



▶ **SS PETER & PAULS**
701 FISKEN ST
BUNINYONG 3357



▶ **ST ALIPIUS**
82 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350



▶ **PARISH OFFICE**
84 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350
PH 5332 6611
OPEN TUE – FRI
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballarata-east/

24 December 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

I am the servant of the Lord

St Alipius parish

MASS TIMES

St Alipius

Monday – Christmas Day

Tuesday – 9:30 AM

Saturday 6:00 PM

Sunday 9:00 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th weeks)

10:30 AM (2nd & 4th)

Ss Peter and Paul's

Sunday 9:00 AM (2nd & 4th)

10:30 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th)

Rosary – Thursday 11:00 AM

Mass and prayer resources

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au

No counting team this week

Our Parish is committed to the safety, well-being and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of this land and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

WE PRAY FOR

Faithfully departed:

Dorothy Richardson

Anniversaries: Mary

Barnett

Unwell: Socorro De

Chavez, Peter McLachlan, Sarah McLachlan, Eleanor McMahon, Patricia Murry, Shelley Pawang, Carole Simmons

PARISH TEAM

Parish Priest

Fr Jorge Jr De Chavez, OSJ

Visiting Priest

Fr Barry Ryan

Sacramental and Parish Coordinator

Cathy Prunty

Administrative Assistant

Natalie Shannon

Finance Officer

Bernadette Prestwood

Child Safety Officer

Emily Clarke

PARISH VISION

The combined communities of St Alipius Parish reach out in the spirit of faith, hope, love, and acceptance, as God calls us to in the gospels.

PARISH MISSION

Our mission in the Parish of St Alipius is to actively engage and serve our combined communities, embodying the teachings of the Gospel. Strengthened in the spirit of faith, hope, love acceptance and Mercy, we strive to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment. Guided by God's call to service, we aim to build strong connections, provide spiritual nourishment, promote social justice, and offer support to individuals and families in their journey of faith. Through our dedicated interactions, we seek to deepen our relationships with God, inspire transformation, and make a positive impact in the lives of those we encounter, spreading God's love and compassion to all.



THANK YOU, FR JORGE

Four years ago, in January, we were advised that Fr. Jorge de Chavez would be our new parish priest. We didn't know much about this man, who was coming to us from Western Australia, where he had been since venturing to Australia from the Philippines several years earlier. It would seem on meeting Fr. Jorge that he didn't know much about our parish either, but he was certainly keen to meet us and learn more about the parish and the Ballarat Diocese.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 had other ideas and after being here only a short period, gathering as a community was banned and Fr. Jorge's opportunities to meet parishioners were severely limited. For this reason, it was some time before we came to know our parish priest.

When the rules around COVID relaxed and we were once again able to come together, it became obvious that Fr. Jorge was very pastoral. He was always off to visit the sick or the homebound. Fr. Jorge was often at our local Catholic schools, where he was well-recognised by the students and staff and never said no to saying masses for the schools.

Though it could be considered that Fr. Jorge is still reasonably new to Australia, he has a love of AFL, although one can't be sure if he barracks for the Bulldogs, the Pies, or the Eagles.

Along with the ability to care for all his parishioners, Fr. Jorge has proved to be a man with a range of talents and has been known to clean the gutters, fix the sound system in the church and has an excellent understanding of finances.

Fr. Jorge, now that the time has come for you to move on, we are sad to see you go, for all the reasons listed above, but most of all because you have cared for us, your parishioners, so well over the past four years. We will miss you but wish you well as you begin a new mission with the people of Waroona. Safe travels and thank you.



PARISH OFFICE HOURS

The parish office will not be open during usual hours between Boxing Day and 22 January 2024. We will check emails and messages regularly, so please don't hesitate to make contact if needed and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and thank you all for your support throughout the past year.

Cathy and Natalie.



CHRISTMAS MASSES

This year Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday, so masses that weekend will be as follows:

Saturday 23 December – 4th Sunday of Advent vigil
6:00 PM – St Alipius

Sunday 24 December – 4th Sunday of Advent
9:00 AM – Ss Peter and Paul's
10:30 AM – St Alipius

Sunday 24 December – Christmas vigil
6:00 PM – Children's mass at St Alipius
7:30 PM – Ss Peter and Paul's
9:00 PM – St Alipius

Monday 25 December – Christmas Day
9:00 AM – Ss Peter and Paul's
10:30 AM – St Alipius

STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our stewardship program. Your generosity is appreciated.

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|---|----------|
| Supporting our parish priests | \$752 |
| Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc. | \$523.80 |

We invite anybody who would like to join the program to please contact the parish office.

