

THE PARISHES OF CAMPERDOWN, TIMBOON AND HAMPDEN

Lismore, Cobden, Mortlake, Camperdown, Terang, Simpson and Timboon

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Dear Fathers and Parishioners,

We have received news that Pope Leo XVI has appointed Father Mark Freeman to be the next Bishop of Ballarat. The news of the appointment was officially published in Rome, in L'Osservatore Romano, January 7. Father Freeman is currently Parish Priest of Bellerive, Tasmania. He will be ordained as Bishop of Ballarat within the next three months, probably in March. Bishops are requested to offer their resignation from office when they turn 75. I turned 75 in July 2024 and duly offered my resignation to the Holy Father. Over the past eighteen months, the nuncio (the Pope's representative in Australia) has coordinated a consultation process about a successor as Bishop of Ballarat. It was announced in Rome today that Pope Leo has appointed Father Mark Freeman to be the next Bishop of Ballarat. At the same time, Pope Leo has appointed me to be Apostolic Administrator of the diocese until Father Freeman is installed as the new bishop. As I share this news, I look back over the years since my ordination as bishop in 2012. I offer thanks to God for the many blessings of these years, and I offer thanks to you all for your support in the care of our diocesan community. I also invite you to join me in prayer for Father Mark as he prepares to take up this service as our bishop.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, Apostolic Administrator of Ballarat

The Baptism of the Lord: The Baptism of the Lord marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. What was the intention behind the baptism of the Lord.

- **Radical Solidarity:** Although Jesus was sinless, he humbled himself to stand in the Jordan with repentant sinners. This act reveals that he does not stand above our struggles but enters directly into them, choosing to identify fully with our human condition.
- **A Confirmed Identity:** The voice from heaven—"This is my beloved Son"—provides a fundamental truth that applies to every believer. Before Jesus performed a single miracle or preached a word, he was already fully loved and accepted by the Father. Our own baptism mirrors this; we are loved by God not for what we do, but for who we are as His children.
- **Empowerment for Mission:** The descent of the Holy Spirit was Jesus' "anointing" for his work of healing and justice. This serves as a reminder that we are not called to live out our faith by our own strength alone. We are empowered by the same Spirit to bring light and hope into the world in our daily lives.

While baptism is specific to Christianity, the symbolism of water as a medium for purification and transformation is a universal motif. Water rituals are seen across many religions and cultures as a conduit to the divine, a way to cleanse the spirit, and a path to renewal.

LITURGY OF THE WORD
Sunday 11 Jan 2026
The Baptism of the Lord Year A

First Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (Is 42:1-4. 6-7)

Thus says the Lord: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations.

He does not cry out or shout aloud, or make his voice heard in the streets. He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame. Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver, nor be crushed until true justice is established on earth, for the islands are awaiting his law. I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 28:1-4. 9-10. R. v.11

(R.) The Lord will bless his people with peace.

1. O give the Lord you sons of God, give the Lord glory and power;
give the Lord the glory of his name. Adore the Lord in his holy court. (R.)
2. The Lord's voice resounding on the waters, the Lord on the immensity of waters;
the voice of the Lord, full of power, the voice of the Lord, full of splendour. (R.)
3. The God of glory thunders. In his temple they all cry: 'Glory!'
The Lord sat enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits as king for ever. (R.)

Second Reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 10:34-38)

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: 'The truth I have now come to realise' he said 'is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him. 'It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ – but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil.'

Gospel Acclamation (Mark 9:8)

Alleluia, alleluia! The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Alleluia!

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Mt 3:13-17)

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you,' he said 'and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands.' At this, John gave in to him. As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. A voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

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HOMILY by Fr Michael Tate

A Whisper Echoing Heaven

For the early church, this gospel incident provided something of a puzzle. Why would Jesus, the sinless One, submit to baptism by John? Why be immersed in the waters of the River Jordan as though he were a repentant sinner? The answer gives us great hope. Right from the start of his public ministry, Jesus wanted to be identified with the great mass of humanity who *are* sinful.

We are a Child-safe, Welcoming and environmentally friendly Parish

In other words, this being plunged into the waters of the Jordan was for Jesus a great act of solidarity with you and with me. He wanted to identify with those of us who have become conscious of the fracturing of our relationship with God, and have sensed the need to turn our lives in a better direction. But what I want to focus on is Jesus' mystical experience as he emerged from the waters of the River Jordan. *'Suddenly the heavens opened.'* Heaven and earth are communicating again! If heaven appeared closed to humankind it is now open again in this great act of solidarity by our saviour. *'And he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him.'*

Jesus was a Jew. He would have been steeped in the first lines of the Jewish scriptures which portray the Spirit of God hovering over the waters of chaos. He would have also been aware of the great story of Noah. When the dove fluttered over his ark he knew that the earth was safe for humanity again. So, it is not surprising that Jesus, a Jew, experienced the presence of the divine Spirit of God 'in dove-like fashion', 'like a dove does' – a sense of being hovered over by this Divine presence.

