



CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE  
of  
BALLARAT



# OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

News around the Diocese

No. 69 March 2023



## IN THIS ISSUE

From the Bishop

Faith and Life in the diocese

International Year of the Millet

Australian Citizens

ACU signs up as partner for Clunes

Booktown Festival

Unsung Heroes

Project Compassion Sunday

A New Centre finally opens

Reducing the Carbon Footprint

School News

In the Parishes

Rite of Election 2023

Jubilee Celebrations

Fondly remembered

The Sacred Tree

Donation to accelerate

Sleepbus Vision

A Treasured Gift from Baronga to

Yanaoca

Earthcare Parish

Vocation

Formation in the Diocese

Shining a light on Mental Health

Six-generation era ends in

Dunnsdown

Catholic Development Fund

celebrates 50 years

### OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY (ODC)

A joint publication of the  
Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and  
Catholic Education Ballarat.



The Editorial Committee of ODC wishes to thank the many people who have contributed to this issue. We also acknowledge the support through sponsorship of the Ballarat Catholic Development Fund and Australian Catholic University - Aquinas Campus.

#### EDITORIAL BOARD

Sr Geraldine Mugavin, Mrs Julie Boyd, Ms Kate Lawry, Ms Fiona Tonkin, Dr Susan Crowe, Mrs Bernadette Lynch, Fr Adrian McInerney, Mrs Jane Collins.

The next ODC will be in July 2023.

All contributions to ODC may be forwarded to:

OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY,

PO Box 576, Ballarat 3353.

Phone: (03) 5337 7179

Email: [odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

Web: [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)

## Voices of the Church in the Pacific

*From February 5 - 10, people from Church communities around the Pacific met in Fiji for a week of prayer and reflection on issues facing us in our region. The celebration began on February 5 with Mass in Sacred Heart Cathedral in Suva.*

*On a warm Sunday morning, the cathedral was full to overflowing with local parishioners and visitors from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Samoa and other islands of the Pacific.*

*The opening procession included servers and readers in traditional Fijian dress as well as bishops from all the countries of our part of the world. The main celebrant was Cardinal Michael Czerny who had come from Rome, where he leads the department that focusses on Integral Human Development. He was welcomed with a garland of flowers and entered the church to the sound of drums and strong singing from the choir and the whole congregation. Songs in Fijian and English filled the cathedral throughout the Mass and there were prayers in some of the many languages of the Pacific. That opening ceremony on Sunday morning began what was to be a week of rich sharing, in song and conversation.*

*The meeting in Fiji was really two meetings in one. It was an assembly of the Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania. Such assemblies are held every four years, focussing on issues of common concern to the Church throughout the region. The Fiji meeting was also part of the international Synod process, initiated by Pope Francis, inviting the Church throughout the world to reflect on how we can become a more "synodal" Church, a Church in which all the members, including bishops and the whole community, walk together as pilgrims on our way to God's kingdom.*

*The major regional challenge that we discussed was one that affects all the countries of Oceania, namely, the care of the oceans. The major task we undertook in regard to the international Synod was formulating a response to a document that had been developed from meetings of Church communities around the world.*

*Before our discussion of environmental issues, we had the opportunity to visit some nearby sites that showed the impact of rising sea levels and the harmful effects some mining operations can have on a local community.*

*A visit to Togoru Village brought home the reality of rising sea levels. The advancing waters have claimed over fifty metres of land. The Togoru cemetery is now under water. The local people have planted mangroves and built walls to slow down shore erosion but the damage to the coastline and people's lives continues.*

*A visit to Nakavu Village showed the impact of the extraction of river gravel. The mining operation has contaminated the water to a point where it is no longer suitable for bathing and cleaning. Silt covers the shore and fish have disappeared from the river.*

*Following the visits to these local sites, we began our discussion of environmental issues, particularly as these are felt in Oceania. Our conversations were enriched by presentations from Jacqui Remond, an Australian who is a member of the Vatican Ecology Taskforce at the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, and from Dr Joeli*



*Vietayaki, a Fijian who teaches Marine Studies at the University of the South Pacific. We also had the benefit of reflections from a theological group chaired by Dr Sandie Cornish and including scholars from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand.*

*Many people in this region are facing an uncertain future because of rising sea levels and more frequent, severe storms. The threat is compounded by exploitation of natural resources and pollution of the environment. We recognised the need to care for our island nations, ranging from our large island of Australia to the many small islands of the Pacific. Our Christian faith encourages us to take whatever actions we can to preserve and nurture the land and ocean that make up our common home. We can also help by being advocates for those who are feeling severe impacts of harmful environmental practices but find it hard to have their voices heard.*

*On the Tuesday afternoon of the meeting we heard from Sister Nathalie Becquart, a French religious sister who is a member of the Rome-based team assisting the Church around the world to take part in the Synod called by Pope Francis. On her way to Fiji, Sister Nathalie had visited Australia, with talks in Melbourne, Adelaide and Parramatta. In each place, she had spoken about a “spirituality of synodality” which she explained as “one of journeying together, of being Church on the move.” As an example of the spirit of synodality, she referred to the encounter between Jesus and the apostles on the road to Emmaus.*

*“To embody a spirituality of synodality is really to follow the synodal style of Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Jesus goes to meet them where they are. He begins by asking a question. He didn’t begin by teaching them all the catechism, but just by walking and being with them – just with his presence, listening to them, he starts to dialogue. And through this process of listening to them, he reaches something very deep within them. And so, at the end, the disciples ask Jesus to stay with them. Jesus didn’t impose himself, but he enlivened in them this deep desire. And then this encounter led the disciples to a path of conversion.”*

*During the week in Fiji we took some further steps on the road of the Synod. We recalled the earlier stage of consultations at the local level around the world, when people in each parish and each diocese were invited to share their observations on how we are already walking together as a Church community and how we might develop this walking together further in the years ahead. In September last year, some 30 people from six continents met in Frascati, near Rome, to consider what people*

*around the world had been saying about being a synodal Church. Our task in Fiji was to respond to the document that had been produced in Frascati. Before our meeting, a group from around Oceania had met in Melbourne to prepare a draft response.*

*In building on this draft, we confirmed that various points made by people around the world resonated with what people had said in Oceania, for example, in highlighting our common Baptism as the source of our common identity as Christians and members of the family of the Church. Another element that resonated with us was the desire to encourage more young people to participate in the life of the Church community. We also shared the hope expressed by people around the world that the experience of being involved in Synod discussions and prayer would promote a greater sense of community among us and a greater sense of our common mission to spread the peace and joy of Christ.*

*In finalising the document, we noted that the text reflects the voices of the People of God in Oceania and that it includes a pastoral reflection by the bishops of Oceania on what they have heard from their people. If we list the headings in the document, we see that the text covers a wide range of issues: Baptism and Sacraments, Inclusion, Church Teaching, Authority and Decision-Making, The Challenge of Mission, Ecological Crisis, Inculturation and Localisation, Women, Young People, Formation.*

*The document from Oceania will be published soon and will be sent to the Synod Secretariat in Rome as a contribution from our part of the world to the ongoing process of the worldwide Synod, leading to the international assembly of the Synod to be held in Rome in October this year. In this way, the voices of the Church throughout the world will be enriched by the voices of the Church in the Pacific.*

*I was delighted to take part in the assembly in Fiji. I learnt from the conversations among the delegates and I was inspired by the vibrant faith of the local people who welcomed us so warmly and celebrated liturgies with us throughout the week.*

*If you would like to know more about the assembly, you could go to our diocesan website at [ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://ballarat.catholic.org.au). In the News section, click on Federation of Catholic Bishops Conferences of Oceania, February 5-10, 2023. There you will find photos and short videos that reflect the colours and sounds of each day.*

*+ Paul Bird CSsR*

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR





Early in 1926, Jim Brady, left the security and safety of a family farm at Norval, a small settlement west of Ararat and made track to the Mallee! Today, it would take three hours in a comfortable air conditioned car, back in 1926 it probably took a week or so with horses, maybe with a dray full of supplies. One would wonder what on earth you would need to take for such a trip



Jim finally make it to Nandaly in the Northern Mallee to Block 35 Bimbourie then in the Shire of Swan Hill. He built a small two room galvanized tin house, two rooms – a kitchen/living room and a bedroom if you could call it that. Both rooms were lined with hessian cloth.

The entrance to Jim's property was via a sandy track on the south side of his block. By this time the railway line was built and the Nandaly Post Office had been open since 1914. People were coming and going – some farmers walking off their properties and selling what they could to go back south from whence they came. Others stayed on and worked on the railways and also assisting in the building of the main channel to provide water to the districts which was a game changer to the Mallee, well anything those days was a game changer.

So that's how and where my family came from and so started my story of farming in the Mallee when my father, Tony, came along to join his brother Jim at Nandaly. It was around 1930. Thomas Anthony Brady, his full name, was the youngest of eleven children, probably last in, first out so for him it was off to Nandaly to help Jim.

## Faith and life in the diocese



As I'm told Jim Brady was the first farmer in Nandaly to own a tractor. Farmers from around Nandaly came from near and far to see this new tractor put through its paces. Jim told the dealer if the tractor can go over that sand hill, he'll buy it, and he did.

Tony worked alongside his brother up until Jim's tragic death in a car accident on February 19, 1942 at the age of 37. At the age of 28, my father took over Jim's property along with his older brother Frank who came to help Tony to settle into farming on his own. During these early years Tony and Frank also worked building the main channel when the dry times came along. This gave them extra money to keep the farm going. As time went on Tony purchased more farming ground.

At the age of 32 Tony married Monica Magee from Beulah who was working for her sister and brother-in-law, the local baker. Tony and Monica went onto have five children, Kate, Mary, myself, Maureen and Bernadette. Tony died aged 46 in 1964. I was just 17 years and took over running the farm. Moving forward, I married Joanne McInerney and we have six children, Bridie, Carmen, Joseph, Matthew, Michael and Gabrielle. Today all our children are grown and have families of their own. Jo and I are very proud grandparents of sixteen grandchildren.

When my father passed away we farmed five thousand three hundred acres, give or take a few, and now I farm with two of my sons, Joseph and Matt, on twelve thousand acres. Joseph and Matt live on Jo's parents original property at Nyarrin, six miles south of us at Nandaly. We crop wheat, barley, peas, lentils and sow veitch for hay and stock feed. We have seventy-nine cows and calves, beef types, and run approximately eight hundred ewes for fat lamb production.

Machinery has gone from Uncle Jim's days of horses to horsepower, from sitting on a steel seat and reins in hand and a whip to an air conditioned cabin, wireless/radio, GPS steering and a very comfortable air ride seat. My late uncle Phil Brady always said and I hope I am quoting him correctly, "the good old days, buggar the good old days!"



Jo and I are still on the farm and both love being here. Jo has a three acre garden, pets galore and does unbelievable volunteering work and I'm here helping out on the farm, well, I hope I am. We love where we are and what we do. We have many memories, both sad and happy, mostly happy. We love having our family around us. Like us, our children are getting on with their lives and now watching their children develop into young wonderful people.

Our faith still remains steadfast. St Joseph's Church in Nandaly where we got married and had our children baptised continues to serve as our place of worship. We celebrate Mass every second Sunday of the month which we all look forward to and on the other Sundays, we have a Layled Assembly.

St Joseph's was built in 1926 so it is approaching 100 years and that will be a great celebration. It might be three years away but it will be here before we know it.



Sam Brady - Nandaly

## International Year of Millets

*With a proposal from Indian government, the United Nations have declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets.*

*Millets are ancient food grains that have been an important part of the agricultural system for thousands of years. They are primarily grown in Asia and Africa, with India being the leading producer followed by Nigeria and China.*

*Millets are a group of small-seeded cereal crops that are grown for food and forage. Some common types of millets include sorghum, barnyard millet, pearl millet, finger millet, brown top millet and foxtail millet.*

*They are highly nutritious and are sustainable source of food. They are rich in vitamins and minerals including calcium, iron, potassium, magnesium, and zinc. Millets have great potential for developing a healthy lifestyle. They are rich in dietary fibre that helps in the better regulation of bowel function and blood sugar levels. They are a healthy option for those suffering from lifestyle diseases*



*such as diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases.*



*Millets are drought-resistant and can grow in areas with poor soil and limited water resources, making them an important crop for food security in arid and semi-arid regions. The water required for one crop of rice is equated to 20-25 crops of millets. Millets can survive in adverse climatic conditions, and they are tolerant to crop diseases and pests.*

*By increasing the cultivation and consumption of millets, we can ensure food security for millions of people, build sustainable agri-food systems, prevent land degradation, promote biodiversity, and can create resilient agricultural systems for a better life.*

Fr Anthony Nagathou



## Emmanuel College Community Meals



Described initially as a soup kitchen modelled on a similar project run by our local St Joseph's Community, which provides a weekly dinner meal to individuals and families in need, our project has become known as a community meal.

Each Tuesday evening our school canteen area is transformed into a dining room and our doors open at 5.30pm to anyone in need of a meal. After starting the first week with a single attendee, and then three the following week, the community meal now regularly attracts between thirty - forty individuals and a couple of families with young children.

All of these families and individuals are doing it tough, and while some have jobs, others are extremely marginalised as a result of unemployment, homelessness, mental illness, poverty, or a combination of these factors. All are welcome and no-one is turned away.

At present the project is supported by school staff volunteering their time to serve the meals, clear up, wash dishes and pack up at the end so the space is again ready for student use the following day. For the first year, we have been in an establishment phase, taking the initial steps slowly to ensure we have had enough time to completely understand what we are doing and ensure we

can manage any challenges that may arise before, during or after each meal.

