



# OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

News around the Diocese

No. 71 November 2023

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### OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY (ODC)

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## Marking 150 Years of the Ballarat Diocese

*On March 30 next year, the Diocese of Ballarat will turn 150. It will be exactly 150 years since Pope Pius the Ninth issued a decree that the then Diocese of Melbourne be divided into three to form the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the Diocese of Sandhurst (Bendigo) and the Diocese of Ballarat. Over the past few months, I have met with an anniversary committee from around the diocese to gather ideas on how we might mark the occasion. I would like to share with you some of the ways in which we will recognise the anniversary.*



*First of all, I note an article entitled "A Diocese Is Born". This has been prepared by Sr Berenice Kerr from the Sisters of Mercy Community in Ballarat. Sr Berenice has brought her training as a historian to bear on the question of the formation of our diocese. She set out to provide "a continuous, detailed narrative" of the events that led to the creation of the Diocese of Ballarat. The decree of Pope Pius the Ninth might suggest that the creation of the diocese was a relatively simple matter, prompted by the need to appoint a bishop to care for the growing population of the western part of Victoria. Sr Berenice's research revealed that the process was not so simple. She gives us an engaging account of the "intrigue, backroom deals and machinations" that marked the years leading up to the creation of the diocese, as people debated how many dioceses Victoria should have and who should be appointed as bishops. Sr Berenice's article is included in this issue of Our Diocesan Community.*

*Our 150th anniversary next year 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 parishes and schools and the social services and health care in our diocese today. The anniversary will also 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.*

*The Season of Lent each year provides us with a time for reflection. On Ash Wednesday we receive ashes on our foreheads to mark a time of repentance. All through Lent, the words of the prophets call us to turn away from sin and draw closer to God. In Lent next year, as we mark the diocese's 150th anniversary, we will be invited to recognise the failings as well as the achievements of the past 150 years and to pray for God's help to live more fully as the Christian community Christ wishes us to be in the years ahead.*

*On the Monday of Holy Week we will continue our practice of gathering in the cathedral with parishioners from all around the diocese to celebrate the Chrism Mass. We will invite members of each parish to bring an image that reflects some aspect of the life of their local community. Through these images, we will share something of the spirit and history of our whole diocese. For next year, we plan to have the Chrism Mass at 11 am and follow the Mass with a lunch and an opportunity to view an historical display highlighting some of the*

events of the 150 years. Groups from parishes and from schools could arrange to visit the archives in the course of 2024 by contacting our diocesan archivist.

The actual anniversary of March 30 happens to fall on Holy Saturday next year. So we will be able to acknowledge the anniversary as we celebrate the Easter Vigil. As we light our tapers from the Easter candle, we will be able to give thanks that the risen Jesus has been with us as a diocesan community for the past 150 years and pray that he will continue to be with us as we move ahead.

I invite parishes to mark the 150th anniversary during the Easter season, particularly at Masses on the weekend of April 27-28 with some special prayers and reflections on the history of our diocese. I invite schools to mark the anniversary during the week of April 29 to May 3. I encourage each parish and each school to celebrate their own history in the context of the diocese's one hundred and fifty years. I am sure that local communities will be able to come up with creative ways of telling their local stories as part of the story of the diocese.

For the Feast of Pentecost, the focus will be on recognising the many ways in which people have served in each parish and the many ways in which people continue to serve. This will be an occasion to commission those who have particular ministries in each parish and to pray for all those who nurture our communities day by day.

As the year unfolds, I hope to mark the anniversary with a personal visit to each parish. Our diocese began when the Pope appointed a bishop to look after the people of Western Victoria. I would love to recognise the 150th anniversary year as bishop by visiting people throughout the diocese and celebrating the Eucharist with as many local communities as possible.

Last year, people from all around the country met in Sydney as the Australian Plenary Council. They considered a wide range of issues of concern to our Catholic community throughout Australia. One of the key messages of the Plenary Council was a call to find ways in which all the members of the Church might be engaged in the life of the community and share in the mission to spread the gospel. The Council encouraged us to draw on people's gifts, including gifts of leadership.

In line with the call of the Plenary Council, I have asked each parish to make 2023 a year when we focus on the leadership in our local community, through forming or developing further a parish pastoral council or leadership team according to our local circumstances.

In 2024, as we acknowledge the 150th anniversary of our diocese, we will hold a Diocesan Assembly, bringing together representatives of the leadership teams in our parishes and schools, to consider how we might develop the leadership in our communities and in our diocese in the future. The dates I propose for this Diocesan Assembly are November 15-16, 2024.

When Pope Pius the Ninth created the Diocese of Ballarat, he did so to provide for the care and the spiritual good of the growing population at that time. As we mark the 150th anniversary of our diocese, I hope the commemorations will promote our care for one another in our time and the spiritual good of our whole community.



Bishop Paul Bird CSsR

## INDUSTRY TOUR

Marian College Ararat Vocational Major students went on a tour of different industries, including the Tiny House Caravan Park located in Dadswells Bridge, the production factory in Playford Street, Stawell and Ararat Kitchens and Joinery. The Tiny House Caravan Park called "Tiny Away" is managed by Dale and Katie, who showed us how the tiny house production started with the CEO and founder, Adrian, who was from Singapore where the project began as "Big Tiny". We learnt how the modular panels of the tiny house are made in Malaysia. The outside of the quirky caravan has a PVC wood exterior. We were able to meet the electricians on the jobsite, Dave and his apprentice Ashley. They told us about themselves and how they came to be in the industry. We walked around the caravan park and went inside the tiny houses. After this, we went to the tiny house production factory where we viewed the tiny houses that were in the process of having the plumbing and electrical systems installed and tested. Dale even let us attach the skirting on the tiny house shell.



Ararat Kitchens and Joinery gave us a fantastic insight into all the behind the scene works that are done before the finished product. It's a family run business owned by Ben and Monique Hargreaves who serve in Ararat and surrounding areas. They have one apprentice, Liam Gray, a former Marian College student, and they showed us what boards they use for cabinetry like the Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF). Lastly, they gave us a demonstration of how the Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine in their workshop operates.

Nick Mason and Charlie Price

So why has the United Nations declared this year the year of millets? The United Nations is encouraging regions of Asia and Africa to replace the big three grasses (rice, wheat and maize) with millet. From millet grain, bread, porridge and malt are made. As a 'smart food,' millet can significantly contribute to overcoming malnutrition. Once critically endangered, the millet species is now recognised as part of the solution to global food problems, as it is full of nutrients and is an essential source of energy.

In northern Victoria we mostly sow cereal crops, such as wheat and barley, as well as legumes, lentils, beans and peas in autumn. We watch them grow over winter to be harvested in late spring or early summer. We rarely grow millet as it can be a risky crop to grow in Victoria if conditions are not right.

## International Year of Millets

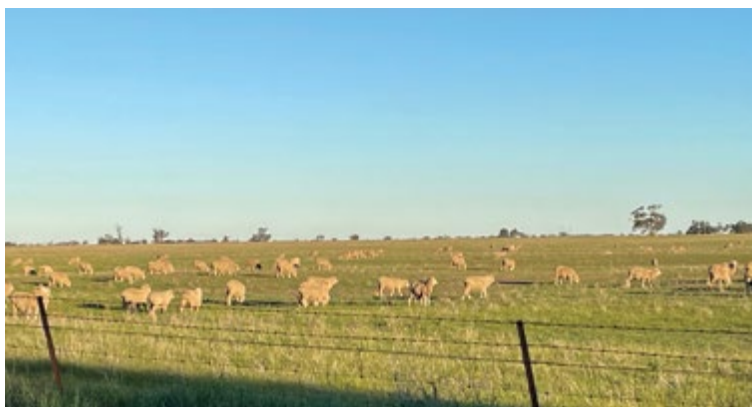
In Australia, we are grateful that malnutrition is very low compared to parts of Africa and Asia, so millet is primarily grown as a stock feed for cattle, birds and other animals. It is sown in spring as a summer crop as it needs a high soil temperature and plenty of summer rainfall to germinate. Northern New South Wales and Queensland have the ideal temperatures and rainfall to grow this summer crop, as it can be an uncertain crop to grow in the cooler states such as Victoria.

Our farm, like so many in the district, has been worked by father and son. When my parents-in-law were farming, God and their church always came first. As busy as harvest and cropping were, Mass was never missed. These days, even though faith is very important to my husband and myself, that same fervency that places church going at the top of our priorities is not there as it was for my in-laws. Our faith has become more passive than their active and passionate faith.

I am regularly reminded of my mother-in-law's passion for her faith when I am in the garden. I sometimes dig up crucifixes that have been buried or find broken beads from her rosary beads strung over a branch. My rosary beads don't get the same work out as hers did, but I can't wait for my beads to break so that I can continue the tradition for future generations to find my broken rosary beads.



Leon and Noeline Hogan



## "I thank my God each time I think of You..."

**Reflections from Fr Bill van de Camp in his fiftieth year of ordination (1973-2023)**

*I was a Dutch migrant child who came to Australia in 1957 from the Netherlands. I was 11 years old. It was in 1959 when Sr Eunice, a Sister of Mercy at St Joseph's School Noorat, asked me if I was interested in attending a camp conducted by Fr Dan Boylan and Fr John Moloney for boys who showed an interest in the Priesthood. This camp was conducted at 'Old Monivae,' Hamilton. In long pants, for the first time, I attended.*

*I commenced my secondary education at St Thomas Primary School in Terang and eventually went to St Patrick's College, Ballarat. At the express wish of Bishop O'Collins I commenced my seminary training at St Francis Xavier's Seminary, Adelaide in 1967. The Seminary was conducted by the Vincentian Fathers.*

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*On October 5, 1973 I was ordained by Bishop Mulkearns in the Terang Picture Theatre. The new church in Terang had not yet been completed. It was the first and only time I ever got on stage.*

*My first appointment as an Assistant Priest (curate) was to the Parish of Ararat. I served as an Assistant Priest in the Parishes of Ararat, Colac, Maryborough and Portland.*

*In 1983 I received my first appointment as Parish Priest of the Parish of Nhill. I served as Parish Priest in Nhill, Camperdown, Ballarat North and as Administrator at the Ballarat Cathedral. After Ballarat I took up my final appointment as Parish Priest of the parishes of Koroit and Port Fairy. In 2020 I retired. I also served the Diocese of Ballarat as Mission Director, Ministry to Priests and Vicar General. I am now retired in Gillan Park Retirement Village, Warrnambool.*

*I have enjoyed and loved my ministry as a priest. I thank my parents and family, my teachers, my seminary professors, my Bishops - O'Collins, Mulkearns, Connors and Bird, my brother priests and above all the people with whom I ministered. I have received great support and affirmation from so many people. May God bless you all. My favourite hymn is "I thank my God each time I think of You..."*

Regards, Fr Bill

## POSSUM SKIN CLOAK MARKING

The Indigenous students at Loreto College Ballarat, recently had the opportunity to delve into the traditional cultural practice of making a Possum Skin Cloak through BADAC (Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative).

Traditionally, Possum Skin Cloaks were used in the cooler climates of the southern parts of what is now known as, Victoria. They are of great cultural significance to Aboriginal people in this area. Often, the inner surface of each cloak displays individual markings to map the identity of their owner, hold stories of kinship, family groups and connection to Country.

Possum Skin Cloaks were extremely versatile and were used for a multitude of purposes. They were vital for warmth, used as baby carriers, coverings at night, drums in ceremony and for burial.

Still today these cloaks play an important role in Aboriginal culture. A possum skin pelt may be gifted to a newborn baby, who will continue to gather additional pelts at each significant milestone throughout their lives. These are then stitched together using sinew to create the full cloak. Often, the completed Possum Skin Cloak is buried with the owner at the end of their life.

Due to the cultural significance of this practice, we decided to make a cloak to be worn at acknowledgement of country and special Loreto College events. One of continuing history, each Aboriginal student from the Dhurrung Centre (the Loreto College First Nations students' meeting place) had the opportunity to 'add their mark' to the Loreto cloak. Originally, markings were made using animal teeth or sharp tools to etch and then paint with ochre. These days the practice of marking continues, but replacing the traditional tool use are electric burners

to scorch the stories into the skin. This was the process used by the Indigenous students at the College.

A central story was designed for the cloak reflecting how each student is connected through their Loreto College journey. It also highlights the connection to the local Lake Wendouree, with circles depicting the regular yarning time in the Dhurrung Centre. The students have added their individual mark onto the outside pelts which are connected to the central story by footprints. As each new Indigenous student joins the Loreto College Ballarat community, they too will add their own personal mark.

Teaming with BADAC for this cultural process has been an enlightening experience for the Loreto College Ballarat students from the Dhurrung Centre. It has provided them with a culturally rich understanding and essential knowledge about a deeply valued rite of passage in their cultural journey.

*Janine Quick - Loreto College Ballarat, First Nations Coordinator*



## Community Building



Each week, since COVID allowed, a small group of 20+ people have gathered for Mass each Friday at 11.00am in the Ararat Centre for the Parish of Gariwerd. This has given us a true sense of Mass as 'gathered around the altar'. We join in songs and many share the readings. It has become a very welcoming, interactive experience. This has been great for people who find 8.30am Mass on Sundays just too hard to manage. Mass is then followed by a cuppa and a biscuit. This has evolved slightly with many people contributing and it is often becoming a lovely light meal - quite a banquet! All are welcome to stay and many do. This is something special to look forward to each week - sharing, supporting and caring for community members.

### SUNDAY MORNING CUPPA

Each Sunday after our Mass we have a cuppa and refreshments. Many people contribute and many others stay for a few extra minutes to catch up with Fr Andrew and parishioners.

### HARMONY DAY

On Sunday June 25, some of our parishioners attended Harmony Day here in Ararat sponsored by the local Islamic community. We had many speakers such as local and Federal government representatives, Islamic Community Victoria, Christian religious leaders, including Fr Andrew. They all echoed the same message of acceptance, respect, support and the need for all to work together to make our workplaces, towns, state and country a welcoming safe place for all to live. We were then treated to a delicious meal prepared by the Islamic community.

### INTERCHURCH BLESSINGS

It's been a busy time for interchurch and intercultural events. We celebrated and grieved the closure of the Baptist Church in Stawell. We celebrated with the Anglicans the blessing and installation of their Marian Shrine and the blessing and installation of the former Glenorchy baptism font at St Patrick's. A good number of parishioners also attended an intercultural and interfaith event in Ararat. Good things happening. Signs of God's kingdom.



Jill Croxford - Parish Secretary

## MONIVAE COLLEGE AT SHEEPVENTION

Sheepvention is one of the largest agricultural events in Victoria, drawing up to 25,000 visitors over two days in early August. The event is held at the Hamilton Showgrounds and features a wide range of community-based agencies and businesses alongside the traditional agricultural focused offerings. Sheepvention is seen as a wonderful opportunity for Monivae College to support our home town and at the same time, dedicate time and resources into connecting with Old Collegians, future families and the wider community. Over twenty colleges and educational institutions from interstate, metro Melbourne and regional centres attend Sheepvention, a testament to the value of education demonstrated by the attendees.

This year, the Monivae College stand was hosted by a roster of eight student leaders from a range of year levels, who gave up their free days to support the cause and talk directly to guests, promoting the value of a Monivae College education.

Kylie Schurmann, Marketing Coordinator

L - R: Tana Nedziwe, Lucille Aarons, Shannon Mhasho, Holly Rook



## SPECIAL VISITORS FROM YARRALIN

Sacred Heart Primary School in Colac were delighted to host sixteen children and four adults from Yarralin community in the Northern Territory on Friday, September 1, 2023 as part of the Yarralin children's first ever visit to Victoria. Yarralin is a ten hour bus trip south west of Darwin. It had been a mighty effort to get to Colac!

One of Sacred Heart's teachers, Jeremy Richardson, has a sister, Zoe who happens to be the Principal of the Yarralin Community School and so when Zoe mentioned that she was planning to send the children with the best school attendance on a camp to Melbourne and was trying to fill the Victorian itinerary, Jeremy enthusiastically suggested a day spent at Sacred Heart in Colac. The children and staff spent four days in Melbourne before catching a mini bus to Colac to spend the Friday at our school. We felt very honoured.



The Yarralin children arrived just in time for the regular Friday assembly. They were, at first, very shy but many of them were prepared to read, in English, in front of the 450+ people at the assembly to tell and show us something of their community and their school. Damien, their teacher, explained that English is their 3rd or 4th language so it was a very brave effort.



The Sacred Heart students welcomed their new friends with genuine warmth and the expectation of making some new friends who might have things to teach them, coming as they do from a place so different to the dairy farms of the Western District. As principal I am happy to say it was one of the most enjoyable and rewarding days I have ever spent in a school across my thirty eight year teaching career. (Fifty if you count MY days as a student!)

Sacred Heart's senior students took small groups of the Yarralin community for a tour of the school but what everyone really wanted to do was PLAY. After recess the children completed a number of different games, physical challenges and some art work, as the children all got to know and like each other. Everyone enjoyed some kangaroo and beef stew for lunch before it was time to play again. The usual lunchtime football game was played but today's was a barefoot affair, with our students following the lead of their Yarralin mates whipping off their boots and socks. A lot of fun was had by all. After lunch the children took part in a Colour Run and enjoyed this experience immensely, leaving all the kids covered in all colours from head to toe.

Once the Sacred Heart students had reluctantly left for the day and while the Yarralin mob waited for their bus, we took a few photos and one young boy insisted on the principal's attention as he had something very important to say. "Mr Jack" he said "please tell all of the kids in your school that I love them." .... I took great pleasure in passing that important message on first thing Monday morning.

