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Laudato Si': Love Natural Resources

Did you know ? Bees help pollinate flowers and food crops, which helps them grow. Bees are the MVPs of our ecosystem. Taking care of the plants and flowers in your garden helps the bees do their job.



Child Safe Church The Parishes of St Columba's & Our Lady Help of Christians (including Lexton, Miners Rest and Waubra) follow the Child Safe Standards outlined by the Victorian Government and we also implement procedures and standards as directed by the Ballarat Diocesan Office. You can download our Code of Conduct and Child Safety Policy from the Parish website or on the foyer notice board. If you have any concerns whatsoever—please contact the Parish Office, Fr. Marcello or one of the Safe Guarding Officers at wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

Our Diocesan Community Please feel free to take copies to the homebound, nursing homes, hospitals, etc., to spread the good news of the diocese.

Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace in Ukraine: I ask you to pray the Our Father for peace in Ukraine, now and throughout this day. **Our Father...**

Let us ask the Lord to grant that the country may grow in the spirit of brotherhood, and that all hurts, fears and divisions will be overcome. We have spoken about the Holocaust. But let us think too that [in Ukraine] millions of people were killed [1932-1933]. They are a people who have suffered; they have suffered from hunger, suffered from much brutality and they deserve peace.

May the prayers and supplications that today rise up to heaven touch the minds and hearts of world leaders, so that dialogue may prevail and the common good be placed ahead of partisan interests. Please, no more war.

COVID Safe Plan

Checking-in is no longer a requirement. Face Masks are no longer required to be worn in most indoor settings but are recommended, particularly if you have any COVID-19 symptoms. They are also recommended for people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19 and are in settings where keeping a safe physical distance from other people is not possible.

- **If you are feeling unwell or have any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough or sore throat) please do not attend Mass.**
- **If you are awaiting results of a COVID test, please stay home.**
- **Please use the hand sanitiser available upon entering the Church.**
- **Please do not touch any surfaces unnecessarily.**

Parishes of St Columba's and Our Lady Help of Christians
Communities of Ballarat North, Lexton, Miners Rest, Waubra, Wendouree
www.ballarat.catholic.org.au (select Parish)

Office: 306 Gregory St, Ballarat Nth **Phone:** 5331 1012
Email: ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au

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

School Co-Principals: Bambi Afford & Shaun Mohr
School Phone: 5332 4894

Staffing
Parish Priest: Fr Marcello Colasante
Finance Officer: Bernadette Prestwood
St Columba's
Parish Co-Ordinator: Lia Andanan Yu
Wed-Friday 10:00am -2:00pm
Safeguarding Officer: Peter Marquand
Our Lady Help of Christians
Parish Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Officer: Maree Roache
Wed-Friday 9:00am -1:00pm

MASS TIMES (This week)
St Columba's
Wednesday 10.00 am
Thursday 11.00 am (Funeral)
Our Lady Help of Christians
Waubra 1st & 3rd Sunday 8.30 am
Beaufort 2nd & 4th Sunday 8.30 am
Lexton 5th Sunday 8.30 am
Wendouree
Saturday (Vigil) 6.00 pm
Thursday 10.00 am
Friday 10.00 am

Readings for Next Weekend
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Ps 104: 1-6, 8-9, R. vv.7, 8
Colossians 3: 12-21
Luke 2; 22-40

25th December 2023 ~ The Nativity of the Lord Year B

Focus on the Scriptures
The readings for the Christmas liturgies vary from celebration to celebration. The gospel for Midnight Mass (Luke 2:1-14) comes from the great story-teller Luke, as does the gospel for the early morning Mass (Luke 2:15-20). Luke tells us that Jesus was born into the world of the Roman Empire during the reign of Caesar Augustus. In his lifetime, Augustus was acclaimed by the people as saviour of the world, son of God, and bringer of peace. Luke's communities at the end of the first century would have known the achievements as well as the ambiguous reputation of Caesar Augustus. These early Christians would have recognised in Luke's story of the birth of Jesus a deliberate attempt to proclaim Jesus, rather than Caesar Augustus, as the face of God, as saviour of the world and as bringer of the good news of peace.

