



St Patrick's Stawell, Immaculate Conception Ararat, St Francis of Assisi Landsborough and St Bernard's Lake Bolac form Holy Spirit Parish, Gariwerd.

We acknowledge recognise and respect the elders and families of the Barengi Gadjin and Eastern Maar people, the traditional owners of the land on which our parish gathers. We commit ourselves to walking in unity with our First Nations people.

First Reading

Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. 'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'

Responsorial Psalm Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10

(R.) My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. He looks on his servant in her nothingness; henceforth all ages will call me blessed. (R.)

The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy his name! His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him. (R.)

He fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil. May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Gospel Acclamation

Isaiah 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

Gospel

John 1:6-8. 19-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.



Information – Holy Spirit Parish, Gariwerd

Parish Priest Fr. Andrew Hayes andrew.hayes@ballarat.catholic.org.au
Parish Bulletin Online www.ballarat.catholic.org.au – follow link to parish
Secretary / Child Safe Jill Croxford gariwerd@ballarat.catholic.org.au
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Mass Times

Ararat Sunday 8.30am
Stawell Sunday 10.30am
Lake Bolac 1st 3rd 5th Sundays 6.30pm Vigil Sat
Landsborough 2nd 4th Sundays 12.30pm
Glenthompson (Hamilton Parish) 2nd 4th Sundays 8.30am

Readings for next Sunday

24th Dec 2023
Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B
2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14.16/Romans 16:25-27/Luke 1:26-38

Weekday Masses (usual schedule)

Tuesday: 10am Stawell (Check bulletin for occasional changes)
Wednesday: Aged Care
Thursday: 2.30pm Hopkins
Friday: 11am Ararat (Check bulletin for occasional changes)

Aged Care Roster

1st Wednesday 11.15am Eventide
2nd Wednesday 11am Lowe St
3rd Wednesday 10.30am Garden View
4th Wednesday 10am ARVillage

December Roster

Sat Dec 16th Reconciliation Lake Bolac during Mass
Tues Dec 19th Reconciliation 5pm Stawell / 6.30pm Ararat
Fri Dec 22nd Carols and Supper in Ararat Parish Centre

Christmas Eve Roster Sunday 24 December

8.30am	Ararat (simple Mass)	10.30am	Stawell (simple Mass)
12.30pm	Landsborough (Christmas Mass)	6pm	Stawell (Christmas Mass with Carols at 5.30pm)
7.30pm	Ararat (Christmas Mass)	9.15pm	Lake Bolac (Christmas Mass)

Anniversaries

Florence Heenan, Daniel Ryan, Joan Boyle, Joan Ryan, Rodney Harvey, Margaret Mary Smith, Glenys Balchin, Mary Smith 1954, Noel McOwan, John Thomas, Fr. Gery Payne, Grace Harrison, Florentina Uda de Torrecarpo, Janice Porter, Norman Rowe, Mary Gellie, Mick Streeter 1996, Hayley Pugh, Maureen Dalton, Linda Thomas 1976, Edna Noone 1985, Roderick (Rick) Healy 1998, Helen Healy 1998, Norman William Rowe, Hughie Lees, Elizabeth Coffey 1957, Robert Soule 2000, Emma Brennan, John Hearn, Pepito Galang, Myra Campbell, Fr Bill Egan, Barry Karlake, John McSparron, Arthur Clark, Kathleen Nicholson 1960, Bridget Hourigan 1976, Laurence Cashin, Fr. John Connellan, Fr. Billie Close, Fr. Pat O'Dowd, Joan Dadswell, Damien Gordon, Joan Fogarty, Phillis Phelan 1946, Catherine Lloyd 1954, Harold Carr 1980, Jennifer Molan.

Lake Bolac Roster

Sat Dec 16th Reader Deb Glasson/ Prayers of Faithful Damian Phillips
Sun Dec 24th TBA
Sun Dec 30th Reader Mick Brennan/ Prayers of Faithful Tricia Higgins

Ararat Roster

Sun Dec 17th Facilitator Cathy McA /Reader Pat L/Euch Sr John
Sun Dec 24th 8.30am Volunteers required.
Sun Dec 24th 7.30pm Volunteers required.