*Jack Lenaghan - Principal*



### **Bishop's visit**

**On Sunday, August 13, 2023, the Bungaree Parish welcomed Bishop Paul Bird as he celebrated the 8.45am Mass for thirteen children who received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. We thank the children – Jack,**

**Adele, Billy, Evie, Lucy, Charlotte, Abigail, Sophie, Felicity, Jai, Kamden, Eliza and Matilda - enrolled in the program, their parents, families and friends for making it such a special day. We would like to thank Dianne Reynolds for preparing and delivering the program that prepared the children. Over three weeks, the children and their parents came together each Monday afternoon for one hour sessions at St Brendan's Primary School Dunnstown. This year we have begun the transition to run a sacramental program that is family based, parish coordinated and school supported. The Parish of Bungaree also thanks Fr Sajan, Inez French, Principal of St Mary's Clarkes Hill and St Brendan's Dunnstown and Louise Haintz, Religious Education Leader, for their assistance in the program.**

**Bungaree Parish**

# Celebrating a golden jubilee

## **Father Lawrence O'Toole celebrates and reflects on his Golden Jubilee of Ordination to the Priesthood.**

Thank You to the Editors Of 'Our Diocesan Community' for the opportunity to reflect in light of my Golden Jubilee of Ordination on September 6, 2023.

I was ordained by Bishop Mulkearns in the Infant Jesus Church at Koroit. It was the Church where I had received the Sacraments of Initiation. Bishop O'Collins who had confirmed me was present. I was born in the new St John of God Hospital in Warrnambool in 1947. The hospital was opened in 1939.

**Tell us about your childhood:** I was the second child in our family of four. My older brother Terence died when he was two from whooping cough. His death has impacted us with grief, faith, hope, love and empathy. Michael whom many know, also a priest in the diocese, was next in line and then Helen who still serves as a nurse, mother, grandmother, sister and friend of many.

Mum and Dad were raised on small farms which grew potatoes, onions, dairy cows, turkeys, geese and pigs. The land at Illowa and Koroit was God's provision for the family. I have retired to Koroit where our family lived. This is a blessing with rural and scenic views, memories, culture, comfort, family and belonging.

The church community was a pivotal part of our lives. The church, presbytery, convent and schools were around the corner. The presbytery was home to four priests. The Good Samaritan Sisters numbered eleven and more than doubled for the Christmas holidays. Parish tennis courts were in the precinct. We enjoyed easy access to the community cricket and football grounds. The parish also owned three halls and a race course. Basketball was big for the girls and women.

The priests and sisters involved our family and friends in chores - deliveries, posting, lawn mowing, hospitality, baking. My after-school work included harvesting of potatoes and hay, delivering meat with the

butcher, gardening at 'Rosebank', a nearby Homestead. When on holidays from the Seminary work included being a postie in Ballarat; working for the Army in Hobart and at the Defiance Flour Mill in Toowoomba.

Tennis was my favourite sport. It meant playing in a team on Saturdays, participating in tournaments on Sundays and having 'a hit' on holidays and of an evening. The assistant priests shared their humanity playing tennis, football and cricket.

I was taught life from experiencing an extended family who respected each other with visits and support. I witnessed my paternal grandmother each Sunday take her baskets of cakes to the convent before walking into 8.30am Mass. I witnessed two of the Sisters walk some distance most Sundays to visit our maternal grandmother who was housebound. An aunt who worked at Nestles would have us take coffee and condensed milk to our teachers' mid-week.

Prior to Concelebrated Masses we would enjoy High Masses on Solemn Feast Days. Our school from the choir loft would sing hymns at the early morning Mass on Feasts that were important to the parish. Processions to the Convent Grotto from the school were the order for the year. We participated in Forty Hour Devotions and whole school Masses on First Fridays.

Friends were always there. A contemporary Robert Billings was ordained a Jesuit and has spent his priesthood to date in India.

My education was at St Patrick's Koroit, Good Samaritan College Koroit, St Patrick's College Ballarat, St Francis Xavier's Seminary, Adelaide. My teachers were almost exclusively Sisters of the Good Samaritan, Christian Brothers and Vincentian Fathers. When at Ballarat, I resided with about ten others in St Peter's Minor Seminary. Br Boulter was House Master and Fr John McKinnon was Rector and Spiritual Director.

As a young family, we holidayed in Lorne and Geelong, not far from Kardinia Park! They were opportunities to stay with aunts,

uncles and cousins and experience trains, taxis, the Melbourne Zoo, beaches, forests and creeks.

**You have been ordained fifty years. When did you know you wanted to become a Priest?** The thought of becoming a priest surfaced in Middle Primary School. It was shelved in senior primary until Year 10. Our community enjoyed locals in the Seminary. With excitement in our extended family, Fr Frank Madden was ordained. He returned to his schools. This was an impetus to share my dream with Fr Dan Boylan our Administrator.

I had noted in a school magazine the senior secondary classes expressed the joy it would be to have a contemporary being ordained. I heard Sr Francis Borgia Egan say in Religious Education, "think of what God has done for us. What can we do for God?"

**Appointments?** My appointments have been at Ballarat East, Ararat and St Joseph's Warrnambool as an Assistant. I was appointed to Edenhope in 1984 as Parish Priest and was there for almost eight years. Penshurst, Port Fairy and East Warrnambool followed. The latter being for twenty-three years. In retirement for fifteen months, I am happy to help where I am needed. My Ordination Motto was 'My Vows to God I will fulfill before all God's People' (Ps.116,18).

**What was the best thing about becoming a priest?** Priesthood is a good fit for me. My life has purpose. I enjoy sharing with others our friendship with our Loving God and our relationships within God's family. I enjoy welcoming people to Mass and celebrations and encouraging parishioners to be hospitable. Parish Family Groups, the Movement for a Better World, Migrant Sundays and lunches helped.

St Dominic's goal was 'to pass on the fruits of contemplation.' I enjoy sharing what I have discovered. The first role of the priest is to preach the Word of God. St Francis of Assisi taught "preach the Gospel always. If necessary, use words." Being retired,



*I miss some opportunities for sharing. For all in our Diocesan Family I share the prayer of Saint John Henry Newman, "God has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do God's work. God does nothing in vain. Therefore, I will trust God."*

**If you were a colour, what would it be?** *Green attracts me. I turn towards green for it reminds me of God the giver of life. I appreciate God as suggested by plants, market gardens, trees, orchards, flowers, crops and pasture. My favourite word is Life. Where there is green, there is life.*

*Jesus introduces Himself as 'The Life' and 'I have come so that you may have Life and have it abundantly'. 'Those who follow Me will have The Light of Life'. Therefore St Irenaeus could say, 'The Glory of God is our being fully alive'.*

*Education is guiding the learner to wholeness, to life. I have enjoyed being part of Catholic Education all my life! St Mary MacKillop's insight resonates: 'God wants us by every means in our power to lead others to life'.*

*Our green Mass vestments, which we use for most of our Masses, can remind us of our 'Life in The Risen Christ'. At Easter, we always celebrate The Risen Christ as The Good Shepherd. "Fresh and green are the pastures where Christ gives us repose."*

*As Easter People, we can associate ourselves with the Easter lyrics "Now the green blade rises from the buried grain; Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green."*

*Saint Hildegard wrote, "Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars. Gaze at the beauty of earth's greenings. Now think. What delight God gives to humankind with all these things. Who will give all these shining, wonderful gifts, if not God?"*

**What are some of your favourite memories?** *1. The joyful and happy children of Our Lady Help of Christians School, East Warrnambool, after our school Masses. 2. Four years ago when we welcomed the first group of Timor Leste workers to Warrnambool for employment at Midfield Meat Company. On account of their being Catholic, an employee who was involved with recruiting informed me of their coming. During their two days of induction, we invited them to a weekday Mass. We also invited a*



*class from OLHC East Warrnambool Primary School and some students from Emmanuel College to join us. Over morning tea whilst I was attending personnel from the Pacific Labourers' Scheme, I was delighted to see students and newcomers posing for photos with much fun and creativity. A warm welcome indeed!*

*3. The Beatification of our now Saint Mary of The Cross MacKillop in Sydney 1994 which I attended with priest friends. It was emotional. Saint Mary often said "All in the end shall be well." On the balmy evening before, at the Domain, we enjoyed a national get-together concert.*

**If you chose a song which most represents you at this time what would the song be? Why?** *With the coming of spring I am finding myself singing from 'Oklahoma' - "O what a beautiful morning. O what a beautiful day. O there's a bright golden haze on the meadow. All the sounds of the earth are like music. And o'weeper willer is laughin at me".*

*I first heard this being sung by Fr Dan Boylan as he emerged from the Koroit Presbytery into a beautiful day. The joyful experience has lingered. Fr Flanigan (Flags) who interviewed me at school about priesthood, when I was in Intermediate, has kindly gifted me with an Anniversary Card. Appropriately with my love of nature the card has verses from the Jesuit and Scientist Fr Teihard de Chardin - "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God". As a Scientist and Theologian his encounters with 'the unique Life of all things convinced him that God is the 'heart of All''. Closer to home Fr Julian Tennison Woods of Penola, who also was a Scientist, wrote, "All created things give us ideas and glimpses of the beauty of the infinitely beautiful Creator".*

*I love to see on long weekends and holidays, people getting away together with their caravans, bikes and boats. I enjoy welcoming them to Mass. The poet William Blake wrote, "Great things happen when men (people) and mountains meet"*

**If you could choose anyone from anytime, who would you most like to be in conversation with and why?**

*Pope Francis is my hero. He gives from his heart, mind, talents and spiritual experience for the Church and the world. I would like to thank him and affirm him. Pope Francis is strong about Hope and he gives Hope to the Church and the world. "To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope!"*

*I think of his strong presence, despite his age and health. He empowered 1.5 million youth in Portugal representing all countries except one. Our two Diocesan Seminarians Cay and Lam and five other young people from our diocese were enthusiastically commissioned with all the pilgrims by Pope Francis. "Take what God has sown into your hearts back to your home countries and build a Joyful Church that is open to all. There is a world that needs you". The Melbourne and the Mexican Pilgrims were graced with private visits to them. Our Ballarat pilgrims were with those from Melbourne and Sandhurst.*

*Pope Francis, like his personal Patron Saint, appreciates God's compassion for the poorest and God's Creation of The Universe. "God saw all that God had made and found it very good". With his encyclical 'Laudato Si', meaning Praise Be, Pope Francis wants all people to enjoy and experience God. "Praise be to you, my God, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs". (St Francis of Assisi).*

**What are your hopes and visions for the Catholic Church in the Ballarat Diocese?** *Our diocese gives me hope. The reports in ODC are always admirable. People are generous in serving and supporting their parishes and schools. I hope for married Deacons to be included in the service*

of our parishes. I apply what Pope Francis said at the end of WYD in Portugal, "Our lives, if we think about it are filled with miracles".

The 150th Anniversary of our Diocese in 2024 is a timely opportunity to remember, refresh and be courageous for the times ahead. Bishop Paul's letter in the July edition of ODC concluded with, "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".

Our Australian Bishop's confidence in us by holding the Plenary Council and Pope Francis' courage in having a 'Synod on Synodality' over the next twelve months will bear fruit in due season. There are people with charisma giving their service for The Kingdom.

The Missionary Priests and Seminarians amongst us now from India, The Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, along with our recently Ordained, witness God's Great Love for us. Let us walk together, brothers and sisters, for Christ's Kingdom of Peace, Justice and Love on earth.

Pope Francis told the youth going out from Portugal to the ends of the earth, "The world needs you like the earth needs rain". The world needs us, Christ's church, today, like rain.

**How are you finding retirement?** I have been retired now for fifteen months. I am 76. I am grateful for forty-nine years of Parish Ministry and grateful for this new phase of

being a priest. I have been celebrating Sunday Masses in various parishes in our diocese and thereby helping my brother priests have a needed break. The next two months I will be in Hamilton and district. Over the last twelve months I have been from Edenhope to Portland and Lorne and some places in between. I am enjoying meeting and supporting parish communities.

When the weather is conducive, I go for a walk for exercise, to enjoy being outside in the countryside and greeting neighbours. On Sundays when we are free Frs Michael Linehan, Bill van de Camp and I concelebrate Mass. We then share Sunday lunch with the three priests of the parish.

I enjoy reading and study. My passion is still the community of the Church and our geographical, historic and cultural setting. I enjoy relationships with migrants and since COVID I have what could be called a virtual parish. I enjoy listening to ABC Radio - news, interviews and the country hour.

LIFE is good! There are not enough hours in my day.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?** Thank you. I will list ministry that was outside parish ministry and happened with God's help and St Mary MacKillop:

- Tutoring groups of teachers in training at Aquinas College, Ballarat. The subject was Theology.
- Prison Ministry at Ararat Prison.
- Initiated 'Mercy Place' Nursing Home in Warrnambool.
- Chaplaincy at Sacred Heart College

Ballarat East, St Martin's in the Pines, Mount Clear; Marian College Ararat; CBC Primary School, St Ann's College and Emmanuel College, Warrnambool.

- Chair of Emmanuel College Governors for twenty-three years.
- Secretary and Chair of Southern Zone Priests and Pastoral Associates at various times.
- A Diocesan Consultor for two terms.
- Visiting Priest to Harrow, Hamilton, Dunkeld, Macarthur, St Joseph's Warrnambool and Purnim.
- Chaplain Deakin University, Warrnambool Campus.
- Diocesan Spiritual Director of Catholic Women's League.
- Having fundraisers, with support, for the Good Samaritan Sisters' Mission in Australia, The Philippines, Timor Leste and Kiribati.

Fletcher Jones, who with dedication and Christian faith, developed in Warrnambool a successful clothing industry, named his autobiography "Not by Myself". Fr Austin Cooper OMI, a Church Historian, entitled his history of The Oblate Fathers in Australia - "A Little By Ourselves".

The Risen Christ of Emmaus walked with me in my parents, my family; immediate and extended. It was Christ who surrounded me in my teachers, mentors, friends, colleagues and communities with help, prayer, formation, hospitality and inspiration.

We the Baptised, Confirmed and Ordained who live in Christ the Priest, Prophet and Shepherd have been anointed with Christ's Spirit.

## St Malachy's Edenhope visit



In July, St Malachy's Primary School in Edenhope had their five year school review. The three visitors were Janet Claassen, DOBCEL Educational Consultant, Mr Nick Murrell, Principal from St Patrick's Primary School Koroit and Ms Cheryl Pefanis, Review Facilitator. A few of our students gave the visitors a tour around the school and showed them inside and outside. We showed them all of our classrooms and the cool things about our school.

We also had the DOBCEL Board visit a few days later and we had a big welcome for them. They viewed the memorials, the Sisters of Mercy Cross in the garden, our playgrounds and met all of our friendly students.

Edward, Grace, Fletcher, Samuel, Gabi, Taewyn, Airlie, Hudson & Scarlett (Year 5 & 6)

# ACU OPEN DAY

Australian Catholic University Ballarat Campus Dean Bridget Aitchison said it was “amazing” to see people come and check out the university on Sunday, August 27. “Open Day is a great day of the year where prospective students can come and talk to faculty staff and other students to get the inside scoop on what it’s like to be a student here, as well as the courses we offer,” she said. “It gives their families a chance to observe the campus and get a feel of the atmosphere - you have to come here physically to experience this, which is why we’re really glad we’re able to do it in person instead of virtually this year.” Professor Aitchison said the Ballarat campus was special - while it had the resources of a national university, the small campus offered a community feel.

Bachelor of Paramedics and Nursing student Molly Konecny is in her third year and was keen to volunteer for the open day. She echoed Professor Aitchison on the positives of the Ballarat campus. “I love the small campus and you know your lecturers and they know you by name



and you get to be really close with your cohort,” Ms Konecny said.

Ms Konecny moved from Mildura to be able to study the double degree. “I really want to just inspire and help encourage students that are looking into this field of study because it’s really interesting,” she said. “I’m just very passionate about this degree, it’s a great idea of combining nursing and the paramedic side into one.”

Professor Aitchison was excited the campus was offering Occupational Health courses in 2024 and said they had already been inundated with inquiries. “To be able to build on what we’ve done in nursing, paramedicine and physiotherapy by adding occupational therapy to our list of health and allied health offerings is really great for the region,” she said.

*Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier, text by Alison Foletta and photos by Lachlan Bence*

*Left: Morgan Shearer and paramedic student Molly Konecny discuss studying at ACU*

*Top: Eden Haddick, Morgan Barby and Jessica Magee*



## Bright Futures at Damascus College

Early on Thursday, August 10, 2023, Damascus College Ballarat was delighted to welcome their community to the Bright Futures Breakfast. This fundraising event is held to support the Damascus College Bright Futures Scholarship, which is awarded annually to one incoming Year 7 student for 50% tuition relief and is awarded for the duration of a student’s enrolment at Damascus College. The well-attended event included College and House captains, students, staff and members of the wider Damascus College community including Ballarat Legacy, Findex and FedUni as well as the Sisters of Mercy, the Ballarat Diocese and Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

Guests at the event were treated to an impassioned speech from Year 11 student Zoe Newman about the importance of her Damascus education. Zoe is a worthy recipient of the 2022 Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Scholarship and she shared the impact her scholarship had on her and her family.

The special guest speaker was Shelby Sherritt, Class of 2013 (pictured right with Principal Steven Mifsud). Shelby shared her inspirational and motivational personal journey, from being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer when she was just 20 to being a full-time artist with an international following. Shelby is also the 2023 Damascus College Alumni Art Prize winner.

Thank you to all who attended this event or have contributed in some other way to show your support for Damascus College and the Bright Futures Scholarship.



Sarah Boswell - Leader of Marketing & Development

Zoe Newman’s speech can be read in Edition 122, e-News, [https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/Our Diocesan Community](https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/Our-Diocesan-Community) - November 2023

# World Youth Day - Lisbon 2023

Gerry Vytilingam - Faith In Action Leader, along with Year 11 Students Grace Doherty and Anna Whiting from St Mary MacKillop College Swan Hill, reflect on their WYD experience:

## **GERRY VYILINGAM - FAITH IN ACTION LEADER:**

World Youth Day is an opportunity for young people from all over the world to gather and experience the Catholic Church's universal community and to deepen their own personal faith. It occurs every 3 or 4 years, changing locations across the globe. This year, 1.5 million young people were recorded to have attended this experience. Grace Doherty, Anna Whiting and I were privileged with the opportunity to attend World Youth Day Week 2023 with a group of over five hundred and thirty people from the Archdiocese of Melbourne, where we represented the Holy Family Parish, Northeast Mallee.

