

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

Ballarat Diocese Lay Pastoral Ministry Virtual Learning Program

Our partners, Dayton University offer low-cost online study and formation for employed or volunteer lay workers in parish and other ministries. Study subjects over 3 & 5 week cycles. Study Cycle 1 for 2021 begins January 3. Registration for new participants has closed. Ongoing participants can register direct with Dayton University by December 30. Study Cycle 2 begins February 21. Registration for this cycle opens January 11 for new and returning participants. For more information go to www.ballarat.catholic.org.au or email djurdia.klaric@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 5337 7121.

Plenary Council Update

In light of the ongoing uncertainty around future COVID-19 restrictions regarding travel and public gatherings, especially social distancing, a decision has been taken for the first Plenary Council assembly to take place using a combination of online and in-person delivery. Read more at the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/first-plenary-council-assembly-mixes-in-person-online-format/>

Discernment Papers: The six discernment papers have been released and are available to read at <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/continuing-the-journey-of-discernment/read>. The National Plenary Facilitation Team have released a resource to assist parishes and communities to explore each of the papers (attached). Here in the diocese, we will endeavour to look at one paper for a month. **For the month of December we will look at HOW IS GOD CALLING US TO BE A CHRIST-CENTRED CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA THAT IS Open to Conversion, Renewal and Reform?** *The "call to conversion" is "the indispensable condition of Christian love." (TMA 50) Christians respond to this call when they openly acknowledge personal and communal failings and experience the joy of reconciliation shaped by renewed relationship with the Trinitarian God. Ongoing conversion is the source of renewal and of authentic reform. Catholics in Australia experience the riches of the Church's traditions, through liturgy, parish life and the Church's contributions to welfare, education and healthcare. At the same time, they acknowledge hindrances to personal and institutional conversion toward Christ. The Report repeatedly refers to the Church's rites of reconciliation (particularly the Third Rite), indicating that the Church in Australia needs to respond to this desire for formation in, and access to, sacramental reconciliation. Have a read of the discernment paper, think about your parish and the diocese in general. We welcome any comments. Please send through to jane.collins@ballarat.catholic.org.au*

Read the discernment paper: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PC2020-thematic-papers-6.pdf>

Visit the thematic page: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/themes/renewal/>

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/>

Reflections on the papers from the Ballarat Diocese: Can be read at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/listen-to-what-the-spirit-is-saying/>

Missionary Sisters of Services' mission entity offering \$3000 grants

The Missionary Sisters of Services' mission entity, "Highways and Byways - A Community of Service" is calling for applications for its 2021 Small Grants Program on the theme 'Healing the Land, Healing Ourselves, Together'. Funding of up to \$3000 is available to assist people and communities to address disadvantage and inequality particularly in rural, regional and remote areas of Australia. Further information available at <https://missionarysisters.org.au/2020/11/17/small-grants-program-now-open-3000-grants-available/>

Catholic Health Australian launches new Mission Scholarship Program for future Aged Care leaders

Catholic Health Australia is offering a new scholarship to attend the prestigious Ministry Leadership Program at the Australian Catholic University. The scholarship is open to people working at a managerial level in the Catholic aged care sector and will help expand the successful mission program to new participants. To find out more about the program and the scholarship criteria go to <https://cha.org.au/mission/69-mlp/mission/911-the-father-gerard-arbuckle-catholic-health-australia-scholarship-program>



Ararat Sunday 03 Jan 2021

The Epiphany of the Lord

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.

Fr. Andrew Hayes

Masses this Week

Stawell: Tuesday to Friday 10am

QR Codes

We've been going ok with registering by QR Code. Thanks to those who have helped others. Now that we've got going, and wondering whether this might be our normal for months or years into the future, now it seems time for as many as possible to scan your own codes. And we'll still happily help those without fancy phones. The codes for Ararat and Stawell are included here. If you have a smart phone, please take the time at home to get yourself sorted. Get a grandchild to set you up?? Again, we'll help those who are still on a 90's Nokia. Landsborough and Lake Bolac don't need to worry. Paper registration is fine for smaller numbers.



St. Mary's Café

Our Café will be taking a break—see you when the schools go back. Have a great Christmas to one and all.

Bishop's Christmas Appeal

Please see the notice board for how you can contribute to the Bishop's Christmas Appeal and where previous year's contributions have been donated.

Ararat QR Code



Location Code

A5W FTY

You will need to have downloaded the APP onto your phone. It will not work if you just take a "photo" of the image above. There will be someone to help. But we would urge you to come 10 minutes earlier to Mass if you are unsure of what to do.

