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**Child Safe Church** The Parishes of St Columba's, St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat and St John the Baptist Beaufort 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 Diocesan or Parish website or on the foyer notice board. If you have any concerns whatsoever—please contact the Parish Offices, one of our priests or Safe Guarding Officers at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/>

**Pope's Prayer for December - For Christians in areas of conflict:** Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope. Lord, hear us.

**Our Diocesan Community Issue 3** The final edition of ODC for the year is available at our church foyer. Please feel free to take copies to the home-bound, nursing homes, hospitals, etc., to spread the good news of the diocese.

**Nazareth House Auxiliary Christmas Stall** Sunday, 15th December. Foyer of Nazareth House 218 Mill St 9am - 2pm. Baked goods, Christmas Gifts & Decorations and much more. Great Christmas Hamper raffle to be drawn today.

**OLHC Parish Wendouree Christmas Day Lunch** OLHC Parish Wendouree volunteers are hosting a free lunch on Christmas Day in the Parish Hall, 482A Gillies Street North, Wendouree from 12.00noon to 2.00pm. Bookings are essential as seating is limited, ph. 0491 029217.

Thank you to all the very wonderful volunteers for all their work in making the Christmas Day lunch at OLHC so special over all the years it has been held. We welcome all those who would like to be with us as a guest or a volunteer on the day, and we are especially looking for a few fit people who might commit to two hours of their time between 2.00pm - 4.00pm to clean up/pack up. To volunteer, please phone 0467 683504.



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\*Interest rates subject to change. View current rates on the [CDF website](http://www.catholicdevelopmentfund.org.au).



Parishes of St Columba's and St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat

Communities of Ballarat North, Ballarat Cathedral, Beaufort

[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) (select Parish)

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

Office: 3 Lyons St South, Ballarat Phone: 5331 2933  
Email: ballarat@ballarat.catholic.org.au

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

Staffing

**Administrator:**  
Fr Edward Moloney  
**Assistant Priests:**  
Fr Francis Kureeckal MST  
Fr Abraham Thomas MST  
Fr James McKay

**Finance Officer:**  
Jackie Wrigglesworth

**St Columba's Parish Coordinator:**  
Lia Andanar Yu  
Wed-Friday 10:00am - 2:00pm  
(closed on school holidays)

**Safeguarding Officer:**  
Anthea Hinchey

MASS TIMES (This week)

**St Columba's**  
Sunday 10.00 am  
Wednesday 10.00 am  
[Reconciliation 10.30am]

**Beaufort**  
2nd & 4th Sunday 8.30 am

**Readings for Next Weekend**  
Micah 5: 1-4  
Ps 79: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19 R. v. 4  
Hebrews 10: 5-10  
Luke 1: 39-45



15th December 2024 ~ Third Sunday of Advent Year C

Focus on the Scriptures

**A Reflective Time of Expectation and Hope** The third Sunday of Advent used to be called Gaudete (be joyful) Sunday. It provided a mid-term break within a period of austerity or penance in preparation for Christmas. Advent is no longer a penitential period, but rather a reflective time of expectation and hope. The invitation to rejoice nonetheless remains part of the Advent liturgy. This invitation is explicit in the first two readings and implicit in the gospel.

There are ethical demands in the time of waiting. Three times John the Baptist is asked, "What must we do?" In line with Luke's emphasis on the universality of God's saving power, the responses are directed to "all the people". Those with even minimal food (something to eat) and clothing (two tunics) are told to share. Tax agents, caught up in a system notoriously open to abuse, are to be honest. Soldiers are given three directives that provide some insight into the negative way the military was perceived: no extortion, no blackmail, and no complaints about wages. The third directive probably derives from the fact that soldiers were better off financially than most others. It is in no sense a prohibition on demands for just wages. In Luke's depiction of John, there is no critique of the harsh Roman taxation system or of the presence of the Roman army. Here as elsewhere, Luke seems to be seeking acceptance for the Christ movement within the Roman Empire by demonstrating that it is no threat to the occupation and its values.

