

CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE  
of  
BALLARAT



# OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

News around the Diocese

No. 70 July 2023





# Our Diocese turns 150

In March next year, our Diocese of Ballarat will turn one hundred and fifty. It was on March 30, 1874, that Pope Pius the Ninth issued a decree that marked the beginning of the Ballarat Diocese. So, on March 30, 2024, we will be able to celebrate our 150th birthday!

As we look back on one hundred and fifty years as a diocesan community, we recognise that there were communities living in our part of the world for many years before that. There were Aboriginal communities along the coast and in the mountains and valleys and plains of Victoria for tens of thousands of years. European settlement began in the 1830s. As we celebrate one hundred and fifty years as a diocese, it is right that we acknowledge the First Nations communities who lived here for those many years before our diocese began. It is also right that we acknowledge those who came from overseas to settle here from the 1830s onwards. However, the 150th anniversary will put a focus on the century and a half in which we have been the community of the Diocese of Ballarat.

From the 1850s, the population of Ballarat and other parts of Victoria grew dramatically following the discovery of gold and it was because of the growth of population that the Diocese of Ballarat was established.

The official description of a diocese focuses on the people who make up the diocesan community. The Code of Canon Law describes a diocese as “a portion of the people of God, which is entrusted to the care of a bishop” (Canon 369). So, when the number of people increases, there comes a time when a new bishop is appointed to care for that community. This is what happened in 1874 with the start of the Diocese of Ballarat. The population in the Colony of Victoria had grown so much that there were too many people for the Bishop of Melbourne to care for, so the Pope appointed two new bishops, one in Ballarat and one in Sandhurst (Bendigo), with responsibility to care for the communities of those regions.

The Pope’s decree was in the formal language of the time but the key message was simple, that new dioceses were established to better care for the growing population. Pope Pius the Ninth wrote as “the successor of Saint Peter to whom the Eternal Pastor gave the care of his flock”. This is how he explained the setting up of the new dioceses.

“Lest spiritual helps become lacking to the flock of believers, we are accustomed to increase the number of bishops for their assistance and convenience when we learn that the number of the flock has increased. Since by now the size of the territory of the Church of Melbourne in the Australian Colony of Victoria and the number of the faithful living there are such that, in the opinion of the bishops of Australia and especially of the Bishop of Melbourne himself, it is too difficult for one bishop to exercise care for that part of the Lord’s flock, it seems to us that for the spiritual good and convenience of the faithful we should erect two new dioceses in the aforesaid territory.”



“Wherefore, after we have considered maturely all the circumstances of this matter, and after we have heard the advice of our beloved brothers in the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, we, by our apostolic authority and by the force of these letters, erect and constitute in the territory of the Church of Melbourne in the Australian Colony of Victoria two new dioceses, one in the city of Sandhurst and one in the city of Ballarat.”

The Pope’s decree described the boundaries of the new dioceses. The Diocese of Ballarat would include the western region of Victoria. “For the Diocese of Ballarat, we define as the boundaries the 144th degree of longitude as far as the sea and the Murray River, and that boundary which separates Victoria from the Diocese of Adelaide, or from the Colony of South Australia, in such a way that the same Murray River will be the northern boundary and the sea will be the southern boundary.” Nearly one hundred and fifty years later, we continue to echo the Pope’s words in describing our diocese today. Our diocesan vision statement begins with the words, “We are a community of communities from the Murray to the sea.”

The 150th anniversary will occur on March 30, which in 2024 happens to be Holy Saturday. This means that we will be able to mark the anniversary as we celebrate the Easter Vigil. Each time we light our tapers from the Easter candle, we give thanks that Jesus is risen and is with us as we gather in his name. When we celebrate the Easter Vigil next year, we might well remember that the risen Jesus has been with us as a diocesan community for the past 150 years. He has been with us through the joys and struggles of these years and he promises to remain with us always.

While we will be able to mark the 150th anniversary at Easter, we could celebrate the whole of 2024 as an anniversary year. I suggest that we have some more

extensive celebrations after Easter, once students have returned to school for the second term. I invite parishes to mark the 150th anniversary at Masses on the weekend of April 27-28, with some special prayers and some reflections on the history of our diocese. I invite schools to mark the anniversary during the week of April 29 to May 3. I would encourage each parish and each school to celebrate their own history in the context of the one hundred and fifty years of the history of the diocese. Our diocesan office will provide some suggestions for celebrations. I'm sure local communities will also be able to come up with creative ways of telling their local story as part of the story of the diocese.

I hope to mark the anniversary year with a personal visit to each parish. Our diocese began when the Pope appointed a bishop to look after the people of Western Victoria in 1874. I would love to celebrate the 150th anniversary year as bishop by visiting people throughout the diocese in the course of 2024. I look forward to celebrating with as many local communities as possible.

Our 150th anniversary will be an opportunity for each community throughout our diocese to remember those who have gone before us, those who have laid the foundations of our parish and school communities and the social services and health care that are provided in our diocese today. The anniversary will be an opportunity to review our history, acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses, celebrating the achievements and recognising the failures to live our Christian faith to the full. It will be a chance to take stock of where we are now and look ahead to how we can live as a truly Christian community, sharing the good news of Christ, in the years to come. I look forward to celebrating the anniversary with you.

*+ Paul Bird CSSR*

Bishop Paul Bird CSSR



## THE FILIPINO SPIRIT OF SHARING IN THE COMMUNITY

*During Mass on March 26, 2023, at the St Paul VI Parish in Horsham, Catholic members of the Wimmera Filipino-Australian Club once again participated as readers, commentators and in the choir. Children from the Club also participated as welcomers and in the offertory. In the spirit of sharing the Filipino Catholic culture, the choir sang English Mass hymns usually sung during Mass in the Philippines.*

*To also foster the spirit of the community being as one family, the tradition of sharing a meal as a family after Sunday morning Mass was also organised. Club members prepared traditional dishes to be shared with all other parishioners after Mass at the parish community hall. Just like a family, there were friendly chats, catching up and laughter during the shared meal. Voluntary monetary contributions were collected to help fund future similar gatherings.*

Paulo Abenes

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## OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY (ODC)

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Front cover image and page 4 image: Jen Pepper





## Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity

Globally, Catholics celebrated Laudato Si' Week from May 21-28. In Australia, we celebrated Laudato Si' Week between May 16- 24. These dates are different from the dates promoted internationally to enable us to fully celebrate National Sorry Day (May 26) and National Reconciliation Week (May 27 – June 3) fully. The theme for the 2023 Laudato Si' Week was "Hope for the Earth, Hope for Humanity". This annual celebration allows us to commemorate the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' historic encyclical, Laudato Si' and to reflect on the progress we have made in protecting our common home.

Two positive actions encouraged during this year's Laudato Si' week included:

Firstly, a screening of 'The Letter': a message for our Earth in order to respond to Pope Francis' call in communities. The Vatican urges all people, dioceses, parishes and schools to view this documentary, which was released in October 2022, in collaboration with Pope Francis and the Laudato Si' movement, by director Nicolas Brown. In the documentary, four people from across the world tell of their experiences, hopes and dreams for the world which they will inherit. It is a moving documentary on the message of Laudato Si'. Dr Lorna Gold, Laudato Si Movement Chairperson, says that Pope Francis wrote us all a letter. Our initial reaction is that Pope Francis didn't write me a letter. Well, yes he did. He wrote every person on this planet a letter to share his concerns about the state of the world. It's that simple really, a letter from the Pope.

The documentary brings together four different voices - Voice of the Poor, Voice of the Indigenous, Voice of the Youth and the Voice of the Wildlife - to have a dialogue on the care of creation. Pope Francis tells the story of how Laudato Si' began: "It's so strange. What does ecology have to do with evangelisation? A Bishop told me once, he was travelling from one island to the next by boat, visiting communities and he came across a tree coming out of the sea and he thought that was strange, and commented to the boat's captain, 'Look how strange this is.' The boat captain told him, 'No, there was an island there and now it is gone' In the last twenty years, rising sea levels have claimed the village that once stood here....Doun Baba Dieye. Pope Francis continues: "Climate change. At a certain moment I realised that I had to say something about it from here (Vatican). So I met with some scientists and asked them to outline the problems that we know are clear. Then I met with some theologians and asked them, 'What can we say about this?' This is serious. And that's how Laudato Si' was born. The cries of the earth and the cries of the poor cannot go on."

The film brings the nature of the encyclical to dialogue between Pope Francis and voices from the world. The 2019-2020 bushfires in Australia are mentioned during the Voice of the Youth Stories, with climate change dominating the thoughts of the youth. Those fires affected many people. People died, 24 million hectares of land were burnt, an area roughly the size of the UK and nearly 3 billion animals were harmed or killed. It is a film with stories about many issues. This documentary can still be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rps9bs85BII>

Secondly, parishes were asked to consider their commitment to joining the Laudato Si' Platform as stipulated by Pope Francis and the Plenary Council Decree 8. The Caritas program, Catholic Earthcare Australia, is one way of stimulating and sustaining ecological conversion. This model provides a concrete way to plan for action in our diocese and parishes through action plans based on setting local Laudato Si' goals, with support from Caritas Australia. The first step in this commitment is to register as an Earthcare Parish at <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/earthcare-parishes/>

St Patrick's Cathedral Parish Ballarat parishioners gathered early in the year with Dr Susan Crowe and Caritas Diocesan Director Jillian Hogbin to share their individual journeys on caring for our common home. St Patrick's Cathedral Parish received its Level One Earthcare Parish Certificate after registering as an Earthcare Parish with Caritas - Catholic Earthcare Program. This acknowledged that the parish, led by Fr Ed Moloney, has committed itself to caring for our common home and has begun its journey to becoming a living Laudato Si' community.

Parishioners have since worked together to complete the Earthcare Audit and are working with Catholic Earthcare during the next few months to begin their Action Plan and receive a second star.



# ResourceSmart Schools Awards



St Patrick's Primary School Port Fairy was delighted to announce that it was nominated as a finalists for two categories in the Sustainability Victorian Awards for 2023. This recognition is based on the work of the Sustainability Group during 2022 and 2023. Mr Steere and the Sustainability Leaders travelled to the MCG on June 15 to showcase their projects and be present for the announcement of the award winners. We are just so proud that we have been recognised for these awards.

The two categories were:

**Student Action Team of the Year:** This 4-Star school's sustainability team formed by ninety-three students ran Sustainability Day, a school-wide activity based on studying and working on natural resources. To finance future activities, the team ran a fortnightly sustainability raffle with a prize of fresh produce from the garden. They also participate each month in a beach monitoring activity run by Port Fairy Coastal Group.

**ResourceSmart School of the Year:** Students of this 4-Star school supported the Port Fairy Coastal Group by recording and monitoring data on erosion levels at two local beaches. The collected data is used in literacy and numeracy classroom activities, with the findings later reported to the community. The passion of these students is so contagious that a nearby school has joined them in their coastal mission.

ResourceSmart Schools is offered by Sustainability Victoria to provide practical support to schools to reduce resource use, make cost savings, integrate sustainability into the curriculum and share learnings beyond the school gate. The service is free and open to every Victorian school.

Program features include: Facilitation and support - Sustainability experts support schools on their journey to embed sustainability into operations and provide support on how to measure and track their school's progress; Recognition - Schools can receive Sustainability Certification and can enter the ResourceSmart Schools Awards to be recognised and rewarded for school activities and achievements; Savings - Schools learn to operate more sustainably by reducing electricity, water and waste costs – and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to minimise their impact on the environment; Flexibility - Schools work through the ResourceSmart Schools program to create a unique environmental management system tailored to their needs; and Curriculum - Schools are assisted to embed sustainability into all learning areas and levels of the Victorian curriculum.

*Olga Lyons - Principal*

<https://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/energy-efficiency-and-reducing-emissions/resourcesmart-schools/about-resourcesmart-schools>

## World Environment Day

*What do we teach at St Patrick's Primary School Stawell about the environment? Through Catholic Social Teachings we teach that the earth and all life on it are part of God's creation. We are called to respect this gift. We are responsible for taking care of the world we live in and for sharing all the wonders and resources the earth gives us. Our changing environment prompts us to stop and think about how we live on our planet.*

*World Environment Day on June 5, coming just after Laudato Si Week, is an important event for kids to learn about and understand the environment. It is a day when people all around the world come together to think about how we can take care of our planet and make it a better place for everyone, including plants, animals and humans.*

*Every action, no matter how small, can make a difference. We are reminded that we all have a responsibility to protect and preserve our planet. By understanding the importance of the environment and taking positive actions, kids can contribute to a greener and more sustainable world.*

*Chris McAloon - Principal*





## VINNIES FESTIVAL MASS

On April 27, the St Patrick's Cathedral St Vincent de Paul Conference in Ballarat hosted the first Festival Mass in some years as COVID restrictions in previous years prevented this.

We held this Mass at the Australian Catholic University in conjunction with the Young Vinnies who operate from there. The Mass was very successful due in no small part to the efforts of Tanya Kehoe, who was acting in the capacity of temporary Chairperson of the Young Vinnies, and her dedicated team of young Conference members.



lunch during which a special speaker, Jason Trethowan, National CEO of Headspace, gave us some insights into the role that Headspace plays in the lives of many young people who have some mental health issues.