Stawell Roster

Sun Dec 17th S/Minister M R Thomas/Reader K Dallinger/ Offertory Pasqual Family **10.30am**
Sun Dec 24th 10.30am S/Minister K Ashton/Reader M R Thomas/ Offer M McGaffin
Sun Dec 24th 6pm S/Minister M Maestros /Reader K Dallinger/ Offertory G Pascal

Stawell CWL

Cuppa today after Stawell Sunday Mass. Everyone welcome.

Christmas Carols and Get Together

Please join fellow parishioners in the Ararat parish centre for Carols and Shared Meal. When: Friday 22nd Dec 6-8pm. What to bring: Savoury or Sweet to share. Voices and good cheer. Instruments or items that you can contribute to the evening.
Love to see you there.

St Bernard's Lake Bolac - A box will be placed at the back of the church for donations of non-perishable food items, to assist with the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal.

Ararat St Vincent de Paul are again asking for Families to donate a toy for Christmas. Please place under the Christmas Tree at the back of the church and they will be collected. We are anticipating more families will be needing out help this year so your donation will be very much appreciated. The final collection of the toys will be the 17th of Dec to allow for packing and distribution. Thank you

Christmas Cards by St Mary's Students The students at St Mary's have participated in a competition to make Christmas Cards. To help raise money for the St Vinnies Christmas Appeal and Art supplies for the school, the cards will be on sale from the school and after Church on Sundays in Ararat. \$10 for 10 cards

Stawell CWL are selling **Christian Christmas Cards** and **Columban Calendars** in the St Pat's church hall after Sunday Masses. \$10 for a pack of 10 cards. Profits to Stawell Inter Church Council welfare Cottage Christmas distribution to those in need in our town and region."

Making a Scene at Christmas

Over 500 Christmas Nativities from more than 60 countries will be displayed at the Bridge Mall Ballarat and at the Catholic Diocesan Archives from Tuesday, December 5 – Friday, December 22, 2023. You can see and smell real frankincense and myrrh; see coins minted around the time the census was called that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem; see hand crafted cultural nativities from Australia, Africa, Asia, North & South America and Europe (and one that went to Antarctica); nativities that prize social justice and the environment. Schools can book for an educational experience. For more information on the Ballarat Bridge Mall display, please contact Fiona Tonkin Fiona.tonkin@ballarat.catholic.org.au. Every one welcome. Entry is a gold coin donation.

Advent Appeal for Ukraine – this weekend

During Advent 2022, all Australian dioceses were invited to take up a special collection for the people of Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of dollars was raised to support people in the war-torn nation through the work of *Mudra Sprava* (Wise Action), a Patriarchal Charitable Foundation in Ukraine. The organisation has three focus areas: Evacuation of people from frontline territories; food packages for people in need; shelters for internally displaced persons. At the Bishops Conference's November 2023 meeting, bishops were asked to again consider if an appeal could be taken for the people of Ukraine during Advent. To donate, go to the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/advent-appeal-for-ukraine-2/>

CatholicCare Giving Tree Appeal

This Christmas, we want to give young people and their families the support they need, so that they can enjoy their Christmas together rather than face the tough times alone. CatholicCare Victoria believes families should never have to choose between seeking help for their kids or putting food on the table. Scan or click the QR code to donate.



Catholic Mission: Life-Giving Gifts

Life-Giving Gifts represent critical church-run mission projects around the world. By purchasing a Life-Giving Gift this Christmas, you are making a lasting impact for children, families and communities in most need. Select as many gifts as you wish! Choose to receive printed cards in the mail or e-cards that you can send to your friends and loved ones inboxes straight away or at a scheduled time. Scan or click the QR code to purchase gifts.



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.