I was fortunate enough to take part in a pre-World Youth Day pilgrimage through Italy before arriving in Portugal for World Youth Day Week. My group, named 'The Italian Way', consisted of forty-six pilgrims who travelled across Rome, the Vatican and Assisi to various sites of historical and spiritual significance. From this group, I was privileged to lead a small group of seven young adults from the western suburbs of Melbourne. Having never been to Italy before, I was really excited to experience all the country had to offer!

On our final full day in Rome, our group was surprised by a private audience with the Pope. What that means is that we were in the same room as Pope Francis and had an allocated time to meet with him. What was incredibly special was sharing this experience with my pilgrimage group. There was something really profound about everyone being in the audience room together and the collective effervescence we felt as Pope Francis entered. Something changed in the air. People were overwhelmed by joy, tears, laughter and disbelief. Even those who were not that religious felt overcome with emotion.

We had the opportunity to ask the Pope a question. He speaks mostly in Italian, so a translator communicated all that I said in Italian, and then translated the Pope's response back into English. Whilst Rome's churches are very glamorous and ornate, the presence of Pope Francis reminded me of the grounded church that I knew. He was someone who listened intently, didn't over-spiritualise the practicals of life and most definitely was aware of the issues of our time. He spoke of the misuse of social media, the challenges of being a teacher and the importance of stewarding our environment. Many of those in my small group would say that was the highlight of their pilgrimage experience!



Later on, my group travelled to Assisi, which is the place where St Francis and St Clare lived. St Francis and St Clare both wanted to change society and challenge the church at a time in history when people were obsessed with money, wealth and social status. A highlight of Assisi was walking through the beautiful green gardens of Francis' monastery and praying at the Basilica of St Mary of the Angels which holds the Portiuncula (where St Francis established the brotherhood) and the room where he died. People call Assisi the most peaceful city on earth and not just because of its religious affiliation. It holds meetings about global peace-building efforts for the UN and other international organisations. After Assisi, we travelled back to Rome and headed to Fatima to meet the other Victorians in our group.

## **YEAR 11 STUDENT GRACE DOHERTY:**

On July 28, Anna and I took off for Portugal, stopping over in Malaysia and Turkey before landing in Madrid, Spain. We took a 6-hour bus ride through the Spanish countryside, before arriving in Portugal.

*We were lucky enough to make the trip to Fatima, a holy site where Mary appeared to three peasant children as a lady in white, one night every month, for six months. Fatima was a very spiritual experience. We had Mass with the rest of the pilgrims from Victoria, and later we prayed the rosary with pilgrims from all over the world, who had come to see the place that Mary had been.*

*We were shocked to see people walking on their knees, praying the rosary as they got closer and closer to where Mary appeared. Their faith and devotion were evident in their faces and the spiritual energy that was in the place was overwhelming. After the rosary, we were able to walk a candlelight vigil along the same path people had walked on their knees, a solemn and spiritual journey.*



*After Fatima, we travelled to Lisbon for the beginning of ‘World Youth Day Week.’ Each day during World Youth Day week had a series of different activities and events. These ranged from big events which featured the Pope, festivals and catechesis.*

*On Tuesday afternoon, we attended the ‘Australian Gathering’, where there were over 3000+ Australian pilgrims. That evening, we attended the Opening Mass where we got to experience the energy of World Youth Day on an international level. People shouted chants from their countries and waved as they went past. Our Australian group would often echo an “Aussie Aussie Aussie”, and others would join in saying “Oi Oi Oi.” This was our first taste of the vibrant and exciting energy of World Youth Day that was present at every event and even in the streets of Portugal.*

*The next day we headed to the Papal welcome, where we were lucky enough to see the Pope as he drove past. As the leader of the church, his welcome was roaring, with many people screaming with excitement. When he spoke, we had to crowd around a radio to try and catch translations through the static. This experience has left me wanting to learn more about what it means to me to be a Catholic, especially after witnessing the extent of the Catholic Church around the world.*

**YEAR 11 STUDENT ANNA WHITING:**



*On the Friday of World Youth Day Week, we experienced the Stations of the Cross, designed by the Portuguese people. It was amazing to watch the personal sharings of the volunteers and to see the dancing and acting of the performers.*

*The final sleepout involved walking 15 kilometres to the location and camping out with over 1.5 million other people. We spent most of the night hanging over the fences talking to pilgrims from all over the world. People from Poland, Italy, Spain, Scotland, Croatia, Israel and more. We woke up in the morning to a beautiful sunrise and music from a priest who was a DJ. We had our final Mass with the Pope, who announced that the next World Youth Day was in South Korea in 2027. After a huge 24 hours, we headed back to the hotel to swim and to rest.*

*We flew back to Melbourne a couple of days later and said farewell to our small group and new friends, hoping to see them again soon. We may not have known them very well at the beginning of the trip, if at all, but after ten days of discussions and opening up to each other, it feels like we have known each other forever and we already miss them a lot.*

*We hope that through our pilgrimage we are able to bring back a sense of faith to our community and inspire others to go on similar journeys. Gerry, Grace and I are so grateful for the opportunity that has been given to us and would like to thank everyone who helped us get to Portugal. The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation for sponsoring us financially, the Parish of Holy Family Northeast Mallee for their prayers and for fundraising for us through the Parish Pentecost Party, and Mrs Michelle Haeusler and Fr James Kerr for supporting us in our journeys. We would also like to thank our families and friends for helping us make it to Portugal.*

*To anyone who is thinking of attending World Youth Day in the future, we would encourage you to really consider it and begin saving up! World Youth Day is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and you should take advantage of it, even if you don’t think you are religious enough. It is for everyone. The Church welcomes everyone. In the words of Pope Francis’s mantra during one of his addresses at World Youth Day, “todos, todos, todos,” meaning “everyone, everyone, everyone.” Everyone is welcome!*

# World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

“His mercy is from age to age” (Lk. 1:50) is the theme chosen by the Pope for the third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Pope Francis proclaimed the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly to be celebrated on the fourth Sunday in July each year – July 23 in 2023. The Day is marked near the Feast of Sts Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus. Parishes, schools, agencies, aged care facilities and other ministries were encouraged to find creative ways to celebrate the contribution of older people to their families and communities.

See stories below on contributions and reflections from around the diocese:



Margaret is an older person living in Maryborough. Like many seniors in our community, she has contributed to the life of Maryborough and to the Church throughout her time here. She continues to be an important part of the community, providing advice and keeping people’s spirits up, while living in Wattle Rise Nursing Home.

Margaret is well known for her sense of humour and her delight in eating out with friends and family. Margaret has a distinctive cackle and seems to find something to laugh about all the time – usually you know when she is around as you can hear her, and anyone near her, having a good laugh about something. She has always helped out where she could – with cleaning and flowers at the Church, driving people to and from services and joining in the senior citizens.

Margaret’s children and grandchildren are an important part of her life. They mostly live away from Maryborough and so her life here involves a lot of socialising with friends over a glass or two of Baileys and getting out to enjoy everything our region has to offer.

Pat Gloury – Maryborough Parish

*My overwhelming sense of being a grandparent is one of Joy. It brings with it an exuberance and sense of wonder which I had not felt in years. One aspect I enjoy most as a grandparent is being allowed to be foolish and frivolous and just have fun – simply not having to be a “grown-up” all the time. As a grandparent you can do all the things you wanted to do with your own children but often didn’t (except sometimes in the holidays) because you were so busy being the sensible parent and running to life ruled by the clock. Making a mess, in my day, was not an outcome you wanted as a parent. As a grandparent, when it invariably happens, it’s really not a problem because tidying can be done when they’ve gone home. Having another home for them to go to is also definitely an advantage – for parents, grandchildren and grandparents! Of course, you get them to help pack things up but there’s not the pressure to enforce picking up every single item which then results in tears and tantrums. That is probably the greatest difference between being a parent and grandparent. There isn’t that responsibility for forming the child to be a responsible and respectful adult.*

*There is another side to being a grandparent which I find is also a great joy and that is in being able to help your children. Something really miraculous happens when a baby is born – as we all know. New relationships are created which change everything. Suddenly, two people who were in charge, and to a large extent in control of their own lives, now become - parents. Their lives are now dictated to by the smallest and most vulnerable person in their – family. Yes, now they are a family, and that smallest of dictators does not communicate via the spoken word! Everything is new, the responsibility feels overwhelming and that nice tidy home you used to have, back when you had uninterrupted sleep, looks the way you feel. Enter the grandparents! Yes, a new relationship has also been formed between you and your children. Suddenly they are shocked to discover that you have been there and done that. Of course they knew that, but now they appreciate it. Being able to do a load of washing and fold some clothes has never been so sweet. Suddenly you are useful for all sorts of reasons.*

*There is no doubt that grandchildren bring with them a unique and life-infusing love that may wreak havoc with your back and joints but is far more long lasting than any aches and pains. Whether it is listening to stories or worries, or being asked for advice(!), babysitting or doing a load of washing or the dishes, cooking or reading stories - when doing it as a grandparent the rewards are so sweet.*



Marie Shaddock – Ouyen Parish

# Emmanuel College: *An Evening of Inspiration*

The *Evening of Inspiration* at Emmanuel College Warrnambool was once again a memorable occasion recognising the achievements of former Emmanuel, St Ann's and CBC alumni, as well as demonstrating the inspiring work and achievements of current Emmanuel students.

Our community came together to take in a diversity of talents presented by our current students from dressmaking and design, visual art and photography, music and performance to leadership.

On entry into the theatre, guests were met with an outstanding display of student art, exhibiting works from Year 7 through to VCE. Our textiles students wowed the audience with their creations on the catwalk, with many surprised to learn that the students had created the garments themselves.



Some incredible music performances were showcased, commencing with the rendition of the 80's glam rock anthem - the 'Final Countdown' by the Emmanuel College Concert Band. Sisters, Chloe and Elyssa Mutton, performed an enchanting version of A Great Big World's 'Say Something', and the finale saw an encore performance by our cast of Frozen JR, singing crowd favourites 'Hygge' and 'Let it Go'.



At the event, Principal Peter Morgan reflected on how social media has changed the meaning of what it is to be an influencer. Though being an influencer is now seen as someone who builds followers to promote cultural, commercial or fashion trends to ultimately sell a product or service, Mr Morgan believed it was important to remember its true meaning and why events like the *Evening of Inspiration* were a great way to hold up an altogether different type of influencer.



Through the stories of our Inspiring Alumni, we learned of the many different ways that following your passion can shape society, and improve the lives of others. The stories of 2023's inductees: Prof. Anna Ryan, Fr Kevin Lenehan, Eleanor Britton, Andrea Vallance, Eric Howard AM and Brigid Delaney highlighted how challenges can become opportunities and how achievement comes with a lot of support from those around us - where they recognised their families, friends, colleagues, and a long list of their teachers from their days at school.

Through our Young Alumni Achievers we again learned of a broad diversity of talents – all borne during their formative years at secondary school. This year we recognised Rachael Houlihan, Jonathan Gleeson, Brody Couch, Alex McLaren, Nicole Gleeson and Isaac Jones. More details can be found at this link -<https://www.emmanuel.vic.edu.au/alumni>

We thank and congratulate all those recognised, as they allow us to inspire present and future generations of Emmanuel students. Individually and collectively, they affirm that an Emmanuel education enables individuals to excel in whichever pathway they choose.

*Candice Hampstead, Emmanuel College Alumni Coordinator*

## Dance through the Decades

St John's Primary School Dennington recently had their bi-annual school concert, with the theme "Dance through the Decades". With a crowd of over 800 people, students took to the stage proudly and performed dances they had been practising for all of Term 3. We kicked the night off with everyone in the stadium dancing to the Macarena, followed by the staff performing a surprise dance that they had also been practising for weeks. The Foundation students then danced through the 1930s and 1940s. The Year 5/6 students finished the dances in the current decade, where everyone again was invited to take part in the Nutbush. Families did an amazing job preparing costumes for students that were fitting for their era. Overall an amazing night was had by students, their families, the staff and the community of St John's Dennington.

Julie Bartlett - Administration/ Risk & Compliance Officer



## Celebrating Sacraments

Over a number of weeks in July and August, students from Sacred Heart and St Mary's Primary Schools in Colac prepared for their Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. The parish based Sacramental Program was brilliantly administered by Mandy Parker, Colac Parish Assistant.

The candidates first attended the Presentation Mass, where they were presented to the parish community. Over the following weeks, children attended weekend Mass where they prepared a little more each week.

Prior to the Celebration Mass, Sacred Heart students were very excited to have Fr Michael O'Toole, Parish Priest,

join them during Sacred Heart's traditional Bread Making Day organised by the Year 3 teachers, Katrina, Angela and Meredith. The children participated in a variety of activities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. When the symbolic Eucharistic bread, regarded as the staple food of the spiritual life, was cooked, it was then broken and shared amongst those present.

We are very grateful for the support given by the staff and families from Sacred Heart and St Mary's Primary Schools in Colac and by Fr Michael.

*Julie Leonard - Religious Education Leader & Wellbeing Leader, Sacred Heart Primary School, Colac*

## One hundred days of school

*On Thursday, July 27, St Mary's School Robinvale 2023 Foundation students celebrated 100 days of school. The students and their teachers dressed up as if they were 100 years old and completed a variety of activities around the number 100.*

*Students explored what they would buy with \$100, what 100 items looked like and created an artwork of the number 100, along with lots of discussion around what we would do if we were 100 years old! The teachers even used a photo app to make student's photos look like they were 100 years old!*



Andrea Welsh - Principal



On August 24, 2023 a group of ten St Patrick College Ballarat students and the College Principal, Mr Steven O'Connor took part in a World's Greatest Shave event to raise awareness and funds for the Leukemia Foundation.

An initiative of the Student Council, the sun was shining as Mr O'Connor and the students had their heads shaved by Ms Ward and Mrs Hopper. These two wonderful staff members were well qualified for the event as together the pair had a combined 40 years' hairdressing experience! Many thanks go to them for kindly giving up their time.

While there may have been some last-minute jitters, the group united to complete the challenge. To date, the Student Council have raised more than half of their \$5000 fundraising target.

*St Patrick's College Ballarat Facebook  
Our Diocesan Community - November 2023*



# Reaching out to those in need

*Jesus tells us to love God and to love our neighbour - that is every neighbour. We can work towards building a world where there is justice and peace for everyone. We can work to make sure that everyone has what they need. Pope Francis says, "we must work for the good of all people."*

*With this in mind, the Mission Team at St Aloysius Primary School Redan set a goal - to make sure people in Ballarat who are 'doing it hard' have access to healthy food.*

*To support the work of St Vincent de Paul, the Mission Team are using their voice to advocate for others by promoting the rights, well-being and interests of others who may be marginalised, disadvantaged or facing challenges. Unfortunately, St Vincent de Paul is seeing a significant increase in the number of families that need assistance, particularly during winter. Some of the simple things that we may take for granted, like providing or enjoying a warm meal, can be a real challenge for some families.*

*Last term, the school community was asked to donate canned or non-perishable food items to support the Vinnies Winter effort. Such items as canned meals, soups, baked beans, spaghetti, tuna, salmon, sauce, rice and canned fruits were gratefully received to support the Appeal. We received in excess of one hundred and fifty items of food to be distributed to families. We are proud to support the work of St Vincent de Paul and to make a difference to our neighbours in need.*



Bev Baxter - Mission Team Leader

## MERCY ASSOCIATES CELEBRATE

It is rather unusual to celebrate thirty five years, yet in this case the core group of the Mercy Associates Ballarat thought that this time in its history was well worth celebrating.

Sunday, June 25, 2023 was the chosen date and about thirty five members were able to gather. This took the form of champagne for the celebratory toast, nibbles and 'cutting of the cake' followed by lunch. Luckily many photos had been taken over the thirty five years so with the help of technology, we were able to have a trip down memory lane during which time there were many gasps, oh dears, memories jogged and remembering those who have gone before us. (One of the original members is still with us and still going strong!)



Following the celebration, time was taken to reflect on our lives as Mercy Associates. This was based on the revised Mission Statement – '... our call to live lives and share the compassion of God ...' and the Vision Statement – '... women and men seeking a faith community in which to nurture and live out the charism of Mercy ... by participating in broad-based formation at Institute and local level ... and ensuring a balance between contemplation and action in the Mercy tradition ...'



A little more of Mercy Associate people - they gather over a month for a variety of activities, eg 'Catherine's Cuppa' (Catherine McAuley), lunch, social, spiritual enrichment and sharing of interests, gifts and talents.

In the writings of Catherine McAuley (the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy) - we find such quotes ... 'If the love of God really reigns in your heart, it will quickly show itself in the exterior', 'be ready to praise, to encourage, to help, to remember in prayer ...'

Helen Smith

# A Diocese is Born

by Berenice Kerr rsm

Historical journals hold accounts of the formation of Ballarat Diocese, and the issues which provided the background to this event have been explored in other publications by students of Church History.<sup>1</sup> A continuous, detailed narrative is, however, difficult to come by. Hence this attempt to provide an outline of the process by which the vast territory of the diocese of Melbourne was divided into three separate dioceses in 1874, noting that subsequently a fourth diocese, Sale, was created in 1887.

One hundred and fifty years have passed since Rome issued the decree which stated:

*We [Pope Pius IX] by Our Apostolic Authority ... erect and constitute ... two new dioceses, one in the City of Sandhurst and one in the City of Ballarat ...*<sup>2</sup>

As the anniversary approaches, it is opportune to revisit the story ... our story, and in doing so certain questions spring to mind. Why was the diocese formed? Who made the decision? How was it arrived at? and possibly, the most fundamental question: What is a diocese, anyway?

## A Diocese

Of the four, the simplest to answer is the last. What is a diocese?

If we take a diocese as being an administrative area, the answer is arrived at through a simple exercise in geography. Those of us who live in the Ballarat diocese are familiar with the 'Murray to the sea' concept and know that there are certain boundaries which define territory administered by Ballarat and that similar boundaries define Sandhurst or Melbourne. Canon Law, however, widens the definition of diocese to 'a portion of the people of God which is entrusted to a bishop for him to shepherd',<sup>3</sup> giving it a pastoral connotation which leads directly to the reason why the diocese of Ballarat was founded.