SVDP CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Ballarat East Conference of SVdP invites you to support their Christmas Appeal which plays a vital role in enabling the good works of the Society to continue serving the community via the envelopes at the end of the pews (put into the offertory collection basket), www.vinnies.org.au, or phoning 13 18 12. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

THANK YOU

As our year draws to a close, we wish to say thank you to everyone who has participated in parish life during the past twelve months. Without regular input from parishioners on many levels, we couldn't exist as we do. Thank you for all that you have done. Your work is appreciated.

Thank you to everyone who came to wish Fr Jorge all the best at his farewell mass and BBQ at St Alipius.



SS. PETER & PAUL'S ARTWORK

Next time you are visiting Ss. Peter and Paul's church in Buninyong, please take note of the new artwork in the foyer. The artwork was gifted to Fr. Adrian on his 40th ordination to the priesthood and is based on the design of the altar in the Buninyong church. Fr. Adrian has generously loaned it to the Ss. Peter and Paul's community so that it can be appreciated by all. Thank you, Fr. Adrian.



BISHOP'S MESSAGE

Bishop Paul's Christmas message is available here: www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/bishop-pauls-christmas-message-3/.

OTHER CHRISTMAS MASSES

Christmas Mass times are available via the diocesan website www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/christmas-mass-times-in-the-diocese/

DIOCESE TURNS 150

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat will turn 150 on 30 March 2024. There will be several events held next year to mark this occasion. The latest edition of Our Diocesan Community has a very informative article about the formation of the diocese, written by Sr Berenice Kerr RSM. A timeline of events is on display in each church.

NATIVITY DISPLAY

"Making a Scene at Christmas" is in the Bridge Mall until Friday, 22 December and at the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat archives by appointment until 22 December, and 4– 20 January 2024. Entry is a gold coin donation.

DIOCESAN E-NEWS

The latest edition of e-News has been published and is available at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news-events/e-news/. You can subscribe to be emailed future editions.

Mary is God's Mercied One

Gospel reflection by Veronica Lawson RSM

4th Sunday of Advent: Luke 1:26–38

We are all familiar with Luke's story of the annunciation, a story that has inspired artists through the ages.

God's messenger, Gabriel, approaches a young Galilean Jewish woman, Mary of Nazareth, and greets her as God's graced one.

The angel's greeting to Mary is unique. No other person in the Christian scriptures is addressed as "favoured/graced one" or "mercied one". The Greek form *kecharitōmenē* contains within it the notion of grace or mercy.

Mary is troubled by the angel's greeting. After being addressed as "favoured or mercied one", she is told only that God is with her. She knows the traditions of her people. She knows that those said to be the graced or favoured of God (Noah and Moses and Gideon and Samuel) are called to be agents of God's saving action entrusted with heavy responsibilities. Now a young woman is called to be God's agent.

In a formula that forms part of angelic announcements of birth, the angel tells Mary not to be afraid and reassures her by stating explicitly that she has been graced by God.

The angel then proceeds to announce the conception and birth of the child she is to name "Jesus". This child will reign forever.

The prophecy of Nathan, recounted in today's first reading, is to be fulfilled in the conception and birth of Mary's son who is also, and especially, God's son in the line of David. David, in his turn, was first of many "sons of God" called to rule with the justice and the wisdom of God.

In the face of almost constant failure on the part of the kings, later prophets projected Israel's hope into the future and looked for one who would have the characteristics of God, who would truly be "of God".

*No other person in the
Christian scriptures is
addressed as "favoured
/graced one"*

Mary's response to the angel, "How can this be...?" echoes the prayer of David in the continuation of today's first reading: "Who am I...and who are we that you have brought us to this point?" (2 Samuel 7:18).

Mary learns that God's dwelling place is her own human flesh and that this extraordinary event will be accomplished through the grace of God and the power of God's Holy Spirit.



Mary is also to learn that her cousin Elizabeth will conceive a child despite her age "for nothing will be impossible for God."

The mysterious workings of God in our world invite Mary's response: "How can this be...?"

As we approach the celebration of the ongoing comings of the Christ into our world, we pause to wonder at the goodness of God at work in all that incarnates the grace and mercy of God.

Let us give thanks in the spirit of today's gospel for the deep incarnation we celebrate at this time, even as we pray that God's grace and mercy might touch the hearts of those who continue to perpetrate the mindless wars that destroy both human life and the beauty of God's creation.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

2 SAMUEL 7:1–5, 8–12, 14–16

ROMANS 16:25–27

LUKE 1:26–38

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS THE HOLY FAMILY

GENESIS 15:1–6, 21:1–3

HEBREWS 11:8, 11–12, 17–19

LUKE 2:22, 39–40