Luke's John situates himself in relation to Jesus, the anointed agent of God's liberation. John describes the one to come in much more fiery terms than the Lukan Jesus turns out to be. His description is more like a self-portrait, especially in light of the fact that John addresses the crowds who flock to him as a "brood of vipers" or "children of snakes" (Luke 3:7). In contrast with John's water-baptism "for the forgiveness of sins", Jesus will "baptise" with the Holy Spirit and fire. Fire, as we well know in this dry land of ours, is a challenging symbol, both friend and foe. In the first-century Manual of Discipline from the Qumran community by the Dead Sea, water, refining by fire, and "a holy Spirit" are listed together as the instruments of God's saving and purifying action.

John, who may have been a member of the Qumran community, presents his own role as preparatory to that of Jesus, the Spirit-filled, powerful and enduring agent of God's refining and purifying work in the world. We know our own ongoing need for a "baptism" with the Holy Spirit and fire. We prepare the way by doing what we must: sharing our goods, treating others with dignity, justice and forgiveness as well as responding to the cry of the earth. The question "What then must we do?" is one that we might ask ourselves each day in the face of a changing world order. -Veronica Lawson RSM

**Responsorial Psalm: (R.)** Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.  
**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. Alleluia!

**Recently Deceased: We commend to God:** Anne Gallagher

**Anniversaries: We remember:** Kathleen Thorne, Kathleen McDaid, Sarah Tonkin, David Fithall, Ronald Mark Edgar, Ronald Leslie Edgar, Stephen Head, Patrick Curran

**We pray:** for all in areas of conflict, war, natural disasters, for those who are sick and all in need of our prayers.

A warm welcome to Bishop Paul! Thank you for your visit as part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations of the Ballarat Diocese.



**9 Day Novena for Christmas** is a series of nine Masses on the days leading up to Christmas, which will be held at **St James' Parish Church Sebastopol**. Mass times are: Sunday, December 15 at 7.00pm; Monday, Dec 16 at 7.00pm; Tuesday, Dec 17 at 7.00pm; Wednesday, Dec 18 at 7.00pm; Thursday, Dec 19 at 7.00pm; Friday, Dec 20 at 7.00pm; Saturday, Dec 21 at 7.00pm; Sunday, Dec 22 at 7.00pm; Monday, Dec 23 at 7.00pm & dinner. Please bring a plate to share. If you have any questions/need further information, please contact Fr Eladio, ph. 0450 017 007 or Dion, ph. 0427 876 553. Everyone welcome.

**Christmas Cake Stall at St Patrick's Cathedral today, Sunday, December 15 after 8am and 10:30am Masses** Competition for a decorated Christmas cake to be drawn on the day. Tickets available after all masses at the Cathedral today. Cash only please. All funds raised will support our seminarians. Inquiries Carmel 0401175045

**Christmas Mass Times within our Ministry District:**

**St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat**

Christmas Eve Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 6.00pm 9.00pm 12am (Midnight)  
Christmas Day Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December 8.00am 10.30am

**St John the Baptist Beaufort**

Christmas Eve 7.00pm Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December

**Parish Office hours over the Christmas period** Fr. Francis will be taking leave during the month of January and Lia will be away. Whilst the parish office will not be staffed during this time, please make contact via email or in an emergency please call St Patrick's Cathedral 5331 2933.

St Columba's Dec 22	(next week) Sunday 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG	Mark Lacey
COMMENTATOR	Min Myers
MINISTER OF THE WORD	Tim O'Farrell
COMMUNION MINISTER	Judy Brown
DIGITAL PROJECTOR	Fiona Newton
SACRISTAN	Barb Brown

**Collections last 2 weeks** Thank you for your contributions  
Presbytery: \$ 955.45 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 1,499.00

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*The Parish of St. Columba's Ballarat North recognises the traditional owners of parish lands. We acknowledge their ancestors with respect and we are committed to working for justice and reconciliation.*

**Christmas Mass Times at St Columba's Church:**

**Christmas Eve, Tue, 24th December, 5pm Carols & 5:30 pm Mass**

**Christmas Day, Wed, 25th December, 9:30am Carols & 10am Mass**

**Volunteers most welcome** If you are happy to help out during our Christmas Day mass, please write your name on our sign-up sheet at the church foyer. Thank you and God bless!