After the talk, long service badges were given out and Emeritus Vincentians were recognised. A great occasion for all.

Fr Justin Driscoll graciously agreed to celebrate the Mass with us and Tanya ensured that the hall where the Mass was held (the superb chapel was not large enough to accommodate us all) was a very welcoming space.

Around fifty people attended including a number of Melbourne head office people. Fr Justin provided excellent music and gave an inspiring homily. Our members proclaimed the readings and wrote the Prayers of the Faithful. The new Presidents were inducted during the course of the Mass, including Naomi Gerrard who accepted her ACU President badge.

After Mass, we gathered in another communal space on the university grounds and enjoyed an excellent catered



Kevin Elliott – Vinnies Ballarat

## STORY DOGS IN WARRNAMBOOL

*St Joseph's Primary School Warrnambool has joined Story Dogs as part of a National Story Dogs program that reaches over three hundred and ninety schools nationally. We are very excited to have Story Dogs as part of our school community.*

*Story dogs involves a reading session of twenty minutes for four Year 2 students each week with our Volunteer Deb, and her dog Sadie. Susie Alexander is the coordinator of our school program. The Dog team visits on the same day each week.*

*The books are chosen to suit the reading level of the students - the team supplies the books and books can also be from the classroom if a child has a book they would like to read to the dog. During the session the handler often speaks through the dog, for example - Sadie doesn't quite understand what is happening in this part, could you help her out? The child becomes the teacher and confidence soars.*

*The program is free with a commitment to run a fundraiser where the students may wear a touch of orange and donate a gold coin or such. We will be holding an event in term 3 to support this program. In time we may look at sourcing a sponsor for the Story Dogs program. We look forward to a long and successful partnership with Story Dogs.*

Matthew O'Brien - Principal







## ADVISING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Year 12 Damascus College Ballarat student Jessica Hodge has become a member of the Australian Government Youth Advisory Group for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. With upwards of 1000 applications from across the country, Jessica said that she applied to join the group as mental health and suicide is close to her heart and family. "I wanted an opportunity to represent my community and generation, by working towards making a positive change. I believe our actions can make an immediate impact around Ballarat and Australia," she said.

In late March she travelled to Canberra to meet her fellow group members, to collaborate with parliamentarians, ministers, federal departments and agencies. The Labor government has introduced the Youth Advisory Groups to work with and increase the voice of young people in parliament, through which they can share their lived experience, views and ideas on issues that are affecting today's young people. There are five groups, each consisting of eight people aged 16-25 from all around Australia, and focusing on: First Nations, Promotion of STEM, Climate Change, Safe and Supported: Protecting Australia's Children and Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

"During our time in Canberra, we spent time in Parliament House, where we explored the restricted areas of the building, sat in on Question Time in the House of Representatives and were lucky enough to watch the second reading of the Constitution Alteration Bill regarding the Indigenous Voice to Parliament. This was exciting to experience. Whilst at Parliament House, our Mental Health Advisory group had the opportunity to meet and speak with Hon Dr Anne Aly, Minister for Youth and Emma McBride, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

For the remainder of the year, the Youth Advisory Group will work closely with the Department of Health and Aged Care, the National Mental Health Commission and the National Suicide Prevention Office. The group will provide advice, expertise, guidance and feedback in the form of lived experience, working on policies, programs, and prevention strategies to be implemented on a national scale. "I want to see the impacts we make take effect around me. Although it is important for action to come from the government, still so much can be done on a local level, around Ballarat in particular. Together, I hope we can continue to reduce the impact of mental ill-health for young Australians, and I am proud to contribute a small part in creating that movement," Jessica said.

Sarah Boswell - Leader of Marketing & Development

## AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS COMMIT TO ACTIONS TO CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

On June 5 this year, marking World Environment Day, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference launched an environmental action plan outlining practical responses to Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, *Laudato si'*.

The Conference had committed to developing such a plan when it published the 2021-22 Social Justice Statement "Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor." Now the Conference has released the plan and registered it with the Vatican's *Laudato si'* Action Platform.

The actions include the identification and planting of native species on Conference properties in Canberra, using recyclable products where possible and providing prayer resources aligned with the messages of *Laudato si'*. The plan also commits to slavery-free supply chains for goods purchased by the Conference.

In 2022, the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia called on all Catholics to commit to care for the earth as our common home. The bishops hope that the example of the Bishops Conference's Action Plan will encourage others to adopt similar plans. The Bishops Conference's Action Plan can be accessed at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Laudato-Si-Action-Plan.pdf>

Catholic Earthcare Australia is supporting parishes and dioceses in taking their own steps locally as part of worldwide actions in favour of the environment. Some parishes in our Ballarat diocese have already signed up to being Catholic Earthcare Parishes.

Bishop Paul Bird CSSR  
Image: [www.pexel.com](https://www.pexel.com)



## MOTHER'S DAY AFTERNOON TEA

St Joseph's Primary School Coleraine had a wonderful turnout for their Mother's Day Afternoon Tea on Friday, May 19, 2023 with over thirty guests joining the school community. The students at school prepared the food, including zucchini slices and blueberry muffins, as part of the Kid's Kitchen. Mums, grandmothers, aunts and special friends were all in attendance, allowing students to say thank you for the wonderful people they are.

The children read a poem about their mothers, performed a song from Meghan Trainor and then gave the guests various herbs from the school garden. Following this, all guests visited the classrooms to see the learning that has taken place this term. Thank you to Nicole Boxer, Rhianna Paton, Emily Dwyer and our Year 6 leaders for organising the catering and being wonderful hosts to all visitors.



Karl Dwyer - Principal

## ACU virtual international study experiences

*In a small building in central Hoi An, a city in Vietnam's Quang Nam province, a physical therapist and a child with a disability stand ready in front of a computer screen. Some 7000 kilometres away, in a pop-up clinic at ACU's Ballarat Campus, a fourth-year physiotherapy student is on the other side of the screen, running their first-ever telehealth session.*



*If it weren't for the pandemic, this physio undergrad might have been there in person on a short-term international study experience, as ACU students have in previous years in Vietnam and many other countries. But as it turns out, these innovative student placements - run by ACU with the backing of the Federal Government through the New Colombo Plan (NCP) - led to many of the same cultural and educational outcomes as the study tours of years past.*

*"Not one of the students from the Ballarat Campus who took part had been to Vietnam, and two of them*

*had never been overseas," says Alison Griffiths, a lecturer in physiotherapy at ACU. "The students involved in these virtual placements didn't leave Australia, yet they learned lessons about understanding and being sensitive to people from diverse backgrounds and abilities. These placements made having that opportunity and building on that skill set much more accessible."*

*The Ballarat telehealth clinic, run in partnership with the Vietnam-based not-for-profit Children's Hope in Action (CHIA), was one of four virtual international study programs for ACU physiotherapy undergraduates. Three other programs, with partners in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, have been conducted from the Allied Health Clinics on ACU's Brisbane Campus.*

*Initiated by ACU physiotherapy academics Mark Brown and Maria Constantinou, the virtual study experiences connected eighteen ACU physio students and several staff members with overseas communities. "The students saw many patients and made a huge difference to the lives of the people they treated - from elite athletes to people living in remote villages," says Dr Constantinou.*

*While telemedicine has been touted as the next big thing in healthcare, until recently it played a relatively minor role in the industry. The pandemic accelerated the uptake of telehealth technology by both practitioners and*

*patients, making it more mainstream to consult with physiotherapists and other health professionals online.*

*For the Bachelor of Physiotherapy students involved in ACU's virtual placement programs, perhaps one of the main benefits is that they'll take the new telehealth skills they learned into their workplace. "Telehealth is going to be an important component of future health practice and in our programs we are trying to better prepare our graduates for the future, rather than relying on old or existing models of care," says Mark Brown, ACU's Allied Health Clinics Coordinator and the Clinic Discipline Lead for Physiotherapy.*



*It is expected that virtual student placements will now complement the traditional short-term international study experiences of years past. This will enable more ACU graduates to enter the workforce ready to practice in a range of contexts.*

Article first appeared in the Ballarat Courier as branded content for ACU.



# National Family Week Australia

Each year, we celebrate National Families Week (May 15-21) – Australia’s annual celebration of families. The aim of National Families Week is to celebrate the vital role that families play in Australian society. It is a time to celebrate with your family, make contact with your extended family and friends and share in the enjoyment of family activities within the wider community. It is a time to focus on the meaning of family and to make the most of family life. CatholicCare’s theme was “Circle of Inclusion”. It calls us to recognise that every family is unique and that family can include more than just those who are biologically related to us. Family can be those within our inner circle, our closest friends and loved ones. <https://www.catholiccarevic.org.au/page/103/familyweek>

National Families Week is celebrated to coincide with the United Nations International Day of Families on May 15. The Australia wide theme for 2023 was ‘living real, dreaming big’. National Families Week 2023 celebrates families in all their diversity and promotes the importance of family resilience in creating strong, safe and connected communities. The theme ‘living real, dreaming big’ is an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a resilient family, and to celebrate and explore supportive strategies to foster resilience in families. When we talk about resilience in families, we are talking about the ability to cope with life’s ups and downs and bounce back from challenges. Our individual characteristics, our family environment and the communities in which we live, all contribute to our ability to recover in difficult times. National Families Week 2023 is a time to celebrate our individual strengths, explore and celebrate the strengths within our families and communities and dare to dream of a safe and resilient world.

Let’s take the time to reflect on the critical role that families play in teaching, supporting and nurturing children especially as they grow. <https://nfw.org.au/> **Read two reflections for this special week below:**

## Peta Mawby (Daylesford Parish)

Family relationships are like no other really. They give us a sense of belonging and a strong sense of purpose beyond ourselves, much like our relationship with God. My husband Dean and I have two teenage sons who have brought so much joy and depth to our lives and our marriage.

Our eldest son Jack is currently studying in England and it has become even more apparent to us how important family connection is since he left. We have had many impromptu video calls on challenging days or when he has exciting news. We are the people he wants to share his world with first. Our cultural and ancestral ‘family’ matters too, as he has visited many places on our family tree whilst being in the UK and soon will travel to Ireland to explore his great grandfather’s birthplace.

Our youngest son, Alexander is also a special member of our family. He is the instigator of ‘family hugs’ including with the dog! He is the one who most looks forward to our annual family traditions of blackberry picking, mushrooming, chestnut gathering and the celebrations of Easter and Christmas.



The Mawby Family

One of the gifts the pandemic gave us was a reset in our focus. Who did we yearn to hug in those times of social distancing? What family milestones did we miss out on? Who did we just want to sit at the kitchen table with for a chat over a cuppa? I think the answer for most would have been family.

The traditional family unit is somewhat ‘uncool’ in our current society, as there tends to be more focus on individual needs and wants. I feel the rewards of family life far outweigh anything I could achieve on my own and I am so grateful that our Catholic faith promotes and celebrates the important vocation of raising a family.

## Linda Morgan Davis (Colac Parish)

Family – what is a family? Our answer today is different to that of even thirty years ago. A family does not need to be blood related as many blended unions attest today. However, what remains the same is the connection. That is what the Passionist Family Group Movement provides today, fulfilling a need realised fifty years ago. The Passionist Family Group movement aims to build Christian Community through the development of extended families. Family groups create an extended family for all who wish to belong, church going or not, young or elderly, married, single or separated. With loneliness and isolation so prevalent in our society, there is a genuine need for people to know and support each other. Companionship, connection, hospitality and the sense of being part of a community is what our family groups provide.



My first connection to a family group came twenty odd years ago, when I was invited to join a “cuppa at Macca’s” one Sunday morning after Mass. Bringing two very young children to Mass every Sunday on my own was a challenge, but suddenly we were included and felt a sense of community. My children had a connection to others at “their Mass”. They were spoken to and acknowledged. Their achievements were celebrated. There were social events and connection after Sunday Mass. As time went on my nine year old son would regularly spend time at gatherings discussing English football with a ninety year old Scotsman!! We all looked forward to the deserts that came with casserole night!

We have enjoyed the joys and sorrows of others. Children and grandchildren have participated in events. We have shared many meals and cuppa’s and a few adventures along the way. Without having to ask, I know I have the support of others when needed, cutting lawns and cooking meals for those who are experiencing some hardship or crisis. The most important of all is providing companionship and acceptance; the sense of belonging to a community.

St Mary’s Parish Colac recently celebrated thirty years of family Groups and currently has three family groups, whose members enjoy a gathering each month throughout the year.