Obviously, our exploration applies to the post-colonial period of Australian history. Nevertheless, we are aware that people have inhabited the land now known as Australia for millennia prior to James Cook's 1770 voyage along the East Coast, an event which prompted the establishment of the penal colony of New South Wales.<sup>4</sup> The history of the dispossession of the First Peoples, the seizure of their lands and the massacre of their people, together with the denial of their culture and spirituality, is not the substance of this paper. It is appropriate, however, to acknowledge that the land of the First Peoples was seized without any recompense.



Warrenheip Hills near Ballarat. 1854. Eugene von Guérard  
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

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1 The Ballarat Diocesan historical journal, *Light*, carried a series of articles written by T.J. Linnane, entitled 'Advent of a Diocese' beginning November 1968. The Melbourne Archdiocesan equivalent, *Footprints*, featured several articles under the heading, 'Setting up Diocesan Boundaries in Victoria', the first of which appeared in October 1973. J. N. Molony and C. Dowd both provide valuable contextual information in their respective theses for the Australian National University. These were enhanced by their authors' access to original documents from the Vatican archives which shed extensive light on events of the period. See below for details.

2 Ballarat Diocesan Archives and Melbourne Diocesan Historical Commission, a translation of the original.

3 Canon 369. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib2-cann368-430\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann368-430_en.html) Downloaded 12/07/23.

4 Before Governor Macquarie's official 1817 recommendation to the Colonial Office that Australia be so named, the continent had been known variously as 'New Holland', 'New South Wales', or even more vaguely as 'The Unknown South Land'. See <https://www.nla.gov.au/faq/how-was-australia-named>

# The Australian Mission

The beginnings of the 'Catholic' story in Australia can be traced to Catholics among the convicts condemned to serve their sentence in the British colony. To begin with there was no priest, no means of receiving the sacraments. The first priests were Irish convicts, and it took almost forty years of struggles with officialdom before a priest was appointed to minister to the growing number of Catholics, who, by 1820, were dispersed over a wide expanse of territory in NSW and Tasmania.<sup>5</sup>

Governance of what was known as 'The Australian Mission', that is, the entire continent, was an ad hoc business. Priests came and went, sometimes authorised by the colonial authorities, sometimes not. The English Benedictines were instructed by Rome to include Australia in their purview, with the result that by 1819 responsibility for 'New Holland' was in the hands of the Bishop of Mauritius. In 1833 Dr William Ullathorne OSB was appointed to Sydney as his Vicar General. No sooner had the latter arrived in Australia than he began to take steps to impose some order on the prevailing mayhem.<sup>6</sup>

The body in Rome which managed the affairs of foreign missions was the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, often referred to by a shortening of its Latin title to Propaganda. For the group of Cardinal administrators, reliant as they were solely on reports from visitors to Rome, the daily affairs of the church in Australia lay in the realm of mystery.<sup>7</sup> Ullathorne aimed to put an end to that and prevailed on Pope Gregory XVI to appoint John Bede Polding, an English Benedictine, to the position of Bishop of Sydney. Polding's diocese extended over the entire Australian mainland - one of his first actions having been to appoint Robert Willson Bishop of Hobart.<sup>8</sup> The 26,000 Catholics in Polding's care made up a quarter of the total European population; he had six priests and a few Catholic schools.<sup>9</sup>



John Bede Polding  
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In April 1842 Pope Gregory established more formal church structures: Sydney was made an archdiocese; Hobart and Adelaide sub-ordinate dioceses.<sup>10</sup> The newly established Church Province of Sydney covered the whole mission. Polding was named Archbishop of Sydney with Robert Willson and Francis Murphy the Bishops of Hobart and Adelaide respectively.<sup>11</sup>

## The Port Philip Settlement

Closer to home, the area identified as the Port Philip Settlement, subsequently to be known as Victoria, was settled during the 1830s. Lands along the south west coast of Bass Strait had long provided a temporary haven to whalers and sealers as they engaged in their trade, while pastoralists had gathered in communities inland, grateful for the benefits provided by what one explorer termed 'Australia Felix'. Portland, the first permanent European settlement in Victoria, was founded by the Henty family in 1834.<sup>12</sup>

'Missions', later to become parishes, some ultimately dioceses, frequently were set up in response to pleas by representatives of the community for the services of a pastor. Such is the story of Melbourne, where, following a quest

5 Tasmania was known as Van Dieman's Land until 1856.

6 For the situation of the church in 1833, see P. Wilkinson. 'Historical Series: Particular Councils in Australia, First Provincial Council, 10-12 September 1844', originally published in *The Swag*. <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Article-Peter-Wilkinson-The-Swag-1844-First-Australian-Provincial-Council-formatted.pdf> Downloaded 12/07/2023.

7 'The men who worked at the Congregation knew that Australia was far away and very big - remotissimo and vastissimo were their favourite adjectives to describe the southern continent - but they seem not to have appreciated just how far or how big'. Though written in relation to a later period, this nevertheless seems accurately to summarise one of the chief problems with Propaganda and the Australian Church. See C. P. Dowd in 'Papal Policy Towards Conflict in The Australian Catholic Missions: The Relationship Between John Bede Polding, O.S.B., Archbishop of Sydney, and The Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide, 1842 - 1874', thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, Canberra, July 1994, p.80.

8 Van Dieman's Land was a separate colony from NSW but was under the administration of the diocese of Sydney.

9 See Wilkinson, *op.cit.*

10 The official term for an archdiocese is 'metropolitan see', the subordinate dioceses being termed 'suffragan sees'.

11 See Wilkinson, *op.cit.*

12 See W. Ebsworth, 'Early History of the Church in Victoria - No. 19, Portland, Oldest Town in Victoria,' *Advocate*, December 18, 1946, p.11. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/172232956?searchTerm=Early%20History%20Church%20Victoria%20Early%20History>

from Jeremiah and Catherine Coffey in 1837, Patrick Bonaventure Geohegan was appointed as pastor.<sup>13</sup> A similar story is behind Polding's visit to the Western District in 1844. Groups of Catholics from these communities had begun asking the Sydney authorities for a priest. It is said that on April 25 of the previous year,

*... the Jemima left for Sydney with a petition from the Roman Catholics of Portland and vicinity requesting Archbishop Polding to appoint a clergyman to the place. [T]he document bore 166 signatures, but many more names could have been obtained had people in the country been given an opportunity of attaching their names.<sup>14</sup>*

Twelve months later, having installed Robert Willson as Bishop of Hobart, Polding, with two companions, stopped over in Melbourne and set out on horseback from Geelong to visit the people of Port Fairy and Portland. The three said Masses, administered the Sacraments, registered marriages and, in all, brought the comforts of religion to these people living so far away from the centre of church administration. Polding's sensitivity to their plight and his first-hand awareness of the perilous journey required to reach them contributed, no doubt, to his decision to establish a diocese in the Port Phillip district, with a pastor who was geographically closer to his people and thus more able to visit them.<sup>15</sup>

## First Bishop of Melbourne: James Alipius Goold



Great Lonsdale Street East (1864) St Francis Church on left side  
More details below.

Accordingly, in 1848, James Alipius Goold was appointed first Bishop of Melbourne. Goold arrived in Melbourne in October of that year to his 'cathedral church', St Francis Lonsdale Street.<sup>16</sup> His area for shepherding was extensive and resources were meagre. His diary tells us the following:

*I left Sydney on the 3rd Sept to proceed overland to my diocese, the extreme boundary of which, at the River Murray near Albury, was crossed by me on the morning of 28th September ...*

*I arrived in Melbourne on the 4th of October ... When I arrived ... the diocese had only three Clergymen, two churches - one in Melbourne, and the other at Geelong - and a commodious little chapel at Portland; in Melbourne, close to the church a small presbytery ... a spacious Hall, which is used for a boys' and girls' school [and] a small school house ...<sup>17</sup>*

By 1851 Victoria had been made a separate colony from NSW. At that time the population was 77,000. Within fifteen years, due in the main to the discovery of gold, the number of inhabitants had grown to almost 400,000 – an increase bordering on 400%. Records show that Goold did his best to meet the needs of his people, recruiting priests, organising schools and establishing parishes.

In the ensuing two decades eleven parishes or missions were established in the territory which would eventually become the diocese of Ballarat, while across the state of Victoria many more were added.

## Who Made the Decision?

With the infrastructure safely in place it is now time to consider who was involved: that is, the actors in the drama.

Early in Polding's administration of the Province of Sydney, the dioceses of Adelaide, Hobart and Perth had been established. By 1869, in addition to Melbourne, there were five other dioceses with resident bishops. Maitland, established in 1847, Brisbane in 1859, Armidale 1862, Bathurst 1865 and Goulburn 1867.<sup>18</sup>

Image: State Library of Victoria record: Title: Great Lonsdale Street East (1864.) [picture] Author/Creator: Francois Cogne 1829-1883. lithographer. Contributor(s): Charles Troedel 1836-1906 Copyright status: This work is out of copyright

13 T. J. Linnane, 'Names in the Eureka Story', *Light*, September 1975, p.20.

14 Ebsworth, *loc.cit.*

15 T. J. Linnane, 'The Planting of a Vineyard', *Light*, December 1964, p.20. Polding wrote of 'miles and miles of bogs and marshes amid snow and sleet, rain and wind, such as I had never before experienced'.

16 Work on St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne began in 1851.

17 Diary of James Alipius Goold, <https://melbournecatholic.org/uploads/documents/GooldDiary1848-1886Complete.pdf>. Downloaded 12/07/23. Hereafter referred to as 'Goold, Diary'.

18 The first Bishop of Maitland was also the auxiliary bishop of Sydney and, until 1865, Maitland had no resident bishop.

There exists in the National Portrait Gallery a print consisting of a collage of several individual photographs of the men who constituted the Catholic hierarchy of Australia in 1869. At the centre is the print of Polding, Archbishop of Sydney. Surrounding it are smaller prints of James Murray, (Maitland); William Lanigan (Goulburn); Mathew Quinn (Bathurst); James Alipius Goold (Melbourne); Lawrence Bonaventure Sheil OSF (Adelaide); Daniel Murphy (Hobart); James Quinn (Brisbane).<sup>19</sup> Despite the semblance of unity among the men surrounding Polding it is safe to say that the majority of them had a view of the Australian church substantially different from that of Polding and little trust in his capacity for administration.<sup>20</sup> This group of bishops, to a greater or lesser degree, played leading roles in the eventual establishment of the diocese of Ballarat.



The Catholic Hierarchy of Australia 1869 by Archibald McDonald and Henry Samuel Sadd (engraver)  
National Portrait Gallery of Australia

A word about the cultural background of these bishops: the majority of them were Irish, appointed to minister to the predominantly Irish Catholic population of Australia. A key figure in the appointment of many of them had been the Irish Cardinal Paul Cullen. By 1869 Cullen was Cardinal Archbishop of Dublin, but he had previously been rector of the Irish College in Rome and his opinions held sway with the authorities at Propaganda.<sup>21</sup> To contemporary Australians it may seem odd that the affairs of the Church in this continent were influenced by someone so far removed from the scene. That was, however, the case and it annoyed Archbishop Polding.<sup>22</sup> It is said 'that there was scarcely an episcopal appointment, a crisis or a question about which ... [Propaganda] did not consult Cullen before making a decision.'<sup>23</sup> Cullen and the bishops to whom he was a mentor were fiercely loyal to Rome and Roman ways.<sup>24</sup> Then, of course,

they were Irish and while Catholics in Australia were in the main of Irish extraction, there were, as Polding was later to point out, other nationalities represented in the Australian church.<sup>25</sup> To them this was of no consequence. 'Men formed by Cullen assumed the guidance of the Catholic Church here. Most of them were Irish by background ...[but] before all else they were Romans.'<sup>26</sup> Collisions between them and the English Benedictine Archbishop were inevitable. They saw Polding as an outsider, to be out-manoeuvred if necessary, in order to gain their ends.<sup>27</sup>

Another factor which cannot be ignored, having as it did a significant impact on the behaviour of several key personnel, is the education question and the consequent upheaval it engendered in the Australian church. In 1872 the Education Act Victoria foreshadowed similar legislation in all Australian colonies to establish a public school system which was 'free, secular and compulsory'.<sup>28</sup> In the years preceding the passing of the Act, debate was not only bitter but the

19 <https://www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/2010.49/the-catholic-hierarchy-of-australia>. John Brady, Bishop of Perth, was not in Australia at the time the print was made.

20 See P. Wilkinson, 'Second Australian Provincial Council, 18-25 April 1869', *The Swag*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Autumn 2018, pp. 7-13.

21 This issue is examined in depth by C. P. Dowd, *op.cit.* See, in particular, pp.17, 69-76, 168.

22 Polding complained, 'I do not know why ... Cullen should interfere so much in our affairs.' J.N. Molony, 'The Roman Mould of The Australian Catholic Church 1846-1878', Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Australian National University December 1967. p. 46. See also T. J. Linnane 'The Priest who borrowed a Tent – Patrick Dunne', *Light*, June 1967, p.15.

23 Dowd, *op.cit.*, p.76. This is corroborated by Molony *op.cit.*, p.43, who points out that none of Polding's nominations for Bishops was appointed to the newly-established dioceses in NSW while all of Cullen's were.

24 The 'Romanisation' of the Australian clergy is treated by Molony, *op.cit.*

25 *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No.1, January 1974, p.20.

26 Molony, *op.cit.*, p.69.

27 Dowd, *op.cit.*, pp.69-76. Molony, loc.cit.

28 See <https://www.foundingdocs.gov.au/scan-sid-786.html>

principles on which the system was based threatened the livelihood of the church. Cullen had been a champion of Catholic education in Ireland. The Australian prelates he had trained and promoted were equally zealous and robustly defended the rights of the church to maintain its own system.<sup>29</sup> By 1867 the Education debate had taken a decidedly sectarian turn, with those in favour of the proposed Bill using the appointment of Irish bishops to flaunt divisive 'No Popery' slogans.<sup>30</sup>

## Second Australian Provincial Council of the Catholic Church, April 1869

1869 is a significant date in our narrative. That year, on April 18, the Second Australian Provincial Council of the Catholic Church opened at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne.<sup>31</sup> The council members, exclusively clerics, were under the leadership of the group of men whose portraits are referred to previously.<sup>32</sup> The business of the Council included, of course, Catholic education, but also on the agenda were marriage, support for the clergy, administration of temporal goods, the formation of priests, and evangelization of the Australian Aborigines.<sup>33</sup> Without warning, however, Pope Pius IX suddenly announced plans for the 1st Vatican Council to begin the following December, meaning that the Bishops were required to make their way to Rome at once. Before dispersing, the assembled bishops discussed two matters relevant to our story. One was the elevation of Melbourne to Archdiocesan status; the second the establishment in Victoria of two new dioceses.<sup>34</sup>

That the Catholic population of Victoria merited a division into smaller administrative and pastoral units cannot be denied.<sup>35</sup> Common sense dictated it and, as Bishop Goold was later to point out, it was 'necessary for the benefit of Religion'. While this may have been so, the size of the population and the vastness of the diocese had not prevented Goold from effectively carrying out his pastoral duties.<sup>36</sup>

The Council having concluded its business, Archbishop Polding forwarded the Acts to the Holy See in June. Shortly after, most of the bishops began making their way to Rome.

## Rome 1870

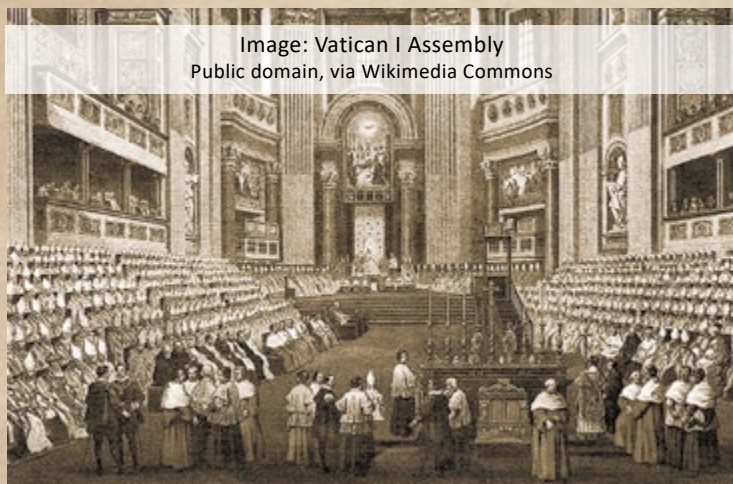


Image: Vatican I Assembly  
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Political events in Rome in 1870 were far from conducive to staging a Church Council. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, a series of events, inspired by the Risorgimento movement, culminated in 1861 with the proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy, a union of the various states and kingdoms of the Italian peninsula. The Papal States and Rome, however, were not part of the Kingdom. Vatican I was in session when, in September 1870, Rome was invaded, and the papal lands were seized. The deliberations of the council were suspended indefinitely – though not before the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was proclaimed – while the Pope took refuge in the Vatican from which he never again ventured forth, declaring himself 'a prisoner'.<sup>37</sup>

In June that year, Bishop Goold had called a meeting of the Australian bishops present in Rome. They composed a petition to the Holy See requesting that Melbourne be made an Ecclesiastical Province and that new dioceses be established in Sandhurst and Ballarat.<sup>38</sup> The petition was accompanied by a letter from Goold giving details pertinent

29 See Molony, *op.cit.*, pp.7, 35, 49.

30 Molony, *op.cit.*, pp.48-49.

31 The first such Council was held 10-12 September 1844.

32 See Wilkinson, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-13.

33 *ibid.*

34 *ibid.*

35 By the late 1860s the colony of Victoria, with only one diocese (Melbourne), contained a larger Catholic population than New South Wales which had five (Sydney, Maitland, Goulburn, Armidale and Bathurst). Clearly, the populous and wealthy Diocese of Melbourne was ripe for subdivision. Dowd, *op.cit.*, p.347.