Luke is a master storyteller. He weaves, from Israel's sacred history and from what he knows about Jesus' origins, a wonderful tapestry of life and hope for the world, a tapestry that unites the heavenly, the human, and the animal world in one great act of praise. The violence that brought "peace" to the Roman Empire has no place in this scene. The peace of Christ is the deep peace of non-violence and reconciliation. It is the peace that satisfies the longing of the human heart and establishes right relationship in the whole Earth community.

The gospel for Christmas morning Mass comes from the prologue to John's gospel. It presents Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, as the locus of life, as the light that is coming into the world, as the one through whom truth is revealed, the one who makes God known. The opening words of the gospel, "in the beginning", evoke the opening words of Genesis. The Word that becomes flesh was "with God" even before the spirit of God swept over the chaos and brought all else into being. John's prologue foreshadows the suffering and rejection that Jesus will experience at the hands of "his own". To those who receive him, however, to those who believe in his name, he gives power to become "children of God". The successive images in this passage will yield their meaning little by little as the gospel story unfolds.

As we celebrate Christmas, we might consider the mystery of the Word made flesh who "tents" among us and brings life to the whole Earth community. Australian theologian Denis Edwards put it this way: "God embraces 'flesh' in Jesus of Nazareth, that flesh might be transformed and deified. This flesh...includes each wallaby, dog and dolphin. In the Word made flesh, God embraces the whole of life on Earth, with all its evolutionary processes, in an event that is both a radical identification in love and an unbreakable promise." We pray that all God's people might be released from the bonds of hatred and violence and have the freedom to ponder the enormity of this truth.

- Veronica Lawson RSM

Responsorial Psalm: (R.) (as per digital projector)

Gospel Acclamation: (as per digital projector)



Recently Deceased: We commend to God: Denis Edgar, Lawrence Jones, Norma McLoughlin, Kathleen Canning (Melbourne)
Anniversaries: We remember: Basil Torpy, Helen Flynn, Julia Duffy, Margaret Maher, Jean McMahan, Lorna Lia
We pray: for all in areas of conflict, war and natural disasters, for the sick and all in need of our prayers.

Christmas Mass Times

St Columba's Sun 24th at 5:00 pm Christmas Eve
 OLHC Sun 24th December at 7:00 pm. Christmas Eve
 Beaufort Sun 24th at 9:00 pm Christmas Eve
 Waubra Mon 25th December at 8:30 am Christmas Day

St Columba's Mon 25th at 10:00 am Christmas Day

Please note: there will be Mass at OLHC at 6:00 pm on Saturday 23rd.
No Masses on the morning of 24th December, Sunday, at either Beaufort or Ballarat North.

Christmas Mass Times on the diocesan website Christmas Mass Times in the Diocese of Ballarat are available on the diocesan website-<https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/christmas-mass-times-in-the-diocese/>

Bishop Paul's Christmas Message 2024 Bishop Paul's Christmas Message is available to view on the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/bishop-pauls-christmas-message-3/>.

Parish Office hours over the Christmas period Lia and Maree will both be taking leave during the month of January. Whilst the parish offices will not be staffed during this time, please make contact via email or phone parish offices (St Columba's 5331 1012. OLHC—5339 2302). In an emergency please contact St Patrick's Cathedral 5331 2933

Fr Marcello, along with Lia and Maree, wish all the members of our community a blessed and peaceful Christmas Season and a safe and happy New Year!