## OFFICIAL OPENING OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE SCIENCE PRECINCT

*The Emmanuel College community came together for the official opening of its state-of-the-art Science Precinct at McAuley Campus!*

*We were joined by special guests to celebrate the occasion, including Member for Western Victoria Jacinta Ermacora, Mayor Debbie Arnott, Architect Matt Cirillo from Cirillo Architects, Sisters of Mercy Marie Mansbridge and Kathlyn O'Brien and Fr Bill Lowry. Musical performances from the Emmanuel Concert Band and the college production cast of Frozen JR made the occasion even more special.*

*Being also Education Week, we are incredibly proud to showcase our commitment to providing the best science education possible. The project, which includes the creation of three new science classrooms and refurbishment of three existing rooms, was designed with student outcomes in mind. Our Science teachers played a vital role in the design process, ensuring the facilities are flexible and cater to a diverse range of year levels and subjects.*

*Jacinta Ermacora unveiled the plaque for the Science Precinct along with College Captains and Principal Peter Morgan.*

*We thank Jacinta and the Victorian State Government, who were instrumental in supporting our College vision, securing a \$2 million capital grant allocated through Catholic Capital Grants (CCG). The balance of the \$4.9 million project was funded by the College from the annual building levy contributed by Emmanuel families.*

*After the Prayers of the Faithful, guests were invited to explore the fantastic facilities and see learning in action in the classrooms. We are immensely grateful for the support in making this exciting project a reality. The Science Precinct at Emmanuel College's McAuley Campus is a shining example of our commitment to providing outstanding science education for all our students.*

*Montanna Macdonald - Emmanuel College Warrnambool*



Harmony Week is the celebration that recognises diversity, while highlighting inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all. St Mary’s Primary School Hamilton had a number of activities planned for the week of March 20 - 26 to celebrate the wonderful way we work together to bring about harmony and to acknowledge that we can always do better. Each day, the school community discussed what Harmony Week was all about and worked on a Harmony Week School pledge which was then shared as a whole school pledge.

*Terrielynn Groves - Principal*

Our Diocesan Community - July 2023



# Faith at War



*The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat archives currently has on display, "Faith at War and the Priests who served from the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat", an exhibition which explores Priests from the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat who served during WWI, WWII, in Vietnam and Afghanistan.*

*Priests that enlisted from the diocese could serve as Chaplains either in the Australian Army, Australian Royal Air Force or the Australian Royal Navy.*

*Other Priests worked at RAAF bases at Ballarat, Hamilton and Nhill where they served men and women working for the AIF.*

*Chaplains from the diocese became highly respected for their determination to serve alongside troops both in the trenches and on the front-line. They*

*continually placed themselves in danger operating in the most appalling conditions where, "only the devout Christian could hear the still small voice above the cannon or battlefield." Many returned to continue their role as Priests within the diocesan community with many establishing new churches and parishes.*

*This display can be viewed in the archives by appointment only Monday to Friday or can be seen online via the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat website. To visit the archives or if you have any conservation or storage management concerns about your historical documents, please contact the archivist by email [archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au).*

Dr Samantha Fabry  
Diocesan Archivist & Collections Manager

Students and staff at Mercy Regional College Camperdown celebrated their Feast Day on Wednesday, May 24. It was a fantastic day, filled with joy and community. We began with Mass in the Church, celebrating Our Lady Help of Christians and our milestone of fifty years of secondary education at the College. We recognised the dedication, resilience and spirit of all those who have contributed to the establishment and sustenance of our school.

Many past Principals were welcomed including Dr Liam Davidson, Dr Andrew Watson, Mr Gerard Bourke, Mr Kerin Glennen, Mr Peter Griffin and Mrs Berni Sinnott, as well as Mr Tim O'Farrell from DOBCEL. Former Parish Priests Fr Eugene McKinnon, Fr Dan Arundell, Fr Michael O'Toole, Fr Peter Hudson, Fr Gary Jones, Fr Ed Moloney, Fr Bill Van de Camp and current Parish Priest Fr Neville Stanislaus concelebrated with us.



## MRC FEAST DAY 2023

During the middle of the day, a brilliant panel of alumni guest speakers gave us an inspiring insight into their careers and lives after school. We thank Briony, Paul, Julie, Natalie, Tyson, Erin, Rebecca, Lewis, Jack and Jaala for generously giving time to share their stories with us!

A range of treats were available including milkshakes, slushies, ice creams and donuts and a BBQ lunch was enjoyed by all. Our Diversity Dash in the afternoon was a big hit, with lots of colour and fun! Year 12 students helped run the event, which saw a group of students and staff run an obstacle course around the oval whilst being sprayed with colour. Thankfully the sun was out and the cold wind didn't dampen the spirit!

Principal Sharon Gillett notes the significance of this celebration: "We celebrated a remarkable milestone on our Feast Day - the 50th anniversary of secondary education at Mercy Regional College. It was fantastic to welcome many past principals, parish priests and alumni to celebrate with us and our students enjoyed a wonderful day filled with activities." The College will continue to celebrate its 50th anniversary later in the year, with a Jubilee Day planned for Saturday, November 25. Tickets for the day activities and dinner are available at [www.trybooking.com/CHKBB](http://www.trybooking.com/CHKBB)

Toby McKenzie - Marketing, Communications & Community Engagement





The St Pius X Primary School Warrnambool West Mini Vinnies crew went to the local Warrnambool Vinnies store to discover more about how they assist people in our community. We learnt that:

- as a result of the rising cost of living there has been an increase in the number of people in need of things like food, blankets and clothes;
- that there are about forty people who work there and most of them are volunteers; and
- that all donations are welcome in the store. There are no longer bins.

Andrew, the manager, took us on a tour of the store to see how everything is sorted. We then went out to the work area where we saw someone fixing jewellery. We also heard about how the toys are mended and cleaned before being put on the shelves. We saw where the truck comes in to collect rags for places like Dubai.

Finally we had time to have a look at the toys and DVD's for sale. A big thank you Mr Nolan for joining us on this visit. Thank you also to Andrew and the Vinnies volunteers for welcoming us so warmly and for taking such good care of the people in need in our community.

Julie Keeley - St Pius X Primary School

## WYD - Preparing for Portugal

St Mary MacKillop College Swan Hill students Grace Doherty and Anna Whiting, along with teacher, Gerry Vytilingam, are heading to Lisbon, Portugal for World Youth Day 2023.

World Youth Day (WYD) is an international event in the Catholic Church, which occurs every three to four years. Young people from all around the world have the opportunity to see the Pope, receive faith formation and gather together through music, the Sacraments and Fellowship.

Through the support of the Catholic Parish of Holy Family Northeast Mallee and the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation, Grace, Anna and Gerry will be heading with the Archdiocese of Melbourne Pilgrimage Group to join five hundred and eighty-two other pilgrims.

The first 'Pilgrim Gathering' occurred on Sunday, April 30, where pilgrims found out about "World Youth Day Week," chatted with people in their pilgrimage groups and met small group leaders and support staff.

Gerry Vytilingam - Faith in Action Leader





# ANNUAL RETREAT



The clergy held their annual retreat from Monday, February 27 to Friday, March 3 at Halls Gap, led by the former Bishop of the Port Pirie Diocese, Greg O'Kelly SJ.

The five days centred on diocesan priesthood with the main themes being:

- Metaphors of the priesthood;
- In the image of God;
- The presence of God in all things;
- A spirituality of the diocesan priest;
- Journey into discipleship;
- The mission.

Greg's reflective approach and selection of insightful material was appreciated by those in attendance. A couple of the things Greg noted were:

*"There are three means by which, with the grace of God, we grow as priests:*

- *Reflection in prayer on what happens to us in our day;*
- *Theological centred reading (after the one who does not pray, the most dangerous priest is the one who does not read and reflect);*
- *Learning from the people we serve; their witness of fidelity, joy, family love, kindness, faith, sorrow – these must also mould our hearts."*

*"Priestly service is making people aware of, and in touch with, the goodness of God; and at the same time helping them to respond and correspond to God in the way Jesus did. Paul defines it as faith expressing itself in love (Gal 5.6). This service is done in activities that are liturgical, doctrinal, exhortatory, admonitory, prophetic, justice-making and pastoral."*

Fr Kevin Maloney – Vicar General



## STUDYING AGRICULTURE AT MONIVAE

Monivae College Hamilton's Agriculture students have been out and about lately, visiting different kinds of local farming enterprises, from a lamb feedlot, to a winery and then to a large scale cropping specialist. Throughout this Semester students looked at livestock production, cropping and mixed farming enterprises. Time spent at the Agriculture Victoria "Get Into AgSTEM" workshop was another highlight. They constructed a digital soil-moisture sensor that monitors the immediate environment of a plant. They also designed a basic algorithm that would automate a watering system based on input from their sensors. Students looked at the use of precision agriculture technologies and their impact on industry growth, cost, need for education and environmental impacts.

At Monivae, the Agricultural Studies program aims to provide students with practical, real-world experiences in the agriculture and horticulture industries. This focus aligns with Monivae's commitment to nurturing industry-ready students in the field of agriculture and horticulture by exposing them to the importance of understanding and engaging with best-practice regional farming systems.

Kylie Schurmann - Marketing Co-ordinator







## Farewell & Thank you

*On Saturday, April 22 Fr Anthony Nagothu celebrated his Final Mass with St Mary's Parish Robinvale. A farewell cuppa was held afterwards.*

*We were certainly blessed when Fr Anthony came to our parish three years ago. It was very unfortunate timing for him as COVID lockdowns had just begun. This meant that he was unable to meet and talk to parishioners to feel first-hand how our parish functioned. However, he made the most of his time and as he was savvy with technology, he offered Mass online by recording Masses in Ouyen.*

*Fr Anthony has been very flexible with the Sacramental programs. Many catch ups were done over the following years to accommodate candidates and their families. He willingly visited the sick and was exceptional with supporting families with funerals and preparations, not only amongst Catholic parishioners but also people from other denominations and cultures. He made everyone feel welcome in our Church.*

*Fr Anthony will be missed for his genuine faith and for the gentle way he approached his religious vocation. We wish him every blessing in this new chapter of his life and sincerely thank him for leaving our parish so well organised for Fr Shaiju. We will truly miss you, Fr Anthony.*

St Mary's Parish, Robinvale

## OPENING OF THE EARLY LEARNING AND ARTS CENTRE

On Friday, May 5 St James' Parish School Sebastopol opened the Early Learning and Arts Centre. The Centre exemplifies early childhood quality education in a mainstream school context.

Both the centre and the school provide an education that: is constituted from birth to eight years of age, not separated into the categories of education and care. It views children as capable contributing citizens and values all contributions in the collaborations between universities, schools, early childhood centres and industry. It supports teachers as researchers to benefit the profession and enables links with Early Childhood Centres, Industry and Primary Schools.



Studies that follow children over time have established the difference a quality early education (birth to eight years of age) makes. Children are provided with lots of opportunities for play-based learning. They will learn to make friends, share and get along. They will be practising skills fundamental to the development of art, numeracy, literacy and science. When you see children painting, singing or inquiring with concrete manipulatives, know that a lot is happening developmentally and educationally.

Quality early childhood education relies on the skills and knowledge of the educators working in the setting. When children are engaged in education, the educator's actions may be invisible. Parents and visitors may not see the thought behind planning that day's environment and be unaware of the many small decisions, conversations and negotiations that occur throughout the day to ensure children's learning and sense of connection. This facility enables the conscious application of knowledge and skills by masterful educators to support the work of all staff locally, nationally and internationally.

This facility makes public the opportunity and responsibility we all have to make the change concerning the systems and contexts in which our children are raised. Too often, we are told what is impossible and, for the most banal reasons, we rob children and communities of possibilities.

The greatest joy is watching children and educators lost in play and applying their minds creatively to the challenge in front of them. New possibilities are born from curiosity and wonderment. This facility enables new generations to engage with new possibilities as capable and contributing citizens.

Garth Kydd & Peter Fahey - Co-Principals  
Our Diocesan Community - July 2023



## Tiwi Island Immersion Experience



Loreto College Ballarat is committed to developing positive and mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous Communities through the experience of immersions. The Loreto values are at the very heart of these experiences, particularly in 2023 in the Year of Justice. Immersions provide a powerful transformational experience for students and can help students better understand their world and the role they have in it.

During May 2023, eleven students and three teachers from Loreto College Ballarat embarked on the experience of a lifetime to the Tiwi Islands, with Catholic Mission Facilitator Bernadette Sullivan.

After spending two days in Darwin, visiting Nungalinga College, a place that embraces and empowers Indigenous Christians through leadership courses on Art, Faith and Wellbeing, the group caught a ferry to Bathurst Island, one of the Tiwi Islands.

Once on the island they spent eight days immersed in the daily runnings of Xavier Catholic College, as well as

aspects within the local community. The Tiwi Islanders have two religions, their Catholic faith and AFL, so it was a wonderful opportunity for the students and staff to experience a few games of local footy.

Over the week the Loreto College students got to know many local children who attended the College. They experienced classes in the pre-school, primary and secondary areas of the school and looked forward to every afternoon, when after the final bell, they played on the oval with the primary school children.



The students learned a great deal about indigenous culture and the Tiwi people, who belong to one of the oldest indigenous communities. Before leaving, they were invited to a women's yarn circle where there was singing and dancing as part of a traditional farewell. Some students would like to return to the Tiwi Islands when they leave school, as the adventure proved to be life changing. They have expressed how grateful they are for the opportunity and how richer they are for the experience.