36 'Setting Diocesan Boundaries in Victoria (1874)', *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No. 1, January 1974, pp.19, 20. By 1870 the population of Victoria was almost 730,000. [https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/B757509AA0D92F0CCA257F730012F0BC/\\$File/20\\_Stats\\_Victoria\\_1870\\_Part\\_II\\_Population.pdf](https://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/B757509AA0D92F0CCA257F730012F0BC/$File/20_Stats_Victoria_1870_Part_II_Population.pdf)

37 The impact of these events on the Australian Church is explored in depth by Molony, *op.cit.*, p.263. The Council was prorogued on 20 October 1870, 'sine die', and was not officially closed until Vatican II met.

38 J. Keaney, 'Setting Diocesan Boundaries in Victoria (1874)', *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1974, p.17.



Bishop Goold, Public domain, via Wikimedia Common

to the case but requesting that the dioceses not be erected until the boundaries were decided – to be done at a subsequent meeting of the Bishops.

## The Official Declaration

At this point the ‘how’ question comes to the fore. Unlikely as it may seem, this part of the story is beset by intrigue, backroom deals and machinations, the likes of which could, without difficulty, be found in the pages of a good crime novel.

Following the suspension of the proceedings of Vatican I, the bishops went home, with the decrees of the Australian Provincial Council (1869) still unratified. Officials at Propaganda had intended to leave approval until the conclusion of the Council but that had become uncertain.<sup>39</sup> Finally, eighteen months later, most of the decrees were ratified, with the exception of the request for additional dioceses in Victoria. The authorities had a problem: the request did not contain sufficient detail.<sup>40</sup>

Bishop Goold was quite clear as to what and who was required. Earlier in 1872, he had sent to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda a map with the proposed diocesan boundaries clearly marked and had proposed names of suitable candidates for the office of bishop.<sup>41</sup> He had assured the Cardinals that financial and domestic matters were well in hand and had pointed out that the boundaries he had marked ‘are the limits chosen for the newly-proposed Protestant bishoprics’.<sup>42</sup>

Rome, however, was not convinced. Maybe the Cardinals were waiting on information from the proposed meeting of the Australian Bishops previously mentioned by Goold. Maybe they were listening to the opinions of James Murray, Bishop of Maitland who, while in Rome in February 1872, was campaigning for three or four additional dioceses in Victoria, not merely two.<sup>43</sup> For whatever reason, the Cardinals requested more detail, more background information.<sup>44</sup>

## Two Additional Dioceses? Or Four? Or Six?

Months passed. At last, responding to a directive from Rome, in September 1873 Archbishop Polding called a meeting of the Australian Bishops to ‘discuss the erection of two new dioceses in Victoria, now the single diocese of Melbourne’.<sup>45</sup> Goold did not attend this meeting, giving heavy work commitments as his excuse. Others, Griver of Perth, Reynolds of Adelaide and Murphy of Hobart were not present. Five bishops present at the meeting - J. Quinn of Brisbane, M. Quinn of Bathurst, Murray of Maitland, Lanigan of Goulburn, and O’Mahoney of Armidale - Irishmen all and proteges of Cardinal Cullen,<sup>46</sup> took a literal interpretation of the instruction from Propaganda, that they were required to recommend ‘the erection of **new sees** in Victoria and fit persons to fill them’.<sup>47</sup> And that is exactly what they did. They divided Victoria into five dioceses, proposed their own nominees as bishops, and produced a new map showing their recommendations for boundaries.<sup>48</sup>

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39 It was formally closed by Pope John XXIII in 1960, prior to the opening of Vatican II.

40 *Footprints* Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1974, pp.17-18.

N.B. The footers on some pages of this volume are incorrectly labelled ‘Volume 2, No 1’ and throughout the volume the date is incorrectly given as ‘January 1974’. Correct details are found on the cover.

41 *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No.1, January 1974, p.19. I had the honour of sending you Your Eminence in the last mail, a geographical map of this Colony in which are traced the limits of the three dioceses of Melbourne, Sandhurst and Ballarat which, after diligent investigation and conforming to the wishes of prudent Priests I judged to be the most suitable.

42 *Footprints*, Vol.2, No.1, January 1974, p.19.

43 *Footprints* Vol.2, No.2, April 1974, p.18.

44 *ibid.*, pp.17-18.

45 The minutes of this meeting are reproduced in *Footprints*, Vol. 1, No.12, October 1973, pp.13-17. See also Vol. 2, No.1, January 1974, p.19.

46 Murray was a cousin to the Quinns and all three were related to Cullen. Hence the term ‘family bloc’ used by Polding’s secretary to describe them. Dowd, *op.cit.*, p.140.

47 See Keaney, J., ‘Victorian Bishops and Research in Roman Archives’, *Footprints*, Vol. 3, No. 6, October 1978, pp.23ff. Emphasis mine.

48 Dowd, *op.cit.*, p.135. The two additional dioceses proposed at this stage were Warrnambool and Sale though later Geelong and Kyneton were also proposed. Goold had already put forward nominees as bishops for the two new sees. The list from the Sydney meeting differed substantially from his and, in fact, contained two names of whom he explicitly disapproved. See *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No.1, p. 22.

Polding had been soundly ambushed. Not wanting to cause trouble or 'to flare up any party spirit', he signed the minutes of the meeting and tried to salvage some respectability by accompanying their dispatch with a covering letter explaining that 'what has happened was beyond my control ... [T]hey proposed the candidates and they enlarged the number of dioceses, both for which there was no need of my consent'.<sup>49</sup> Polding's letter expresses strong support for Goold, 'who more than anyone else, is fully aware of the state of his diocese and whether or not it is necessary to set up more dioceses apart from the two decided upon and who knows best of all which candidates are more suited to the positions'.<sup>50</sup> Goold, blind-sided by events and affronted that they 'started to split up my territory into five bishoprics giving each borders but hiding other important circumstances', wrote a letter of complaint to the Cardinal Prefect noting, among other matters, lack of due process.<sup>51</sup> His main point was that had the bishops, as courtesy and fairness would demand, informed him of or even consulted him about their decisions, he could have 'proven the impracticability and futility of such villages as Sale and Warrnambool as bishoprics'. His proof lay in the fact that neither of these 'villages' had a sufficiently wealthy Catholic population to support a bishop and hence a diocese – the Catholic population of each consisting 'mainly of servants, household staff, small farmers and land tenants who live from hand to mouth.' His trump card in all this was to claim that were Propaganda to set up these dioceses, they would not be self-sustaining and would have to be funded from Rome. Furthermore, he was 'not happy with the majority of the candidates proposed to the Holy See by the conference prelates ... [and] that choosing them as bishops would be dangerous and would not in any way help the Catholic cause in this area'.<sup>52</sup>

The group of five Irish bishops,<sup>53</sup> resolute that their views would prevail over those of Polding and Goold, now launched into campaign mode. Each member of the group sent a separate letter to the Prefect of Propaganda giving his version of events, arguing his case and in more than one instance nominating bishops other than those proposed at the Sydney meeting.<sup>54</sup> Murray, Bishop of Maitland, added weight to his argument by referring to the implementation of the Education Act, citing the need for 'new Bishops with deep religious knowledge and zeal' on account of the 'bad education system recently introduced in [Victoria], and outlined in detail how his candidates would 'benefit [the] church and ... promote the interests of the true religion and Catholic education in Australia'.<sup>55</sup>

Matthew Quinn revealed himself as the master of intrigue. As well as sending the information to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda and expounding reasons to support the position taken by the coalition, he enlisted the aid of Monsignor Tobias Kirby. Kirby was the successor to Cullen as Rector of the Irish College and an ally as well as influential in Roman circles. It is probably no flight of fancy to suggest Kirby and Cullen, by having their nominees appointed bishops, had exercised excessive influence on the Australian Church.<sup>56</sup> Quinn fed information to Kirby suggesting that he 'may make use of it ... should anything turn up which would make it advisable or necessary'.<sup>57</sup>

## Goold in Rome

Furious with the New South Wales - Queensland coalition of bishops but unaware of the extent of their plotting, Goold decided that the written word was insufficient to win this particular battle.<sup>58</sup> He needed to be on the spot in Rome. On October 10 he and his chaplain Dean Moore left Melbourne on board the 'China'.<sup>59</sup> Quinn, on finding out he had been outwitted, wrote in haste to



Railway Pier Melbourne  
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

49 *ibid.*, p.21.

50 *ibid.* Goold had refused to accept one of the 'Sydney' candidates whom the meeting had urged him to endorse. *Footprints*, Vol.2, No.2, April 1974, p.20.

51 Handwritten documents held in Ballarat Diocesan Archives containing translations of letters relevant to this matter. Letter No XIII is from Bishop Goold to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, dated October 9, 1873.

*I have to make the holy Eminence aware that the division of a diocese must be done according to the necessary recommendations made by the 'Ordinary' whose knowledge and local experience of the spiritual needs of the soul and of the financial means looked for so as to cover the costs of such needs are favoured and not the propositions of bishops who finish up by saying big blunders as their knowledge and local experience is not enough.*

52 *ibid.*

53 The Quinn-Murray faction.

54 *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1974, p.20.

55 *ibid.* See also handwritten documents held in Ballarat Diocesan Archives containing translations of letters relevant to this matter, document entitled Summary, Letters No 9, No 10. See also a second document which contains 'Letter from the Bishop of Bathurst to the Distinguished Prefect of Propaganda' (No. 11).

56 Dowd, *op.cit.*, p.69. In 1867 the 'Cullenite' bishops of Australia had asked Kirby to act as their official representative in Rome.

57 'It is probable that you may have to make use of it in the proper quarter'. See Keaney, J., 'Victorian Bishops and Research in Roman Archives'. *Footprints*, Vol. 3, No. 6, October 1978, pp.23ff.

58 He made sure that they knew they were not welcome to call on him in Melbourne en route to or from the episcopal ordination of Christopher Reynolds as Bishop of Adelaide. *ibid.*

59 Goold notes: November 21st. At Brindisi. November 30th. *Took up my quarters at Santa Maria in Posterula.* Goold, Diary <https://melbournecatholic.org/uploads/documents/GooldDiary1848-1886Complete.pdf> p.435.



Kirby, warning him that Goold was on his way 'to upset what we have done'.<sup>60</sup> While the term 'conspiracy' may be too extreme, it is certain that there was a united front against Goold and Polding, consisting of the five Bishops of NSW and Queensland, supported by Cullen in Dublin and Kirby in Rome. Quinn provided Kirby with sufficient ammunition to counter any claims Goold might make and promised to provide more if necessary. Aware of Goold's nominees for the two sees, with surgical skill he denigrated their characters declaring them 'unfit for Episcopal dignity'. His choicest criticisms were reserved for Dr James Moore, Goold's chaplain and a nominee for Ballarat. He was, according to Quinn, hot tempered, with too great a fondness for alcohol.<sup>61</sup> Lest this attempt at character assassination miss the mark, he resorted to innuendo: 'For many other reasons his promotion would be disastrous for the church in Australia' adding that Bishop Reynolds of Adelaide had told him that 'some of [Moore's] closer relatives are not respected for their way of living'.<sup>62</sup> Then came the plea to Kirby, '[A]sk him [the Cardinal Prefect] for God's sake, to pause before Dean Moore is appointed Bishop'.<sup>63</sup>

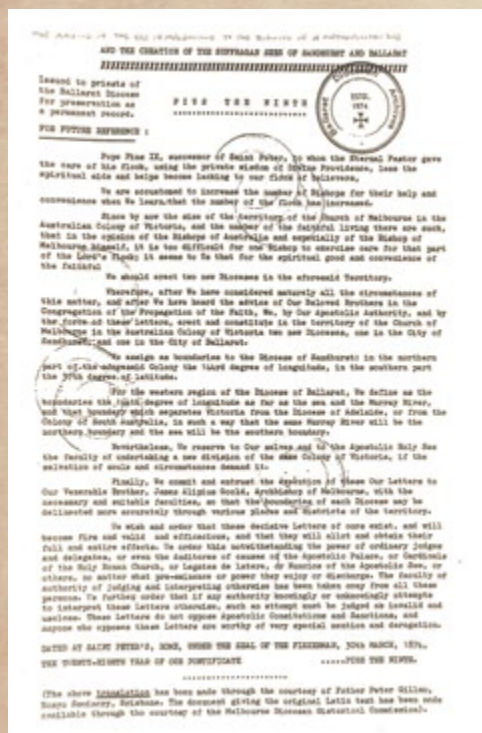
Against such an onslaught Moore's chances of being named bishop fell to zero, a fact of which Goold was unaware until he arrived in Rome and was given access to the Australian correspondence.<sup>64</sup> Then and there, he could reply to the assertions of the Quinn-Murray alliance, refuting their arguments, declaring their opinions 'erroneous and exaggerated' and the bishops themselves 'insufficiently informed'. In the proposed dioceses 'it was not the rich who supported religion but rather the business people, the small shopkeepers, and the poor working classes'; a division according to population numbers simply would not work.<sup>65</sup>

Goold was not without allies in Rome. In February he was informed that the meeting to determine the matter of the Victorian sees was to be held on the 16th March. Immediately he began lobbying, spending two weeks visiting the cardinals who would attend the meeting and briefing them in full.<sup>66</sup>

## Two New Dioceses in Victoria

His efforts were rewarded. Prior to the March meeting the assembled cardinals were told of the difficulties under which Polding and Goold had been labouring on account of the goings-on of the Murray-Quinn group.<sup>67</sup> At the meeting two new dioceses were created in Victoria, Ballarat and Sandhurst. The boundaries were those proposed by Goold in his 1872 letter to Rome. The bishop named for Ballarat was an Irishman, Rev. Michael O'Connor, parish priest of Rathfarnham, whom Goold had recommended when he had made the original submission in 1872, though he later seems to have set his preference on James Moore.<sup>68</sup> This choice seems to have been a 'win-win', as O'Connor was favoured by Cullen and ostensibly would be acceptable to the Irish members of Australian hierarchy. The official document creating the two new sees was issued on March 30, 1874. On the following day Melbourne was elevated to the status of a metropolitan see (an archdiocese). Goold was invested as Archbishop, on 10th May 1874.

One important outcome of this meeting was 'the cessation of the monopoly of authority of Sydney over the Australian Church'. The Holy See erected a second province, based on Melbourne. The Dioceses of Hobart, Adelaide, Perth, Port Victoria, Ballarat and Sandhurst became suffragan dioceses of Melbourne while Sydney retained Maitland, Brisbane, Goulburn, Armidale and Bathurst.<sup>69</sup>



60 Keaney, *op. cit.*, p.24.

61 *ibid.*

62 *Footprints*, Vol.2, No.2, April 1974, p.20. See also Ballarat Diocesan Archives, a second collection of copies of letters, No XIV. Goold's response to these charges can be found in *Footprints*, Vol.2, No.1., January 1974.

63 Keaney, *loc. cit.*

64 *Footprints*, Vol.2, No.2, April 1974, p.20. See also Goold, Diary p.435: December 3rd. *Received two large packages of correspondence of the Bishops of Australia on the proposed erection of new Diocese in Melbourne besides those proposed by me.*

65 *Footprints*, Vol. 2, No.2, April 1974, pp. 20-21.

66 Goold, Diary, p.437. February 28th. *Had a visit from Canon Rinaldini, who informs me that my business will be settled in the Consistory to be held on the 16th. He gave me a list of the Cardinals to be visited before then.*

67 Dowd, *op. cit.*, p.348.

68 On the appointment of O'Connor as the first bishop of Ballarat, T.J. Linnane, writing in the diocesan magazine, *Light*, in 1968 makes the following observation. *One could speculate as to the part played ... by O'Connor's Archbishop in Dublin, Cardinal Paul Cullen. Certain it is that the Cardinal's residence was a kind of second Propaganda exercising a deep influence on the destinies of the promising Australian Church by having a say-so in the appointment of its new bishops.* T J Linnane, 'Advent of a Diocese', *Light*, November 1968, p.21.

69 Dowd, *op. cit.*, p.356.

The Quinn-Murray group was ultimately unsuccessful in its attempts at control; 'it would seem that the the Holy See was guided principally, if not solely, by Archbishop Goold, in the matter of dividing Victoria into several dioceses. The attempt of an episcopal faction to influence the affairs of Bishop Goold's diocese failed'.<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, Goold noted in his diary that on March 19th he had 'received a visit from Cardinal Martinelli, who called to say that the Holy Father told him that he was doubtful as to the admissibility of one of those ... proposed for one of the new Sees; his name was not mentioned'.<sup>71</sup> Perhaps the unmentioned was James Moore. Perhaps the Quinn-Murray faction on that score at least was successful.

Ultimately Moore was vindicated. On the death of Michael O'Connor in 1884, he became second Bishop of Ballarat – the first to be consecrated in St Patrick's Cathedral. He served as Bishop until 1904 and is buried in the cathedral crypt.

An account of the eventual appointment of Martin Crane OSA to the see of Sandhurst is not given here. Suffice it to say that the first two appointees declined the position, one on account of ill-health, the other for reasons unknown. Goold's diary simply records: 'August 22nd. Received a letter from Rome informing me of the appointment to the see of Sandhurst of Dr Crane'.<sup>72</sup>

## Michael O'Connor, First Bishop of Ballarat

On May 17, 1874, Michael O'Connor was consecrated Bishop of Ballarat at Propaganda College, Rome, by Cardinal Franchi, assisted by Archbishop Goold.<sup>73</sup> On December 18, he arrived in Ballarat, to be greeted by a crowd estimated at 3000. Bells, sacred and civic, accompanied his journey to St Patrick's Cathedral (the church had been given that status) where he was solemnly welcomed.<sup>74</sup> On the following Sunday he was officially installed by Archbishop Goold as Ballarat's first bishop.<sup>75</sup>

O'Connor's episcopacy was characterised by the building of schools and the establishment of parishes. He 'insisted in season and out of season on our Catholic right to build schools and on the strict duty of Catholic parents to send their children to those in existence'.<sup>76</sup> In any appreciation of our current strong diocesan school system, some thanks must go to this man, 'stout in mind, frail in body'. At his ad Limina visit shortly before his death, he reported that his diocese could boast forty new churches, several schools, and three religious orders operating in Ballarat city, another in Warrnambool.<sup>77</sup>



Bishop Michael O'Connor

O'Connor from the day of arrival was a creature of bodily frailty constantly afflicted with colds, and finally succumbing to the TB germ. ... His brief term of office ended when he died on February 14, 1883, only a few weeks after his overseas return.<sup>78</sup>

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70 T. J. Linnane, 'Advent of a Diocese', *Light*, November 1968, p.21.