All this was a prelude to a heavenly intuition: *'and a voice spoke from Heaven: "This is my Son, the beloved, my favour rests on him."* In the Jewish tradition this sort of sensation is called the *bat qol*, the daughter of a voice, a whisper echoing heaven. All these sensations had a great impact on Jesus, leaving him with a deep sense of intimacy with his heavenly Father which enabled him, humanly speaking, to persevere throughout his ministry. This is part of what it meant for Jesus to be baptised in the River Jordan. But what does this Gospel mean for us? Each of us has shared in the baptism of Our Lord. Each of us has been incorporated into *His* baptism. At whatever age you received baptism, the heavens were opened: divine love and power streamed from heaven to earth. At that moment, heaven and earth were as one in each one of you; the Holy Spirit, Divine lover of humanity, hovered gently over you; and deep down, at the intimate wellspring of your life, the Divine voice was heard whispering: *'You are my beloved daughter'* or *'You are my beloved son,' 'My favour rests on you.'*

That is our true identity as adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Of course our Heavenly Father in his boundless compassion finds other ways to communicate divine life to billions who never get the opportunity to be baptised, or even to hear the gospel. But, oh what a special privilege! What a great gift to have been incorporated into the baptism of the Lord. What a difference it would make if we re-called each morning the heavenly whisper at *our* baptism and then re-echoed it in *our* lives.

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Diocesan e-News & "Our Diocesan Community" e-News: The latest edition of e-News has been published and is available to view <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news/diocesan-e-news/> or you can subscribe on this page to receive future editions straight to your email "Our Diocesan Community: The final edition of ODC has been distributed and is also available to view on the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/news/ourdiocesan-community/>

What is happening in our communities this week		
Camperdown Parish	Timboon Parish	Hampden Parish
Vigil Mass in Cobden at 6.30pm		Mass in Terang on Saturday at 06.00 pm
Sunday Mass in Camperdown at 11.00 am	Sunday: Assemblies of Word and Communion at Timboon and Simpson 09:00a.m.	Sunday: Mass in Mortlake at 09.00 am Mass in Terang at 10.30am
		Wednesday: Mass in Terang at 10.30am
	Thursday Mass in Simpson 11:00 a.m.	
Friday: Mass in Camperdown at 09.30 am		

Recent Deaths: Deborah Hennessey, Sr. Leonie Glennen and Toby (Anthony) Darcy

Anniversaries:

Hampden: Jim O’Sullivan. Mary Arundell, John E Glennen, Doris Jackson, Catherine Lucantonio, Bernard BouchierPatrick Moloney, Gwen Goulder, Lynette Justin, Anne van Duynhoven, Patrick Harrington and Ken Tebble.

Camperdown: Jean Forster, Ann Buckle, Stanley Adams

Timboon: Vera Hickey, Madge Boyle, Bill Haig, Patrick F Nicholson, Greg O’Flynn, Peg Duffy, Laurie Loft, Nancy Nugent, Jim Rylance Snr, Brian Fleming, Patricia Gaut, Ann Dodd, Bob Maslin, Catherine Dendle, Gertruda Heyden, Frank Keegan and Anne van Duynhoven.

Pray for the sick

Hampden: Jack Glennen, Oliver Thoma sand Hedy Altree

Timboon: Fran Evans, Pat Thornton, Hugo Reidl, Marlene van Nieuwkerk Maree Leske and Doreen Delaney

Camperdown: Kristen Pickford, Brian Wain, Julie Karlsen, Basil Thornton, Catherine O’Flynn and Marlo McCarthy.

Camperdown: Rosters for Weekend of 11th January: The Baptism of the Lord

Cobden: 06.30pm Reader: E Darcy	POF: A Horan	E/Minister: P Dwyer
Camperdown 11.00am Reader: M Saunders	POF: J Saunders	E/Minister: M Russell
Counting Team: P & J Dwyer	Altar Camperdown: T O’Leary	
Church Cleaning: B Hewitt	Altar Cobden: Volunteer	Marian Statue: S Darcy

Camperdown: Rosters for Weekend of 18th January: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Cobden: 06.30pm Reader: G Kelson	POF: P Dwyer	E/Minister: J Dwyer
Camperdown 11.00am Reader: S Grinter	POF: P Kingston	E/Minister: M Macauley
Counting Team: G & W Gleeson	Altar Camperdown: R Henry	
Church Cleaning: Robert L	Altar Cobden: Volunteer	Marian Statue: M Spokes

Terang: Rosters for Weekend of 10th and 11th January: The Baptism of the Lord

Readers:	06.00pm Jenni Lennehan	10.30am Bernadette Wurlod
Eucharistic Ministers	06.00pm Carmel Moloney	10.30am Justin Staunton
Laptop	06.00pm Pam O’Keeffe	10.30am Des McKinnon
Linen for the month of January	Jan O’Brien	

Terang: Rosters for Weekend of 17th & 18th January: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Readers:	06.00pm Christine Moloney	10.30am Christina Lee
Eucharistic Ministers:	06.00pm Lorraine Meade	10.30am Annette Clifford
Laptop:	06.00pm Evelyn O’Keeffe	10.30am Robb Storr
Linen for month of January:	Jan O’Brien	

Timboon: Roster 11th January: The Baptism of the Lord; Assembly of Word and Communion: 9.00am

Leaders: Ruth Hoffmann, John McInerney
Reader: Noel McKinnon; **P.O.F.** Lyn McInerney; **Eucharistic Minister:** Anne McMeel
Simpson: Assembly of Word and Communion 09.00am

Timboon Roster 18th January: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A: Mass 9:00 a.m.

Reader: K Currell; **P.O.F:** P Nicholson **Statue:** D Moloney, M Moloney
Simpson Closed

Holy Communion to Sick, Elderly or House Bound/Nursing Homes: Any family members who are aware of relatives (or friends) in the above situations who would like to receive Holy Communion at their place of residence. Please advise details to our Parish Office number or please contact Fr George Kuruvila at any time. Ministry will be arranged.

Praying with The Holy Father Prayer for January- For prayer with the Word of God: Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

Parish Notices: All notices need to be delivered in writing, emailed or phoned by noon every Thursday:
Clare Banks 0427677278 /George Swierczek: 0439 145 805

Our community wishes to respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and worship Our God."