Narelle Mulrooney - Graphic Design and Marketing Office



## Celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

*The concept of the Week of Prayer for Christian unity began in 1907 with correspondence between Fr Paul Watson, the co-founder of the Graymoor Franciscan Friars and the Reverend Spencer Jones, a clergyman from Moreton-in-Marsh, England. The first celebration was held in 1908 and focused on church unity.*

*Devout Christians in the Northern Hemisphere celebrate this week from January 18 - 25. In the Southern Hemisphere, our celebrations are held in the week between the Feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost. The theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023 was prepared by a writing group from the Minnesota Council of Churches. The different order of service in each church, was adapted from their original project.*

*2023 Ballarat celebrations began on Monday, May 22 at the Church of Christ Peel Street where Pastor Tim Clark led us in a joyful celebration of faith and fine hospitality in the very comfortable warm, refurbished chapel. Tuesday's gathering was hosted by St Patrick's Cathedral where Bishop Paul Bird CSsR and Fr Ed Maloney celebrated a service of prayer based on the Isaiah text 1:17 "Do good, seek justice". Following the liturgy all gathered in the MacKillop/Glowrey Room for supper and a lively chat. On Wednesday evening, we gathered in the Anglican Cathedral of Christ the King to celebrate a liturgy led by the Very Reverend Michael Davies, Dean of the Cathedral. The final celebration was held at the Ballarat Central Uniting Church where Pastor Lyle Reid and Reverend Lauleti Tu'inauvai lead us in a very moving service on the theme of "Doing Good and Seeking Justice".*

*Throughout the week a bond of friendship and camaraderie developed as new friendships were forged and we celebrated the One God in a variety of styles. All look forward to extending the hand of Ecumenism through our combined celebrations in 2024.*

Kay Curran



# 'Reflections on Lived Experience of our Priestly Ministry'

*You have to be very careful with using misattributed quotes from the internet, but paraphrasing one of my favourites from the ancient philosopher Aristotle about friendship is:*

*Friendship is not only invaluable, but also beautiful. Being a good friend and a good person is the same thing. Friendship is based upon the mutuality of shared experience, knowing that the person you are friends with understands you completely. In my own context as a newly ordained priest, I have never appreciated the need for good friendship more than in the last nine months of parish life.*

*Priesthood is a rather unique vocation. Good friends can understand much of the lived experience of a priest, but some experiences we may have can only really be understood by another priest. Enjoying the friendship of other priests and sharing their joys and struggles is really fundamental to a healthy, integrated ministry.*

*The newly ordained priests of country Victoria including Fr Matthew Restall and myself gathered earlier in the year in Moama, NSW to reflect 'on the lived experience of our priestly ministry'. Around fifteen priests ordained in the last five years from around the Dioceses of Sale, Sandhurst and Ballarat attended the four-day seminar, along with the three Bishops of the respective dioceses and a number of senior clergy including our own Vicar General, Fr Kevin Maloney.*



*This time away together involved input from many contributors and really highlighted the importance of ongoing formation in priestly life. Our discussions traversed many topics including things such as synodality in parish ministry, the art of presiding, ministry supervision, safeguarding those in our care and the importance of human formation. There was also ample time for leisure and to enjoy each other's company. I even managed to play a round of golf at Rich River whilst I was there. Our time in Moama was personally nourishing for me and being able to see some of the people I had studied with (some almost after a three-year absence) was really great.*

*Priests are ordained to serve, to be a support for those entrusted to their care, but they are not imperishable, they need good friendship and support like everyone else. Having opportunities like these to reflect on the privilege of priestly service and the experience of others is very important for those in ordained ministry. Thank you to the Diocese of Sandhurst for facilitating this seminar and the Diocese of Ballarat and our own parishes of St Paul VI and Star of the Sea for the opportunity for Fr Matthew and myself to attend. Please continue to pray for your priests and support them in their important ministry, to be in the service of all.*

Fr William Lowry - Assistant Priest, Star of the Sea Parish SouthWest Coast

## NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

On Tuesday, May 23, as part of the lead up to National Reconciliation Week, Trinity College Colac's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordinator, Mrs Anne McCrickard, organised a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country. The whole school participated in two ceremonies conducted by Ebony Hickey from Colac Aboriginal Gathering Place (Wathaurong), a proud Gulidjan woman, whose connection comes from her mother's family line. The Welcome to Country had great meaning. This was Ebony's welcome to the Trinity College community, on behalf of her people, the custodians of the Gulidjan land upon which the school is located.

The Smoking Ceremony is an ancient Aboriginal custom in Australia that involves burning various native plants to produce smoke, which has cleansing properties and the ability to ward off bad spirits from the people and the land, making a pathway for a brighter future. Staff

and students participated in the Ceremony after Ebony explained the significance and importance of land, culture and respect. She also shared with us a story she has written about Lake Elizabeth in the Otways and the strength of Aboriginal women. Ebony generously donated a copy of this story book she authored with Forrest Primary School students. The book is titled *Yal Yarra's Gadubanud* and is dedicated to the Yal Yarra's, The Wild Gadubanud Women of the Otways. The ceremony and story were both very moving and we thank Ebony for her time and for sharing her story with us. Students appreciated this opportunity and were very respectful throughout the ceremony. It was a sign of greater understanding and of our community moving towards reconciliation.



Daniel Rodway - Acting Director of Faith & Mission

Our Diocesan Community - July 2023



# Celebration of Service to CATHOLIC EDUCATION

On Friday, May 26 over one hundred diocesan staff, family and friends came together to recognise and celebrate staff who have reached the remarkable milestone of thirty years of service to Catholic Education. The evening was held at Damascus College Ballarat and began with Mass in the College Chapel.

Congratulations to the following staff for reaching thirty years of service:

- **Ena Bruty** - Our Lady Help Of Christians School, Wendouree
- **Leigh Denning** - Damascus College, Mt Clear
- **Debra Glasson** - Marian College, Ararat
- **Terrielynn Groves** - St Mary's School, Hamilton
- **Suzanne (Suzi) Haley** - St Mary MacKillop College, Swan Hill
- **Genevieve Hawkes** - St Thomas More School, Alfredton
- **Patricia Lannen** - St Brigid's School, Ballan
- **Elizabeth (Liz) Postlethwaite** - Lumen Christi School, Delacombe



The following staff were noted as also reaching thirty years of service, but were unfortunately unable to join us:

- **Natalie Howard** - Loreto College, Ballarat
- **Peter Ryan** - St Patrick's College, Ballarat
- **Maryanne McDougall** - St Mary's School, Ararat
- **Susan Larkin** - St Thomas More School, Alfredton

Terrielynn Groves gave a moving response on behalf of the recipients. Connecting the theme **"LET THE WORDS YOU SPEAK ALWAYS BE FULL OF GRACE"** with speaking a child's name with love.

We also celebrated with three outstanding educators in our community. The 2023 Diocesan Leadership Awards recognise the exemplary service, leadership and innovation of each awardee and are an acknowledgement of their demonstration of one or more aspects of the Diocesan Education Vision.

## PARTNERSHIP AWARD:

- For commitment to enhancing partnering between the School, Catholic Education Ballarat, parish, or local community that enhances learning for students;
- For ongoing witness to partnership in Catholic education and an active presence in the education, parish, diocesan and/or local community;
- For promotion of Catholic education as partnership in local and extended community.

Recipient of this award was **Linda McDonald - Loreto College, Ballarat.**

## CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP AWARD:

- For leadership that provides active witness to God's presence in education, parish and/or diocesan community which enhances Catholic Identity;
- For excellence in leadership around Religious Education, spirituality, liturgy, religious art, social justice, the founding charism, evangelisation and ecology.

Recipient of this award was **Marion Guthrie - Sacred Heart Primary School, Mildura**

## FULLNESS OF LIFE AWARD:

- For leadership that leads to fullness of life for colleagues and students;
- For excellence in education, staff formation or professional learning and student learning;
- For education innovation for demonstrated commitment to evidence-based practice in education.

Recipient of this award was **Jayne Bosworth - St Brigid's School, Ballan**

Those who were recognised for their thirty years of service and the Award recipients, recognise leadership that reflects one or more aspects of the Diocesan Education Vision being partners in Catholic Education, open to God's presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.



*Kerrie Zammit - Catholic Education Ballarat  
Photos taken by Damascus College student, Jake Sbardella*





## Reflecting on twenty-five years

As I reflect on twenty-five years of priesthood I'm thankful for having been ordained a deacon with Fr Ed Moloney. It's a precious memory to share with Ed. I personally feel that my diaconate ordination was my wedding. It was my forever commitment to God. That's the anniversary I celebrate. What's it like being a priest? Better than it looks and not always what I thought it would be at the beginning. I've found God's kingdom in places I wasn't looking.

I last wrote one of these reflections for ODC ten years ago. Big things in my life since then?

The Ararat Islamic Community's building of a new holy place has been such a gift to me. The Ararat Islamic community are among the holy people. I love them. They've drawn me into a better holiness. I'm a better priest because of Manzoor and Robina and Altaf and Osman. We once read together the story of Moses' exodus from Egypt through the Red Sea, alternating paragraphs from the Bible and the Quran. I look at the texts now and can't tell which is

from where. I know that some people are challenged by this. I'm freed by Pope Francis' "the diversity of religions is willed by God." God wants there to be Muslims. They have a valid place in God's kingdom. Around the world they are building mosques and churches together, side by side. This journey has been priesthood-shaping for me.

Another big thing in my life over the last ten years has been, of course, the Royal Commission and the ribbons on the fences. As a boy from Ballarat I just cry for every broken person, but especially my mates from school, the ones who are broken and the ones who are dead. I still wonder at the wisdom of my mother who made me vestments with ribbons sewn on. "Don't put ribbons on the fence. You be the fence. Put the ribbons on you." It's a horrible stole to wear, but I have to look my school friends and my mother in the eye.

There's good ribbons in my life too. I'm the compere of the Ararat Eisteddfod. I'm the ringmaster, costumes and all, for a week every year, introducing hundreds of dancers to the stage. It's great fun. I value the arts. Again I found God's kingdom where I wasn't looking. I used to think I was taking time off from my work to do this. Now I think that enabling girls (and some boys) to shine IS the work of a parish priest who can do musical theatre.

I don't suppose they'll ask for my reflection again until fifty years of priesthood. I'll be old then. My prayer is that by then we will have made peace with the Muslims, made peace with the people with the ribbons, made peace with first nations people, given women and gender-diverse people more of a go, and Essendon will have won a final, just one would be nice, just one.

*Fr Andrew Hayes*

## Official Blessing & Opening

*On Friday, May 26 during Catholic Education Week, Emmaus Catholic Primary School Mt Clear in the St Alipius Parish Ballarat East had the official opening of their new learning space, the Emmaus Leadership Centre.*

*A Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony were performed by Peter-Shane Rotumah and a blessing service was lead by Fr Jorge De Chavez. The ceremony also featured a script read on behalf of Jason Clare MP - Minister for Education.*

*The Leadership Centre features a retreat room, where grade six students can begin the day twice a week, taking up activities such as yoga, puzzles, art and crafts. In years to come, this building will be the setting where so many young people come to work collaboratively, share their thoughts, be challenged, develop leadership skills, solve problems and learn in a setting where they can genuinely author their own future*

*Ethan Corfee - Principal*





## BE NOT AFRAID: PREPARING AND CELEBRATING SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

On Saturday, April 29, over thirty people gathered in the MacKillop and Glowrey Rooms at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat for a pastoral formation day: "Be not afraid: preparing and celebrating sacraments of healing." Professor Clare Johnson and Dr Paul Taylor from the ACU Centre for Liturgy, along with Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, explored questions about the Sacraments of Healing.

Throughout a number of presentations, including a conversation between Clare and Bishop Paul, the following questions were answered:

- What do Catholics believe about Sacraments of Healing?
- How do Catholics celebrate reconciliation and forgiveness?
- How do priests, deacons and lay ministers care for the sick?
- What is Viaticum and how is Communion ministered to the sick?

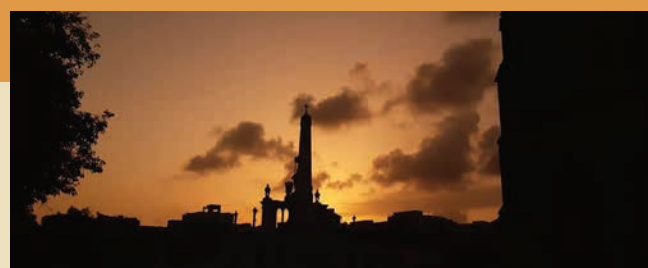
Clare skillfully explained the components of illness from the biological, psychological, spiritual, cultural and social angles and highlighted the fact that the one aspect that is frequently ignored is the spiritual well-being of the patient. She very capably cited references to the Sacraments of Healing from the perspective of Canon Law (Canon 840), in addition to exploring aspects from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Clare's passion for and knowledge of the sacraments – historically and liturgically – came through so strongly, as did her generosity in sharing this with those present.