71 Goold, Diary, p.438.

72 *ibid.*, p.438. See W. Ebsworth 'Early History of the Church in Victoria—No. 32, Bishop Crane, O.S.A comes to Sandhurst, 1875', *The Advocate*, 19 March 1947, p.16.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/172486398?searchTerm=Early%20History%20Church%20Victoria%20Early%20History>

73 Goold, Diary, p.439. May 17th. *Assisted at the consecration ceremony of the Bishop of Ballarat.*

74 For an account of the building and consecration of the Ballarat Cathedral, see W. Ebsworth, 'Early History of the Church in Victoria, No. 39, The Building of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat', *The Advocate*, May 7, 1947, p.16. and *id.*, 'Early History of the Church in Victoria, No 45, First Cathedral consecrated in Victoria', *The Advocate*, June 19, 1947. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/172487547?searchTerm=Early%20History%20Church%20Victoria%20Early%20History>

75 Goold, Diary, p.443.

76 Linnane, *Light*, March 1969 and subsequent volumes for a calendar of O'Connor's activities.

77 Linnane, *Light*, September 1970, p.25.

78 *ibid.*

With the death of Bishop O'Connor, the 'infancy' phase of the Diocese of Ballarat ended. He left it firmly established and well-equipped to begin the next stage of its existence. The story of the ensuing years is told elsewhere and so it is fitting to end this piece with an extract from Cardinal Moran's History of the Catholic Church in Australia, where he describes the first Bishop of Ballarat thus:

*As a Bishop he treated both priests and laity as a loving, tender father . . . His humility and personal sanctity were a source of constant edification to all with whom he came in contact.*<sup>79</sup>

The mortal remains of Michael O'Connor were laid to rest in the transept of St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat.



Top: St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat (1863-65), the wooden building on left is St Patrick's school. Left: St Patrick's Cathedral Interior. Right top: Bishop James Moore (Second Bishop of Ballarat); Bottom right: St Alipius tent school, by Eugene Von Guerard (Ballarat Historical Society Collection.)

79 W Ebsworth, 'Early History of the Church in Victoria—No. 43, A Bishop's Residence is Built, *Advocate*, 4th June 1947 p.16. Incidentally, Moran, too, was a protégé of Cullen and Kirby – in fact he was Cullen's nephew. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/172488305?searchTerm=Early%20History%20Church%20Victoria%20Early%20History>



## “THOROUGHLY PROUD”

Mercy Regional College Camperdown is one of the three Tidy Towns finalists in the Education category through their garden revitalisation at Wombeech Puyuun Reconciliation Park. The project, coordinated by VCE Vocational Major students, is to rejuvenate the Wombeech Puyuun Indigenous Memorial Garden, which needed replanting and maintenance after being left since its opening in 2008. The site is a garden in dedication to Wombeech Puyuun, also known as Camperdown George, who was Camperdown’s last Indigenous person living on ancestral land.

Initially, Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria announced the shortlist in August, with the College project falling under the education category. Now in its forty-first year, the Sustainability Awards recognise, celebrate and share environmental achievements and strong community spirit right across Victoria.

With a total of one hundred and thirty two entries, seventy projects were shortlisted across ten categories, highlighting the efforts of communities, organisations, individuals and councils in creating a more sustainable, resilient and beautiful Victoria.

Other entries include initiatives that have tackled waste reduction, energy efficiency, wellbeing, positive Indigenous outcomes and community engagement, exemplifying the innovative and impactful approaches taken to promote sustainability across the state.

The shortlisting process was conducted by a panel of ten expert independent judges who meticulously reviewed each entry in their assigned category, considering

environmental impact, innovation, and community involvement. These interviews allowed shortlisted candidates to showcase their accomplishments, share insights and engage in enlightening discussions.

Keep Australia Beautiful Victoria CEO Olivia Lynch said this year’s submissions have “blown our socks off”. “From creative community gardens that could make veggies tap dance to waste reduction initiatives that could convince the fussiest koala to compost, these projects have left us in awe,” she said. “So, let’s give a round of applause to all the dedicated communities who poured their hearts and souls into these transformative sustainability projects.”

VCE-VM coordinator Claire Virgona said Mercy Regional College was thrilled with the recognition. “This public acknowledgement of the College dedication to sustainability and environmental stewardship is greatly appreciated and we are excited to share more about our students outstanding initiatives,” she said. “As the project progresses we are hoping to make a significant contribution to both the community and their educational journey. Being shortlisted and then being a finalist are both remarkable achievements for our young people and a celebration of their hard work on this project. They should be thoroughly proud of this achievement.”

Finalists in each category were revealed on September 13 and the winners announced at the prestigious Tidy Towns and Cities Awards Ceremony held on October 23. The winner of the Victorian Tidy Towns Award will automatically be entered into the National Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns Sustainability Awards held in Western Australia in May 2024.

Article and photos courtesy of the WD News Publications, text by Christine Kirk (adapted)



## Reconciliation at Timboon

After Mass on July 30, Esther Couch received the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time.

All were welcome to stay for the short service to support Esther and her family.

George Swierczek - Timboon Parish

# Discerning the Future Together

## What is the Spirit asking of the Star of the Sea Parish?

“All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind is part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter into another.” Anatole France, French Writer.

These thought provoking and compelling words were what greeted participants of a discernment in common weekend for parish leaders, as they leafed through the first pages of the vast and wide-ranging document prepared for the occasion.

From August 18 - 20, 2023, eighteen members of the South West Coast Parish Pastoral Leadership teams embarked upon a journey of collective discernment

facilitated by Fr Michael Smith SJ at the beautiful Star of the Sea Guest House in Apollo Bay. We began the day on Saturday morning by composing a timeline on butcher’s paper stretched out across the windows of the dining room, outlining the history of our church communities. Where we have come from and how our identities have been formed by over a hundred and fifty years of history, now a shared history for our parish.

We reflected also on the recent parish amalgamations in light of the feelings of grief and loss that, for some, accompanied this transition and tried to draw conclusions of what this new reality means for our communities. Appreciating where we have come from certainly helped participants to enter in the next part of our session, looking at the life-death-resurrection model of organisational development. Every organisation, including parishes, can be understood through the paradigm of the life, death and resurrection cycle.

Transitioning into a new ‘mode’ of parish as we are, Fr Michael’s words were a timely reminder that we must remain grounded in the deep story of who we are as faithful followers of Jesus in the SouthWest, and in the storytelling culture we must continue to build to be power generating for mission and outreach into the future.

On Sunday morning the theoretical conversations of the previous day found practical expression, as participants collectively arrived at concrete goals that best expressed who we are and what we desire as a parish. The goals produced really focused on being Christ-centred and witnesses to our faith through our example as a community of welcome. The goals our community produced will be further refined and the discussions had over this weekend will feed into our new parish council and future pastoral goal setting.

As the final day drew to a close with the celebration of Mass, Fr Michael’s parting wisdom was clear, “pray, pray and pray more.” Our role as leaders and missionaries must come out of a deep knowledge of God and God’s desire for our community. Prayer must be part of every meeting, every major decision and every parish venture. Even reading the balance sheets can become “a contemplative experience.”

For this model of parish amalgamations to work into the future, subsidiarity must be at the heart of it. Parishioners must have agency over the future of their parish and the direction it is heading. As we have seen from the Plenary Council and the forthcoming Synod on Synodality, consultation and collaboration can be messy, but Pope Francis has invited us to go out and “make a mess.” This collaborative leadership models really gives expression to the *sensus fidei* (the sense of faith) of the people of God. I pray that all parishes can take the time and opportunity to invest in their future leaders also. Thank you to Fr Michael Smith for facilitating the weekend, Sr Margaret McGrath rsm for hosting us, Fr John Fitzgerald for his guidance and support and thank you most especially to all the participants who gave up their weekend to be involved as current and future leaders of the church communities of SouthWest Coast.

Fr Bill Lowry



## A beautiful morning at the Ballarat Community Garden!

*St Alipius Parish School Ballarat East Laudato Si’ group visited the garden on September 11, 2023 and learnt about fruit trees and which fruit can be enjoyed in each of the seasons. We enjoyed a morning tea and a garden treasure hunt.*

*Thanks, Cathy and Sandy, for partnering with our students to foster their love of the environment. We look forward to more students visiting the community garden!*

St Alipius Parish School Facebook

Our Diocesan Community - November 2023





## *Celebrating the birth of Jesus: nativity scenes from around the world*

The first nativity scene recorded in history was conceived by St Francis of Assisi in 1223. After visiting the Holy Land and birthplace of Jesus, St Francis was concerned that the meaning of Christmas was being forgotten. To highlight the importance of the birth of Jesus, St Francis of Assisi obtained permission from the sovereign Pontiff to construct a nativity scene in a cave near Greccio, Italy. It was to include the people of the town and animals, making it a living nativity scene. Although this tradition still continues in some countries today, the 19th century saw the nativity scene gradually being replaced with static displays with baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph in a manger surrounded by richly robed figurines and animals.

Today, nativity scenes continue to be displayed at Christmas in churches, schools and homes, along with many other places. They act as a reflection on the deeper truths and mysteries of the birth of Jesus, whilst giving us the opportunity to experience a calm silence, even if just for a moment. They can make us reflect on the importance of family and loved ones whilst uniting the world together through the birth of Jesus.

Displayed in the Diocesan Archive Centre, this exhibition highlights the private collection of Fiona Tonkin and Kay Paton, plus other nativity scenes from the wider community. The nativity scenes will be exhibited from Monday, November 20, 2023 with the archives open Monday to Friday by appointment only. For more information, please contact Samantha Fabry by email - [archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:archives@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

*Image - handcrafted and hand painted paper flower with nativity scene. Made in Peru. 2017*



## World Environment Day

*For World Environment Day, St Brendan's Primary School in Coragulac participated in a conservation effort. The school painted and constructed three nesting boxes designed specifically for native animals.*

*Students learnt about the various animals that might use these boxes and why it is so important to provide habitat in this way. In the wild, really old trees form hollows which birds and small mammals live in. Due to a lack of old growth trees, there are not many hollows in our area, which is why nesting boxes are so valuable.*

*The team from 'Colac Trees' came out to school to install the nesting boxes. This was a very exciting event - the arborists climbed the trees using ropes and pulleys and fixed the boxes to the trees. They also drilled a hollow in one tree using some special machinery.*

*The school has installed a wildlife camera alongside one of the boxes and hopes to capture some photos of any animal or bird that might be using the box. In this way, we will monitor the project and be able to participate in some citizen science!*

Gracesyn Watts - Business Manager



# A Truly Blessed Ten Years



To be honest I am a little embarrassed making a big deal of only ten years when so many are celebrating 40, 50 or even 60 years of faithful dedication... but I suppose you can only take it a decade at a time! Even if 10 years isn't so long a time, there is still so much to give thanks for. I am truly blessed to be called to the life I have. Like every calling, priestly life has its ups and downs, but the blessings are many and the challenges always lead to new graces.

When I first began in Ballarat, I was on home territory. I already knew many of the parishioners from the Cathedral, Linton and Beaufort Parishes and I was able to work alongside some great friends. Sunraysia and the Mallee were new ground for me. Leaving all those friends to start afresh was a real challenge. And yet the welcome and support I received in Mildura and surrounds was tremendous. It didn't take long at all for it to feel like home.

Swan Hill was a little more familiar, but still very much a fresh start. COVID didn't make for the easiest start. The seemingly endless lockdowns really did wear me down, with loneliness a real struggle and yet through all that some deep friendships were formed and I was never without the help and support I needed.

I can too easily forget it, but I think this really shows the hand of Christ gently working in our lives. Knowing my own flaws, I can never quite understand how Christ is able to comfort and strengthen so many through my priestly ministry, and yet he does. There are so many little moments when you find yourself just where you were meant to be, with the person who needed you most, and with the words they needed to hear. It can't just be down to chance; God's providence must be at work. The same is true in the other direction as well. So often I have found just the help I needed, right when I needed it most. If I were made of stronger stuff, He probably wouldn't have to intervene quite so often... the Potter knows how to best work with the clay he has at hand!

Our Parish in Northeast Mallee has the Holy Family as our patron and I really do feel like I am part of a family here. We are never more a family than when we gather for the Eucharist and offer up the gifts. Whether in Nandaly, Quambatook or for a Family and Faith gathering at someone's house in Lake Boga, Christ continues to call us together so that we may be filled with His life and grace. He pours his life out anew, so that we may offer up our lives and all our efforts to him. The longer I am in one place, the more I get to know our parishioners and their stories. We truly do walk among some saintly and courageous people. I am truly blessed to serve and walk alongside them. I am truly blessed to be 'their' priest.

*Fr James Kerr*

## KOORIE BIG DAY OUT

*On Thursday, August 17, 2023 St Joseph's College Mildura First Nations students in Years 10 to 12 attended the Koorie Big Day Out, held by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc at SuniTAFE's Mildura Campus. The event commenced with a warm Welcome to Country and a traditional smoking ceremony. Energetic cultural dances by Mildura Primary School students delighted all.*

*Students explored diverse career stalls, engaging with professionals to discover potential pathways. Exciting giveaways, including a free lunch, added to the event's spirit. A unique activity, 'mapping your mob,' had students place their handprints on a giant map of Australia to signify their heritage locations. The Koorie Big Day Out beautifully united cultural appreciation and career prospects.*

*The students really enjoyed the Koorie Big Day Out because it mixed learning about their culture with thinking about jobs for the future – they didn't want to leave!*



Michelle Winderlich - Student Inclusion Leader



## Receiving a ray of light

Children living in energy poverty across the world are set to receive a ray of light from students at Lumen Christi Primary School, Delacombe. Millions of children rely on kerosene lamps to provide light to do their homework - but the kerosene lamps cause breathing problems and other health concerns and are a common cause of house fires.

A school walkathon involving all Lumen Christi students earlier this year raised more than \$3800 to buy SolarBuddy lights to be sent overseas to allow children to study safely after dusk and improve their health and education outcomes. The students constructed one hundred lights as part of their annual Lumen Christi Celebration Day giving thanks for their blessings. "It was pretty easy to build them and screw them together," said Year 6 student Ankita. "It's a good thing and it gives us good hearts that we are helping."

Teacher Leonie Leviston said the project was an important way for children to learn about energy poverty, renewable energy and what it means to be a global citizen.

After building the SolarBuddy lights, which are attached to a child's school bag so when they arrive home from school the device has been charged to provide the light needed to study by, the Lumen Christi students wrote letters to the overseas recipient of their light.

The SolarBuddy lights not only help a child to study, they positively impact the lives of the whole family and reduce the risk of burns and health issues from the use of kerosene lamps, as well as providing an 80 per cent reduction in kerosene expenditure for the household. Each SolarBuddy also has important positives for the environment, offsetting 1.28 tonnes of Co2 emissions and is the equivalent of planting twenty-one trees. "There's a lovely link between Lumen meaning light and our school (motto) 'shining our light around the world'," Ms Leviston said. "It is very apt that our gift of solar lights will help illuminate the lives of other children worldwide. The lights will be delivered directly into the hands of children experiencing energy poverty and they'll receive the letter from our students."

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier  
Text by Michelle Smith and photos by Adam Trafford  
Top: Sienna, Ankita, Chalsi with the lights they put together

## SACRAMENTS AT ST JOSEPH'S COLERAINE

Congratulations to all four students who received the Confirmation and First Eucharist sacraments on Sunday, August 27, 2023 at St Joseph's Church Coleraine.

Mae was very excited to receive the sacraments and shared her experience further.

*Charlie, Dylan, Jasmine and I met in the Mercy room for six weeks to prepare to receive the sacraments. We used the booklets from "Let the Children Come" and did activities like talking about the teaching of Jesus and what that means for us today. Sometimes, Fr George would talk about special things like the chalice, baptismal font, bread and wine. We are all very excited to become full members of the Catholic Church.*

Thanks to all families who joined us at the Mass and morning tea in the Parish Hall. Also, thank you to Fr George Kuruvila for being generous with his time and preparing the children.

Karl Dwyer - Principal



## Celebrating a birthday

St Michael's Wycheproof community took a moment after 8.30am Mass on Sunday, July 30 to wish Fr Gerry Prunty all the best for his upcoming birthday in early August. The congregation presented Fr Gerry with a scrumptious jam and cream filled lamington (topped with a sparkler) and sang Happy Birthday to a rousing applause.

Happy Birthday, Fr Gerry!