Our plan for this year and beyond is to involve senior school students as part of their commitment to community service, with the hope of including parents and family members as volunteers in the longer term.

The project has received extraordinary support from our canteen operator, McMahons Family Catering, who provide the meals (two courses) each week. Since March 1 this year, over 850 meals have been served, and our guests comment on the quality of the meal, several stating, "it's the best meal in town" provided by volunteer services.

Another wonderful aspect of our community meal is getting to know people in our community by building a sense of trust, and demonstrating compassion and hospitality to all we meet. Emmanuel College is hugely appreciative of the financial support received from CaSPA enabling our social action project to get underway and gain momentum in 2022.

*Montanna Macdonald, Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator, Emmanuel College Warrnambool*

*Photo: Staff members Julia Smith and Jacinta Skilbeck with Andrew McMahon (McMahon Catering) in the college canteen*

## Australian Citizens

*During the Buloke Shire Australia Day celebrations at the Watchem Hall, Princy George and two of her children, Joshua and Anna became Australian citizens. The family are important and valued members of the St Mary's Donald community in the East Wimmera Parish.*

*To acknowledge this commitment the parishioners of St Mary's congratulated them at the Ash Wednesday Mass with all of the children from the school attending. Princy, Joshua and Anna were presented with a native flora plant, card and God's blessing on their commitment to our country.*

Merilyn Frank

Our Diocesan Community - March 2023



# ACU signs up as partner for Clunes Booktown Festival

Australian Catholic University further expanded its arts presence in regional Victoria after signing on as principal sponsor for the Clunes Booktown festival which was held in March. It is the first time Clunes Booktown has had a major sponsor aside from state government funding.

ACU's investment in Clunes Booktown was not just financial, but its National School of Arts and Humanities took over the historic Clunes Courthouse for the festival, with high profile historians and literary academics headlining sessions on everything from fashion and femininity to LGBTIQ+ non-fiction and writing the histories of refugee children. "The festival is a celebration of reading and writing, and the connections that great storytelling forges," said Ballarat ACU historian Dr Benjamin Mountford. "We recognise Booktown as one of the key cultural events in regional Victoria and this is part of our commitment to arts in Victoria which we are expanding at the moment."



"At ACU, we see the value of the arts every day on our campuses, and the communities they are part of," Dr Mountford said the ACU Courthouse Sessions covered a diverse range of topics building on work being done throughout the university. "What we wanted to do was provide a really diverse chance for people to hear some of the latest research going on in different areas and books that people are writing," he said.

ACU Ballarat Campus Dean Professor Bridget Aitchison said the partnership with the iconic Clunes Booktown Festival was a "good fit" for the university. "We have started offering some limited arts offerings at the Ballarat campus now with Ben Mountford and David McGinniss (pictured above) and will soon welcome five PhD students," she said. "We were talking to Clunes Booktown and they were saying they were looking for a major sponsor. We thought it was a really good fit for us as we have such strength in arts and humanities at our Melbourne campus that we are now leveraging to support people in Ballarat and western Victoria."

Creative Clunes Chief Executive Sue Beal said the organisation was thrilled to have ACU on board as a major sponsor for Clunes Booktown Festival. "Not only does ACU have a local goldfields campus in Ballarat, but it is a university that is increasing its commitment to the arts and humanities in its curriculum and in its outreach programs. This is reversing the trend of most other tertiary institutions, and one we applaud," she said. "The diversity of the program presented by ACU at the Courthouse was of such breadth that every person who attended the festival found a panel or conversation that drew them in."

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Michelle Smith

## THE NEW YEAR



The beginning of a new school year at St Michael's Primary School in Daylesford has been an exciting time for students, teachers and parents alike. It has marked the start of a fresh academic journey, full of possibilities and opportunities for growth and learning.

For students, the start of a new school year can be both thrilling and nerve-wracking. Many of our Year 6 students have been preparing leadership speeches to present in front of the school community. Our new prep students have been developing new routines and meeting people closely linked with our school such as Fr Justin at our beginning of year Mass. Students may feel excited to see their friends again, meet new teachers and take on new challenges. They may also feel anxious about the changes

ahead, such as adapting to a new schedule, adjusting to higher academic expectations or making new friends.

To help ease the transition, parents and teachers have been supporting students during the first few weeks of school. This has included establishing regular routines, setting goals, and creating a positive learning environment that promotes engagement, curiosity and collaboration. For teachers, introducing classroom expectations, establishing a safe and inclusive learning environment, and building positive relationships with students and parents has been the primary focus.

This year, we look forward to seeing parents and carers become actively involved in their child's education. This will include ongoing dialogue with teachers about their child's progress and supporting their child's learning at home through activities such as reading and engaging with 'Seesaw' - our online learning platform.

Overall, the beginning of a new school year is a time for excitement, growth and opportunity. With the support of parents, teachers and the wider school community, we look forward to seeing the students at St Michael's thrive and succeed academically, spiritually and personally.

Tim Hogan - Principal



# Unsung Heroes

Parish workers, including secretaries, co-ordinators, pastoral associates and business managers, are vital in a parish, supporting the parish priest in the running of the parish. Sometimes even one person being all of the above. They are often the first person encountered when contacting the parish, in situations when someone has died and the person needs comforting and reassurance, when a baby requires baptising, a family in crisis, the person to coordinate the rosters for Mass, dealing with all areas of compliance and professional standards from child protection, work, health and safety, copyright, public liability and the list goes on. Two such person are Noeline Hogan from the East Wimmera Parish and Tony Beggs from St Patrick's Cathedral Parish. We asked Noeline and Tony a little about their roles and you can read their answers below:

Noeline Hogan from the East Wimmera

**Tell us about your parish:** East Wimmera Parish was formed in 2018 when the communities at Banyena, Birchip, Boort, Charlton, Donald, Nullawil, St Arnaud, Wedderburn and Wycheproof were amalgamated. Since the amalgamation Nullawil and Wedderburn Churches have held their final Masses and we've gone from two priests to one, with Fr Gerry Prunty being my second parish priest and fourth priest overall.

**Tell us about yourself, what is your role, how long have you worked in the parish?** I came to the parish in May 2019 as parish coordinator to assist Fr Eugene McKinnon with the administration involved after the formation of the new parish. Soon after, the business manager moved on and I took on that role as well. Although I am a farmer at Morton Plains, south of Birchip, I travel to St Arnaud on a Tuesday as that is where the main computer and the parish records are kept. Fr Gerry is based in Donald, but we catch up most Tuesdays in St Arnaud for an hour or so, other than that, there are a lot of phone calls.

**Who's the boss?** Fr Gerry of course!

**You are the often the first person that people encounter in parish life, sometimes referred to as 'frontline evangelists', how do you feel about that?** My faith is very important to me so when faith enquiries are made to me, I hope I treat everyone with the same respect that I would want in that situation.

**Often in parishes, the secretary is the only staff member, the skill set required is extensive. How has the role changed over the years, especially with all areas of compliance and professional standards from child protection, work, health and safety, copyright and public liability and add COVID on top?** Although compliance and professional standards (and insurance) are very important aspects of parish life, the sheer mention of them sends me into a cold sweat. I am very grateful for the support I get from Diocesan staff in relation to these requirements.

**Challenges/Highlights:** Aging population attending Mass would have to be the number one challenge. As volunteers age we have fewer people at Mass and therefore less planned giving and fewer people helping. Our parish has a finance council but not enough volunteers for a pastoral council as this would mean the same people and another night out.

On a positive note, COVID was a little serendipitous for us at East Wimmera Parish. Although it has meant fewer numbers at Mass than before COVID, we took the giant leap of setting up Zoom Masses from Fr Eugene's office into the homes from across the nine communities. We averaged 90 – 100 attendees each Sunday and as at the time we were all in lockdown, we relished the weekly catch ups on zoom and the chats afterwards. We had many, many hiccoughs but our clever parishioners managed to master the technique. We have since progressed to a more professional AV set up in our churches so that those centres without Mass can livestream in from wherever Fr Gerry is saying Mass from at 10.30 on a Sunday. A true connection for all the community.

Tony Beggs - St Patrick's Cathedral Parish

**Tell us about your parish:** I am split between St Columba's Catholic Parish which has been my spiritual home for over 40 years and St Patrick's Cathedral Parish which is now my place of employment. There has obviously been cross over in the years with marriages of my children with Fr Justin Driscoll being heavily involved with weddings and then Christenings. However, St Columba's for the most part with involvement in the Iona Family Group which has provided great friendship and family to us. Also, I am a singer and leader in music and have had roles in liturgy, sacramental programs and RCIA. And of course our children have attended St Columba's before St Patrick's and Loreto Colleges.

**Tell us about yourself, what is your role, how long have you worked in the parish?** I had taught at St Patrick's College from 1990 up to the start of 2023, after a dozen years in the State Education System (Charlton, Newcomb and Wendouree High Schools). I mostly taught Computers, Maths and Physics and at St Pats was lucky enough to also teach







*Religious Education and especially grateful to have the opportunity to teach scripture with the highlight being able to share with the boys in year 12 their study on Luke's Gospel. So, this shift in work at the end of my teaching career sees me move from St Patrick's to St Patrick's and I am so glad of the opportunity.*

**Who's the boss?** *I have a number of bosses, but I am not one of them. My wife Kaye is my soulmate and she is able to get me out of most troubles as well as care for our five beautiful children. There are now five grandsons as well to keep us occupied and they are all very special.*

*My other boss is Fr Ed Moloney who is the administrator at St Patrick's Cathedral. We both grew up on farms and you could say that we share a lot of similarities with our background and values. I think I am very blessed to have Fr Ed as a boss. His helpers, Fr Abraham Thomas and Fr Jim McKay, make up the troupe in the Cathedral office and I feel very comfortable with the way that the four of us operate together. Kerrie McTigue, who oversees*

*all the finances, is my right-hand person who knows everything that I don't know and who has been a great help to me learning the ropes of how the office works.*

**You are often the first person that people encounter in parish life, sometimes referred to as 'frontline evangelists', how do you feel about that?** *The role of secretary and administrator at the St Patrick's Cathedral Parish is a very honourable and important role. I can only hope that I bring an openness to all opportunities, an ability to complete the jobs required and a love of God and of those I meet – coupled with a sense of humour and thankfulness.*

*All parishioners are evangelists when they attend Mass and the sacraments and undertake the special opportunities that the Cathedral Parish offers. The faith of the parishioners that I meet: some in the visual leadership roles and others that just complete their work behind the scenes is very uplifting to observe.*

*On a personal level, I was given an opportunity recently to speak to parents about their sons and daughters first reconciliation. I enjoyed the opportunity to share my faith with the parents and was obviously not too daunted considering my many years in religious education – including in some cases having taught the same fathers in front of me during their own schooling at St Patrick's College.*

**Often in parishes, the secretary is the only staff member, the skill set required is extensive. How has the role changed over the years, especially with all areas of compliance and professional standards from child protection, work, health and safety, copyright and public liability and add COVID on top?** *The parish secretarial role is very wide in scope and each day tosses up different questions and requires a many faceted approach. Fortunately, my background in computer studies and in religious education has prepared me to undertake this position. Of course, knowing the language and customs of the Catholic Church makes handling such a role possible. It would be a very steep learning curve if one came from outside the Church.*

*The areas of compliance that were emphasised in the question are all necessary today in our very regulated world. Having come from the education sector as well as having been involved in sport administration (recently President of Ballarat North United Soccer Club) has given me a wide experience of compliance, child safety and other administrivia. It goes without saying that all these areas have to be considered in this role; as well as in all other business and recreational areas in our lives today.*

**Challenges/Highlights?** *Every day in this role has been a highlight. New people to meet, different activities to complete and problems to unravel. Also, meeting ex-students or parents of students that I have taught has made for joyous reunions. I have been coordinator of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday for many years, and am starting to consider its preparation. Bishop Paul brought up the topic in the presbytery last week. He immediately offered himself as leader of the Walk and such enthusiasm for sharing our faith in Jesus Christ continues to inspire me in this role.*



## Project Compassion Sunday

On Sunday, February 19, 2023 Bishop Paul Bird CSsR commissioned Student Leaders, teachers and Caritas Diocesan Director, Jillian Hogbin, as representatives of their communities to promote Project Compassion 2023. This Commissioning was held during 5.00pm at St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat. The representatives pledged to work in partnership with Caritas Australia "For all Future Generations." Those gathered prayed for a world of justice, a world where no-one is hungry or poor; a world where richness is shared, for all to enjoy; a world where different races, faiths and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect; a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is achieved through love.

*Jillian Hogbin - Caritas Diocesan Director*





## A NEW CENTRE FINALLY OPENS!

*On Tuesday, 21, the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Historical Commission held its first 2023 meeting in the newly established archives centre within the Diocesan Office building in Ballarat. After the meeting, the committee members were taken around on a tour of the new centre by the archivist.*

*The archives space has been designed with easy access into the centre. Situated on the ground floor the diocesan archives has a purpose made display area for exhibiting objects from the collection. The lower floor can be accessed via a lift or steps and has a research and study area, large map draws for storing the extensive vestment collection. Also stored in this area are various large architectural plans, maps and photographs. A small sliding compactus is also on this level. Donated to the archives by the Sisters of Mercy, the compactus holds the reference library and a collection of rare historical literature on Ballarat and townships within the diocese.*

*The largest storage room has been designed, to maintain a large sliding compactus for the entire archive collection. Measuring over 2 metres in height and holding just over 700 boxes, it contains the diocesan archives, printed manuscripts and library collection.*

*Currently the archives is looking for volunteers to assist with cataloguing, sewing or research. If you are interested in assisting within the archives or would like to discuss further, please contact the archivist directly via [archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or 0415600180. The archives is open Monday to Friday by appointment only.*

Dr Samantha Fabry - Archivist



## Reducing the Carbon Footprint



St John of God Ballarat Hospital has taken practical steps to protect the future of the planet, unveiling a new solar panel system as part of St John of God Health Care's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint.