Last Sunday's Readings—27 Dec 2020

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph B

First Reading

Sir 3:2-6. 12-14

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

Responsorial Psalm Ps 104:1-6. 8-9. R.vv.7.8

(R.) The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

Second Reading Col 3:12-21

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians

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 Lk 2:22-40

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

First Reading Is 60:1-6

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples. Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness. Lift up your eyes and look round: all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and your daughters being tenderly carried. At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you; the wealth of the nations come to you; camels in throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 71:1-2. 7-8. 10-13, R. see v.11

(R.) Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

- O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. **(R.)**
- In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. **(R.)**
- The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts shall pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts. Before him all kings shall fall prostrate, all nations shall serve him. **(R.)**
- For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. **(R.)**

Second Reading Eph 3:2-3. 5-6

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation Mt 2:2

Alleluia, alleluia!
We have seen his star in the East;
and have come to adore the Lord.
Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 2:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him, 'for this is what the prophet wrote:

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,
for out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd my people Israel.'

Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

Gospel Reflection

The gospel of Mark, the first of the four canonical gospels to be written, does not bother at all with the question of the birth of Jesus. Written some ten or more years later, the gospels of Luke and Matthew both present a version of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus. The gospel of John, written later still, also avoids details of Jesus' birth. The two accounts of the infancy that we do have from the gospels tell very different stories because they have each been used to place the rest of the gospel in a particular context. Unfortunately, the two stories have been mashed together so much that we now have one notion of the Christmas story that is a poor amalgam of the two unique narratives.

In the gospel of Luke, Joseph and Mary are living in Nazareth and travel to Bethlehem and are forced to give birth out in a field because there is no room at the only inn in Bethlehem. The ones who bear witness to the birth in this account are shepherds – some of the lowest of the low – as the gospel of Luke identifies Jesus as having a preferential option for the lowly ones. In the gospel of Matthew, Joseph and Mary are living in Bethlehem and give birth in their own house. They later flee to Egypt and then settle in Nazareth. The two towns need to be included in both accounts because they are named in some of the ancient prophecies about the Messiah. In the gospel of Matthew, the witnesses to the birth are wise men, dignitaries from another land. The Matthew writer wants to emphasise the 'kingship' of Jesus and it is fitting that foreign dignitaries present gifts on the birth of a king.

ANNIVERSARIES: Jan 4th—Jan 10th

Vincent Thomas, Vera Shea, Anthony Gordon, Peter Keogh, Michael Campion, Don Rickard, Margaret Haslett, Peg Clark, Fr Jim Green CSsR, Fr Frank Honan CSsR, Anthony Gordon, Geoffrey Lewis, Jack Flynn, Michael Joyce, Fr Brian James, Stephen Barry, Bartolo Mercovich, Jack Donovan, Linda Hughes-Soden, Clara Thomas, Peter Pola, Evie Moloney, Brian O'Donnell, Kathleen Canty, Justin Henriksen

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK:

Julie Neale, Jean Rolfe and Margaret Hassell

Please contact the office if you would like your name to be on the sick list. Names are kept on this list for one month—and be put on again.

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

Ministry to the Sick:

Please email Fr. Andrew during these difficult times to discuss Ministry to the sick on

andrew.hayes@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Or phone the office on 5358 1119 Stawell (Thursdays)

Pope Francis—Twitter

The #prayer of thanksgiving begins by recognizing that we were thought of before we learned how to think; we were loved before we learned how to love. If we view life like this, then "thank you" becomes the driving force of our day.

Readings Jan 10th 2020

First Reading Is 42:1-4. 6-7

Second Reading Acts 10:34-38

Saint of the Week

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Feastday: January 4

Patron: of in-law problems, against the death of children, widows, death of parents, and opposition of Church authorities

Birth: August 28, 1774 **Death:** January 4, 1821

Beatified: by Pope John XXIII on March 17, 1963

Canonized: by Pope Paul VI on September 14, 1975

Born two years before the American Revolution, Elizabeth grew up in the upper class of New York society. She was a prolific reader, and read everything from the Bible to contemporary novels.

Read more on—www.catholic.org/saints

Phone Lines

Victorian Coronavirus Hotline — 1800 675 398

If you suspect you may have the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) call the dedicated hotline – open 24 hours, seven days.

Older persons COVID-19 Support line — 1800 171 866

Translations for Victorian Government coronavirus website -

www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/translations

Vinnies Ararat Phone: (03) 5352 5560

Salvation Army Australia — 13 SALVOS

St Vincent de Paul, Stawell – 0437 344 323

Stawell Inter Church Council welfare Cottage – 0408 038 949

Finances

If you would like to donate to a parish, please see the details below. Many thanks

Details for Ararat Parish:

Parish Account "Main Church Account"

Westpac Bank **BSB** 033 201 // Acc 810035

Presbytery Account "Presbytery Account"

Westpac Bank **BSB** 033 201 //Acc 810043

Details for Stawell Parish

Parish Account **BSB** 013 815 **Acc:** 286326347

Presbytery Account **BSB** 013 815 **Acc:** 286326355

Joke of the Week

"Secret to a long happy marriage"

An old woman was sipping on a glass of wine, while sitting on the patio with her husband, and she says, "I love you so much, I don't know how I could ever live without you".... Her husband asks, "Is that you or the wine talking?".... She replies, "It's me...talking to the wine."