Jackie Noonan - Wycheproof





## One Body, Many Parts



*Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts though many, make one body, so it is with Christ... As it is, the parts are many, but the body is one. (1 Cor 12: 12, 18b-20)*

*Living in a culture as we do, which prioritises personal autonomy and self-fulfilment above all else, the decision to subject oneself to another authority and to forgo certain personal liberties for a higher ideal is countercultural in the truest sense of the word. But could you truly imagine freely offering your entire life to serve a community of people you have never met on the other side of the world, because your faith in God and commitment to proclaiming the Gospel compels you to do so?*

*Meet our four seminarians, young men studying for ordained ministry in our diocese, who are forgoing their country of origin, their family, language, local church and culture, all to be of service to you who may be perusing this article.*

*Cay Xuan Trinh and Lam Tran have both come from different parts of Vietnam and have been in Australia for some time. Both are very joyful men and have wonderful singing voices. Cay is well known in, and appreciated by, the parishes of St Patrick's Camperdown and St Mary MacKillop Western Border, where he has lived and ministered for some time throughout his training.*

*Fr Matthew Restall and I also had the great privilege of studying with Cay for a number of years in the seminary. Cay will hopefully be ordained a Deacon for the diocese later this year or early in the new year.*

*Lam has been a recent acquisition for our diocese and a great one at that. Completing much of his studies in Sydney and Parramatta, he brings a broad and varied skill set to the diocese, recently being employed in aged care. Lam was joined just this year by two more seminarians who have generously come to serve, Channa Jinendra Tilakarathna from Sri Lanka and Simon Fedoje Zakari from Nigeria. Both men had completed much of their seminary studies in their own countries before embarking on their journey to Australia.*

*Fr Ed Moloney, Diocesan Vocations Director, has been a great collaborator and support for both men as they have discerned their vocation here in our diocese and we wish them every blessing as they continue to grow and develop in their relationship with God and their knowledge of the Australian church.*

*I began this article intentionally with a passage from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, referencing the parts of the body of Christ. A limb is a limb, is it not? Regardless of where they come from, all of the faithful from near and far truly make up the body of Christ. Though they may come from different parts of the world these generous and humble men form a single unit, bound by one common goal, serving the community of the faithful in the Diocese of Ballarat.*

*As the cultural and ethnic make-up of our church and nation continues to change, so should the membership of our community. These men will in God's good time be serving within our diocese as ordained ministers. We owe it to them to give thanks for their generosity through our prayer and spiritual support.*

*Priests are not made in a factory - they are nurtured and developed in an environment of prayer and in a faith community. If we desire more priests for our diocese, we need to continue to build a culture of prayer for vocations within our homes and parishes and to propose vocations to the priesthood and religious life as a real and positive option for our young people. All the parts - lay, ordained, and consecrated make up the body of Christ - all are needed. So please continue to pray for the seminarians, religious and priests of our diocese, that they be a support for all the baptised in their mission of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to all.*

Fr Bill Lowry - Assistant Priest, Star of the Sea Parish South-West Coast

### REFLECTIONS FROM SEMINARIANS CHANNA AND SIMON CAN BE READ BELOW:

#### MY VOCATION JOURNEY TO THE DIOCESE OF BALLARAT IS A MYSTERY OF GOD

My name is Channa Tilakarathna. I was born into a devoted Catholic family in Sri Lanka. I have two brothers and a sister. My father died in 2008, when I was in the Seminary in Sri Lanka. I am one of twins and my twin brother is also a seminarian. My sister is married and lives away from our

family, whereas my younger brother is married and they live with my mom.

My desire to consider a vocation to the priesthood developed gradually from my early childhood, influenced by the committed lives and selfless service of many priests and brothers who served in my parish and school. When I was a child, I used to serve at Mass in my parish. Every Sunday, I remember looking up at the consecrated host



during the elevation and thinking very clearly “I wonder if I could do that?”

During college, my brother and I attended a vocations program and we met with religious priests. We were the only ones who wanted to become priests in our College group. This was the first time I thought to myself deeply about a priestly vocation and felt the burning zeal of God’s calling. However, my twin brother and I spent a lot of time praying to discern our vocations. As a result, we both have recognised that God has been calling us to be priests.

In 2008 I entered the Blessed Sacrament Congregation in Sri Lanka and my twin brother joined the Diocesan seminary. I was happy in consecrated life, deepening my interior life. I continued in the Congregation until 2016. After completing my pastoral year in 2016, the Provincial Superior of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation asked me to join a Diocese for the rest of the Seminary formation. It was a challenging time for me because it seemed a sudden, and unexpected, decision of the Provincial Council. However, I took it as my own cross and transformed these challenges into opportunities for growth.

In April 2017, I co-founded an all-island youth movement called “Youth for Jesus”. This involved working with a team of young people helping the needy and the poor in rural areas around Sri Lanka. During my five years in this movement, I was struck by both the faith of certain priests, as well as by the importance of the priest in the soul’s journey to heaven. This led me to consider a vocation to the diocesan priesthood, and so, in April 2017, I contacted Fr Ed Moloney, Director of Vocations of the Diocese of Ballarat, through the help of my twin brother. Later I had the opportunity to meet Bishop Paul Bird in Sri Lanka where I shared my interest in joining the Diocese. As I remember, Bishop Paul replied to all the questions I

asked about the formation and the Diocese with a smile on his face. After meeting the Bishop, I went straight to the Church and prayed before the Blessed Sacrament asking His strength to go ahead with my vocation to the diocesan priesthood wherever He directs me.

I was blessed to meet three priests of the Ballarat Diocese before I came to Australia, Fr Ed, Fr Neville and Fr John. Fr Neville is a Sri Lankan national and he has served in the Diocese of Ballarat for the last twenty three years. In 2020, Fr. Ed travelled to Sri Lanka to visit me at my home, met my family and visited the National Seminary as well as meeting my friends, priests and religious sisters. It was a wonderful time. After nearly six years of being guided by Fr Ed, I began Theological studies, along with Simon from Nigeria, at the University of Divinity in Melbourne in February 2023, working online until we received our visas to go to Australia. As soon as we finished our first semester, we received the visas and arranged travel. The Bishop's secretary, Djudja, provided invaluable support and guidance in the stressful visa situation. Her patience, guidance and timely responses made the process much easier. I thank her for her invaluable assistance.

After a ten-hour flight, my first ever flight, I arrived in Melbourne on July 4, 2023 and Fr Ed welcomed me at the airport. Simon then also arrived and we went straight to the Ballarat Cathedral to reside until Seminary began, which has given me the opportunity to meet people and get to know our diocesan priests.

As I reflect on my journey in preparation for the priesthood, I recognise that the past years have been joyful along with those more challenging periods. I have learned to prioritise my relationship with God above all else, I have grown significantly in self-knowledge and begun to develop the intellectual and pastoral skills necessary to be a holy and effective priest one day. I thank sincerely those who helped me in this journey, especially Bishop Paul, who accepted me into his Diocese and believed in me. I want to thank Fr Ed for his spiritual guidance and the good encouragement he has always given to me and I thank God for him.

Last but not least, I would like to ask you to continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Please pray for those of us who have already said yes to God’s call and may His grace help us all to say yes to our own vocation every day.

## REFLECTION ON MY VOCATION JOURNEY TO THE BALLARAT DIOCESE

*“If the Lord does not build the house, in vain does the laborer labor, and if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil...” (Psalm 127:1)*

**WHO I AM?** I am ZAKARI, Fedoje Simon, born into the family of Mr and Mrs Boniface Ibrahim Zakari. I am the fifth of nine children, five girls and four boys and the first among the males. I hail from Akeh, Olamaboro Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria.

**DESIRE TO BECOME A PRIEST** - My desire to be a priest started when I was about 10 years old. After my secondary education, I applied and was later admitted into the Congregation of the Mission, Vincentians in the year 2010. I was with the Vincentians for eight years before I formally withdrew from formation to further discern my vocation outside the seminary walls. Within these periods, I was a volunteer in humanitarian services with the Community of Sant 'Egidio, Nigeria (a Church Public Lay Organization known for charity) and also assisted in my local parish as a Lay

*Pastoral Minister, Catechism Instructor, Marriage Course Facilitator, Church Service Conductor and served in the Catholic Youth Organisation.*

**JOURNEY TO BALLARAT** - *The journey to Ballarat has been one of prayer, patience, commitment and resilience, which took about six years to materialise. My contact with the Diocese of Ballarat began around December 2018 when I first came in contact with the diocesan website. I was fascinated by the diversity, geographical extensions, long history and natural beauty in the Diocese of Ballarat. Amidst these, the Diocese had been challenged by a declining number of priests and religious and other crises.*

*Nevertheless, having read through the Ballarat Diocese website, I was particularly drawn to the bulletin notice regarding a "Vocations Retreat Day" and the need to raise awareness for "vocations" within the Diocese. This article greatly inspired me and after several months of prayerful reflection and Spiritual Direction, I felt a strong conviction to go back to the seminary but this time as a diocesan seminarian. My time with the Vincentians Congregation and experiences with the Community of Sant'Egidio spurred my thoughts of the Western world and the growing need for vocations of which Ballarat Diocese was one. This informed my decision to reapply and the Ballarat Diocese was my first point of call.*

*Consequently, in February 2019, I emailed Fr Ed Moloney, requesting to join the Diocese for the training to the priesthood. The next three years were characterized by a series of correspondences, references and paper works. Last year around April 2022, Bishop Paul finally accepted my candidacy. It was a big moment in my discernment.*

*The next crucial stage was obtaining a Visa. Getting an Australian Visa was not an easy task considering the huge amount of time and paperwork involved. I had to wait for the next fourteen months for my Visa to be processed and finalised. Nevertheless, my Training Visa was granted in June 2023 to the glory of God.*

**LOOKING FORWARD** - *When the day of my trip to Australia arrived, I awoke with mixed emotions. I became emotional as I prepared to leave my family and nation, Nigeria. Another minute, I was motivated by the desire to board a plane and fly for hours over the sky to Qatar and then Melbourne. Before leaving for the airport, I knelt in front of my parents, and they both prayed and gave me their blessings for my priestly vocation in Ballarat. Later that day, I arrived to the airport a few hours before my flight. My only regret was that I had been so time-sensitive about boarding (since it was my first time travelling outside my country) that I had little time to offer my siblings a final goodbye hug and snuggle in their warm embrace. I'm delighted we were able to accomplish it digitally before my flight took off. It was indeed a memorable and long voyage of thirty-six hours and fifteen minutes to Australia.*

*I am eternally grateful to Djurdja, Fr Ed, Bishop Paul and the entire faithful of the Diocese of Ballarat. As I look forward to what the future holds for me, it is my prayerful wish that my time in the Diocese will be fruitful and joyous as I commit myself to the service of God and God's people in the Ballarat Diocese for the rest of my life.*



## SEASON OF CREATION

"Let Justice and Peace Flow" was the 2023 theme for Season of Creation, the ecumenical celebration held each year from September 1, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, to October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. We are called to embrace climate and ecological justice and to speak out with and for communities that are most impacted by climate injustice and biodiversity loss. Those in faith are asked to make our prayers a call for justice, not only for human beings, but for all creation. In covenant with peace, we are called to change our attitudes and actions in order to preserve creation. We want to reach out to local leaders and call our communities to actively participate in the Season of Creation by promoting the theme and responding to the cry of creation wherever the Lord calls us in our various contexts.



"A mighty river" is the symbol chosen to go with this theme, representing biodiversity at risk. The urgency is growing and we must make peace with the Earth and on the Earth visible, while justice calls us to repentance and a change of attitude and actions. When we join the river of justice and peace with others, it creates hope instead of despair. We are invited to join the river of justice and peace on behalf of all Creation and to converge our individual identities, of name, family or faith community, in this greater movement for justice, just as tributaries come together to form a mighty river.

Our individual actions during the Season of Creation are important. Celebrating creation, participating in clean-ups, planting trees and reducing our carbon footprint are some of the immediate actions we can take. St Joseph's Primary School Red Cliffs Senior Unit has been cleaning the chicken coop, weeding and replanting the veggie patches, planting native shrubs around the perimeter of the yard and tidying up the roundabout as ways of celebrating this Season of Creation.

*Tamara Leamon - St Joseph's Primary School Red Cliffs*



# Trinity Day

Over the final days of Term 3, Trinity College Colac celebrated its rich history, diverse achievements and unique place in the heart and soul of Colac with our fun and festive Trinity Day celebrations.

On Wednesday, September 13, the entire College gathered for a special liturgy that explored the Trinity College story. The ceremony also featured the commissioning service of our 2024 Student Leaders and concluded with Fr Michael blessing our Year 12 graduands as they prepare for exams and life beyond school..

On Thursday, we held a fete on our beautiful campus with everybody getting into the spirit. The SRC, along with a team of staff, worked hard on the day's program throughout the term which included games, competitions, food stalls and a popular barbecue. Students were encouraged to bring along gold coins to pay for the activities and refreshments and to dress up in the theme of movie and TV characters to add to the party atmosphere.

All funds raised on the day will be shared between four valuable causes and pay homage to Trinity's heritage and founders:

### **Rice House - Edmund Rice Camps**

For more than 40 years, Edmund Rice Camps Victoria have provided residential camp experiences for young people and families facing adversity. Developed and grown in Melbourne, Eddie Rice Camps have spread across the world and continue to provide an opportunity for intense relationship and confidence building through a 1:1 ratio of participants to volunteers.

### **McAuley House – Mercy Foundation**

The Mercy Foundation was established by the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney in 1990. It is an organisation committed to social justice and structural change with the goal of creating greater social equity and inclusion in the Australian community. The Mercy Foundation addresses its social justice agenda through seed funding, advocacy and education.

### **MacKillop House - MacKillop Family Services**

MacKillop Family Services began on July 1, 1997, but its history extends back more than 150 years, when the Sisters of Mercy, Christian Brothers and Sisters of St Joseph began their work in Australia, establishing homes for children who were orphaned, destitute or neglected and for families in need of care and support.

### **Glowrey House - St Vincent de Paul Society (Colac)**

The St Vincent de Paul Society was founded in 1833 and is made up of thousands of people who every day share their time, care for humanity and energy to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged people all around Australia. Their volunteers respond to the call to feed, clothe, house and assist our brothers and sisters who are forced onto the margins of society.

Trinity Day is an opportunity to commemorate what makes our College unique, especially the heritage that underpins our story. It was an amazing day with beautiful weather, lots of fun activities and plenty of food. Thank you to all for getting into the Trinity Spirit.

Daniel Rodway - Acting Director of Faith and Mission



## Getting to know each other

Parish office workers from the northeast of the diocese recently gathered for lunch at St Mary's Swan Hill, to get to know each other better and swap stories on how things are done in each parish.

The day began with Mass and a welcome prayer, with Fr James Kerr praying for all parish workers. Ironically, Fr James read the Gospel about feeding the multitudes, better known as the loaves and the fishes. Not sure if that was a reference to our lunch or not! Lots of questions were asked of each other's roles and many stories were shared. We all got to know each other a little better and we know we have each other's support if needed.

Noeline Hogan - East Wimmera Parish Manager

L – R: Mary Kennedy Northeast Mallee Parish; Marie-Ann Kelly Kerang & Echuca (behind); Glenda Klabbers Northeast Mallee Parish; Marie Shaddock Ouyen Parish; Noeline Hogan East Wimmera Parish and Fr James

# ACU Mission Week

Recently, the Australian Catholic University community came together for ACU Mission Week (August 28 - September 1) One thing that makes ACU unique in the Australian higher education sector is its distinctiveness as a Catholic university and what underlies this uniqueness is the university's mission which drives all endeavours. While it is often talked about and all try to live mission, time is rarely taken to intentionally celebrate it.

This changed with the inaugural ACU Mission Week – an opportunity for the ACU community to join in celebrating mission across all campuses, including Ballarat. The 'We are ACU' theme that was chosen as the catch cry for the week signifies the unique perspectives that combine to embody the ACU community and this was showcased in the activities hosted throughout the week. Some of the energising events colleagues and students participated in, on the Ballarat campus, included:



The Saint John Bible: From Inspiration to Illumination - This event was held in the Torney Room, Carn Brea and explored the work of art that unites an ancient Benedictine tradition with the technology and vision of today. You could immerse yourself in its exquisite beauty as the University proudly showcased the fine art, limited heritage edition of The Saint John Bible acquired by ACU. The event featured a talk by Director of the Saint John's Bible Mr Tim Ternes, followed by a guided imagery discussion to ignite the spiritual imagination of people of all faith journeys.



Festival day event - Students and colleagues gathered in the Forbes Student Centre at the Ballarat campus to hear an inspiring keynote message from Young Australian of the year 2022 Dr Daniel Nour and local alumni guest speakers, followed by the blessing and lighting of the ACU Mission Week candle, a moment of prayer, personal reflection and morning tea.

Mind, Body, Spirit - The ACU community was invited to consider the "wholeness" of the human person and what it means for wellness of mind, body and spirit. This event offered a moment of reconnection, between the mental, physical and spiritual as we rotated through a series of activities while asking the bigger questions of life. Participants moved from physical exercise and team building to a time of guided meditation in the chapel, displaying the various elements integral to the wellbeing and dignity of the human person. It was a time to be strengthened, built-up and refreshed with the event being held at the track and in the chapel.

The Letter - In 2015, Pope Francis penned *Laudato Si'* (the encyclical letter to the world about the environmental crisis). A few years later, four voices that have gone unheard in global conversations have been invited to an unprecedented dialogue with the Pope. Hailing from Senegal, the Amazon, India, and Hawaii, they bring perspective and solutions from the poor, the indigenous, the youth, and wildlife into a conversation with Pope Francis himself. This documentary follows their journey to Rome and the extraordinary experiences that took place there and is packed with powerfully moving personal stories alongside the latest information about the planetary crisis and the toll it's taking on nature and people. An online viewing of a portion of the documentary followed by discussion and questions with panel members was held in The Track, Forbes Student Centre, Ballarat. The Mission and Ministry team want to say a big thank you to all who supported, organised, and took part in the events and helped to make our first ever Mission Week a huge success!

ACU Ballarat

## *Laudato Si' in the Diocese*

*Pope Francis and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference invites all parishes, educational institutions, organisations and eparchies to develop a Laudato Si' Action Plan and upload it to the Laudato Si' Action Platform. The Ballarat Diocesan Offices have joined the Caritas Australia's Catholic Earthcare Program. This program outlines a 4-step cycle of self-assessment, reflection, planning and action that complements the global Laudato Si' Action Platform. It is designed to help initiate practical, meaningful change within your own environment as you*

*plan and take action to live Laudato Si'. The Diocesan Offices have taken the first step by registering and will follow up the next steps in the near future.*

*When you join the Catholic Earthcare Community you will receive your free Australian Guide to Laudato Si' Action Planning as well as other supporting resources for your sector.*

*For more information - <https://www.caritas.org.au/catholic-earthcare/>*





## Archivists meet

Recently, the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat hosted the 20th annual Catholic Diocesan Archivist of Australia conference. Held on September 13 and 14 in the Mary Mackillop and Glowrey rooms at St Patrick's Cathedral Hall, over twenty-four Diocesan Archivists from around Australia attended either in person or remotely. Some archivists travelled from Geraldton, Port Pirie and Rockhampton whilst others came from Melbourne, Bendigo and Sale.