The hospital's new 300 solar panel array will provide a 181,062 (kWh) system that will save more than 174 metric tonnes of carbon emissions per year. That's the same amount of emissions as a car driving approximately 1.2 million km.

Chief Executive Officer, Alex Demidov, said the installation of solar panels will help create a more sustainable hospital moving into the future.

"I am excited to be taking this step to further our commitment to addressing climate change through meaningful sustainability initiatives. Ballarat is a beautiful region and I'm proud we're doing our part to help protect it for generations to come."

<https://www.sjog.org.au/our-locations/st-john-of-god-ballarat-hospital/news/>



# ASHES AND PANCAKES

Sacred Heart Primary School Colac celebrated Shrove Tuesday with a burning ceremony and cooking pancakes. Students wrote a personal message to God in the form of giving up something for the season of Lent (ie lollies). Some made a promise to perform a good deed or change something in their life to make themselves act in a better way.

Classrooms across the school were full of excitement as our children and staff were cooking and enjoying pancakes with their classmates. The Foundation children had their first experience of Shrove Tuesday at Sacred Heart whilst learning the true Christian meaning of the day. In Catholic tradition, Shrove Tuesday is the time to empty the cupboards and eat foods such as eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast. Pancakes are the perfect way of using up these ingredients.



The Year 4-6 students attended the Ash Wednesday Mass at St Mary's Church whilst the Years 1-3 students celebrated an Ash Wednesday Liturgy at school. The ashes from the burning ceremony were used to mark the sign of a cross on our foreheads. This is done for two reasons: a personal act of remembrance and as a sign or a witness for others.

During Lent, we are asked to focus on 'Almsgiving', which can simply mean donating money or goods to those in need. In every classroom and in the office area there is a Project Compassion money box from Caritas that we have made available for monetary donations. We encourage students to think of those in need and donate when and if they can. An example of being kind and generous can be when a child donates their money and goes without buying an icy pole at lunchtime. That's Almsgiving.

Jack Lenaghan – Principal



# SUCCESSFUL START AT ST JOSEPH'S

*New Principal, Mary Hogan, has been welcomed with a flurry of activity at St Joseph's School Charlton! Three new Foundation students, Sally, Ivy and Sam, began their education at the start of the term, along with a number of recent enrolments in the other grades. All students were warmly welcomed and staff prepared for the new school year by refreshing their First Aid requirements on day one of the term.*

*The Beginning of School Mass was celebrated by Fr Gerry Prunty, with students from all grades participating. Students added their own leaf to the St Joseph's Family Tree and we look forward to watching the growth in each student throughout 2023! New Foundation students were presented with a certificate and the Grade 6 Class were surprised with specially printed Year 6 hoodies!*

*The school's Swimming Program is almost complete, with all students showing improvement over the intensive two-week program. Students have focused on water safety and survival each Monday and Tuesday, while working on stroke technique on the other days. It was a bit tricky putting on and removing PDFs in the water but perseverance paid off in the end! The program concluded with a Swimming Carnival on Friday, February 24, 2023.*

*Academically, the school has been supported by Education Consultants from Catholic Education Ballarat, to complete both Literacy and Numeracy assessments on all students. Staff have worked together to analyse the data collected, ensuring all students receive the best individualised tuition moving forward.*



Mary Hogan - Principal



## Passionist Family Groups

Well, we finally got around to celebrate thirty years of Passionist Family Groups in St Mary's Parish Colac on October 30, 2022.

We were joined at 9.00am Mass by Alison and Tony Wooley representing the leadership team of the Passionist Family Groups, along with current and former members including Fr Kevin Arundell as Celebrant. Fr Kevin initiated the Family Groups in Colac in March 1992 and it was important to us that he could be part of our celebration so that we could acknowledge his vision thirty years ago.

Family Group members took part in all aspects of the liturgy including a welcome by Linda Morgan Davis and the candle was lit by Les Croft (who travelled from Torquay), acknowledging his role as a former leader. In true Family Group style and hospitality, we rounded the morning off



with an impressive morning tea enjoyed by a large crowd who gathered and took the opportunity to catch up.

I would like to acknowledge the role of Pat and Brian Gleeson who were co-ordinators for many of the thirty years and kept us all on path.

*Linda Morgan Davis*

*Photo: L-R: Tony, Alison, Fr Kevin, Linda Morgan Davis*

## Rite of Election 2023



*The annual Rite of Election was celebrated on Saturday, February 25, 2023 at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat by Bishop Paul Bird CSsR and assisted by Parish Priest of Redan, Sebastopol and Linton, Fr Eugene McKinnon.*

*During the Rite of Election, an important step in the RCIA journey, the candidates and catechumens are presented to the local bishop as a sign of their "election" into the Catholic community. It is at this gathering that those wishing to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation make public their intention to continue their discernment and preparation during the Season of Lent.*

*Seven parishes were represented with catechumens (those yet to be baptised) and candidates (those who have already been baptised but have yet to receive the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation) accompanied by their sponsors/godparents, family and fellow parishioners. Catechumens were presented from the parishes of Ballarat Cathedral, Gordon, Redan and South West Coast. Candidates were presented from the parishes of Ballarat Cathedral, Ballarat East, South West Coast, Wendouree with apologies from Mildura. Following the blessing and dismissal, all present joined Bishop Paul for lunch in St Patrick's Cathedral Presbytery.*

*The journey of discernment for these catechumens and candidates will culminate at the Easter Vigil where they receive the Sacraments of Initiation and are officially welcomed into the Catholic Church by the local parish community.*



# RIP Fr Bill Melican

Fr Bill Melican (03.01.31 – 15.10.22), said that the best way to be a Catholic Christian was by believing and belonging. Bill was a much loved, admired, and respected brother, brother-in-law, and uncle of the dairy farming Wangoom (near Warrnambool) Melicans. He was colourful, never more so than in full flight reciting ‘the Man from Snowy River’, cracking the whip and resounding the thunder of the horses as they flew down the mountain. Unassuming as he was, he gathered a considerable library of books reflecting his great interest in history and sport, with a love of poetry that made his conversation interesting and entertaining.

Bill’s historical consciousness afforded him a broad and wide perspective on most things. History, *that great teacher of life*, taught Bill so much – and primarily the perspective that he said came from knowing that Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever and that the Church is to reflect Christ and is Christ.

Bill served in twelve parishes across the Diocese, where he brought an inclusive, non-judgemental approach and encouraged real growth in community. Upon retirement from active ministry in 2011, his farewell recognised his faithfulness to the People of God through drought and pain, remembered for his distinctive gestures and expressive shrugs, regaling with Plato and Aristotle and vociferous quoting of his beloved Tablet. As a Spiritual guide he was appreciated for his thoughtful, literary mind.

A Diocesan Priest of the Ballarat presbyterate for 67 years, he went to everything, in good times and in bad, as clergy gatherings were so important to him.

In 2019, when Pope Francis wrote to priests on the feast of St John Vianney he may he been writing personally to Bill, *“you who have quietly left all behind in order to immerse yourself in the daily life of your communities...You served in the trenches, bearing the burden of the day and the heat, confronting an endless variety of situations in your effort to care for and accompany God’s people. Despite the hardships of the journey, you have written the finest pages of the priestly life... Thank you being a merciful shepherd.”*

*Fr Justin Driscoll (for The Swag)*



## Soctober at St Aloysius

*During Word Mission Month (October each year) St Aloysius Primary School Redan’s Mission Team joined with students across Australia to raise awareness and funds to support families in remote communities facing malnutrition and food insecurity.*

*Our Mission Month activity, Socktober, encouraged children to rise up and engage their local community to take action against poverty through the world game of soccer. It is fitting that the iconic symbol of Socktober is a tattered, misshapen ball made of recycled material like socks, t-shirts and plastic bags, tied together with string. It’s not a conventional icon, but one that represents what Socktober is all about. It’s this kind of ball that a young boy named Jorge Mario Bergoglio kicked around with his friends in the streets of Buenos Aires some 75 years ago.*

*Today, he is known as Pope Francis, the first pontiff from a majority world country, and his special connection with children from the world’s poorest communities is symbolised by the iconic ‘Sockball’ they all once played with.*

*Students made ‘sockballs’, soccer balls made from plastic bags, clean socks, unwanted clothing items and string. The ‘Sockball’ is an appropriate symbol for our children as it is easily identifiable to them as something they use every day that brings a sense of unity, diversity, joy and teamwork to our school.*

*As a school community we pride ourselves on the sense of justice our students have for causes that will assist children who are suffering or in need in our world. We would like to thank the Mission Team, supported by Mrs Baxter who help us to reflect on the needs of others*

Michael Kennedy - former Principal



# Jubilee Celebrations



**Sisters of Mercy who celebrate Jubilees this year include Sisters Chris Coughlan and Carmel Giles who marked 50 years in religious life (Golden Jubilee) and Sr Veronica Lawson celebrated her 60th anniversary (Diamond Jubilee).**

**We asked Sr Veronica about her life as a Sister of Mercy in recognition of this celebration.**

**Where were you born? Tell us about your childhood.** I was born in Melbourne and spent my childhood with my parents and four siblings on a dairy farm in Macedon (known to our first peoples as Geboor for 26,000 years). My maternal grandparents and my dad's father lived with us and bathed in the reflected glory of every one of our achievements, however small or insignificant they may have been. The influence of these elders on our lives was inestimable, especially the influence of our Granny Manassa. I cried an ocean when she died, just five days after my 10th birthday. My schooling included four years at the local State School, five years at St Ursula's College at the foot of Geboor/Mount Macedon, and four years of boarding school at Sacred Heart College, Ballarat. Each school was right for me. I have always loved learning and was blessed to have parents, teachers and companions who nurtured my thirst for life and learning. I inherited my mum's appreciation of art, my dad's love of poetry and both parents' commitment to public life. I still marvel at my dad's mastery of numbers and my mum's extraordinary capacity for design and creativity in a range of media, even if my own gifts lie elsewhere.

**You have been professed for sixty years this year. When did you know you wanted to be a Sister of Mercy? When and where were you professed?** I decided to join the Sisters of Mercy during my first year at Melbourne University. Don't ask me why. I come up with a different answer every time I am asked that question. It surely had something to do with that never-ending God-quest that leads us all on different paths. I was professed on February 4, 1963 at Ballarat East.

**If you were a colour what would it be? Why?** Blue is my colour these days. It's the colour of the sky and I have always loved the changing moods of the sky. I am also fascinated by all that lies beyond the blue.

**What was the best thing about becoming a Sister of Mercy, what was the hardest?** The best thing about being a Sister of Mercy was and is the sense of being part of a worthwhile living tradition that has the potential to make a difference in a troubled world. The hardest thing initially was the limit on family contact.

**If you chose a song which most represented you at this time, what would the song be? Why?** The lyrics of ABBA's 'I Have a Dream' resonate fairly strongly with me. While I am conscious of the pain of the Earth community, I see angels everywhere who are working to change the systems that oppress and exploit, and these people give me hope. So yes, 'I believe in angels' in that sense.

**Tell us about the roles you have undertaken as a Sister of Mercy? What has changed? What has stayed the same?** I have always loved teaching and most of my ministries have had something to do with teaching or education. Research and writing are part of that. For some years, I taught secondary students during the day and was a 'dorm nun' at night. I later worked as a biblical consultant at the Ballarat Diocesan Religious Education Centre for three years and taught theology and biblical studies at Australian Catholic University and its predecessor institutions for some twenty-five years. I have had various leadership roles including Deputy Principal then Principal of St Martin's in the Pines (now Damascus College), Local Community Leader and Congregation Leader. Over the decades the world has changed dramatically. The need for mercy and compassion is ever present although its expression may take different forms as circumstances call for different roles. My Mercy ministries these days include the writing and distribution of weekly reflections on the Sunday gospel, adult ecological theology courses with Fr Barry Ryan, refugee support, participation in Ballarat Interfaith Network activities and meeting my friends in Mercy Place. I am sustained in ministry by engagement in these contexts, by the wonders of the garden and the bush, by my Mercy companions, by the faith community of St Peter and Paul's in Buninyong and by the friendship of countless former students and colleagues.

**Where have you been previously as a Sister of Mercy? What are some of your favourite memories?** I have spent most of my adult life in Ballarat and Mount Clear. My studies in theology and scripture took me to the United States, to Jerusalem, Germany and Dublin. When I began my formal studies in theology, it was not possible for a Catholic woman to obtain a theology degree in Australia. Hence the need to study overseas. My work has taken me beyond Ballarat to various parts of the world including Israel, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, PNG, Hong Kong, Kenya, Pakistan, Ireland and the USA. One of my favourite memories is associated with a group of women in Nairobi who gathered once a month to reflect on their lives in the light of the gospel and gain courage to challenge the structures that kept them impoverished and subservient. I learned a great deal from those women. My time in the Middle East as a student, and subsequently on study tours with ACU Masters students, gave me a deeper understanding of my maternal ancestry (Lebanese/Syrian), while my time in Dublin helped me to appreciate my Celtic roots. I have special memories from every phase of my life as a Sister of Mercy and of those I have been blessed to call my students.