Through the dialogue session, Bishop Paul shared his own time as a chaplain in hospitals and told the group of many moving times and some of the challenging times when the physical care of a patient was determined to be more important than the spiritual care given at the time of anointing. His gentle manner in the telling of these stories demonstrated that many patients he anointed and prayed with would have gained great spiritual help on their journey.

Paul Taylor reflected on his own family story of caring for elderly parents and what that entails when it comes to the Sacrament of Anointing in the home. He shared artifacts that many of us in attendance recognised from our own families as items that were present in a Catholic home in preparation for a visit from the priest and the anointing of an older family member.

Those attending the day included a group of volunteers from St John of God Hospital Ballarat and also a group of Sisters and staff from Nazareth House. Others in attendance were parishioners from St Patrick's Cathedral and other Ballarat parishes. We all came away from the day a little overawed, but with increased knowledge to enable us to minister in various ways to the pastoral needs of the sick. A valuable resource "Communion of the Sick" created by Fr Tom Elich and Fr Frank O'Loughlin and published by the Liturgical Centre Melbourne was distributed to all who attended.

Susan Crowe and Kay Curran - St Patrick's Cathedral Parish Ballarat



### MISSIONARY TALK ON PAKISTAN

A Catholic missionary was in Ballarat to deliver a talk on the Church's action in Pakistan. Fr Robert McCulloch, of the St Columban's Mission Society, spoke following a light lunch at the MacKillop Glowrey Room, Cathedral Precinct after celebrating 12.00noon Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral on Monday, May 8.

Fr McCulloch spent thirty-three years in Pakistan working in the Sindh Province, where he established extensive programmes of adult literacy and worked to increase the education and basic health care of the poor in the region. He told *The Courier* there had always been good support in Ballarat for his work and a drive to help others within the community here. "The people who are already committed to various aspects of the civic and social life of Ballarat, it's just wonderful that they're not limited by the local scene, but their engagement in the local scene enables them to look wider," he said.

Fr McCulloch was awarded the highest award in Pakistan for a foreign national - the Sitara-e-Quaid-e-Azam, for his "services to Pakistan in the fields of health, education and interfaith relations". He now resides in Rome after being appointed there as the Procurator General of the Missionary Society of St Columban, returning at least four times a year to Pakistan.

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Ellie Mitchell

Image: Pakistan Lectionary, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



## SUPPORTING REFUGEES

A group of ten Star of the Sea parishioners from South West Coast Parish are on a path to sponsor a refugee household to come to Australia, as part of the four-year Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP), run by Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA), in conjunction with the Department of Home Affairs and the UNHCR.

The Star of the Sea Parish CRISP group have undertaken the required background checks, training and are fundraising to enable the provision of initial housing and essentials prior to the household accessing government support and seeking employment.

We have been matched with a refugee household by CRSA. The family of five, originally from Iraq, will be flown to Australia and come to Warrnambool with permanent humanitarian visas.

We will meet them at the airport, provide transport to Warrnambool and then twelve months of support as they transition to independence. This will include linking with government services, language assistance and looking at education and employment options.

CRISP is an innovation in refugee resettlement in Australia and we are excited to be part of it. When only one percent of displaced people globally is permanently resettled each year (UNHCR figures), we are proud to be taking our small part in giving a future to even one household for the first twelve months of their life in Australia. The response from our parish community to participating in CRISP has been overwhelmingly supportive. We are over half way to our fundraising goal. The parish has agreed to rent a currently vacant presbytery to the family for their initial twelve months. A group of parishioners showed up to assist in a 'spring clean' of the presbytery. The majority of the furniture for the presbytery has been provided and moved free of charge. We live in a generous community. We await their arrival date in nervous anticipation!

Tax deductible donations to support the CRISP fundraising can be made via <https://shoutforgood.com/fundraisers/StaroftheSeaParish>. More information about CRISP is available on the CRSA website [www.refugeesponsorship.org.au](http://www.refugeesponsorship.org.au)

Coordinators of the Star of the Sea Parish Community Supporter Group are Katherine Stewart (0459 615 564) and Ann Barker (0427 728 333). Give us a call if you want to talk about creating a CRISP team in your parish!



## Final Mass

On Saturday, March 18, 2023, Bishop Paul Bird and Parish Administrator Fr Anthony Nagothu, along with visiting priests Frs John Monaghan and Matt Thomas, celebrated a final Mass in Our Lady Help of Christians Church at Patchewollock. Although the Mass was held in 40 degree heat, it was attended by over sixty people. Many had travelled to pay their respects from all over the Mallee and Wimmera area as well as Gippsland and Melbourne, with some even coming from interstate.



After Mass, a large gathering attended an afternoon tea in the Patchewollock Community Centre. Many people were able to reconnect with each other, including those whose relatives were responsible for building and furnishing the Church.

The Church was originally blessed and opened by the Bishop of Ballarat, Most Rev J P O'Collins, on May 26, 1957. Unfortunately Parish Priest Fr T J Glynn was on sick leave so Acting Parish Priest Fr F Kirby welcomed Bishop O'Collins who was accompanied by the parish priests of Sea Lake, Hopetoun, Red Cliffs, Manangatang as well as Fr W J McCunnie who was the Bishop's Secretary. Our Lady Help of Christians at Patchewollock was constructed by local contractor, Mr L Werner. The bronze tabernacle gifted to the church was donated by the Woollard family, in memory of a brother who died as a POW. An ornate set of plaster Stations of the Cross was gifted by Mr and Mrs J O'Sullivan in memory of their parents. The block on which the Our Lady Help of Christians Church stands was given by Mr and Mrs Rumler. The total cost of the church and furnishings was estimated to be £4,000.

Samantha Fabry – Diocesan Archivist

Our Diocesan Community - July 2023





## Sorry Day Marked

St Patrick's College Ballarat marked its first Sorry Day ceremony, held in conjunction with Loreto College Ballarat, with some special visitors who flew from far and wide to be part of the day. Families of some of the College Indigenous boarding students travelled from the Tiwi Islands, Darwin, Alice Springs and other parts of the Northern Territory to be reunited with their sons

and take part in the Sorry Day ceremony and Reconciliation Week activities. Year 7 student Gregory Bush moved from Bathurst Island, off the NT coast, to start school this year. Dad, Gregory Kerinaiaua, has been to Ballarat once before but for his wife Maggie, and daughter Alice, it was the first time travelling to see Gregory at school.

It was also the first time that the College held a Sorry Day ceremony. The forty-five Indigenous students, many of their families, Indigenous students from Loreto College and Year 12 students from both Colleges came together to mark the day, which remembered and acknowledged the mistreatment of Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities. The first National Sorry Day was held on May 26, 1998, a year after the Bringing Them Home report was tabled in Federal Parliament. At St Patrick's College the day was marked with a Sorry Day ceremony, a minute's silence, a smoking ceremony and welcome to country. "As an Indigenous fella, I think Sorry Day has been overlooked for a long time. I don't think it's ever really got the respect it deserves," said St Patrick's Indigenous student mentor Darren Burns who organised the day. Mr Burns said it was important to acknowledge the history of the Stolen Generations as a way to move forward. "This is the first Sorry Day ceremony at our College and it was quite significant for me as an Indigenous fella to get the recognition out there that this is a day we should recognise as important." Having families of Indigenous students involved was also important. "If we can show the families what we are trying to do in the cultural space, around cultural safety, it makes it easier for them to understand and realise we are giving these boys the best chance at education and really growing the school forward."

Mr Kerinaiaua said Gregory had quickly adapted to boarding school in Ballarat and during a recent trip home had been keen to get back to school. "There's a lot of things happening back at the island, kids hanging around with the wrong crowd, getting in trouble ... so me and my partner decided to send him down here. We feel like lots of our family feel proud of us for sending him here. The reason why we sent him (to St Patrick's) is for a better education and by the time he finishes Year 12 he will .... be a better role model for the young." There was a family connection to the College, with Gregory's cousin and Richmond three-time premiership player Daniel Rioli also having attended. Mr Kerinaiaua said it was great to see the College talking about Indigenous culture.

This year St Patrick's College became the first non-government school in Victoria, and one of only a handful of schools, to partner with the Clontarf Foundation to support its Indigenous students and work to improve their educational and life outcomes. The foundation's Academy model sees two foundation staff embedded in the College to directly support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier. Text by Michelle Smith and photos by Lachlan Bence and St Patrick's College  
Photo: L-R: Alice Bush, Maggie Punguatji, Gregory Kerinaiaua and Gregory Bush

## LEARNING & EXPLORING

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."  
Matthew 28:19

The 1/2 Learning Community at Lumen Christi Primary School Delacombe has been exploring the question 'How can actively participating in a community help me and others to grow?'

Recently, they visited their parish church, St Aloysius Redan, to learn about Baptism as a Sacrament of Initiation and the importance of the links between Baptism and participation as a member of the Catholic Church.

Carmel Hanley - Principal





## 'A SPECIAL SPIRIT'



When asked what has inspired Lachie Lee to devote so much of his life to Mercy Regional College Camperdown, he is quick to respond, "It has a special spirit." *A Special Spirit* is the title of the book Lachie has written as part of the year long celebration of its 50th anniversary.

A teacher at MRC for thirty years, the now semi-retired Lachie has spent three years writing a history of the school as part of an ongoing history project.

Lachie explains that his intent was never to write a dry history book but to tell the stories of the people, families and teachers who had a significant impact on the College in a relatable and engaging way. "I think it's really important for us as individuals to reflect on where we have come from, but it's also important for communities," says Lachie. "The story of MRC is definitely a story of community," he adds. "The school evolved from what was a crisis in Catholic secondary education at the time and it was through the initiatives of the local communities in our region that the College was built, survived and has thrived."

According to Lachie, the journey to establish the College was paved with obstacles. "There were setbacks certainly, and the major obstacles were twofold. Firstly there was the ever-present problem of transport and school buses and the other was the bringing together of a diverse group of young people from different areas of the district who were used to inter-town rivalries. Gradually, the students grew to know each other and to develop friendships, which often became lifelong. One of the lasting legacies of the formation of the school," says Lachie, "has been the breaking down of those barriers in the local and wider school community."

Along with the book, the College will celebrate the anniversary with a day of festivities on Saturday, November 25. Principal Sharon Gillett said "It is important for us to recognise this milestone of our school providing Catholic Secondary education for fifty years. It really is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our founders, teachers, staff and boards, as well as the commitment and perseverance of our young people. We would love our past students, families and staff to join us in this celebration." The weekend will feature a Saturday evening dinner with band The People's Poets and presentation of the inaugural Spirit of Mercy Awards, roll calls and displays for each decade, food trucks and music, a tree planting, free family portraits, school tours, afternoon tea and more.

The book, 'A Special Spirit', will be launched in October at Noorat and pre-orders for the book, along with tickets for the Jubilee Dinner and Jubilee Day, are available through the College website or via [tinyurl.com/MRC50th](https://tinyurl.com/MRC50th).

Jean Christie and Toby McKenzie

Photo: Left to right: students Tyler Lenssen, Hunter Bennett and Madidi McKenzie with author Lachie Lee

## World Day of Prayer

On Friday, March 3, St Peter's Parish in Daylesford had the pleasure of hosting this year's World Day of Prayer which was prepared by the women of Taiwan. Funds raised are to be used in support of immigrant brides and their families. From the short video which was sent to us as an introduction to the prayer, we learned that over the past thirty years hundreds of thousands of brides have immigrated to Taiwan from mainland China and south-east Asia.

They are a vulnerable group of women who face many challenges and barriers to full participation in Taiwanese society. The Christian churches are raising money to develop programs to support them.

Parishioners from Daylesford were joined by people from local churches including the Anglican, Baptist and Uniting Church communities. What a wonderful opportunity the World Day of Prayer is to meet with our fellow Christians and enjoy time with them. The prayer was followed by a sumptuous supper and lively conversation. This year's leaders were Carmel Bolton and Diane Corro, ably supported by Sandra Whiffin (our technical wizard), Denise McMinn proclaiming the Word of God and welcomers Carol Collins and Hilary Cummings. Next year's World Day of Prayer will be prepared by the women of Palestine and hosted by the Daylesford Uniting Church.



Diane Corro and Carmel Bolton

Right: Rose Thannhausser & Wendy Chamberlain with 2023 Leaders Carmel Bolton and Diane Corro





## Painting poppies

Students at Siena Catholic Primary School Lucas (Ballarat) were busy painting, as part of a new outdoor art installation in Lucas, to honour the ANZACs. The project saw one thousand wooden poppies painted red by the children at the school and 'planted' around the Avenue of Honour and adjoining fields in time for ANZAC Day.

Several Ballarat businesses were on board with the art installation, with Integra Group providing the vacant land in Lucas to plant the poppies and Haymes providing the red paint required to make the display.

Siena Catholic Primary School Deputy Principal Danielle Wilson said creating the poppies offered a good opportunity to educate the children on the history of the ANZACs. "Through the art classes, the children, as they painted poppies, learnt about the history and significance of ANZAC day," she said. "Understanding how we celebrate and commemorate an event in history. They are learning history as they are painting poppies, so it was a nice opportunity. I think because they are our next generation it is really important to instil in them the knowledge and understanding of the sacrifice that has been made. I think that is a key part of the learning here at Siena."

