering the Church.

Please do not touch any surfaces unnecessarily.

Please remain in the designated area of the Church (in or near your seat at all times).

Once Mass has concluded, please leave the Church immediately afterwards to allow for cleaning of all surfaces.

We appreciate your assistance. The fines for non-compliance with Government Regulations may be imposed on the Parish are up to \$100,000.



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

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

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au (select Parish)



Office: 306 Gregory St, Ballarat Nth **Phone:** 5331 1012
Email: ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ballaratnorthpastoral@ballarat.catholic.org.au
School Co-Principals: Bambi Afford & Shaun Mohr
School Phone: 5332 4894

Office: 480a Gillies Street, Wendouree **Phone:** 5339 2302
Email: wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au
P O Box 192, Wendouree
School Principal: Leigh Bradshaw
School Phone: 5339 4726

Parish Priest:

Fr Marcello Colasante

Staffing

St Columba's

Pastoral Associate:

Judith O'Sullivan

Tues-Friday 9:00am – 1:00pm

Our Safeguarding Officer:

Peter Marquand

Our Lady Help of Christians

Parish Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Officer:

Maree Roache

Wed-Friday 9:00am – 1:00pm

MASS TIMES

St Columba's

Saturday 5.00 pm

Tuesday 10.00 am

Our Lady Help of Christians

Sunday 8.30 am

Waubra 1st & 3rd Sunday;

Beaufort 2nd & 4th Sunday;

Lexton 5th Sunday

10.00 am Wendouree

Thursday 11.00 am Kelaston

Friday 10.00 am

Readings for next weekend:

2 Sm 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

Ps 88:2-5. 27. 29. R. see v.2

Rom 16:25-27

Lk 1:26-38



13th December 2020 ~ Third Sunday of Advent (B)

Focus on the Scriptures

The first section of today's gospel reading comes from the prologue of John's gospel and offers comment on the identity of John the Baptizer. The second section revolves around a question that has already been answered in the prologue. In other words, the reader knows the answer to the question posed by the characters in the second section. The prologue presents John the baptizer as one "sent from God". He is not "the light"; he is rather a "witness" whose role is to testify to "the light". The true light [Jesus] was "coming into the world". As we proclaim Jesus as "the light", we might take time to appreciate the wonder and the properties of the material reality that informs this metaphor.

In the face of less than friendly questioning, John the baptizer responds simply and honestly to questions about his identity. The questions in this second section of the reading are relentless and John's responses are unambiguous. He is not the Messiah/the Christ, the Anointed of God. He is not the prophet Elijah that some identified with God's messenger of Malachi 3:1-3 who would return and restore the "descendants of Levi" He is not the prophet-like-Moses of Deuteronomy 15. He states his identity with reference to the words of the prophet Isaiah: he is the voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting God's people to prepare the way for God's advent, God's coming.

John knows who he is. He understands the parameters of his mission and he points his questioners in the direction of the truth. His role is pivotal in the story of God's saving action and in the unfolding of the drama of the fourth gospel. It is worth asking how we might answer the question that the priests and Levites put to John on behalf of the Jerusalem "Jews": "Who are you?" If we can honestly answer that question, if we can admit who we are with all our strengths and weaknesses, if we can know our place in the scheme of things and own it in all humility, then we are probably in a good position to recognise and, like John, witness to the "one who is coming", the light of the world, the revelation of God, the Word who became flesh and tented amongst us. For many of us, pandemic time has sharpened our awareness of who we are and how we are called to be.

A caution is in order regarding this reading: not only the opponents of Jesus but most of the actors in the gospel drama are Jewish. The group of characters specifically named as "the Jews" includes some influential members of the Jewish religious leadership, but cannot be identified with them because it comprises a more extensive group who are consistently in conflict with Jesus. It would be a serious disservice to the gospel to condemn the Jewish people on the basis of this and similar stories of Jewish opposition to Jesus.

Veronica Lawson



Responsorial Psalm: (R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

Recently Deceased: We commend to God: Bernard Righetti, Stan Sheehan

Anniversaries: We remember: Greg Roberts, Joan Richardson, Shelia Gregory, Maisie Lamb, Ron Morgan and Nance Reidy

We pray: Those in need of our prayers; all the sick in our Parishes, and all those struggling with the effects of Covid-19. For the Plenary Council process in Australia.

Ceremonies and Religious Gatherings We will now be able to have up to **125** (Ballarat North), **155** (Wendouree) **45** (Waubra) for each Mass. The increase in numbers requires that each parish have a Quick Response (QR) Code for parishioners to register their attendance at Mass. Each Parish is registered for a QR code and these are on the doors or either side of the doors as you enter. Please use the camera on your smart phone to scan the QR code before you enter the Church. If you do not have smart phone signing in using pen and paper is available. To ensure that we keep within the permissible density limits pre-registration using Try-Booking, email or phone will be retained. It is recommended that you download the Service Victoria App on your phone before you arrive. Please ensure you arrive at least ten minutes before the commencement of Mass to complete entry requirements. Doors will be locked before Mass commences.