**If you could choose anyone from any time, who would you most like to be in conversation with and why?** I would value a conversation with Tabitha of Joppa (Acts 9:36-43). She is the only woman in the Christian scriptures who is actually called a disciple and she is said to be 'filled with works of justice and mercy'. I could learn from her.

**What are your hopes and visions for the Catholic Church in the Ballarat Diocese? What challenges you?** The vision of Pope Francis fills me with hope, as does the readiness of so many to espouse that vision. One of my hopes is that we can pour resources into the spiritual (theological and biblical) education of our younger parishioners and fire them to lead us anew in the ways of God in our changing world. I would like to see us find ways of developing small vibrant communities that gather to study and reflect on the Word of God and to worship in anticipation of a time when Eucharist and Church leadership will be more inclusive than the present structures permit. That is my hope for the whole church, not just for Ballarat, although Ballarat has the capacity to become a beacon of light in this respect. The dedicated teachers in our schools might provide the impetus. The declining participation in the celebration of Eucharist is a huge challenge. Some of this is doubtless related to the sexual abuse crisis and to Ballarat as its epicentre in many respects. Other contributing factors would seem to be the changed and changing nature of the society as a whole. The exclusion of women from church leadership roles is a serious challenge. The twentieth century creation in our Church of the insidious notion of gender complementarity serves to sustain their exclusion. We have work to do and we have faith-filled people with the capacity to address the challenges we face.

**The Sisters of Mercy have always been a strong presence in your parish. Tell us a little about their history in the Ballarat area. How do you envision their role within the community in the future?** Five Mercy Sisters came from Warrnambool to Ballarat in 1881. They began teaching at St Alipius' within days of their arrival here and then established Sacred Heart College. Our foundress, Mother Agnes Graham, established a foundation in Colac in 1887 and never returned to Ballarat. Mother Xavier Flood became the superior and principal of Sacred Heart College. She was the driving force behind the establishment in 1910 of Aquin Teachers College (now the Ballarat campus of Australian Catholic University). Our ministries over 142 years in Ballarat have included teaching from kindergarten through to teacher training, adult faith education, provision of three boarding schools and a hostel for student teachers, tutoring, mentoring, home visitation, the home nursing service, diverse parish ministries, catechetics in State Schools, refugee and asylum seeker support, provision of low-cost accommodation, ministries of prayer, counselling and spiritual direction. The role of the sisters is now a more contemplative one, underpinned by a strong commitment to Pope Francis' call to ecological conversion. We do not claim a monopoly on the spirit of mercy or even on the particular refraction of Mercy we have inherited from our foundress, Catherine McAuley. I would love to see our material and personnel resources contributing to an ever-deepening exploration of the God of Mercy at work in our world. Our Mercy Associates and the staff of schools in the Mercy tradition are key partners in ministry. Their roles are increasing while ours are decreasing. I am confident that religious life in general and vowed Mercy life in particular will persist, though in radically different forms.

**Over the past fifty years there have been many changes within the Church. In your opinion what changes have been the most significant?** Vatican II turned Catholic Church life upside down. The recognition that the Church is the people of God rather than simply a hierarchical institution was a very significant change that has still to be realized in the everyday life of the Church. Baptism is now understood as entry into a community rather than as a door into heaven. The biblical renewal that was affirmed by Vatican II has already had far reaching effects on the life of our Church community. There is a renewed recognition of the action of God's Spirit in the world that finds expression in the opening paragraph of Gaudium et Spes: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ" (GS 1). The vision of Vatican II opens the way for greater ecumenical as well as interfaith and inter-religious dialogue and engagement. Finally, there is the church's new engagement with the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. The plight of the most marginalised, of those enslaved and impoverished is at the heart of our mission. If we engage seriously as a faith community in the 2023/2024 Synod on Synodality, there are grounds for hoping that we might learn to listen to the most disparate voices and walk the journey of life together for the sake of a world where war and slavery and poverty and destruction of species belong to the past.

**Finally, anything else you would like to add?** Just to return to 'I Have a Dream'. Our whole tradition is grounded in God's transformative dream for the whole of creation, God's Kin-dom. It is good to belong to a worshipping community that struggles to understand and to contribute to making that dream a reality in our world.



**Carmel (pictured left) and Chris (pictured far left) taught in many of our Diocesan primary schools, with Carmel teaching at St James Sebastopol; St Patrick's Manangatang; St Francis Xavier Ballarat East; St Mary's, Warracknabeal; St Colman's Mortlake; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Birchip; St Alipius, Ballarat East; and Chris teaching at St Mary's Warracknabeal; St Malachy's Edenhope; St Columbus Ballarat North; St Alipius, Ballarat East; Our Lady Help of Christians Wendouree.**

**The Diocese congratulates Carmel, Chris and Veronica on this special occasion and thanks them for the contribution they have made in sharing their gifts and spreading the Good News.**





## An Exciting Partnership

February 13 2023 was the fifteenth anniversary of the national apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples, with a particular focus on the stolen generations and the trauma and impact this had on all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The national apology was an integral step which highlighted the need for all Australians to work towards a genuine reconciliation.

Around the same time or a bit earlier, St Patrick's College was embarking on developing and implementing a program to provide places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and through these, quality educational opportunities to them as SPC students.

St Patrick's continues to articulate and illustrate its commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students via our offerings and indigenous education programs at the College. We currently have approximately fifty indigenous students, seventeen of whom, are boarding students who come from the top end. The College is incredibly proud of these young men and the growth and progress they continue to make at SPC.

This year, St Patrick's has commenced a partnership with The Clontarf Academy. 'Clontarf' is a highly regarded organisation with a network of partnerships with schools. The primary aim is to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys in their pathways through school. There are approximately 145 'Clontarf Academy' schools across all Stated and Territories of Australia.

The Clontarf Foundation exists to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and by doing so, equips them to participate more meaningfully in society. The first month of this partnership has been truly positive and the response from the young students reflects this. It is hopeful that in time, the benefits of this program for the College's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students will be significant.

*Steven O'Connor - Principal*

## The Sacred Tree

*There is a story, it dates back to the 1950's. This story tells us of a lady from Morton Plains, south of Birchip, who lived with her brother and was concerned about him driving home from a local establishment having to pass through a notorious rural intersection to get home. The story is now legendary and goes like this.*

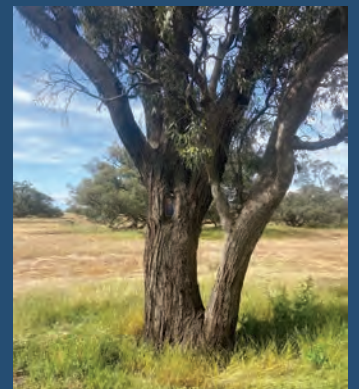
*Monsignor Martin O'Keefe, who was parish priest at Watchem at the time, assisted Miss Green in placing the picture of Our Lady of the Way in a tree beside a dangerous intersection near Watchem in Northwest Victoria. Mons O'Keefe blessed this picture of Mary, and Miss Green's brother was able to continue to travel safely through the intersection. In fact, to this author's knowledge, no serious accidents have ever occurred at this terrible corner even though it is still in disrepair.*

*Around twenty years ago, Michael (pictured right) and Lucy McLoughlan, who live across from the tree, replaced the picture which had been overtaken by ants, with a laminated copy. They organised local handy man, Mick Hogan, to put a steel frame around it to reinforce it from the weather and local wildlife. Back in the early 2000's when the pipeline was being laid throughout the Wimmera Mallee, it was detoured ten metres around the tree as it was deemed to be a sacred spot.*

*On further investigation (google search), I could not find much information on Our Lady of the Way except for a shrine "In Saint Charles, Missouri, called Our Lady of the Way: it is believed to be the only one in the world dedicated to the Virgin Mary under this title."*

*On April 2 after Mass in Birchip, there was a blessing at the 'Sacred Tree' followed by a cup of tea in the Warmur fire shed nearby.*

*Prayer to Our Lady of the Way O sweet Mary, our heavenly mother, be the guide of our steps along the often steep and rocky path of life. When we come to the end, be for us the door of heaven and show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.*





# Mini Vinnies

Sacred Heart Primary School worked closely with Vinnies to help people in Casterton who were doing it tough in the festive season. Vinnies usually sent food and gift hampers to families, but in 2022 they decided to hand out vouchers to be spent at businesses in town - so instead of collecting donations, the school raised money. A great approach to support the businesses of Casterton as well.

The school community came up with many ideas and set to work making them happen - so Zooper Doopers were sold at lunchtime on Fridays and a drive thru lunch held. All the money raised on the concert night selling popcorn and raffle ticket sales went to Vinnies. Thank you to all the families who donated goods for the raffle and a big thank you to Sports and All, Element and Sunnyside and Co who also donated items!

We raised a great amount for the Vinnies Christmas Appeal! What a beautiful way to make a difference in the community in this season of Advent.

Marlee Robbins – Sacred Heart Primary School Casterton



## Donation to accelerates SLEEPBUS VISION



An innovative solution to tackle the region's homelessness crisis will become a reality sooner than anticipated after a generous donation by a much loved community group. The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat pledged \$50,000 to efforts towards the Future Shapers sleepbus proposal.

The sleepbus, which has already seen success in Maroochydore, Melbourne and Sydney, could help house a minimum of twenty rough sleepers in the region. It is anticipated to contain twenty partially sound proofed pods, with each room being fitted with a television broadcasting free-to-air programs as well as a separate channel dedicated to airing the details of relevant welfare services in the area.

Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Business Manager, Andrew Jirik (pictured fourth from left), said he felt compelled to make the donation after hearing about the idea from various media outlets and realising it aligned with his organisation's ethos. "I saw the article in The Courier and I heard something on the ABC and it was just a project I knew we could help with," Mr Jirik said. "It complements what we do in our social services arm and social housing space but this is much more immediate and I saw that we could help with some funds and actually make it happen. So it was a good fit for us."

gforce employment and recruitment apprenticeship and traineeship consultant Joeline Rayment, who forms part of the Future Shapers cohort, said her group was in utter "shock" by the diocese's selfless contribution. "We follow up on all avenues and there's always that hope there but the support of the value of \$50,000 is amazing," Ms Rayment said. "It means we get a bus but more than that it means that we have the support of organisations and groups in Ballarat, who have been long standing parts of Ballarat, and who see the value in this as well." Ms Rayment said the donation has now allowed the Future Shapers to reach nearly three quarters of their \$100,000 target. "We're really close; we're over the halfway point. We're up to about \$70,000. We just need the last of the funds to make sure that the building doesn't get hindered." She said if all went to plan Ballarat could see the bus out on the streets as early as May

Ms Rayment said the Future Shapers were not going to stop at one bus having ambitions to advocate for more in Ballarat to cater for the region's most marginalised groups. "One bus isn't the end. Not only are we wanting to sustain the bus and keep it running, we also want to then go for a pink sleepbus for women and kids," she said. For those interested in donating to the Future Shapers fundraising campaign visit <https://www.sleepbus.org/fundraisers/homelessnesscentralhighlands>

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Malvika Hemanth and picture by Lachlan Bence





## The tree

A magnificent art installation now dominates St Joseph's Primary School hall in Warrnambool. Like all trees, this one started with a seed. That seed was an idea from one of our parents in the Primary School Association (PSA). Over the course of a few meetings the seed was planted and the idea began to grow. The PSA threw their support behind the project and Andrea Welsh enlisted the St Joseph's Art Team of Cara Chisolm, Di Brown and Jo Barfus McCoy.

And from there the seed began to grow.

Every child in the school, all six hundred and twenty of them, designed an individual piece of art to be etched onto their leaf.

Through many trials and designs the tree was finally drafted and fittingly for our school is modelled on the majestic Moreton Bay Figs from the Botanic Gardens. Andrew Suggett, a local artist, was co-opted by the team to paint Warrnambool landmarks as features in the backdrop. Finally, the leaves were added to complete the picture.

At a recent assembly, I tried to convey to the children that this tree is only so wonderful because of the contribution of each of us. Each leaf, although good on their own, become a masterpiece when put together. So it is with a school, a family, a choir, a team or a class. Together we can be so much more.

Finally, it is important to thank and acknowledge some of our community who have enabled this piece to come together. Andrea Welsh planted the seed, Adrian Benson and the PSA watered it (with financial support). It was our Art team, Cara, Di and Jo who tilled the soil and laboured and it was our children whose creativity has brought the tree to life.

My hope is that many years from now, these children (maybe with their children or grandchildren) will visit St Joseph's, find their leaf and be pleased that they have contributed to a masterpiece.

*Matthew O'Brien – Principal*



## INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

At their annual International Women's Day Breakfast held on Friday, March 3, Loreto College Ballarat had the honour of inducting three incredible alumni into the Women in Time - Inspiring Alumni initiative.

The 2023 inductees are Sister Trish Franklin ibvm AO (Class of 1968) in the category of Religious & Spiritual Leadership, Michelle Payne OAM (Class of 2003) - Sporting Excellence, Gender Equity & Inclusion and Olivia Sellars (Class of 2015) - Young Achiever & Entrepreneur. All with incredible stories of determination, leadership and Loreto spirit.

Each inductee shared a different but incredible story as exemplars of the Loreto values. Sr Trish spent many years working in Thai refugee camps, teaching English and swimming to Vietnamese children, with her focus on the children who were discarded by family. Olivia is working in stage management at the Sydney Opera House, living her dream job. Michelle made history when she was the first female jockey to win the Melbourne Cup.