Bishop Paul Bird gave a very warm welcome during the conference and examined the meaning of history, archives and their significance. Bishop Paul thanked all the diocesan archivists for their great efforts in protecting the diocesan archives which they maintain. Fr Ed Moloney celebrated Mass and led the opening prayer during the conference.

During the first day of the conference, there were three guest speakers. These included Michael Myers, Professional Standards Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, Dr Emilie Gagnet, Leumas EGL Consultants USA and Martin Fordham, Senior Information Officer, Archdiocese of Perth who attended via TEAMS. Presentations focused on records management within the archives, canon law and the protection of records within the parishes.

During the second day of the conference, the archivists took the opportunity to discuss their own protocols and processes with the goal of embedding best practice within the church and discussing how the Diocesan archives can further assist parishes through policies, workshops and support.



Dr Samantha Fabry - Diocesan Archivist

## AUSLAN AT ST BRENDAN'S

The language we study at St Brendan's Primary School Coragulac is Auslan, and this term we have been very fortunate to have school visits from people who use Auslan in their everyday lives. At our Assumption Day Mass, we were joined by students from Thomas Carr College in Tarneit. They currently have two students with hearing impairment onsite so their teachers were up the front signing the Mass for them.

Each Friday our Auslan support teacher Nicole comes into each class to support students and teachers with their signing. Nicole learnt to be fluent in signing in order to communicate with her mother Rosemary, who is hearing impaired. Earlier this term, Rosemary came in to visit us with Nicole. The children signed questions to Rosemary and told her a bit about themselves. It was really interesting to hear about Rosemary's challenges as a hearing impaired person and we were really impressed with how competent the children are with their signing.

Ewan, a student from Thomas Carr College Tarneit, came with staff member Simon, to meet the children. Children observed Simon and Ewan communicating with one another through signing and also signed their own questions to the pair. We appreciated Simon organising this session and thank Ewan for being willing to share his experiences in order to enhance our knowledge of Auslan and the hearing impaired community. These were all wonderful, authentic experiences for our students. To see Auslan in action really brought home how vital the language of Auslan is, enabling deaf people to communicate with one another and the wider community. It is not only the hearing impaired and hard of hearing communities that need to learn Auslan. In order to promote inclusion the more people who know the language the better. By providing the opportunity for our students to learn Auslan, we are not only enhancing their communication skills, but also teaching them the importance of inclusion.



Gracesyn Watts - Business Manager

# Religious Education Leaders' Retreat



Veronica led us masterfully through the material and connected it to our lives as individuals in the Ballarat Diocese today and in the wider Church under the leadership of Pope Francis. The impending 'Season of Creation' was a backdrop that was explored through outdoor prayer opportunities, making use of the awesome surroundings. Evening and sunrise prayer were held at different locations in and around Halls Gap. We were certainly blessed with two magnificent Spring days.

**Two participants offered their reflections:**

*"There were so many opportunities for reflection in light of the Catholic tradition on the retreat. After receiving so much knowledge it was wonderful how Sr Veronica Lawson gave us opportunities to "digest" the material and discuss our thoughts and understandings."*

*"The retreat nurtured my spirit in so many ways. I was provided with many opportunities to experience the "awe and wonder" of God's Creation. There were also many beautiful prayer experiences. It was so wonderful to connect with other people sharing the REL role - a role which is challenging in today's climate but also very rewarding."*

*Justin McInerney - Catholic Identity and Mission DOBCEL*

One of the many gifts shared with those present by keynote presenter Veronica Lawson RSM was to change the expression 'We're lucky to...' to 'We're blessed...'. And truly blessed we were.

Some fifty Religious Education Leaders (RELs) and members of the Catholic Identity and Mission Team gathered from all corners of the Diocese in Halls Gap for a retreat experience in late August. The retreat theme 'Coming to the Mountains and Going to Ground in Gariwerd' was explored through key scripture texts around mountains: "They took their stand at the foot of the mountain" (Exodus 19: 17), and also key Eucharistic texts: "And those who ate were about five thousand men besides women and children" (Matt 14:21).

## Remembering Rose Thannhauser

*Rose (19.03.1938 - 09.08.2023) died in Hepburn House, with her Funeral Mass celebrated in St Peter's Church Daylesford on August 14 and burial at St Francis Xavier Cemetery Eganstown.*

*Born in Holland, Rose and the de Jong family migrated to Australia in the 1950's and as many Dutch migrants did, they began their life in Australia in Creswick, with Rose working in Ballarat. Rose married Bob Thannhauser in 1962 and they settled in Muskvale where over time their family of four sons and one daughter grew.*

*Faith, family and friends were three pillars of Rose's life and she served the Catholic Church as a strong woman of faith her entire adult life. An active parishioner of St Peter's Daylesford, over the years Rose was the sacristan, a member of the liturgy group, finance committee, funeral ministry team and St Vincent de Paul Conference as well as part of the organising team for the annual World Day of Prayer. For twenty six years Rose was the Daylesford Parish secretary serving with dedication and passion with respective Parish Priests - Clem Cafarella, Peter Priestly, Dan Torpy, John Fitzgerald and Kevin Maloney. It was during this period, in 1993, that the Daylesford Parish was transferred from the Archdiocese of Melbourne to become part of the Diocese of Ballarat.*

*Former Parish Priest, Peter Priestly (1988 – 1993) remembers that Rose was "without doubt the backbone of the day-to-day administration of the Parish for which I am eternally grateful. She was unfailingly accurate in whatever she did, always dependable. On the personal level I found in her and her family the support which is so essential in any parish. I remember well her culinary skills and the delightful meals we shared around the Thannhauser table".*

*Ian and Trish Tinetti considered it an honour to lead the Rosary for the Vigil Prayers and remember that one of Rose's sayings was "thanks a million" and to Rose they say "and so say all of us!"*



Fr Justin Driscoll - Parish Priest



## Equine-assisted therapy for emotional wellbeing

*On Tuesday, September 5, Jessica Cody arrived at St Mary's Primary School Warrackabeal with her horse Digby to offer equine assisted therapy for all students. Jessica is a qualified teacher with a Masters in equine-assisted therapy and a lifetime connection with horses. With social and emotional learning at the heart of the program, Jess and Digby offered sessions to the students to help develop resilience, hope and optimism.*

*The students were thoroughly engaged and thrilled to have Digby visit our school. Our Grade 5 students had a special session with Jess and Digby with a focus on leadership and service to others. Fr Matt Restall joined in with the visit!*

Nerrida Holland - Principal

More information: <http://www.innerrhythm.com.au/>

## Final 8.00am Mass



Fr Dan celebrated his final 8.00am Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat on Sunday, August 27, 2023. Fr Dan has been celebrating this Mass at the Cathedral for a number of years and it has been his timeslot since he retired to Ballarat.

Over this time the regular 8.00 clockers (as Fr Dan calls them) have developed friendships and assisted Fr Dan to continue to celebrate Mass. Following Mass the regular crowd usually gathered for a coffee and chat and ensured his safe delivery home.

During Fr Dan's homily he expressed gratitude to the congregation. Fr Dan told those in attendance that during his 67 years of service in the diocese, much of this time he was appointed to smaller parishes where you knew people, their stories and their connections. When he started

at the Cathedral he was new and the people were new to him. Over the years he has come to know their stories and connections. He is grateful for the opportunity to celebrate 8.00am Mass and thanked all who contributed to make it possible.

Following Mass, morning tea was shared in the Presbytery to acknowledge Fr Dan's ministry, to give thanks and to continue to ask God's blessing upon him as he moves to the next stage of his journey. He will be missed by the 8.00 clockers. Thank you Fr Dan.



Julie Boyd

L-R: Denis Foley, Dan & Tony Bongiorno

Our Diocesan Community - November 2023



# Remembering Catherine O'Connor

About forty descendants of Catherine (Kelly) O'Connor (March 20, 1869 – July 27, 1923) and her husband George gathered for Mass in Woomelang on July 22, 2023 to remember their grandmother and great grandmother who died 100 years ago and is buried at Woomelang.

Deep appreciation is extended to Fr Gerry Prunty who generously travelled from Donald to officiate. He had previously met some of the family, having celebrated the Requiem Mass for Catherine's granddaughter, Monica, in Charlton two years ago and as a past Parish Priest in Terang, where he ministered to some of Catherine's descendants.

In a moving service overlooking Mallee farmland, flowers were placed on the grave, mementos of her children were offered at the procession of gifts and hymns of 1923 were sung. The Woomelang Historical Society prepared the gravesite and served a wonderful lunch at the hall where



photos and memorabilia were shared, and conversations and recollections went on late into the afternoon.

The family is conscious that they can never repay the gracious generosity of the Woomelang community who were recognised in Mass as well as Catherine's children, Mick, Jack, Ted, Kate, George, Tom and Jim whom she dearly loved and whose loving memories of their mother have led to our presence, in her honour, at this memorial.

Julie Aldous

## JJAMM Week

St Mary MacKillop College Swan Hill celebrated JJAMM Week from August 7 - 11, 2023. JJAMM is an acronym for Joseph, Julian (Tenison Woods) and (St) Mary of the Cross MacKillop. It was a great opportunity to reflect and honour the Josephite charism which the College follows. St Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus and spouse of Mary. He demonstrated courage, patience and tenacity in caring for his family. Julian Tenison-Woods was a priest who supported Mary MacKillop's dream of making Catholic education accessible. He was a passionate botanist and avid promoter of ecology. St Mary of the Cross MacKillop was the founder of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (Josephites) who were a religious order focused on service to others in Australia, especially the poor and those living in rural and remote areas. The College, with other Josephite schools across the country, use this week to remember how we can show similar qualities to these great people in all we do and say.



Throughout the week our College participated in different activities centred around our core values: dignity, respect, compassion, reverence, generosity and forgiveness. Students also participated in Kahoot quizzes during Homeroom on the name-sakes for our Houses (Julian Tenison-Woods, Emanuel Solomon and Sr Francis Xavier) and participated in a Josephite-themed colouring activity organised by Ms Howison. To launch JJAMM week, students were treated to delicious JJAMM (jam) donuts. Students were lining up down the breeze way to secure their jam donut (or two) to enjoy. Special thanks to Mandy McCallum, Mel Brooks, the VET Hospitality team and student leaders for their assistance in preparing and selling the donuts. On Tuesday, the College gathered together in St Mary's Catholic Church to celebrate our Feast Day Mass, on the Solemnity of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Solemnities in the Church are considered as an extra special Feast Day and so it was for our College, as we remember the life, faith and works of Australia's first Saint and the name sake of our College. Special thanks to Fr James, Ms Howison, the student leaders, staff volunteers, college band and choir and all staff and students for their efforts and participation.



Other activities through the week included the illustrious Staff vs Student Netball Match, organised by Grace Scott and ending in a draw. Many students also participated in PyJJAMMa (Pyjama) Day with a contest for the best dressed students in their pyjamas! On Thursday, students were invited to wear casual clothes, with each gold coin donation going towards wellbeing services for students at the College. JJAMM Week concluded with a new activity, 'Mack's Tracks' which was a circuit of activities inspired by the life of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Students balanced books on their heads, shot basketball hoops and even piggy backed across South Grass, to ensure the best House won. The winning House was Tenison. Thank you to all the staff, students, office and maintenance crew who collaborated to make JJAMM Week the best week that was possible.



## Staff Formation at Mount Macedon

Recently, staff from Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) attended the Victorian Emergency Management Institute (VEMI) in Mount Macedon to participate in a Staff Formation experience. The two-day agenda included insightful keynotes by Fr Justin Driscoll, followed by several workshops led by CEB staff and members from external organisations. This time offered employees an opportunity to explore what is at the heart of the Catholic story and vision, and the implications of this for our contemporary world. It was also a great occasion for staff to connect and develop greater relationships with one another.

We thank those outside of DOBCEL who offered their time to joined us in Macedon. We welcomed Fr Andrew Hayes, Gwen Michener from Caritas Australia, Nick Collins and Deanna Davis from CatholicCare Victoria, Josh Lourensz from Catholic Social Services Victoria, David Halliday from Eureka Street, Paul Brophy from Fr Bob Maguire Foundation and representatives from the OLHC Wendouree Parish, Vinnies Australia and the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP). These sessions provided an opportunity for staff to link Catholic Social Teaching with the world in which we live and work. We also acknowledge and thank the wonderful work done by the Catholic Identity & Mission Team for their help preparing and facilitating the event.

DOBCEL communications

## MOTHERS WHO PRAY

In July the movement *Mothers who Pray for their Children* held their first meeting in the Star of the Sea Parish Koroit community.

*Mothers who Pray for their Children* began in 2011 in Brazil, Vitória city in Espírito Santo state, at São Camilo de Lellis Parish. *Mothers who Pray* is a non-profit organisation seeking to encourage families by the power of prayer. It was acknowledged by the Archdiocese of Vitória (ES) as “Mothers who Pray for their Children’s Movement”, with Angela Abdo as Foundress and the Patroness is Our Lady of La Salette as Patroness with St Monica as Co-Patroness.

Bishop Paul Bird and Fr John Fitzgerald, South West Coast Parish Priest, visited the *Mothers who Pray for their Children - Star of the Sea Parish group* in Koroit on August 11. Carolina Cetenaeski, Coordinator of the Australian Movement, said it was a privilege and joy to write



to Bishop Paul thanking him for his visit to the group. Carolina added that “one of the things she treasures from our beautiful Catholic Church is the apostolic succession and always shares with mothers that when we meet with a Bishop, we meet with one of the apostles which is why for us at *Mothers who Pray* the contact

and the blessing from the Bishop is so important.” Carolina also said that Marita Flanagan, Coordinator of the Koroit group and all the mothers present, felt honoured to have the Bishop’s presence and blessing.

Carolina Cetenaeski  
Photo: Koroit Group

# NZ MEETING AT NULLAWIL

An invitation was extended to Fr Gerry Prunty to hold the Northern Zone meeting at the Nullawil Heritage Museum on Tuesday, August 22, 2023. On arrival the participants were provided with a delicious morning tea of scones, jam and cream. The copper was boiling and they were able to have a hot drink to warm up on what was a drizzly cold day in Nullawil. We were prepared though and had a log fire going which warmed the shed. They made use of this warmth and held their meeting at the tables in close proximity. Following the meeting, a tour of the heritage museum was conducted.

The museum consists of seventeen buildings including a house, school, post office, blacksmith and numerous other buildings. The Catholic Church closed in 2020 and the Holey Barn is dedicated to preserving the local catholic history. As many articles as possible were moved to the museum for preservation. It has become a working space and includes the Altar, the Stations of the Cross and the side altar with St Joseph on it, the nativity, pews and other numerous artifacts.

Participants proceeded onto other buildings and a stop was made at the Winston Church. A sermon was given about the museum, how it started, visitors, buildings - including the Winston Church - and how it was moved to the site, weddings and other activities. After this brief tour, all were treated to soup and sandwiches. Some managed a look through Auchmore house, Towanninie School and the machinery sheds, before we all departed for our respective destinations. A good day was had by all.

*Barry James - Tour Guide*



*Back row: Barry James, Fr Shaiju Matthew (Ouyen & Robinvale Parishes), Fr Matt Restall (Wimmera Mallee Parish), Fr Gerry Prunty (East Wimmera Parish), Mons Glynn Murphy (Wimmera Mallee Parish), Fr James Kerr (Northeast Mallee). Front row: Mark Bromley (Diocesan Office), Fr Matthew Thomas and Fr John Corrigan (both Sunraysia Parish)*



## RUOK?

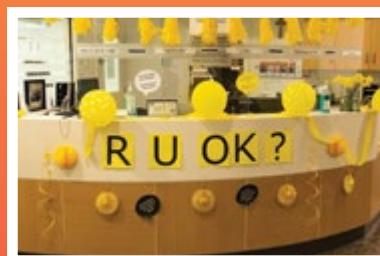
*R U OK? is a public health promotion charity that encourages people to stay connected and have conversations that can help others through difficult times in their lives.*

*Their work focuses on building the motivation, confidence and skills of the help-giver – the person who can have a meaningful conversation with someone who is struggling with life.*

*R U OK? contributes to suicide prevention efforts by encouraging people to invest more time in their personal relationships and building the capacity of informal support networks – friends, family and colleagues - to be alert to those around them, have a conversation if they identify signs of distress or difficulty and connect someone to appropriate support, long before they are in crisis.*

*R U OK? Day 2023 was held on September 14 and St John of God Hospital Ballarat was dressed in vibrant yellow, marking #RUOKDay and prompting us to check in with one another and ask the simple yet powerful question: "Are you OK?" Continuing to foster a culture of care, compassion and open conversation. Remembering, a small chat can make a big difference. #RUOK2023*

Jamie Lovett - Communications & Marketing Officer  
<https://www.ruok.org.au/>





*The 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission” will be held in two sessions, spaced one year apart: the first began on October 4 until October 29, 2023, the second will be held in October 2024. The Vatican is asking all baptised people, regardless of whether they will be in Rome, to participate in October’s assembly of the Synod of Bishops with their prayers. “Without prayer there will be no Synod” (Pope Francis. Prayer Intention for the month of October 2023). Mario Grech, General Secretary writes in a letter to Bishops, “The Synod is, above all, an event of prayer and listening that involves not only the members of the Synodal Assembly but every baptised person ..... Indeed, all of us are called at this time to unite in communion of prayer and insistent invocation of the Holy Spirit to guide us in discerning what the Lord is asking of His Church today.”*

*The Ballarat Diocese launch of the Australian Bishops Social Justice Statement for 2023: “Listen Learn Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples” is pre-recorded and in digital format so that parish and school communities, along with individuals can access these resources at their convenience. See <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/social-justice/social-justice-statement/> for more information. Bishop Paul Bird says in the launch “ At the heart of the statement is a call for all people to embrace a new engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, an engagement that involves a commitment to listen to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers and to learn from them.”*

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

Vision Statement for the Diocese

Photos: Front cover: Canola Crop at Morton Plains, south of Birchip; Back cover: 1. Loreto College Ballarat Possum Skin Cloak Marking. 2. ACU Open day (Ballarat Courier - Lachlan Bence) 3. Colac Parish Sacramental Program. 4. Yarralin community in the Northern Territory visit Sacred Heart Primary School Colac