Each of the poppies, supplied by Integra, was made from recycled wood.

*Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Alex Dalziel and photos by Adam Trafford*

## A Celebration with Our Faith Neighbours

*On Friday, March 17, St Patrick's Parish Gordon celebrated St Patrick's Day with Mass at St Patrick's Church. The occasion was made more special with our faith neighbours from the Bungaree, Creswick and Daylesford Parishes joining the parishioners from Ballan, Gordon and Springbank. We were also fortunate to have the Central Zone School Principals join us for Mass.*

*In his homily, Fr Justin Driscoll highlighted the three most common patron saints for churches and schools in the Ballarat Diocese, namely St Patrick, St Joseph and Mary, Mother of God (and the many variations including Immaculate Conception and Our Lady Help of Christians). As the Irish settled across our diocese, they brought their heritage with them. Their devotion to these patron saints was expressed in the names given to the many churches and schools that our Irish forebears and the many Irish Clergy and Religious who came to serve in our diocese founded.*

*In this celebration of St Patrick, Fr Justin called us to remember with gratitude the legacy of the Irish but also to consider those who come on mission to us from other parts of the world. Our international clergy, especially those from India and the Philippines in our neighbouring parishes,*



*who follow in the pattern of St Patrick, play a critical role in nurturing the Word of God in our faith communities. He invited us to consider our own receptiveness to them and reflect on their experience of us as Christians.*

*In concluding his homily Fr Justin drew on the spirituality of Pope Francis, noting the recognition that faith is not a light that dispels all of our darkness, but rather a lamp that guides our steps in the night and that is sufficient.*

*Following Mass we gathered at the Wallace Hotel to share food, drinks and the company of our extended community.*

Sue Daly - Chairperson, Gordon Parish Leadership Team





## Celebrating Diversity and Harmony

*Acknowledging and respecting the Sisters of Mercy Irish Heritage was a great way to start Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Week at St Joseph's College Mildura. These weeks occur during March every year and encourage everyone to experience, explore and appreciate the wealth of cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity in Australia. The College Mercy Action Group organised the creation of two Harmony Week banners for students to sign, demonstrating the respect they have for diverse cultures and a multicultural Australia.*

*Harmony Day is a day to celebrate Australian multiculturalism, based on the successful integration of migrants into our community. Harmony Day is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural or linguistic background, united by a set of core Australian values. Held every year on March 21, it coincides with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Mercy Action Group held its Orange Food Stalls at recess. Thanks to all staff and students who wore orange in support of the day. Lovely orange cupcakes, donuts, biscuits and lollies were sold to raise funds for Project Compassion.*

*Cultural Diversity Week runs from March 11 - 26 and aims at celebrating and reflecting on the contributions of Victoria's multicultural communities. To celebrate Cultural Diversity Week and Harmony Week, Friday March 24 was a student casual clothes day at the College. Students were encouraged to wear orange clothing and multicultural or traditional cultural dress to celebrate our cultural diversity.*

*The Mercy Action Group organised a Multicultural Fashion Parade to showcase our College's diverse heritages. At the beginning of the parade, Richard Anketell delivered an Acknowledgement of Country before students modelled a variety of multicultural clothing styles with pride. Students were also able to have their faces painted with numerous symbols of peace and harmony and sign the Harmony Banner. An amazing week of celebrations and activities was held at the College. The Mercy Action Group would like to thank all involved in the activities and hope that everyone felt they belonged. All money raised during the activities was donated to Caritas Australia.*

Paula Cox - Director of Catholic Identity

## Shipment of medical supplies on its way to Tonga

The shipment has many important supplies and equipment for Tonga. The 40ft shipping container was filled with high quality superseded medical equipment and supplies that have been donated by a range of donors across Ballarat and the region.

Equipment donated includes an ultrasound machine, X-ray machine, defibrillators and patient monitoring machines. Supplies are also an important part of what is donated and a variety of items have been included such as mattresses, hospital linen, theatre scrubs, surgical masks, kitchen goods, hand gel, gloves and trolleys. An important resource that is being donated by St John of God Ballarat Hospital is the recycled KimGuard for CSSD wrap, which provides Vaiola Hospital and outer islands their entire supply of wrap.

Tonga Twinning Program Coordinator Carolyn Mornane is excited that we are able to provide these medical supplies. "The equipment is so important to Tonga and I thank all the organisations who were involved in providing donations," said Carolyn.

The container arrived into Tonga in June, with the shipping container getting unpacked and goods distributed by the Tonga Ministry of Health to areas of need in Vaiola Hospital and to the Niueiki Hospital in 'Eua.



We thank the following organisations who have donated important supplies and equipment to Tonga: St John of God Ballarat Hospital; St John of God Bendigo Hospital; St John of God Geelong Hospital; Ballarat Base Hospital (Grampians Health); Eureka and Gouge linen; Elyptol Australia; Ballarat East Rotary; Central Highlands Rural Health Daylesford; Western District Health Service; Western Health; Lake Imaging.

Jamie Lovett - Communications & Marketing Officer





## NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK

National Volunteers Week (NVW) is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteers. From May 15-21, NVW was a chance for all of us to celebrate and recognise the vital work of volunteers and to say thank you. This includes people in our parishes and agencies. The theme for NVW 2023 is *We are the Change Makers*. Millions of volunteers across Australia are giving their time and energy to make change in our communities. The *We are the Change Makers* campaign celebrated the powerful impact volunteers make supporting individuals, communities and the nation. <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/#/>

A reflection on the wonderful Vinnies volunteers:

The St Vincent de Paul Society, also known as Vinnies, is a lay Catholic charity that has been helping Australians for almost one hundred and sixty five years. In Ballarat we have five different groups or conferences as well as a Young Vinnies conference based at the Australian Catholic University (Aquinas Campus). There are a number of Vinnies Conferences around the diocese and many schools also have groups of Mini Vinnies who are assisting those in need.

We, at the St Patrick's Cathedral Conference, help clients in many ways. At our assistance centre we can help up to 120-150 clients a week over three days and our assistance includes food vouchers, bill and utilities assistance, paying registration and licences, picking up and delivering furniture, among other things. We are finding the need for this assistance is increasing and our members are a very dedicated group of men and women who all follow the same ideal of "a hand up, not a hand out."

We are dependent on volunteers who willingly offer up much of their free time to assist in this work, as we receive no government funding at all, and we can only continue the work we do if we continue to receive donations from our Catholic parishioners, clergy, schools and organisations. Many volunteers all agree that the satisfaction they get from helping the less fortunate and needy, many of these unwillingly thrust into this situation, is the greatest reward for their work.

We are always looking out for new volunteers, as the nature of what we do and when we do it means we are an ageing force. Younger volunteers are what is needed to continue on this work and whilst the Young Vinnies can boast a young membership, we still seek young volunteers who of course will be the future "heavy lifters" of our Society and Conferences.

Kevin Elliott – Cathedral Vinnies

*St Brendan's Primary School Coragulac celebrated its Feast Day on June 8 with Mass. St Brendan's has a proud history of providing a quality Catholic education to Coragulac and surrounding areas over many years. The Mass was extra special this year, with members of the school community receiving the sacrament of Baptism. We extend a big congratulations to Brennan, Eden and Ivy; Caleb and Jordy; and Janet. We congratulate them all on taking this important step on their faith journeys. It was wonderful to be able to witness and share this special experience with you all.*

*A big thank you is extended to Liz McGuane who prepared the candidates and also organised a special lunch to celebrate this special occasion. Liz always goes above and beyond and we appreciate all that she does, many times quietly in the background. Thank you also to Fr Michael for doing such a beautiful job of celebrating Mass for us. We also appreciate all that Fr Michael does for us. Nothing is ever too hard. Thank you!*

*Parents, carers and parishioners came along to celebrate the Feast Day with us. Many of them came laden with food to add to the lunch table. Gathering in the hall to celebrate special occasions is such a special tradition of the St Brendan's community. A truly heartwarming experience. Thank you to everyone who was involved.*



## Special Feast Day



# PRETTY PROUD



Michael Ryan from Ballan has been named a recipient of one of the country's highest honours, with winners announced over the King's Birthday Weekend. Michael, a parishioner in St Patrick's Parish Gordon, was named Order of Australia Medal (OAM) recipient on Sunday June 11 by the

Governor-General, His Excellency the Honourable David Hurley. Michael, the current President of the Ballan & District Chamber of Commerce and Regional President of St Vincent de Paul Ballan, said it was an honour to be named a recipient of the OAM.

"It's a funny thing, everybody says you don't expect it, but I'd have to say I'm pretty proud and thrilled that someone thought what I've done was worthy of a nomination. So, at the moment I feel really good about it," he told the Moorabool News. Mr Ryan said he received an email about six weeks ago.

"It was a real surprise. I had no idea I'd been nominated. Getting involved in cricket, footy and school groups, you get to meet people, it's in your own interest. I do enjoy being able to give something back – I've been very fortunate with my education and work life, so I do sort of feel a bit of a responsibility to help with training and things I've been involved with community groups, who may not have those skills and do a lot of other things I can't do."

Michael was St Patrick's Parish Coordinator from 2016-2018, as well as chairing the Finance Committee at the same time.

*Article courtesy of the Moorabool News*



***The guiding Scripture for Catholic Education Week 2023 was 'Let the words you speak always be full of Grace.' (Col 4:6)*** Catholic Education Week is an opportunity to celebrate and enhance the reality of our Catholic identity, to dialogue with the Catholic faith tradition and the world in which we let the words we speak always be full of grace. May our schools all empower future generations to go into the world to proclaim and act out the good news to all they encounter.

All local Catholic schools in the Sunraysia came together to celebrate Catholic Education Week in a Combined Schools Mass on Friday, May 26 at St Joseph's College Mercy Campus. The celebration was led by

## CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK 2023

the three local priests, Fr Matthew Thomas, Fr John Corrigan and Fr Saiju Mathew. Also present at this important celebration were two of our Sisters of Mercy, Rosemary Graham and Helen Nolan. Following the Mass, the special guests and school representatives enjoyed a beautiful morning tea.

Students from all schools were actively involved in the Mass by reading, carrying symbols, singing in the different school choirs and as band members. The stadium was full and the warm, loving and supportive faith community shone through with students aged from Prep - Year 11 present.

The Catholic Schools communities in the Sunraysia area are beautiful places that can and do enrich the mystery of Christ's identity and enable His way to be continually raised up in and by community. We are all called to be mindful that words have the greatest power to break or connect communities. They build and strengthen our relationships with one another and God.



We pray that all our school communities inspire from within to be people of peace, hope and love in these times of displacement, anxiety and concern for the earth as our common home and to realise each unique community's intimate connection in following and proclaiming the light of the Gospel for these times.

Paula Cox - Director of Catholic Identity, St Joseph's College Mildura

Our Diocesan Community - July 2023



## REMEMBERING 170 YEARS

*St Alipius Parish Primary School Ballarat East celebrated 170 years of Catholic Education in the week of March 27 and April 2, 2023. This is an incredibly significant milestone for the school community.*

*We celebrate and thank all those who have been part of our community over the years; leaders, teachers, support staff, administration staff, maintenance staff but most importantly, students and their families. What began as a humble tent school on the diggings is now a thriving community of hope, faith, resilience, diversity and inclusivity. We are proud of who we are now and all that we will continue to be in the future.*

*The school community participated in some great events to commemorate the 170 years, including a visit to the Eureka Centre for Years 4 and 5, a morning tea for Foundation students and their families and guests were invited to join for a special Mass at St Alipius Church on Friday, March 31. Also for those that wanted to celebrate in a different way, there was the Ballarat East Community Day on Sunday, April 2 in the school grounds.*

*We also paused and acknowledged that a part of our history is tainted by people who did not uphold who we are and what we stand for. We pay our respects to all survivors, their families and those that continue to support and advocate for them today. You hold a place in our hearts as we reflect on our journey.*

*The most wonderful aspect of our school are the students. They are compassionate, driven, kind, funny, honest, brave, intelligent, courageous... we could go on... we just want to celebrate the very people that make our community the incredible place that it is today!*



Emily Clarke – Principal



## Clergy Wellbeing

Before COVID-19 collided with our world, Clergy Care Coordinators from Australia and New Zealand would meet over several days on an annual basis. These conferences were a fantastic way to gather with other care coordinators, offering peer support and both formal and incidental learning along the way.

Unfortunately, as of 2023, a national conference has yet to be planned. As a low-key alternative, Ballarat Diocese hosted a Victorian Clergy Carers' Conference in Apollo Bay. We gathered in late March, staying at the Mercy Sisters' guest house, Star of the Sea.

Clergy carers from the dioceses of Melbourne, Sandhurst, Sale and Ballarat were all present and it was a wonderfully fruitful gathering. It was a time of reconnection with familiar colleagues and welcome of newcomers. We had many laughs and very much enjoyed each other's company.