Congratulations was also extended to Georgia Halstead who received the Women in Time - Student Award at the breakfast. Georgia was recognised for highly developed leadership skills, resilience and enthusiasm. We thank previous inductees of the Women in Time - Inspiring Alumni who continue to sponsor this student award, recognising amazing students.

Congratulations to all award recipients, such phenomenal women and students. Loreto Ballarat is lucky to have inspirational and strong women in their network.

*Judy-Ann Quilliam  
Director of Marketing & Development*



## A Treasured Gift from Baronga to Yanaoca



*I received a package from Mildura which included a bag of fifty pairs of Rosary beads lovingly crafted by Mrs. Nancy Petrucci from Baronga, on the NSW side of the Murray River. Friends had contacted me asking whether Nancy's offer of the Rosary beads would be of any benefit to our mission here.*



*I accepted the offer without hesitation. The Rosary beads were gifted to young people who celebrated their First Eucharist in November. They were thrilled to receive them and affirmed our universal Church. A gift from a woman of Italian heritage, living in Sunraysia in Australia to people of Indigenous heritage in Peru, all sharing a common faith heritage.*

*escape into the more familiar world of fantasy, which was in its own way a truly spiritual one. More than anything, I remember the rhythm of the prayer which lulled one into a sense of security.*

*For me, one of the most powerful lines in the Gospel of Luke comes at the end of the Annunciation scene following Mary's self-abandonment to God's will: 'And the angel left her....' (Lk 1,38). From this point on, it seems as though Mary is left completely to her own human devices. Throughout the journey, she confronts doubt and misgiving, rejection and isolation, and pain and suffering. And yet, through her role as the mother of Jesus, she remains the bearer of the mysteries; at times so joyful and at others even glorious, and others so incredibly sorrowful.*

*As Christians we do not attempt to explain away the mysteries of life, nor do we pretend to have the answers to those mysteries. Rather, we attempt to be at home with mystery and to take time to contemplate and reflect upon it. This is the essence of the mantra which we call the Rosary. As we get older, perhaps we do not feel any closer to an intellectual understanding of the mysteries of life, but I trust that we are able to experience them in a fuller way. The joyous and the glorious are further savoured, and the sorrowful are experienced with a more profound sense of consideration and empathy.*

*Mary occupies a very special place within the hearts of the people of the Southern Andes of Peru, as she does throughout Latin America. In fact, Mary is venerated with special devotion among so many people throughout the world where life has been associated with human struggle and deprivation. The story of my own forebears, Catholics from Ireland and Scotland, carries within it this same devotion to Mary and the tradition of praying the Rosary. In the absence of priests to regularly celebrate Mass in the rural outposts of the early Australian colony, the Rosary was the means through which families maintained a spiritual focus and unity of faith and tradition.*

*As for so many others born before the 1970s, my memories of praying the Rosary after the evening meal are vivid and heartfelt. The repetitiveness which could cause boredom for the youngest members of the family was alleviated through permission granted to use the beads as a means to*

*For the people of the Southern Andes, there is a connection between Mary the mother of Jesus, and the Pachamama, the Earth Mother. As Jesus is God incarnate, Mary is the Pachamama incarnate. That does not make her a goddess, but rather an instrument through which the life-giving power of the Creator God flows. This too is a sacred mystery and one which I must continue to ponder.*

*So, on behalf of our young people here in Yanaoca, I thank Nancy for her gift, the result of a labour of love. I have no doubt that as she silently threaded together those beads, as a mother, she reflected upon the gift of her own life and the gift that she, through God's grace, has been able to bestow upon her own children and grandchildren. And I pray that together with Mary the mother of Jesus, she continues to be at home with the mysteries that weave themselves between time and eternity.*

Fr Michael McKinnon – Yanaoca, Peru

## Celebrating the Feast of St Brigid

St Brigid's College Horsham recently celebrated the Feast Day of Saint Brigid. The occasion was marked with a liturgy in the school stadium attended by all students and staff.

Principal Mr. Gerard Raven spoke to the school about the history of Saint Brigid and the significance of the Brigidine Sisters to the College's history.

*Malory Ryan - Compliance & School Development Officer*  
Our Diocesan Community - March 2023







## Wellbeing Project

Students from St Brendan's Primary School Coragulac, along with teachers Liz McGuane and Kate Parker, created tour guide books for refugees arriving in Colac. Students selected sites around Colac which are free to visit and accessible to everyone. The information was presented on collapsible books and the children even added QR codes to give the users easy access to information.

Fr Michael O'Toole visited the school and was presented with the Tour Guide books that the students had made for new arrivals in the Colac community. The amount of work that went into the books was phenomenal and they look absolutely superb. Fr Michael does amazing work with the refugee community in Colac.

To also deepen the children's understanding of what it is like to move to a new country with a totally different culture, the school was fortunate to have Agnes (mother of Cuba) come in to talk to the students. Agnes told about her life coming from a big family in Uganda and what it was like to leave her family and culture behind to move to Australia. Agnes's story was fascinating and made a big impact on the students. We thank Agnes for sharing her amazing story.

Leanne Eastman - Principal



## AGRICULTURE & HORTICULTURE EXCURSION

On March 1, St Mary MacKillop College Year 12 Agriculture and Horticulture Class travelled to three different farms in the Lake Boga area, Bethune Dairy, Chasney Estate and Wattle Organic Farm.

This excursion was part of their assessment for Unit 3, where they are investigating how the agriculture and horticulture industries are responding to a range of challenges through innovations and solutions.

It was wonderful to have the opportunity to speak with farmers and to learn from them what changes to farm practices that they have implemented, the advantages and disadvantages of farming in Lake Boga/Tresco and their ideas for the future.

Many thanks to Sally Bethune, Gary Chasney and Nathan Free for sharing their time and their passion for the industry.

Emma Doherty - Science Teacher





# Earthcare Parish



St Patrick's Cathedral Parish Ballarat Parishioners gathered on Sunday afternoon, February 19 with Dr Susan Crowe and Caritas Diocesan Director Jillian Hogbin to share their individual journeys on caring for our common home. St Patrick's received its Level One Earthcare Parish Certificate, acknowledging that the Parish led by Fr Ed Moloney has committed to caring for our common home and begun its journey to becoming a living Laudato Si' community.

Parishioners further developed their understanding of Laudato Si' and expressed a desire to understand more as they journey towards working to completing the Earthcare audit and action plan later this year.

## School's Back



Bishop Paul Bird and Tom Sexton, Executive Director of Catholic Education, welcomed all back for 2023.

A Message from the Bishop - Bishop Paul Bird

In our diocese, we rejoice in fifty three Catholic primary schools and eleven Catholic secondary schools. Some are quite small; others are much larger, with over a thousand students. But whether they are large or small, our schools have a common mission. They seek to nurture the gifts of each student and build a community inspired by the teaching and example of Christ.

Jesus came that we might have life and have it to the full. Our Catholic schools seek to lead each student to the fullness of life. Jesus came to serve. Our Catholic schools encourage students to use their gifts in service of the community.

As we begin a new school year, I ask God's blessing on all the students, staff and families involved in Catholic education. Each year brings its own challenges and this will be true of 2023. However, considering the gifts and dedication of our school communities, I am confident we will meet the challenges of the year ahead. When we see the vibrant school communities throughout our diocese, we have good reason to have firm faith in the future.

Our Diocesan Community - March 2023

A Message from the Executive Director of Catholic Education – Tom Sexton

Welcome back to the new school year. After the challenges of the past three years, I pray that 2023 will be a calmer and more settled year for us all, as we carry out our noble vocation in the service of our precious students as we enact our vision: As partners in Catholic Education and open to God's presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.

In regard to the challenges posed by COVID-19 over the previous three years I would like to again say I commend all staff in the schools around the diocese, I am grateful and in awe of what was accomplished during this period. You have been beacons of hope for your community and our wider Diocesan community. As Pope Francis says, "Every moment spent nurturing children and young people is an act of hope for the future."

A special welcome to new staff who have joined one of our sixty four schools across our diocese this year. Let us embrace new challenges, support each other and enjoy 2023.

### DOBCEL Board Meeting



The first DOBCEL Board meeting for 2023 was held at St Patrick's School in Camperdown on Tuesday, February 7. On Tuesday evening, the Board Directors and CEB staff hosted a very successful dinner for local School Advisory Council Chairs, Parish Priests and Principals.

As part of the Board Directors' commitment to visit all schools within the Diocese on an annual basis, they began the year with school visits to Casterton, Penhurst, Dennington, Port Fairy, Mortlake, Hamilton, Terang, Colac and Camperdown.



# ALL SAINTS ALL SOULS

November is the month when the Catholic Church especially remembers those who have died. Tuesday, November 1 was the celebration of the Feast of All Saints, a time for remembering all of the Saints who have gone before us having performed many great and charitable works in their lifetimes. Wednesday, November 2 was the Feast of All Souls' when we remember the members of our families, our ancestors, our friends, community members and pioneers, all people who have died; and we pray that they will come to know the joys of life in heaven with the Risen Jesus.

On these days it is good to take the time to remember loved ones who have passed away. Share some good memories of them, look at photos and laugh about good times you had with them, visit their grave if you want and are able to, light a candle for them and say a prayer for them: *Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord. May perpetual life shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

During this week students at Our Lady Help of Christians Primary School Murtoa spent time exploring *Día de los Muertos* (The Day of the Dead) which originated in Mexico and Central America. It aligns with 'All Saints' and 'All Souls' Day celebrations. Five facts the students discovered were:

- It's not the same as Halloween
- It originated in Mexico and Central America
- It's a celebration of life, not death
- The *ofrenda* (altar) is a central component
- Flowers, butterflies, and skulls are typically used as symbols

In Catholic tradition, the butterfly can represent and symbolise the Resurrection. We know that the butterfly has three phases during its life: The caterpillar - The caterpillar which just eats symbolises normal earthly life where people are preoccupied with taking care of their physical needs; The chrysalis or cocoon - The chrysalis or cocoon resembles the tomb; The butterfly - The butterfly represents the resurrection into a glorious new life free of material restrictions.

In recognition of how important the butterflies are used in various celebrations, our students designed butterflies and placed them in our special prayer garden to remember loved ones who have passed away.

Cathy Grace - Principal



Gavan O'Brien passed away on November 14, 2022 at 71 years of age. The Funeral was held at St Mary's Catholic Church Swan Hill on November 21 officiated by Fr James Kerr. Gavan was a parishioner of the Holy Family Parish Northeast Mallee as a resident of Lake Boga and earlier life spent in Culgoa.

In his eulogy given by friend and cousin Paul Bowler, Gavan was described as: "..... an incredibly authentic and genuine fella. Down-to-earth and never complained about his own physical maladies. He loved his family unconditionally and was a dedicated, besotted husband - and that proved to be his best choice, Teresa. They were inseparable. Gav may have been unlucky with some aspects of his life but he was fortunate enough when it came to love. Their journey started when they were young and over the years their friendship, love, respect and connection with each other never waned. They honoured their "until death do us part" vow. Gavan and Teresa's relationship was a great example that even through adversity, true love conquers all.



**Tribute to Gavan**

Gavan's faith was important to him and he and Teresa attended Mass regularly. The ultimate aim of being a good Catholic is to be more 'Christ like' in our every day dealing and interactions - showing humility, compassion, understanding, caring, sincerity and generosity of spirit. All qualities Gav had in spades and displayed on a daily basis. I'm not sure if 'barracking for the underdog' is part of the Catholic value set, but if Father James here will grant us a little poetic licence, perhaps we can squeeze it in under the "Stand up for the down trodden" clause, in which case Gav should receive some extra credit from St Peter. Gav died with rosary beads in both hands and a medal pinned to him that he'd got from Father Payne as a child. Gav's final words on this earth were to his beloved life partner Teresa - He simply said "I love you". Besides Teresa, Gav will live on in James and Kerrie, his children and between them Leah, Ellie, Grace, Indi and Gyp with the next generation just over the horizon. Gav will also live on through the wonderful personal legacy he leaves in each of our hearts."

Teresa O'Brien

Our Diocesan Community - March 2023

# Symbolism of special tree

*Damascus College Ballarat celebrated Enviroweek by creating a special tree to symbolise the very thing we need to care for, our planet. Enviroweek is celebrated during October 22 – 28 and gives schools and students the chance to have fun while connecting with the local environment and community. The Sustainability Committee invited the school community to continue to find ways to make small personal changes that help reduce negative impacts on the environment. The tree, a symbol of growth and rejuvenation was fitting, as small changes in our behaviour can repair any human-imposed damage to the environment.*



*The wooden tree was created by technology teacher Mr Ross and was displayed in the St Martin's Resource Centre for all to enjoy. The tree had been deliberately left unpainted so that the natural beauty of the wood grain can be appreciated.*

*At the conclusion of Enviroweek, Year 9 Horticulture students planted twenty eight new native trees along the reflective trail at the back of the campus. The trees have been a collaborative effort between students over the two semesters in the 2022 school year. Semester one students collected the local Acacia seed from the school campus and experimented with different treatment methods to simulate natural events known to trigger seed germination, such as fire, flood and drought. Semester two students then took over the care of the trees until they were big enough to plant out.*

*We are also happy to report that 100% of the native gums that were planted on National Tree Day have survived and the students have been weeding and tending to these trees. With the record rains last year, watering the trees had not been necessary. Congratulations to all the 2022 Horticulture students who have helped make Damascus a greener space! Thank you to everyone who has been making a special effort to respect and care for our fragile planet.*

Sarah Boswell - Leader of Marketing & Development & Kayla Robson

## St Colman's welcomes new principal

Janet Cain felt it was time to take the next step as she signed on as St Colman's Primary School Principal after decades working in the region. Janet was welcomed to

the school, taking over from outgoing Principal Stacey Atkins. "I've been teaching in this area with Hampden schools network, so I worked for twenty-five years at St Patrick's Primary School in Camperdown and then spent three years at St Thomas Primary School in Terang," she said. "I've had leadership roles with each of those schools, so when this opportunity came up I thought it was time to put my hat in the ring and take the next step."