Plenary Council Discernment papers now available in audio format: The Diocese of Bathurst has taken the discernment papers to another format, recording audio versions to help with the reception of the documents. All six discernment papers have now been recorded and can be accessed on the Plenary Council website <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/continuing-the-journey-of-discernment/>

Vinnies launches 2020 Christmas Appeal The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia is asking people in a position to do so to dig a bit deeper this year as the Society launches its Christmas Appeal after a very tough year. To donate go to https://donate.vinnies.org.au/christmas-appeal?_ga=2.45291745.433958477.1606174687-2061808706.1606174687

Weekday Mass Please note the next week the weekday Mass at St Columba's will be on Tuesday not Wednesday.

Baptism preparation sessions The final preparation session for 2020 will be held on Tuesday 15th December at 11am at St Columba's Church foyer. For more information or to register please contact your Parish Office.

Congratulations to Leni and Alice Dewsbury, children of Sarah and Blair and to Aliyah Cahill daughter of Katrina and Russell, who will be Baptized at St Columba's during the 5pm Mass on Saturday evening. Please keep the families in your prayers.

Laudato Si Advent Laudato Si Advent Week 3 : "Fresh drinking water is...indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic systems" LS # 28. Most plastics in the ocean break up into very small particles called microplastics. Microbeads are also plastics intentionally designed to be small and are used in many health and beauty products. They also pass unchanged through waterways to oceans affecting all marine life. Are plastics and microbeads part of your Advent purchasing? <https://www.ethical.org.au/theguide/>

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve: 5.00pm Ballarat North, 7.00pm Wendouree, 9.00pm Beaufort

Christmas Day: 8.30 am Waubra, 10.00 am Ballarat North

To register for these Masses please either phone or email the Parish Office or booking using the **Trybooking Links** below:

Christmas Eve 5:00 pm: <https://www.trybooking.com/BNNRD>

Christmas Eve 7:00 pm: <https://www.trybooking.com/BNNWJ>

Christmas Day 10:00 am: <https://www.trybooking.com/BNNRF>

Collections at St Columba's

We thank you for your generous support

1st Collection: \$ 215.65

2nd Collection (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 900.00

OLHC Christmas Lunch Due to the uncertainty of gathering in large groups for Christmas Day, OLHC Wendouree is offering a Christmas Day Take-away lunch. For those without transport, alternative arrangements can be organised. Bookings are essential. **Bookings:** 0419 975 914 or **Email:** christmaslunchwendouree@gmail.com

Christmas Giving Tree a St Columba's this year we will not have the giving tree in the foyer as in previous years, however the need in the community is greater this year than ever. We invite you to donate gift cards, grocery items or cash donations which we will distribute to the Parish St Vincent de Paul. You are also invited to purchase gifts suitable for the Mum's and Dad's. These can be left at the office during office hours or give to Judith after one of the Parish Masses.

Advent Recollection: Reflecting on the Joys and Struggles of 2020 On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, you are invited to gather as the Church of Oceania in recollection and thanksgiving on the year that was. This event will be hosted by the Pastoral Ministry Network (formerly known as NAPPA) and supported by the Mission Planners Network Oceania and the Diocese of Parramatta. More information is available from the diocesan website "news" section www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

Thank God for Mass! Just as lockdown begins to ease and Churches open for prayer and the celebration of Mass, Sue Ellis has produced an interactive book that will help every family, school and church to inspire children to enjoy the many aspects of this key event in the life of every Catholic. More information available from the diocesan website "Liturgy resources" page

Making a Scene In this year of COVID, travelling around the world is but a dream. Making a Scene at Christmas, a display of over 500 Christmas Nativities, can take you around the world and through time using the lens of hand-crafted Nativities. Currently we have Nativities from Australia, Asia, Europe, Africa and North and South America. We have nativity related artifacts (coins) that are 2000 years old, nativities made of different materials including bullets and bullet shells, recycled potato chip packets, spark plugs, pewter, china, wood and our latest acquisition is a 1.2 m high wooden Herod about 100 years old that came from a carousel in NY State. We will be displaying these in The Bridge Mall, Ballarat, from December 17 - 20. All are welcome. .

Gifts for others via Catholic Mission <https://catholicmission.org.au/gifts>

Readings for 3rd Sunday in Advent (B)

First Reading Is 61:1-2. 10-11 A reading from the prophet Isaiah
The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels.

'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'



Responsorial Psalm Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10

(R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed. (R.)

2. The Almighty works marvels for me.

Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him. (R.)

3. He fills the starving with good things,

sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,

remembering his mercy. (R.)



Second Reading 1 Thes 5:16-24 A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you

Gospel Jn 1:6-8. 19-28 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:
Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal -strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

The Gospel of the Lord

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