We also had our more serious times. Our first full day saw each clergy carer responsible for presenting an appropriate topic to the group. Some of the topics covered were Advanced Care Directives, The Importance of Self-Care, The Art of Being a Healing Presence and Death and Dying. Two case studies were also presented. These sessions were heavy in terms of content but they initiated excellent dialogue among participants and fostered invaluable learning.

To lighten the mood after our final full day, we were treated to a lovely meal at the Apollo Bay Distillery by the Ballarat Diocese. This was a wonderful way to end a successful, much needed and really enjoyable conference. I think that all participants left Apollo Bay feeling renewed, revitalized and better equipped to continue working with our wonderful diocesan clergy.

Sonia Walker - Clergy Health & Wellbeing Coordinator Ballarat

L to R. Rhonda Bell (Sandhurst), Loretta Lilford (Sandhurst), Therese Rush (Melbourne), Marie Flynn (Sandhurst), Eileen Thorp (Sandhurst), Deslee Mortensen (Melbourne), Sonia Walker (Ballarat) and Barbra Kingwill (Sale)





# McAuley House

*There are two McAuley Houses in Victoria. The one in Melbourne grew out of an initiative of Sr Wilma and Sr Sheila who in the 1980's responded to the need of homeless women and women escaping situations of domestic violence, with 24/7 crisis accommodation. This was run by volunteers for over twenty years.*

*Today, McAuley House in Footscray and Ballarat provide medium term accommodation for women who have experienced homelessness or escaping violence. Footscray has twenty-five beds and Ballarat has eight beds.*

*The aim of McAuley House is to provide accommodation and programs to break the cycle of violence, homelessness and mental illness. This is achieved by finding suitable employment, building confidence and skills which in turn all lead to personal security. When one realises that last year in Australia, almost 8000 women returned to the violence of their home as they could not find affordable accommodation, one understands just how important this skilling and confidence building really is. The story is different for every single woman. For those with children, McAuley provides specially trained workers to help the children and to assist in the rebuilding of relationships between mother and child. Scarily, the average age of these women is 40.*

*How can we help? Basic toiletries would be greatly appreciated and the need continues throughout the year. This is an extremely doable response. A donation to McAuley supports women and children to be safe. <https://www.mcauley.org.au/ways-to-give/donate/>*

Interview with Hayley  
Image: [www.123rf.com](http://www.123rf.com)

## Celebrating Wendouree West Exodus Community

The nineteenth birthday of the Wendouree West Exodus Community was celebrated with a barbeque and wonderful weather on March 4 at the Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre with about fifty people attending. It has again been heart warming to be able to gather to celebrate together this milestone as a community. We were very pleased to welcome Bishop Paul Bird and Bishop Peter Connors, as well as a group from the Olympic Village Exodus Community, Heidelberg West along with people from the local community. We are now able to gather together weekly after three years of supporting the community with takeaway meals.

We are also delighted to have had our annual Family Camp at Halls Gap in January for fifty-four people from babies to 80 year olds, with different abilities. It was a wonderful opportunity to gather, socialise, share and relax in a beautiful environment. Our thanks to the Diocesan Foundation and Ballarat Grammar School for their support.

Sandra Dillon







## HEARTS AND HANDS MASS

On Monday, June 19, St Mary MacKillop College Swan Hill celebrated their annual 'Hearts and Hands Mass.' The Mass brings together the school community to join prayers and hopes for the St Vincent de Paul Society in Swan Hill. At this Mass, we present donations collected over the past three weeks from the families of staff and students at the College.

We are so grateful to everyone for their generous contributions. The College has donated over 400 items to assist families doing it tough in Swan Hill, Kerang and surrounding areas. We are very grateful to Damian Kelly, President of the St Vincent de Paul Society, who was in attendance at this Mass and who accepted the donations on behalf of the Vinnies Conference in Swan Hill.

Special thanks to all the students and staff who assisted with the collection of donations and those who

participated in the Mass. Special thanks to Fr James Kerr, Parish Priest of Holy Family North East Mallee for leading our Eucharistic celebration.

*Gerry Vytilingam - Faith In Action Coordinator*



## Celebrating at Banyena

*St Joseph's Church in Banyena celebrates Mass on the fifth Sunday of the month, around four times a year. Donald, St Arnaud, Charlton and Birchip forgo their Mass on this weekend so that Banyena, Wycheproof and Boort can celebrate Mass. This has opened up the opportunity for people from across the parish to attend one of these other Mass centres.*

*On a glorious Sunday in April, parishioners gathered together for Mass at Banyena. Some of you may recognise this church as the one used in the film "The Dry" with Eric Bana and Fr Eugene McKinnon the stars of the film.*

*A lovely time was had chatting to parishioners from other centres after Mass and then many headed to the Jeffcott Hotel in Donald for lunch where we all got to know each other a little better.*

*Noeline Hogan - East Wimmera Parish Manager*



## Music, Songs and Videos



a memorable and treasured experience for the students at OLHC.

It all began when Andrew Chinn requested online for anyone who had a liturgy and powerpoint presentation for the 'Feast Day of Our Lady Help of Christians'. The school celebrate this special feast day every year and so Anne Newton (Acting Principal) emailed the school's liturgy and powerpoint to Andrew. That evening Andrew emailed back, asking for permission to turn the Magnificat (one of the readings on the liturgy) into a song. Anne said that the school would be honoured for him to do this. Emails continued back and forth, as Andrew remembered coming to the school for two concerts. Anne remembered them too, and then mentioned that, several years ago, she tried to organise for him to come back for a concert, but was not successful. Andrew wrote back, "No joke, but one school actually cancelled on me and I'm in Horsham the day before." From there the school promptly booked him in.

Throughout the few weeks of rehearsing, Andrew also sent, via emails, his first recording of the song with him singing and playing on his guitar. Later he sent the music to the song and then a recording of himself and another musician singing the song, with a youtube clip. It was the most beautiful song.

After the concert, Andrew stayed on to film the children for the song. By the weekend, Andrew had the whole song put together and emailed it to Anne, to make sure all was fine. It is the most beautiful song and an honour and blessing to be part of for all involved. We can now take this memory and song with us, all of us here at Our Lady's, on our journeys throughout life.

*Anne Newton (Acting Principal)*

Andrew Chinn is a songwriter, singer and performer for Butterfly Music. Andrew worked as a classroom teacher in Catholic Primary Schools in Sydney for nearly twenty years before moving into his full-time music ministry. Andrew has visited more than 1100 Catholic primary schools, performing in 3000 concerts across Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada sharing his music and his faith with children, teachers and parents. He has released twelve albums, five DVDs, and six picture books, which are used widely by teachers and catechists in the faith development of children. In recent years he has developed the Butterfly House, an online RE Resource which our school uses frequently.

Our Lady Help of Christians School Murtoa were successful in the quest of inviting Andrew to come to the school. On the morning of Thursday, June 1, Andrew came to conduct workshops with the students. After the workshops the students then performed a concert. In just forty minutes of rehearsal, families and friends were able to enjoy an amazing and memorable concert. Students love Andrew Chinn's music, songs and videos and often said they wished he could come to our school. Definitely a wish and dream came true. After the concert, Andrew stayed on and filmed the students as they performed a dance for his new song, a song that we inspired him to write. This was

## A TRIBUTE TO FR JORGE

*On Saturday, April 15, the St Alipius Parish Community Ballarat East celebrated Fr Jorge De Chavez' twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination into priesthood. It was a full and joyful church, with friends and parishioners acknowledging and celebrating the kind and caring nature of Fr Jorge and his service to our community. We thank the Filipino community who brought their amazing voices (and food!) to this celebration. Thank you also to those who brought a plate to supper. We also thank the many diocesan priests who came to share Mass with Fr Jorge. Congratulations Fr Jorge.*

Article courtesy of St Alipius Parish School FaceBook Page

*Fr Jorge, the youngest of nine siblings, was born on March 29, 1970. He was ordained on April 13, 1998. He studied for the priesthood with the Oblates of St Joseph. After ordination Fr Jorge participated in different courses on spirituality and formation in Italy and in further studies in Canon Law at the Pontifical Royal University of the Dominican in Manila.*

*He has served the OSJ congregation in different capacities. For twelve years Fr Jorge was posted to the Order's formation houses, serving as Prefect of Discipline, Vocation Director And Rector. He also worked in the OSJ Provincial Council as a member of the Council and Secretary for fifteen years.*

*Prior to his appointment as Parish Priest of Ballarat East, he was a Parish Priest in many different parishes back in the Philippines and in Albany, Western Australia for almost five years. Fr Jorge was appointed to the St Alipius Parish on January 15, 2020.*

Information sourced from Buninyong & District Community News Edition 472, July 2020, pg 16





## CELEBRATING INITIATION

*On Pentecost Sunday, nineteen children were fully initiated into the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat.*

*These children, their parents and in some cases their god-parents participated in a number of formation sessions as they explored what it means to celebrate and know Jesus Christ through family, community, scripture, prayer and the Sacraments. The liturgical year was explored and time was spent on learning about and understanding the celebration of Mass. This included an opportunity to investigate the church building with explanations about furniture, physical set up of a church and the vestments and vessels, books and items used when celebrating Mass.*



*The children participated in a number of rites at the 5.00pm Mass over the weeks, based on the rituals of RCIA, before the final rituals of Baptism and Confirmation and the reception of Communion for the first time.*

Susan Crowe - St Patrick's Cathedral Parish Ballarat

## The School of St Jude



Recently, Trinity College Colac hosted Gemma Sisia, founder of the School of St Jude in Arusha, Tanzania, for a special public event. Over eighty people, including Trinity College staff, students and their families, parishioners from St Mary's Parish, Rotarians, as well as some who had travelled from further afield, heard the extraordinary story of how one woman, armed only with a vision and a \$10 donation, built a school that provides free private education to hundreds of the poorest and brightest children in Arusha and the surrounding regions.

When it first opened in 2002, St Jude's had one volunteer teacher, three students and a single classroom built by hardworking Rotarians. Twenty years later, St Jude's now employs hundreds of teachers to educate its almost 2000 students over three campuses. The current graduates are in universities across Africa, Europe and North America and many are studying to become the next generation of Tanzanian doctors, architects, engineers, accountants, teachers and scientists.

One of Gemma's 2015 graduates, Enock Ephraim, shared how he won a scholarship to attend St Jude's where he excelled. Upon graduating, he was accepted to study finance at a university in New York State and now has returned to Tanzania to help run the school's alumni network. His entire life, and that of his family, was changed by the opportunities that a good education provided. Gemma was also joined by one of her Australian staff members, Maddie Kelly, who wrote a book about the twenty year history of St Jude's called *The School That Hope Built*. Copies of this book are now available to be borrowed from the College library.

A casual clothes day held recently had raised almost \$900 for the School of St Jude, this money along with the entry fee will be donated to the school on behalf of the Trinity College community. Thanks to the Year 12 College Leaders who volunteered to attend, to Duncan and Michelle Green from Fusion Restaurant for the wonderful catering and to Year 12 student Darcy P for providing the wonderful floral decorations through the Jubilee foyer.

Daniel Rodway - Acting Director of Faith & Mission



# UNSUNG HERO – PARISH WORKER



Maree Roach reflects on her role in the parish:

**Tell us about your parish:** Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, Wendouree was established in 1964 with the parish including the areas of Miners' Rest, Learmonth, Waubra and

Wendouree. I started work here in July 2016 – the first (paid) Parish Co-ordinator with the role evolving around the needs of the parish and the Parish Priest. I work 12 hours per week, fitting in a lot of work in those hours.

**Who's the boss?** Fr Marcello Colasante is the Parish Priest and we work side by side with the Parish of Ballarat North, where he is also the Parish Priest.

**Often in parishes, the secretary is the only staff member and 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 COVID on top?** The skill set is extensive and the role wide-ranging. On a daily basis I can deal with mail, phone calls, messages, ordering office supplies and cleaning materials (parish and church). I compile the Parish Bulletin each week which is then emailed to community members.

I update the Parish website as required (with the assistance of Diocesan staff). Attendance at the Parish Pastoral Council is required as I am the Minute Secretary, as well as the Child Safety Officer for the parish. I am a liaison officer. I liaise with the parish school for different occasions, including Liturgies, Sacraments, special celebrations and liaising with parish groups such as Liturgy and the Exodus Community.

The area of compliance and risk management is ongoing and includes:

- Copyright (One License) – uploaded weekly.
- Management of plant and equipment:
  - Co-ordinating with Gardeners, rubbish removalists.
- Maintenance:
  - now in-charge of organising maintenance and repairs.
  - negotiating with trades people, sourcing equipment.
- Policy & Procedures
  - OH&S
  - Child-Safety
  - Essential Services checks

**You are the often the first person that people encounter in parish life, especially in regard to Sacraments. What does this entail?** I am Sacramental Co-ordinator and look after the communication, organising certificates, programs, consumables (candles, stoles, transfers), rehearsals and co-ordinating with the parish Liturgy Committee. We have centralised Baptism Preparation Sessions – first Thursday of each month – in the Ballarat area and each parish takes a turn in presenting this program at 10.00am and 5.30pm.