Janet she felt "very lucky" to have the opportunity to get her start at a smaller, tight-knit school. "Everyone at St Colman's is switched on to what they're doing, so I've been rolling with the punches and continuing on with what has already been built. The school certainly has some good practices in place. The staff are dedicated and prioritise the children, and because it is a small school the kids all play together in the yard. It is such a nice, connected feeling between all the students, from prep all the way through to grade six. This is the smallest school I've worked at as St Patrick's was as high as 350 students, St Thomas' had around 120 and now here at St Colman's we are with just under 50."

Janet said her focus for the year would be on improving literacy practices. "We'll be bringing in a structured literacy approach which is going to solidify what we do from prep to grade six, she said. "It will be a big push throughout the school, lifting our literacy date. Our other focus at St Colman's is community engagement. We want to get the parents back at the school and involved in terms of not only helping out at barbecues but really being involved in their children's education, knowing what they are learning and how to support it at home." Janet said she had enjoyed meeting some of the parents in the school community and welcomed the opportunity to meet with anyone.

*Article courtesy of the Terang Express.  
Student leaders (from left) Spencer, Billie and Noah  
with Janet.*





# Ash Wednesday



St Joseph's College Mildura attended a liturgy led by Fr Matt Thomas to celebrate Ash Wednesday at the Sacred Heart Parish Church this year. Staff and students were invited to receive the ashes as a symbol of repentance and contrition. During the service, staff collected their Homeroom and Pastoral Care Project Compassion Boxes to raise funds for Caritas Australia during Term One.

The ashes used at the service were made from the blessed palm crosses used at the 2022 Palm Sunday celebrations. While the ashes symbolise penance and contrition, they also remind us that God is gracious and merciful to those who call on Him with repentant hearts. His divine mercy is of utmost importance during the season of Lent, and the Church calls on us to seek that mercy during the entire Lenten season with reflection, prayer and penance.

*Paula Cox - Director of Catholic Identity*

*Let the words you speak always be full of grace* Col 4:6



The staff of Catholic Education in the schools and offices of the Central Zone gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat on January 27 to ask God's blessings on the 2023 year of learning, beautifully led by Fr Justin Driscoll. Over six hundred educators gathered, with an energetic and spirited hum of conversation and reconnection filling the sacred space. The words of St Paul were used, and all were encouraged to reflect on the message of Colossians 4:6 – 'Let the words you speak always be full of grace'.

The following words were shared as a touchstone for the year ahead as we strive to bring the light of Christ into our schools and the wider diocesan community. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote, 'Let the words you speak always be full of grace'. This message was written to a community receiving distorted accounts of Christian conduct and belief. St Paul was urging Christ's followers to be above the misrepresentations. His words could be seen as inviting people into dialogue about Jesus and the Christian message in the world.

The words of St Paul will guide us through the year as our Catholic Education theme and as we bring the light of Christ into our schools and the wider diocesan community.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote, 'Let the words you speak always be full of grace'. This message was written to a community receiving distorted accounts of Christian conduct and belief. St Paul was urging Christ's followers to be above the misrepresentations. His words could be seen as inviting people into dialogue about Jesus and the Christian message in the world.

We are invited to do that again today by Pope Francis who provides three fundamental guidelines to help us dialogue or speak with grace. These are "the duty to respect one's own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and sincerity of intentions." May our words, actions and demeanour show others that God loves them. May we know that this love calls us to work together in Catholic Education as we pursue fullness of life for all.

As the name of each education community was read, a representative was invited to come forward to receive the message of St Paul and to display these words prominently in each school to remind all to 'let the words you speak always be full of grace'.

*Jo-Anne Bond and Kate Lawry - Catholic Education Ballarat*

# Vocation



*The difference between a vocation and a job is the former requires you to take your heart to work while the latter just requires you to turn up.” (Ann Rennie, Australian Catholics, Summer 2002, 23:6)*

*“Vocation” was the theme of the Diocesan Pastoral Workers’ recent gathering at the Pinnacle Lodge, Hall’s Gap from 24 - 26 October, 2022. A small group of pastoral workers, mainly volunteers from the northern, central and southern diocesan zones, came together to revive their enthusiasm for their call, after a two-year absence due to COVID. Participants included Maree Roache, Mary Lancaster, Evelyn Gurry, Ann Maree Convery, Jacinta Rice CSB, Maree Holt CSB, Marie Morgan, Noreen Ryan RSM, Mary Rita Thomas and Helene Clarke.*

*Roles of our 2022 participants included hospital and homebound visiting and Eucharistic ministry, church liturgical ministries, financial support, aged care, knitting for the needy, secretarial skills, parish-school liaison, organisational and leadership roles, mentoring newcomers, study and spirituality groups and media power-point liturgical and spiritual presentations.*

*This year, Bernadette Wurlod, Pastoral Educator and Supervisor in Clinical Pastoral Education and member of St Thomas’ Catholic Community, Terang was our facilitator, pictured centre left. She*

*acknowledged the Country of Budja-Budja (Hall’s Gap) and then through art, story, scripture and pastoral resources, Bernadette led us into reflection firstly on both positive and negative aspects of our parish vocation using our skills in caring, listening and companionship in vulnerability. We then contemplated key words from Scripture, such as: “I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10) and a reminder of our origin in the words - “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Ps. 139: 13-14. This meditation linked us with the vocation of Jesus and our own incarnate creation and call as baptised Christians. These words also prompted other guiding words from scripture.*

*Using the symbol of the useful saw until it is worn down and needs sharpening we were then asked to consider the question, “How do we sharpen the saw in our lives?” In a group reflection we shared many ideas on how we take time out to re-energise ourselves creatively and healthily and discussed team and time-restraint issues. We were also reminded that busyness can be a form of escapism and we cannot work effectively in ministry without sharpening “our saws”.*

*Besides our delicious Sunday evening barbecue we also had a very enjoyable meal at The Flame restaurant on Monday evening, relaxing and sharing experiences.*



*In reflection over these days and in the final review meeting on Tuesday morning, recollections, experiences and future dreams included:-*

- Gratitude for the 30 year history of this group founded by Diocesan Pastoral Associates and always enthusiastically guided by Clare Arundell.*
- Plenary Council and Synodality goals.*
- Recognition of parish lay ownership of parishes and the significant role of women.*
- Encouragement of the use of necessary resources.*
- Sharing resources with one another.*
- The need to continue reflection, creativity, action and review.*
- Continuation of the Diocesan Pastoral Workers’ (or Influencers’?) Group.*
- An enthusiastic and appreciative acknowledgement of Bernadette’s skilful and enriching guidance and recognition of her valuable role in parish ministry support.*
- Gratitude for continued financial help from the Bishop and the CDF who also donated bags for this event.*

*The group also affirmed Maree Holt CSB (Ararat) and Mary Lancaster (Warrnambool) who revived this group with their planning and enthusiastic dedication after the lockdowns of the pandemic. At our final liturgy on the theme of The Potter, presented by Mary Lancaster, we shared inspiring words from our prayer to take with us as a focus for revitalising our vocation through our ministries during the next year. Needless to say, we are also looking forward to this year’s meeting in October 2023.*

Jacinta Rice CSB





# Christmas at Nullawil

A Children's Christmas Service was held in the "Holey" Barn - St Josephs at the Nullawil Heritage Museum in the morning on Sunday, December 4. The last combined children's church service was held at Nullawil Uniting Church in 2019 and coordinated by Lois Bartram, with assistance from Wendy Watts and Kaylene James. The Christmas and Easter children's services held at St Josephs and the Uniting churches were unable to proceed in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID restrictions. Kaylene had the idea for the day at St Joseph's "Holey" barn motivated by a desire to continue the combined children's services. Kaylene contacted families in the community and was assisted by Wendy Watts in creating a family friendly event.

It was well supported by Nullawil Community members with some travelling from Wycheproof and Culgoa to attend, and some proud grandparents travelling from Donald. It was the first hot day for the season with temperatures in the high 30's, but after months of rain and floods and with harvest still to be completed, no-one was complaining about the conditions. Teenagers and children enthusiastically participated in all aspects of the service including reading, praying, singing Christmas songs and acting out the nativity story.

People were invited to bring Nativity scenes to add to a display on the altar at the church. There were many and varied Nativity scenes of different styles and sizes and made of different materials. Margaret Pollington had a nativity display nestled within a carved-out Mallee Root made by Margaret Elliot. Fr Gerry Prunty, East Wimmera Parish Priest called in on his way from Mass in Birchip to Mass in Boort and brought a Nativity from Bethlehem.

After ninety-two faith-filled years, St Joseph's Catholic Church shut its doors at the end of 2020, coinciding with the departure of Fr Eugene McKinnon. Following its closure, significant items were relocated to the suitably named Holey barn at the Nullawil Heritage Museum. The barn was so named due to the numerous holes in its walls, but has since been lined making it suitable to house the St Joseph's memorabilia. Many of the relocated items had local significance, with the altar built in Donald and the pews from the Towanninie Church. Other significant items moved to the barn are the Stations of the Cross, the Nativity, the Statue of St Joseph, the Baptismal font and a collection of smaller artifacts which help portray church life.

An offering of \$213.65 was taken up for "The Christmas Bowl" appeal to assist people around the world who are experiencing hardship and suffering.

A light luncheon followed the service, made by "The Mallee Bunker Cafe and Pantry" at Culgoa and subsidised by the Buloke Bounce Back Grant.

Christmas Carols at the Winston Church was held on Sunday afternoon following on from the Children's service. In days gone by, the annual Winston Christmas celebration was a highlight of the calendar year, heralding the start of the festive season and summer holidays. It was a less extravagant, less materialistic time, with simple pleasures shared with friends, neighbours and community. Following the Carols program, guests were invited for afternoon tea in the catering shed compliments of the Buloke Bounce Back Grant.



Kaylene James

## Clean Up Australia Day

Participating in a national litter reduction day like, Clean Up Australia Day, is one of the ways we can show our commitment to taking care of the earth and responding to Pope Francis' call to take care of our 'common home'. St Joseph's Primary School students in Red Cliffs cleaned the school yard, outer boundaries, churchyard, skate park and Erskine Ave as part of this event.

Parents were also encouraged to attend. Bright yellow gloves available for students to wear were a highlight. Clean Up Australia Day is also a great way to inspire students to learn about the impact of rubbish on their local environment while playing an active role in their community. More information can be found at <https://www.cleanup.org.au/schools>.

Naomi Kennedy – Principal



# Formation in the Diocese



In his article in the October 2022 ODC, “Spotlight on Liturgy”, Bishop Paul highlighted the letter from Pope Francis regarding the importance of Liturgy in the life of the Church and the significance of each of us developing “the art of celebrating”. Formation days about Liturgy and the different ways it can be celebrated were held late last year as our diocese endeavours to enhance our Liturgical celebrations.

The Liturgy Team at St Patrick’s Cathedral took the theme of the Pope’s document on board and organised a day on October 8, for not only their own parish community but for communities in the diocese, “Sing Assembly Sing: a day for all to explore the role of the Assembly in enriching the Mass”. The team invited Dr Paul Taylor (Executive Secretary Bishops’ Commission for Liturgy and National Liturgical Council) and Rev Dr Kevin Lenehan (Master Catholic Theological College) to give the key note addresses. Ms Sophy Morley (Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator Diocese of Sale) presented workshops as did Fr Andrew Hayes, Laura Avery, Jude Gustus and Bernard Kirkpatrick.



Key messages from both Paul and Fr Kevin were the importance of the full, conscious and active participation of the assembly and the other liturgical ministries in the public worship of the Church. We were also reminded that the Gospel teaches us to focus not on how many gather, but on what happens to those who do gather in our liturgical assemblies. The various workshops were further opportunities where participants were offered ideas upon which to focus. We explored where some hymns come from and how a better understanding of Scripture helps us to connect more deeply to the liturgy; the importance of the liturgical year and how seasonal music, in which the assembly may participate, can draw us closer to Christ through the unfolding of his life,

passion, death and resurrection; and insights into the universality of music and the voice as an instrument were also considered by those in attendance.

Throughout the day we were asked to reflect upon such questions as: How does the liturgy lead us deeper into the mystery of Christ and his Spirit? Are our assemblies effective in forming us as disciples of Jesus and members of his crucified and risen Body? In what way can the assembly be a sign of Christ’s presence in the world? Questions that we continue to reflect upon as we prepare and celebrate liturgies in our communities.

Although unable to be with us, the day was supported by Bishop Paul and his article became a centre piece for the gathering prayer and further reflection. The Cathedral Community wish to thank the Diocesan Foundation for the financial support given to the gathering.

On Sunday, November 19, individuals from the different communities in the Star of the Sea Parish, South West Coast as well as parishes further afield, gathered to hear Bishop Paul, Fr John McKinnon and Dr Susan Crowe from the Liturgical Commission present on the importance of Sunday Assemblies in the absence of a priest.