The billionaire owner of a computer software company dies at the ripe old age of 90 and goes to heaven where Saint Peter gives him a nice, modern four-bedroom house with a pretty garden and a tennis court. Pleased with his lot, the man quickly settles into the afterlife. One day he is out walking when he bumps into a man with a white beard wearing a fine tailored suit. "That's a really nice suit," says the rich man. "Where did you get it?" "Actually," says the bearded man, "I was given 50 of these, plus two mansions, a yacht, a golf course and four Rolls-Royces." "Wow, were you a pope or a doctor healing the terminally ill?" asks the rich man. "No, actually I was the captain of the Titanic." The rich man is puzzled. He finds Saint Peter and asks, "How come the captain of a sunken ship with all those lives lost gets all that while me, the inventor of a software company that has helped millions of people only gets a pokey little house?" he asks. With a wry smile Saint Peter says, "The Titanic only crashed once."

Lectionary Art and Reflection by Jenny Close/ Reflection by Artist

There is some confusion about the identity of John and his relationship to Jesus in this week's gospel reading. The message is plain - John is not the light, rather he is 'a witness to speak for the light'. Light is the dominating image of the Advent/Christmas cycle. The liturgical cycle and the natural cycle are harmonious in the northern hemisphere so that the advent of the light is a powerful image of hope. In Brisbane where I live, we have to reshape the light imagery to suit our seasons: Christmas is in the middle of summer and the warmth and light of the sun are present realities, not future prospects. This is by no means an insurmountable problem: the Advent/Christmas cycle is redolent of past, present and future time imagery. Further, because of its nature as a multivalent symbol, the 'light' image can be read from many different perspectives and still be fruitful. By December the sunflowers I have planted in my garden will, I hope, be two metres tall and flowering in time for the Christmas liturgies. If all goes well they will give powerful witness to the efficacy of light. Advent is a time of watching and waiting (on things natural and spiritual) in hopeful expectation.



REFLECTION by Dianne Bergant CSA

Traditionally, the third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete* Sunday, the Sunday of Joy. The joy of this Sunday comes both from the message of the readings and from the anticipation that Christmas is nearing. As described in the Isaian passage, the Messiah is the one imbued with the spirit and with the power of the prophet, the one who will fulfill the promises of God. It becomes obvious in the Gospel that the Messiah is the one proclaimed by the Baptist. John cleared a path for the coming of the anointed one, and from that time on the lives of believers have been the pathway through which the Messiah has entered the world.

REFLECTION by Fr Michael Tate Witness to the Light

St John's Gospel never calls John, 'the Baptist'. No, he is John the Witness: 'a witness to speak for the Light'. We discover in this Gospel that this light is embodied in Jesus Christ, most graphically portrayed in the Transfiguration when Christ's body is radiant, translucent, with Divine Light. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the One who came to liberate human beings from the many dark captivities which imprison them, the One who vanquished the inky blackness of the tomb. We can become partakers in the life of this Divine Light. At baptism, this is symbolised by the lighting of a small candle from the great Easter candle which is sung into the church on the Easter Vigil as 'Christ our Light', the Conqueror of Death. As a baptised people our allegiance to 'The Light' is not to be a private matter between 'me and God'. No, like John, we must bear witness to 'The Light' by being instruments of His power to dispel the darkness which can enshroud people's lives. We could pause for a moment to commit ourselves to fulfil the promise of our baptismal candle so that we might more authentically celebrate the birth of the Divine Light come into human history.

REFLECTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – by Lisa-Marie Calderone-Stewart

You have probably heard of political prisoners being captured and released. In your local newspapers, you have probably seen pictures of men and women getting married. You have probably seen gardens all over your town. This sounds like the year of favour that Isaiah was talking about. Do you think it is? Why or why not? Are there plenty of things to be thankful for and to rejoice about? Name some. When Jesus came, he fulfilled these Scriptures of Isaiah. Jesus comes for us again and again every year at Christmas time. During Advent we do our best to prepare for Jesus in our hearts – to get ourselves ready to help Jesus make this year a year of favour. How can you help make this a year of favour in your school? in your neighbourhood? in your family?



Living the Gospel – A Witness? Me?

It came as something of a surprise to me to think that other people might observe the way I treated others and draw conclusions about my motivation. It was when I started to work with young people that the truth of this was revealed. I realised that my actions could speak so much louder than anything I might say. I hoped that the young people I was working with might stop some time and think to themselves, 'I wonder why he treats us all that way? I wonder how it fits with that religion stuff he talks about?' Well, I can hope can't I?