Letter to the People of God: Watch the audio visual version of the Letter to the People of God <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/for-a-synodal-church-communion-participation-and-mission/>

St Columba's Dec 31st	Holy Family	Sunday 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG		Mark Lacey
COMMENTATOR		Anthea Hinchey
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Tom Keogh
COMMUNION MINISTER		Bruce Chapman
DIGITAL PROJECTOR		Kathleen Keogh
SACRISTAN		Barb Brown / Norah Moloney / Josie Crowe

Collections Last Weekend Columba's Thank you for your contributions.
 Presbytery: \$ 551.85 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 1,580.00

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Parishes of St. Columba's Ballarat North and Our Lady Help of Christians Wendouree recognise the traditional owners of parish lands. We acknowledge their ancestors with respect and we are committed to working for justice and reconciliation.

Parishes in the Ballarat Region The letter from Bishop Paul Bird CSsR regarding ministry districts in the Ballarat region is available from the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes-in-the-ballarat-region/>

Diocesan Christmas Appeal 2023 Our Christmas Appeal is one way in which the Diocese can respond to the many communities from near and far who turn to us for assistance. Often these requests come from people who have personal links to the Diocese of Ballarat.



I thank the people of the Diocese for their support of last year's appeal. The funds raised were distributed as follows:

Catholic Mission Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine	\$10,000	
Caritas Australia Humanitarian Aid for Gaza	\$10,000	
St Columban's Mission 'Shared Table' Peru	\$ 5,000	
Nazareth House Ballarat	\$ 5,000	
St Vincent De Paul	\$ 5,000	
Catholic Care Victoria	\$ 5,000	
Aid to the Church in Need	\$ 2,000	
Australian Catholic Religious...		
Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)	\$ 2,000	\$44,000

In commending the Diocesan Christmas Appeal to you, an opportunity to contribute will be given at Mass on **Christmas Eve / Christmas Day**.

Monday, 1st of January 2024 (New Year's Day) Mass 10.00 am Our Lady Help of Christians Wendouree

Lenten Program 2024 - 'A Resurrected Life' A six week reflection resource for use during Lent or at any time throughout the 2024 Liturgical Year.

- Daily reflections for Lent, Holy Week to Easter Sunday
- Each day contains a double page with the date, Scripture verse, reflection and a prayer.

Copies are \$7.00 each and if you would like a copy kindly include your details on the order form in the foyer. Orders close 21st January 2024

Plenary Council update: Church in Australia carrying forward its pursuit of synodality One "particular grace" of the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia has been its encouragement of many initiatives in the Church across the country, according to a letter to the People of God prepared for the Solemnity of Christ the King. As the Church marked the end of the liturgical year, the letter provides an update on work carrying forward the Plenary Council's outcomes while awaiting the Holy See's formal recognition of the Council's decrees. Read the letter at the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/our-diocese/plenary-council-2020/>

Praying with Pope Francis The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is an international movement that is more than 170 years old. Each month, the Pope puts forward a prayer intention and asks Catholics around the world to join him in prayer. These intentions cover all sorts of areas of life, encouraging faith, renewing hope and calling us to loving service. Praying each month 'The Pope Video' forms part of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network – view at www.thepopevideo.org.

Pope's intention for December – For persons with disabilities: We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation. Lord, hear us.

Next Centralised Baptism Preparation Session Parents planning to have their child baptised are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Session. Next sessions are at the MacKillop and Glowrey Rooms, St. Patrick's Cathedral Hall, 3 Lyons St South, Ballarat, **Thursday, February 1, 2024**. You may attend either the 10.00 am or the 5.30 pm session.

Diocesan Office Closures Diocesan Offices dates in December/January are available from the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/diocesan-offices-dates-for-christmas-new-year/>

OLHC 30th December	Holy Family	Saturday 6.00pm
LEADER OF SONG		Paul Hogan
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL		Margaret White
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Colin & Helen Feely
COMMUNION MINISTERS		Jennifer Adams & Bev Hayward
SACRISTAN		Lyn Gray & Michael Rienets

Collections Last weekend OLHC Thank you for your contributions.
 Presbytery: \$ 370.45 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 610.00