Bishop Paul spoke to the group about the importance of Pope Francis’ document “Desiderio Desideravi” and the content that is so important for all of us to read and reflect upon. He highlighted that part of the document where Pope Francis “speaks of a sense of wonder at how God has come close to us through the ‘paschal deed’ of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus”.

Susan spoke to the group about the importance of being able to have a liturgical celebration when a priest is unable to be present on a Sunday. She explored the protocols of the celebration and highlighted the importance of having a team able to prepare and reflect upon the Liturgy of the Word which is the main aspect of such a celebration.

Fr John highlighted the importance of reflecting upon the Scripture prior to the Sunday gathering and gave many ideas on how parishes and liturgical teams can implement this reflection process. He also told the group to have confidence in themselves, that they have much to offer from their own life experiences and how important it is to link these experiences to Jesus’ words in the Gospel.

The day concluded with Evening Prayer led by Bishop Paul. Thank you to Fr John Fitzgerald and the community of St Joseph’s Warrnambool for making everyone feel so welcome.

*Diocesan Liturgical Commission*







are a lot of people who cannot afford a roast Christmas lunch," Vin said. "There would be quite a number of people who could quite easily go and purchase the ingredients for Christmas roast, but they are by themselves. It is really important that people connect."

COVID-19 saw the team host a "pick-up" Christmas roast in 2020 and 2021, with meals packaged and available for people to take home. However, Vin said he was glad to be able to return to the event's regular format. "We had quite a lot of people who thanked us for the beautiful meal, but said it just wasn't the same as when we came together," Vin said. "I think Christmas is about joy, giving, sharing and community. I think most other people see Christmas in some terms like that. We can just gather together and share some sort of joy on the day. "I think that is important. I think it is important for those who can to share what we have and what we can contribute for our community."

## Christmas community lunch returns

A long-standing Ballarat Christmas tradition returned last year after a COVID-19 disruption. Our Lady Help of Christians' Wendouree free Christmas community lunch was back on, in person, for 2022, after two years of having a socially-distanced roast.

The Christmas day lunch, hosted at the Our Lady Help Christians' Parish Hall, dates back to 1991. Volunteer Vin Dillon (pictured above with Karen Davies) said the tradition came about when a friend's mother was too sick to attend their family Christmas roast in Melbourne. "They woke up in the morning and the mother was not well, so they couldn't travel to Melbourne," Vin said. "At about 2pm she was feeling really flat, so she went to go and wash her car and she couldn't get a bay at the car wash. There were all these people that were out washing their car, lonely on Christmas. That is where it started, trying to meet that need."

Since then the annual event has blossomed, from an initial attendance of fifteen people to more than one hundred and forty - so much so attendance has been capped on some years. Vin said all in the community were invited, and he saw a mix of people come to the event. "There are a lot of people who are really lonely on Christmas, there

The normal assortment of Christmas roast food and dessert was available. Singing and dancing were also part of the day.



Chef Fiona Patterson and her daughter Brittany Patterson have been volunteering for six years.

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Alex Dalziel and photos by Lachlan Bence and Nieve Walton



## Very exciting

St Colman's School Mortlake students are very excited to be finally playing on their newly resurfaced court under their "shed" after years of planning and fundraising.

The project has been four years in the planning. There were many hold ups along the way but it has certainly been worth the wait.

The total cost of the project was \$180,000 which has been funded by a combination of the annual School Raffle (\$19,000), a government grant (\$25,000), a loan from the Catholic Development Fund and the balance with our own funds.

The new facility will enable the students to remain outside during recess, lunch time and during PE classes regardless of the weather. We are grateful for the support of our families and wider community in helping to make this project a reality.

Janet Cain - Principal



## World Interfaith Harmony Day

In celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week, the Ballarat Interfaith Network hosted a Flag Raising Event on Wednesday, February 1, to celebrate religious and spiritual diversity across the city. Harmony Week, an initiative of the United Nations, was founded in 2011, following the recommendation of King Abdullah II of Jordan at the time. The aim is to bring together people of all religions, and those of no religious persuasion, to recognise that our common core belief in harmonious living as members of the worldwide family of humanity far outweighs our differences.

Building bridges of understanding and respect between people of different religions and spiritual persuasions is also a core mission of Ballarat Interfaith Network, which celebrated its 20th Anniversary as an organisation this year.

Musical performances, prayers for peace and wisdom from various religious representatives were a feature of the day. Keynote Speaker, Obaid Noor, from the Islamic

community, spoke about his experience of living in Australia's multicultural community after limited exposure to other belief systems earlier in his life.

The morning concluded with the Ballarat Interfaith Network's flag being raised by the Mayor, Cr Des Hudson, Elham Jamali (Deputy Chair of Ballarat Interfaith Network) and Fr Michael O'Brien of St Peter's Anglican Church.

### Ballarat Interfaith Flag:

The Flag is unique to this Interfaith Network and the City of Ballarat. It is the outcome of a City grant several years ago, where local artist, Kat Pengelly, guided interfaith members through workshop sessions to design their own flag. The Blue Background in the lower section represents the Ballarat community; The White Background above it represents spiritual diversity; The Curved Line between these two colours symbolises a bridge connecting the Ballarat community on an upward path to a greater understanding of spiritual diversity; The Blue Circle in the centre represents the earth, and its humanity; The Orange Stars on an ascending trajectory symbolise harmony, and a spiritual path from earth to light.

*Jo-Anne van der Voort – Ballarat Interfaith Network Member*

Photo above courtesy of Ballarat times, Tim Bottams and photo left originally posted on Ballarat Interfaith Network Facebook, credit to is Yvon Davis

Bishop Garry Weatherill from the Anglican Diocese of Ballarat, Ballarat Interfaith member Jo-Anne van der Voort and Bishop Paul Bird



## Opportunity embraced

Three Mercy Regional College Camperdown current Year 12 students chose to embrace a great opportunity through the summer break. Angus, Emily and Katerina enrolled in ACU's SUIT (Step Up Into Teaching) program. SUIT is an Australian Catholic University (ACU) early entry program. It provides secondary school students considering a career in teaching the opportunity to experience learning in a university environment. The participants enrolled in either one or two university level courses at ACU: *Digital Technologies and Understanding Learning and Teaching*.

Congratulations to Angus, Emily and Katerina on enrolling and successfully completing their chosen units. Students who pass their SUIT studies and achieve a minimum 25 score in VCE English will receive either an unconditional (two units) or conditional (one unit) offer to study a Bachelor of Education degree at ACU. Offers of a place at ACU will be made before the TAC offer rounds. We hope that a similar opportunity will be available to current Year 11 students at the end of 2023.

*Sharon Gillett - Principal*





# Energy Audit Day at Port Fairy

St Patrick's Primary School, Port Fairy held a Sustainability Day to finish of their 2022 school year. The School Leaders started the day by going to each class for two hours and doing activities such as reading books about energy, organising energy detective journals and executing a count of lights in the classes' respective areas.

After the first break the 5/6 students set up their science projects in two different areas, the hall and the new school building. Some of the projects that were set up were balloon racing, airplane making (paper), drinking candles and liquid conductives.

All of the tasks were completed with little to no electric power due to the day being a 'lights out' day, meaning almost no energy was used throughout the day. This was also a great day because we all got to wear costumes related to energy. Some of the costumes were electricians, scientists, evil scientists, suns and more.

All up it was a fantastic day. We had so much fun and all will be looking forward to this year's big Sustainability Days.

Olga Lyons – Principal



## Remembered fondly



Sr Marie Louise rsm, who died on January 10, had a place of note in the history of the Sisters of Mercy, Ballarat. Marie Louise's devotion to Mary was legendary. Her refrain when asked to pray for something was 'I'll ask Our Lady'. Ask she did and invariably her prayers were answered! She died peacefully at Mercy Place Ballarat after a very brief illness. May she rest in peace.



Sr Irene Monigatti rsm died peacefully in the Gandarra Palliative Care Unit, Ballarat on February 18. Irene had been a teacher since 1958 and taught in many schools in both the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Ballarat. We remember Sr Irene's family at this sad time, especially her sister, Teresa Monigatti rsm. May Irene rest in peace in the eternal embrace of her loving God.



It is with sadness that Loreto College Ballarat share the passing of Sr Bernadette Ziesing ibvm, a former Principal of the College who passed away peacefully in Adelaide on February 12. Many staff and past pupils have fond memories of their time at Loreto with the much-loved Sr Bernadette. May her soul rest in the love of the God she had so faithfully served over all her years.  
Our Diocesan Community - March 2023



# SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON MENTAL HEALTH

A large crowd turned out for the 2022 MENTAL Brekky, which aims to shine the spotlight on mental health. St Patrick's College Ballarat in association with the Chris Yeung Fund hosted the Brekky at the Ballarat Golf Club.

The College were honoured to have former Victorian Premier and Old Collegian Steve Bracks AC (SPC 1968-71) as guest speaker of the event at the Ballarat Golf Club with Steve Moneghetti as emcee.

The MENTAL Brekky is a major fundraiser for the College's Chris Yeung Fund, which provides financial assistance to current families experiencing mental health struggles.

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, it was wonderful to see so many people come out and support this event and help raise crucial funds for the CYF to continue their work.

Donations to the Chris Yeung Fund can be made by contacting the College's Alumni and Foundation Officer on 5322 4442 or [lliston@stpats.vic.edu.au](mailto:lliston@stpats.vic.edu.au)

More information on the Chris Yeung Fund can be found at this link: <https://www.stpats.vic.edu.au/community/chris-yeung-fund/>

St Patrick's College



## The Voice

*St Alipius Parish Primary School Ballarat East value student voice and empower students to use it at every opportunity. Recently, some students were invited to share their thoughts about the possibility of an Indigenous voice to parliament at the Ballarat & District Aboriginal Co-Operative. They spent time informing themselves about the topic and were given the opportunity to share their opinion. They represented themselves beautifully and demonstrated that age doesn't matter when it comes to having a strong voice.*

*Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV) has released a statement, Relentlessly Pursuing Reconciliation, in support of a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament as articulated by the Uluru Statement from the Heart.*

*The upcoming national referendum on the constitution provides an opportunity for Australians to support the Statement from the Heart and to embrace the cries of our First Nations Peoples for a just future, a means of recognition and a way forward for healing and learning together.*

*More information can be found at <https://cssv.org.au/publications/cssv-backs-enshrinement-of-indigenous-voice-to-parliament/>*

Emily Clarke - Principal





## Five minutes with Mons. Glynn Murphy.....

**Where were you born? Tell us about your childhood.** I was born in Sydney as a baby boomer of the later 50s, now in my later 50s. I grew up mainly in Swan Hill on the Murray River. St Mary's Primary, Swan Hill. Swan Hill High School and Assumption College, Kilmore in secondary education. On to ANU in Canberra and the Defence Department as a public servant, before entering Corpus Christi Seminary in Melbourne, for the Ballarat Diocese in 1977.

**You have been ordained forty years this year. When did you know you wanted to become a priest? When and where were you ordained?** I had considered the Priesthood in Year 12 at Assumption College. A wise Marist Brother (who ran the farm, smoked cigarettes in his office and had his collie sheep dog under his desk) suggested I do a couple of years 'out in the world' and test the calling. Sound advice. The idea persisted and became stronger in '76 in Canberra. I entered the seminary in '77 with a decision to "come and see" (Jn 1:39) about a priestly vocation. I was ordained a priest on August 12, 1983 at St Mary's Church, Swan Hill - the family church, as it were, for celebration and sadness over the decades. It was a great weekend of faith and celebrations.

**If you were a colour what would it be? Why?** Green. It's a traditional colour of the Australian Army, along with red. Army is one of the finest institutions of our nation. Army members for over a century have sought to bring some safety, relief, protection and hope to innocent people in desperate circumstances: be that man-made chaos or natural disasters. The Army ethos of sacrifice and courage is well grounded in Gospel values.

**What was the best thing about becoming a priest, what was the hardest?** The 'vocation' of priesthood (living a constant calling, rather than 'doing a job') is in some ways both the best and the hardest reality of being a priest. Unlike a 'job', you can't change it on a preference. It is a way of life that shapes and etches the very identity of the soul: an eternal truth in a finite world. To me, this is the essence of my 'pilgrimage' of faith through the decades of mortal life I have been given, with others, as 'entrée'. As for difficulties, our own Calvary times only have one thing going for them: we are in Go(o)d Company! Something beneficial will come out of them, even when not immediately obvious. So goes the history of our family - the Church. Thousands of years and counting.

**If you chose a song which most represented you at this time, what would the song be? Why?** Allowing myself some levity, "I won't back down" by Tom Petty. Faith and discipleship need to stand firm in our contemporary society - and in our sometimes wavering lives. When they are challenged, yet stand, faith and discipleship bring hope.

**Tell us about being a chaplain/priest in the Australian Defence Forces? What made it special? What challenged you?** It was a great privilege to be Chaplain to many young and motivated Australians from all across our nation. Whatever their background or understanding of God, they



recognise the pastoral support of their 'Padres'. Many deepen their spiritual lives due to the challenges and demands of military life. Operational service in its many dimensions places the harshest of realities of life into young lives. Families of Defence members also bear the sacrifice, constant moves of home and separation from the one in uniform. Some receive the dreaded knock at the front door, which shatters their lives. Chaplains always stand at that door. My 'parish' involved parishioners who could be ordered onto a C130 and flown to challenging environments and duties at very short notice. A tsunami in Papua New Guinea in '98 was fairly challenging with thousands killed. It's difficult to walk through a shattered school house and see the written poetry of children and their paintings on the wall, knowing they have been swept away. The Chaplain is always with his people in their duties. He is their spiritual comfort in chaos. I spent three years at the national Operational Headquarters, where one sees every global Operation in which the ADF is contributing (a lot of demanding activity for our military members). The ADF is charged with the defence of our people, nation and others to whom the national government sends our military forces. The challenges are constant for all. For all Chaplains, there is a ministry to assist the reintegration of a generation of young soldiers back into the blessed sanctuary of Australian life, after years of Operational duties (such as East Timor '99 & '06, and the Middle East from '02 to now).