**Any other jobs?** I attend the monthly Central Parish Staff meeting where on alternating months parish workers from outlying parishes are invited to attend. This is a good meeting to share what's happening in our parishes and work together with resources. I also help out with week-day Mass and act as sacristan on Thursdays and Fridays.

**Challenges/Highlights:** Despite the decline in membership of parish groups, including the Maintenance Committee, the Pastoral Parish Council and Sacramental Teams (to name but a few) the work continues and the Parish Coordinator has picked-up the required tasks! Much of the role of the Parish Coordinator rests in being the welcoming face of the parish. It is a full on position but very rewarding.

## Mother's Day and Special Persons Day

*On Friday, May 12, 2023, the St Brigid's Primary School Ballan community came together to celebrate the special women in their lives. The guests were invited to a breakfast with a selection of fruit, yoghurts and breakfast muffins, along with other refreshments for all. The gathering space was abuzz with family and friends chatting and conversing in the company of those familiar and unfamiliar.*



*The students then joined their families in the church and celebrated a beautiful liturgy honouring the special women in their lives, transcribing and performing songs in Auslan. The students were proud to share in the liturgy and showcase their talents.*

*To finish the day each special guest was presented with a flower stem as a gift. We thank all those who came along to our school and participated in this wonderful celebration.*

Therese Winter - St Brigid's PS Ballan



# CLIMATE AND HEALTH

*St Alipius Parish School Ballarat East is pleased to have received recognition from the Achievement Program's Climate and Health team, for their commitment and progress towards creating a healthier school and planet.*

*The school Laudato Si' team have done amazing things in the twelve months they have been working together. The school community are very proud of them. They have:*

- Conducted waste audits of our school;
- Promoted healthier lunchboxes;
- Encouraged less waste on a Tuesday;
- Created a worm farm to encourage composting and reducing waste;
- Planted native plants in our garden.

*In Term 3, we will be transitioning to new Laudato Si' representatives for the 2023/2024 year. It will be exciting to see what comes next!*

*Thanks to Ballarat Community Health and the Achievement Program for their support in strengthening a healthy and sustainable environment for learning, working and living. Learn more about the Climate and Health pathway here: <https://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au/climate-health>*

Emily Clarke – Principal



## REST IN PEACE

Br Douglas Evin Zoch cfc died peacefully at Nazareth House Ballarat on October 23, 2022, aged 88 years.

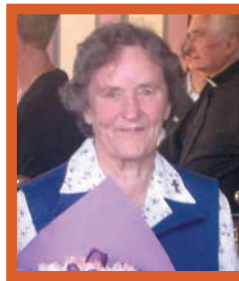
Br Zoch was the longest-serving Christian Brother at St Patrick's College, Ballarat. He commenced at the College in 1976, teaching Year 7 Social Studies, Mathematics and Christian Doctrine. As well as teaching roles, Br Zoch supported the College in various roles including Master-in Charge of the Sports Room, Dormitory Master, Junior School Co-ordinator, Cadet Master, Boarding House Master, Boat House Manager, Property and Building Maintenance and Grounds Person. He was often acknowledged and appreciated for his untiring assistance at College Sports events and fetes. His dedication to St Patrick's College is fondly remembered by staff and students over a long 40-year history.

Br Zoch's Funeral Mass was held on Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at Nazareth House Ballarat at 11.00am.



*St Patrick's College Ballarat facebook page 25/10/2022*

## BRIGHTENED LIVES



On March 20, 2023, Sr Sheila Belleville (Sr Mary Gregory RSM) died peacefully at Mercy Place, Ballarat, aged 91 years, in the 70th year of her Religious Life. Sr Sheila was a much-loved Sister of Mercy who radiated the joy of the gospel and on April 19, local parishioners had a chance to commemorate Sr Sheila at a Memorial Mass held in St Mary's Church in Birchip. Fr Gerry Prunty, assisted by Fr Eugene McKinnon, officiated the service, with readings, prayers and songs from her Funeral Mass held at St Alipius Church in Ballarat on Thursday, March 30.

The service in Birchip also incorporated a power point presentation of photographs from Sr Sheila's childhood, teaching placements, Silver and Golden Jubilee as a Sister of Mercy and many birthday celebrations including her 80th birthday held at Beaufort.

Sr Sheila/Sr Gregory practised as a Sister of Mercy in many places including Ballarat, Robinvale, Charlton, St Arnaud, Birregurra, Beaufort and Birchip, and what was overtly obvious was the high esteem in which she was held in all of these communities.

Kevin Delaney hosted an informal tribute to Sr Sheila and summarised Sheila's contribution by concluding with "she brightened our lives".

*Article courtesy of Simone Christie from The Buloke Times*

# CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IN YANAOCA

I remember an old photograph of my maternal grandmother and her elder sister on the day of their Confirmation and First Eucharist; they were in their early teens. It was taken during the last decade of the 19th Century, well before Pope Pius X in the year 1910 issued the decree *Quam singulari*, which changed the age at which children could receive communion from 12 to 7 years old, the age of discretion. Since that time, in most dioceses around the world, children receive the Eucharist before being Confirmed. This is certainly the case here in Peru as well as Chile.

Thanks to the RCIA program most Catholics in our diocese have a much better understanding of the theology behind the reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. We understand the link between Baptism and Confirmation and that reception of the Eucharist is the culmination of our initiation and the means through which we continue to affirm it and to be nourished in it. So, for children in our diocese, it makes theological sense to receive Confirmation before First Eucharist. However, I believe it is important to consider that, historically, the separation of the reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation was done not for theological reasons, but rather, for pastoral reasons.

It is interesting to note that although in 1910, the age of seven was accepted as the age of discretion, the age of the reception of Confirmation was not reduced along with the reception of the Eucharist. Whether or not people fully considered the connection between Baptism and Confirmation at that point, it seems to me that the timing for the reception of Confirmation remained as it was because, pastorally, it was seen as a kind of rite of passage between childhood and adolescence or adulthood.

In South American countries, whilst First Eucharist may be celebrated during Primary School, Confirmation has always been celebrated at the age of fifteen and over. It would be impossible to convince people here to celebrate the Sacrament of

Confirmation with children of primary school age. Whilst this practice of receiving the Eucharist before Confirmation may be theologically incorrect, pastorally there are many positives associated with it in the context of South America.



In any culture, young people at this age have a greater capacity to ponder the complexities and implications of their Christian faith. Whilst more than willing to question, they are also open to considering their faith within the context of the world in which they live. For some here in Yanaoca, completing their Christian Initiation is simply the thing that real Catholics do. But for a considerable number, it is a time to seriously commit themselves to live out their faith and to confirm their identity as Christians.

The fact that the formation process endures for at least six months is a testament to the seriousness with which the participants commit themselves to their preparation. I have always found it a great privilege to accompany young people during this period of their Christian development and the celebration of the Sacrament is a powerful experience. As in all of the parishes where I have worked in South America, it has taken some time to convince the Catechists that if a young person enlisted for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is not already baptised or has not already celebrated First Eucharist, then they receive these sacraments within the one celebration.

The South American reality is extremely different from that of Australia. High in the Andes, society itself for the most part is still culturally very Catholic. I am not suggesting therefore that we replicate this

sacramental model in the Diocese of Ballarat.

However, when I was in Mildura, our Sacramental Team decided that over the period of a couple of years, we would raise the age of the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist to Grade Five. We chose Grade Five rather than Grade Six because, during the second part of the year, a focus was placed on the leadership these children would have to assume the following year as the seniors of the school community. The impetus was that full initiation into the Faith Community went hand in hand with this focus. In Mildura, with the preparation of the children, there was also a series of formation evenings for the parents. We experimented with home gatherings of parents during which, in an informal setting accompanied by drinks and nibbles, parents were encouraged with the help of a facilitator to share questions and insights concerning their faith and their relationship with the Church. In light of Pope Francis' vision of a more Synodal Church, I believe these evenings had much more potential than we were able to realise at the time. The adult formation was considered as important within the Sacramental Program as that of the formation of the children, if not more important. The change of emphasis in terms of the age of the children as well as a stronger focus on the formation of parents was not an easy progression. My continued experience here in South America convinces me of the fact that reassessing the current model of sacramental preparation for primary school children within the context of our contemporary reality in Australia is vitally important for the future of our Church in the Diocese of Ballarat.

*Michael McKinnon - Yanaoca, Peru*



Our Diocesan Community - July 2023



# A GOOD KITCHEN

A Good Kitchen (St Vincent de Paul) which opened in October 2018, offering free meals to the Swan Hill Community, serving a great need as well as great food to many people, is still going strong. A driving force behind the initiative is Goodie Hiensch, (pictured below) who says that everyone is absolutely welcome. The initiative is supported by many volunteers from the community, different organisations and is the recipient of frequent donations from many sources. Swan Hill has a high rate of rough sleepers, as well as people who couch surf and with the cost of living rising considerably, people who work still can not afford to eat, so this service helps ease the pressure.



The idea of A Good Kitchen developed from St Vincent de Paul's food parcel distribution to the homeless after many did not have the facilities or utensils to cook. So initially aimed at the homeless, the vulnerable of the community are also supported.

A Good Kitchen is sustained by many volunteers and could not function without this amazing support. Volunteers come from many walks of life and the Good Kitchen is grateful for any and all assistance.

Sponsors and supporters of A Good Kitchen are also important in the function of the initiative, with many organisations and individuals donating food for the meals, as well as food that can be taken by the guests. Donations of other helpful items such as warm clothing are also a great support to those in need. Many community organisations

fundraise for the Good Kitchen to provide the necessary funds to keep the service functioning. Another important benefit of the Good Kitchen is the social contact that the evening brings. Many people live in isolation and with the ability to join in a sit-down dinner it allows for the guests to get to know each other and enjoy the company of others.

<https://vimeo.com/345925982> and <https://www.facebook.com/p/A-Good-Kitchen-Confronting-Hunger-and-Poverty-in-our-Community>

## "Working together, working smarter"



Recently, Parish Administration staff, clergy and leaders gathered for the "Working together, working smarter" Seminar Days. The days were open to all personnel, volunteers and paid employees alike, involved in the financial, administrative, information technology and communication management of parishes and were held on April 26 in Ballarat, May 17 in Warracknabeal and May 18 in Warrnambool.

During the day, participants covered a wide area of topics relevant to parish administration and communication. Fr Kevin Maloney, Vicar General of the Diocese, welcomed all to the day and led the gathering in prayer.

The first presentation was by Mark Bromley with an overview of the diocese and the laws and structures, covering topics such as Canon Law, Civil Law and Diocesan Law. Mark also covered the Parish Administration Manual and some of the most relevant sections for parishes, looking at what is important for parishes to know.

Other sessions led by Jane Collins and Julie Boyd explored diocesan communications – the diocesan website focussing on both the administration of the website and the member's area with the resource section. The Diocesan e-News, the print publication 'Our Diocesan Community' (ODC), parish bulletins and other useful resources were shared. Copyright of music, images and other materials was a topic of discussion.

Mark presented a session on WorkPlace Health and Safety, the responsibilities of and implementation of this important component within a parish setting.

Mark also reiterated the Essential Services and Risk Management requirements of parishes.

Diocesan Director of Caritas, Jillian Hogbin, provided a presentation on Project Compassion, the importance of this and the great support it receives from parishes, along with some helpful hints on the payment of funds. Jillian discussed Catholic Earthcare, now a program of Caritas, and encouraged parishes to register as a Catholic Earthcare Parish in line with Decree 8 of the Plenary Council.

Sharyn Simpson from the Catholic Development Fund and Diocesan Finance Office closed the days with a summary of the workings of these two agencies. Sharyn looked at the benefits of the CDF and services they can provide, as well as the services of the Diocesan Finance Office who look after car fleets, sacramental stoles, titles and more.

All who attended found the days to be most worthwhile for their area of ministry in the parish.





On June 20, 2023, the Secretariat of the Synod published the *Instrumentum Laboris*, or working document, for the first session of the Synod on Synodality. This is a significant milestone in the process. It is both an invitation and an opportunity to remain engaged in prayer, reflection and ongoing discernment with all that has emerged in the consultation that has taken place worldwide. Read more at the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/for-a-synodal-church-communion-participation-and-mission/>

On the Feast of Pentecost, a new guide was published to support local reflection on the outcomes of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia. *Carrying Forward the Plenary Council* invites Catholic parishes, schools and other communities to pray about, reflect upon and review what they are already doing, or could be doing, in relation to acting on the commitments the Council members made in the decrees. More can be found at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/carrying-forward-the-plenary-council/>

*Photos: Front cover: Coastline - Great Ocean Road. Back cover: 1. CRISP volunteers working bee - South West Coast Parish 2. Mercy Regional College Camperdown Feast Day. 3. Trinity College Colac Smoking Ceremony. 4. Working Together, Working Smarter Seminar Day.*

We are a community of communities from the Murray to the sea. Inspired by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist, we follow the example of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, reaching out in joyful and humble service, caring for all of God's creation, growing in love day by day and looking forward to life with God forever.

Vision Statement for the Diocese