**A massive and heartfelt thank you to our wonderful volunteers here at St Columba's for all your help this 2024! We appreciate you and your generous sharing of your time and talents. We pray for God's continued blessings upon you.**

**Vatican International Photography Contest - Sport in Motion** In the context of the Jubilee of Sport for the Year 2025, the Dicastery for Culture and Education (Vatican) is promoting an international photography contest, under the title 'Sport in Motion'. The contest is aimed at young photographers, professional or amateur, under the age of 25. The contest includes 5 categories of photography: Sport and hope (sport as a message of hope to society); Sport and family (sport as a moment of family life); Sport and disability (sport as a platform for inclusion); Sport and politics (sport as a resource accessible to all); Sport and ecology (the relationship of sport with the elements of nature). The deadline for participation ends on April 30, 2025 and the winners will be announced at the Jubilee of Sport (June 14-15, 2025). The winners will be awarded a meeting with the Holy Father, a visit to the Vatican Museums, a workshop in the *Osservatore Romano* newspaper and the international dissemination of the photos in the Holy See's media. Entries can be made by email to [sportinmotion@dce.va](mailto:sportinmotion@dce.va) and further information (entry form/rules/jury) can be found on the Dicastery's website <https://www.dce.va/it/news/2024/concorso-di-fotografia.html>

St Columba's Dec 24	Christmas Eve Tuesday 5:30 pm
LEADER OF SONG	Kerin Johnson
COMMENTATOR	Jo-anne van der Voort
MINISTER OF THE WORD	Fiona Newton
COMMUNION MINISTER	Tim O'Farrell
DIGITAL PROJECTOR	Vicki Moroney
SACRISTAN	Barb Brown

**High Court Judgement – Message from Bishop Paul**

Dear People of the Diocese,

You may have seen media coverage following a recent judgement of the High Court of Australia that involved the Diocese of Ballarat. This judgement has prompted renewed discussion about liability. I appreciate people's concern for those who have suffered abuse and people's questions about organisations accepting responsibility. I offer the following notes in response to people's concern and questions.

*In cases where there is evidence that the Diocese of Ballarat has been negligent in the duty of safeguarding children, the Diocese accepts liability and provides compensation to victims.*

*In the case considered by the High Court, Victorian courts had found that the Diocese of Ballarat was not negligent but still held that the Diocese was liable – vicariously. The High Court set aside this decision of the Victorian courts.*

*I would like to make it clear that the Diocese of Ballarat will continue to accept liability and provide compensation in cases where there is evidence that the Diocese has been negligent in safeguarding. In addition, the Diocese will continue to provide compensation through the Federal Government's Redress Scheme and through the state-wide Church process called Pathways Victoria. As well as providing compensation in these ways, the Diocese will continue to provide assistance to those who have suffered abuse by funding counselling and other pastoral help. God bless you all.* ~ Bishop Paul

**Laudato Si': Everything is connected** Pope Francis calls us to move towards "more sustainable lifestyles". There are ways to live a sustainable Christmas in true fraternity and harmony with our common home and other creatures. Discover these tips to live a Christmas in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*:

- \* **Christmas gifts:** In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invites us to choose a different lifestyle in a world where "the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products" (LS 203). When shopping for gifts, spend a few minutes researching ethical and sustainable sources, look for eco-friendly or second-hand products. Decide to cycle or walk instead of using a polluting vehicle. Finally, look for creative wrapping with materials you already have at home.
- \* **Christmas dinner:** Christmas night is also special because of the delicacies we serve at the table. This Christmas, opt for more vegetarian dishes. Decide to shop at a sustainable store, with products straight from the garden, and with plastic-free packaging.
- \* **Time with your loved ones:** The best part of the holiday season is the time spent with your family. Take time to share experiences with your closest family members and also with those you don't frequent so often. Put aside differences and enjoy the family that God has given you. Organise special games for Christmas Eve and a creative theme for gift opening. Remember those who may be lonely or without family.
- \* **A gift for the Common Home:** Reducing your energy consumption can be the best gift to creation. If you're in the northern hemisphere, choose to dress warmly instead of turning on the heat all day; conversely, if you're in a warm area, choose to create air currents in your home to keep it cool. Another option that will help you and will also look nice: light candles on the Christmas table to decorate and also reduce electric light. <https://laudatosimovement.org/news/four-steps-sustainable-christmas-en-news/>