**Where have you been as a priest? What are some of your favourite memories?** St John of God Hospital Chaplaincy, Ballarat Cathedral, OLHC Wendouree parish, St Paul Pontifical University Ottawa Canada (Canon Law), Ottawa parishes, Ballarat Bishop's Office/Tribunal, supplying in many Diocesan parishes on weekends as Bishop's Secretary over eight years, Army Chaplaincy Ministry in Townsville, Papua New Guinea, East Timor, Brisbane, Canungra, RMC-Dunroon, Baghdad, UAE, Afghanistan, Kuwait, the Canberra region and currently back in parish life in the diocese from 2018 (also served as part time Principal Chaplain - Catholic until age retirement in Dec

2021) I have merged the former Warracknabeal and Hopetoun parishes, plus the Nhill and Horsham parishes into 'St Paul VI Parish' Wimmera-Mallee.

Also Baptisms and Weddings all over Australia, as one of a very few Catholic Chaplains in Army (therefore many requests). Baptisms are always a joy. To see the immense and gentle potential of an infant soul, held in the loving gaze of adoring parents and family, presented to the love and grace of God, gives rest and shade to old campaigners on our pilgrimage. It is a gift to all who are present. And personally, the living memory of the love and laughter of my parents and sister.

**Tell us about the Ballarat Diocese?** As a priest, my first years were a joy. Many clergy in parishes of course and, it seems now, more people throughout the rural regions and small towns. The socio-economic pull to the cities has had an effect. Sacramental and wider parish life always had me in a variety of ministries, across a broad range of

people and age groups - much as it still is for the Aussie priest.

I think the core of the Diocese was as it still remains: rural Australians who meld their faith into the demands of family, work, social challenges and their share of sorrows. They see God in the 'everyday' experiences of life and, as people of practical faith, they are fairly good at knowing how to 'dance in the rain' rather than decry the storm.

**Finally, anything else you would like to add?** I have happy memories of many priests over the decades, including those who enjoyed life and ministry in the parish of Swan Hill and surrounds. Take one good Australian poem, one stock-whip, one Fr Bill Melican, mix liberally and enjoy.

Many people I ministered to as a young priest back to the mid-80s are still warmly remembered. May God walk with them now and forever (through entrée, into the Main Event).

## Inspiring Alumni



The Emmanuel College Warrnambool community continue to admire the work of Inspiring Alumni, Sr Natalie Houlihan ibvm (Class of 1991) in her recent appointment to the Loreto Sister's Institute Leadership Team. Natalie is now the Australian and South-East Asian Province Institute Consultor for the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM) globally.

This new role for Natalie saw her relocated to the Vatican towards the end of 2022, where she now works closely with the other IBVM Consultors and members of the Institute Leadership Team. Their mission is to support the growth in faith and freedom of each person through IBVM's ministries in education, social and ecological issues, pastoral care, health care, and arts and music.

As Natalie settles into life in Rome, she has already met with Australian Ambassador to Italy, Ms Margaret Twomey AM and the Ambassador to the Holy See, Ms Chiara Porro.

Natalie was inducted as an Inspiring Alumni in 2010 for her work with the Loreto Sisters, teaching and mentoring students and young teachers, primarily in East Timor, but also as far as Europe and South Africa.

*Candice Hampstead – Alumni Coordinator*

*Photo: Sr Natalie Houlihan ibvm with her mother Beverly at Emmanuel College's celebration of St Ann's Day in 2017.*

## Mass of Remembrance

Each year St Alipius Parish Ballarat East organise a Remembrance Mass for families who have lost someone special in the last twelve months. Family and friends were invited to join parishioners from St Alipius and Ss Peter and Paul in Buninyong to this special Mass of Remembrance. The name and a photo of those whose funeral has been celebrated during the year was on display.

The Remembrance Mass for 2022 was held on Saturday October 29 at 6pm in St Alipius Church. A BBQ was provided for people to stay and have a bite to eat following Mass. The parish hopes that this Remembrance Mass is one way for people to find some peace, knowing that their loved one is in God's care.



*St Alipius Funeral Team*



## EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAINING EXERCISE RETURNS TO ACU



The screams of injured patients and gunshots rang out across Ballarat's ACU campus as fourth year paramedicine and nursing graduates took part in a mass casualty disaster exercise along with army medics and the city's emergency services. More than three hundred people from ACU, Victoria Police, the Country Fire Authority, State Emergency Service, St John Ambulance, Ballarat Health Services, two Victorian Medical Assistance Teams and three Health Battalions from Adelaide took part in the exercise - the first held since 2019.

The scenario began with a vehicle-borne attack, running victims down, from a gunman with two hostages. The gunman then entered a building, shooting victims, before letting off an improvised explosive device in the university's quadrangle and continuing his shooting rampage in another building. To make

the emergency as realistic as possible volunteers, most from other years of the paramedicine and nursing course and university staff, were made up with fake wounds and injuries to be triaged.

About sixty graduating paramedicine and nursing dual degree students formed the health response, taking on the roles of health commander, communication, casualty clearing officer and triage officers with the remainder of students on the triage team treating the casualties.

ACU Ballarat Campus Dean, Professor Bridget Aitchison, said the annual exercise provided crucial insight into real-world mass casualty events, allowing students to finetune their training, learn and make mistakes without putting lives at risk. "Our students are in their fourth year of study, so they have done their practical experience on placement, but nothing really prepares them for a mass casualty or disaster of this scale," she said. "They don't know how they will respond until they are in it, and by doing a simulation that's as close as possible to the real thing they get firsthand experience of what it's like to be in that pressure cooker."

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Michelle Smith and photos by Lachlan Bence



### Six-generation era ends in Dunnstown

The grade six graduation of Sienna Cahir and Kade McKay from St Brendan's Primary School in Dunnstown marks the end of a mighty era of attendees from one family that span six generations. Nellie Leonard, the great grandmother of Sienna and Kade, and her late husband Leo, were both pupils at the school in the 1940s, following in the footsteps of both their mothers (and their siblings) who attended in the early 1900s and Nellie's grandfather, Con Britt, who was one of the early students at the then-new school in the 1860s.

Nellie's own association with the school is also an achievement in itself. After going to school there herself she has been involved for sixteen years as a mother, twenty years as a grandmother and thirteen years as a great-

grandmother. The Leonard's seven children all attended as well as fourteen of their twenty-five grandchildren and seven of their thirty three great-grandchildren, with Sienna and Kade the last of their generation to graduate from the school.

St Brendan's Primary School Principal Inez French said the family had made an immense impact on the school over the years. "They have been fully involved. Small schools rely on families for lots of support. This is a milestone. The family have made such a contribution over the years and really made the school what it is," Ms French said.

The school had its origins in 1858 in a wooden building known as the Catholic School Shed not far from its present site. The school has been known by different names since its inception. It was known as St Mary's during the era of the Josephite Sisters (1891 -1901), the Presentation Sisters (1921 – 1965) changed the name to St Brendan's. The Sisters of Mercy were also involved for a number of years from 1966 until around 1981. After the new school was erected in 1952, the school changed names again and was known as Our Lady of Fatima Primary School. This did cause some confusion as the Church was known as St Brendan's. After some decades the school reverted to St Brendan's so both the church and the school's names were consistent.

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Michelle Smith.  
Photo: (rear) Dianne Cahir, Jaye Cahir, Nicholas McKay, Jennifer McKay and (front) Sienna Cahir, Nellie Leonard, Kade McKay



## Catholic Development Fund

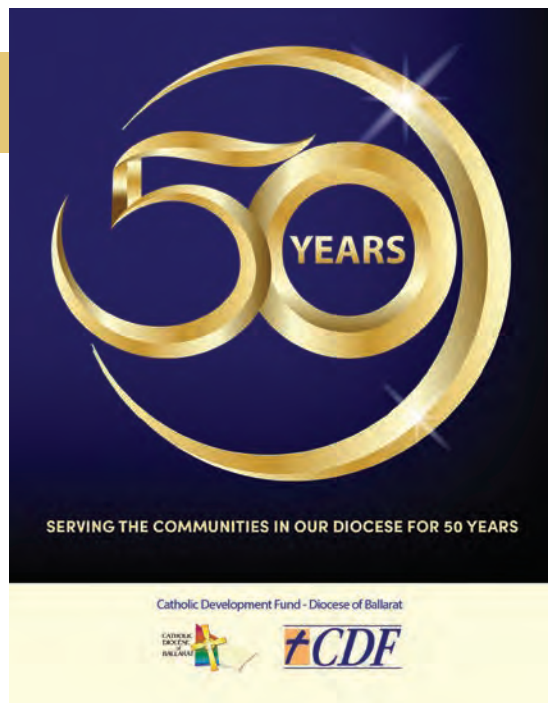
During 2022, the Ballarat Catholic Development Fund turned fifty. Established in 1972, for all of those fifty years it has worked hard to fulfil its mission...

“The Fund aims to maximise the use of resources within the Catholic community in order to provide facilities to invest funds, offer loans at favourable cost for capital and other projects, and provide the means of promoting the pastoral, financial and educational needs of the Ballarat Diocese”.

Reflecting on this milestone, the CDF’s current manager, Andrew Jirik, said “From humble beginnings, the CDF currently has over \$175m of funds on deposit, deposits which through loans, have supported projects costing almost \$300m across the agencies, parishes, and schools in the Diocese”. Andrew thanked the CDF’s supporters and also stated that “the Ballarat Catholic Development Fund looks forward to supporting the communities in the Diocese of Ballarat for the next fifty years”.

The CDF provides full banking services and products to all the parishes, schools and catholic organisations in the diocese. Services and products include an online banking portal, EFTPOS terminals, tap & go devices and school online payment platform for fees, canteen and other activities. The CDF is located on the 1st Floor at 5 Lyons Street South, Ballarat (in the Diocesan Offices) and staff can be contacted on 1800 134 100.

Andrew Jirik - Manager



## BELATED BIRTHDAY WISHES



*Fr Gerry Prunty celebrated his 70th birthday last year in Alice Springs with his sister, Mary. On his return to the Mallee, a series of celebrations ensued across East Wimmera Parish with parishioners determined not to let such a wonderful milestone pass by unnoticed. Fr Gerry had a month-long celebration across the parish with the probability of more celebrations when he next attends our smaller outposts of Boort and Banyena.*

*In Birchip, a surprise PowerPoint presentation was presented to Fr Gerry at the end of Mass thanks to his brother, Mark Prunty supplying some old family photos. It was viewed with Bill Hayley’s “Rock around the clock” singing in the background given that it was a day of celebration!*

*Fr Gerry’s beloved Geelong Cats featured highly in the celebrations with both the theme song, a Geelong coffee mug and a Cats themed cake presented to him. Charlton and Donald and Wycheproof parishioners celebrated with lunch at a local pub, whilst Birchip and St Arnaud marked the occasion with a morning tea in their parish centre after Mass. The celebrations were thoroughly enjoyed.*

Noeline Hogan



## Remembrance Day

The school captains and vice captains of St Patrick’s School were honoured to read poems and lay the wreath at the Remembrance Day Service at the War Memorial in Camperdown. The Camperdown RSL prepared a fitting service to honour the great men and women who have served our Nation through duty, bravery and sacrifice. SRC representatives did a wonderful job leading the Remembrance Day Service at school.

All of the grade 5/6 children created a poppy display for the foyer window with every child in the school having their name written on a poppy. We are grateful for those who sacrificed so much for the freedoms that we have today and pray that they can now rest in peace. Lest we forget.

Tim Bourke - Principal





At its 75th session, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2023 the International Year of Millets. The year is an opportunity to raise awareness of the nutritional and health benefits of millets and their suitability for cultivation in changing climate conditions. As whole grains, millets are a good source of essential nutrients, can grow with minimal inputs and are resilient to changes in climate. They are therefore an ideal solution for countries to increase self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on imported grains. More information can be found at <https://www.fao.org/millets-2023/en> The year of the Millet fits in the Laudato Si's goals of Ecological Economics, Simple Lifestyles and Ecological Education. <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/laudato-si-action-platform/>

Gatherings held across the world have been finalising the responses from local bishops conferences to the Working Document for the Continental Stage, *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent*. Bishops from around the Oceania region met in Suva in early February for their quadrennial assembly, where they finalised their draft response to the working document. The continental responses will be shared with the Synod secretariat to assist with the development of the working document, or instrumentum laboris, for the first assembly in Rome this October. See <https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/> and <https://www.catholic.au/s/article/XVI-Ordinary-General-Assembly-of-the-Synod-of-Bishops> for more information.

*Photos: Front cover: Wheat; Back cover: 1. St Michael's School Daylesford. 2. Ballarat Interfaith Network Gathering. 3. St Joseph's College Ash Wednesday Mass at Sacred Heart Church Mildura 4. St Mary MacKillop College Swan Hill Agriculture Day.*

We are the Catholic Church of the Ballarat Diocese. We gather in the name of Jesus from the Murray to the Sea in interwoven faith communities. Spirit-filled, we celebrate and share our journey; reaching out to nurture all God's people.

Vision Statement for the Diocese