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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

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

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

Staffing
Parish Priest:
Fr Marcello Colasante
Finance Officer:
Bernadette Prestwood
St Columba's
Parish Co-Ordinator:
Lia Andanar 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
Sunday 10.00 am
Wednesday 10.00 am
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 11.00 am (Kelaston)
Friday 10.00 am

Readings for Next Weekend
Isaiah 55:6–9
Ps 144:2-3, 8-9, 17-18
R.v.18
Philippians 1: 20-24, 27
Matthew 20: 1-16



17th September 2023 ~ 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Focus on the Scriptures
The opening verses of this Sunday's gospel reading have Jesus advocating limitless forgiveness (not seven, but seventy-seven times). The parable that follows is anything but consistent with this teaching, however, and with the teaching of Jesus in the gospel as a whole. We are all familiar with the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall be mercied" (5:7) and with the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (6:12).

How then do we read today's story of a king who is prepared to forgive the debt that his slave has incurred, only to resort to torture when that slave fails to forgive his fellow slave? This story raises endless issues: the unquestioning acceptance of slavery and the plight of slaves; the absolute power of the king over his subjects; the institution of debt slavery; the treatment of women and children; the collection of crippling taxes to finance the power of the king; an unjust and cruel ruler as an image of the God of Israel; imaging God as a loving parent who nonetheless acts in tyrannical ways. In other words, the parable encodes institutions and practices of the time that Jesus and the Matthean community seem to accept without question.

Does the parable come from the lips of Jesus or from the Matthean community? It would be anachronistic to expect a critique of slavery in the first century since the institution of slavery was simply taken for granted in the Graeco-Roman world. It persisted without critique for some 1800 years. It has now taken a new and sinister turn with the widespread practice of sexual and labour slavery of the vulnerable. It is totally out of character, however, for Jesus to image his "heavenly Father" as a merciless torturer. It may be that Jesus did in fact tell such a story in another context and that the Matthean author has rather arbitrarily linked the sayings on forgiveness (forgiving 77 times and forgiving from one's heart) with this story. It is conceivable that Jesus insisted on the consequences of refusing to forgive.

While God is merciful and forgiving, disciples must not exploit God's capacity to forgive. Bad behaviour is not to be tolerated. It has its consequences and those who exploit others or fail to forgive can expect to suffer the consequences of their actions. Whatever we make of the story of the merciless king and the unforgiving slave, we might take on board Jesus' response to Peter. We might also note the reminder that true forgiveness is "from the heart". In the biblical world, the heart was the core of the person's being, the seat of cognition as well as of emotion. To forgive from the heart is to forgive with the whole of one's being. We are all in need to God's forgiveness if we are to find the freedom to address "from the heart" the plight of the planet.

~ Veronica Lawson RSM

Responsorial Psalm:(R.) The Lord is kind and merciful; slow to anger and rich in compassion.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. Alleluia!

Recently Deceased: We commend to God: Eileen McManus
Anniversaries: We remember: Norm Donehue, Mick McNamara, Leonie Kelly, Francis Curran, Jack Clancy,
We pray: for those in need, all who are sick, and for the people of Ukraine, Turkey and Syria.

Migrant & Refugee Sunday, September 24, 2023 The theme of Pope Francis' Message for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees is, "Freedom to choose whether to migrate or stay." The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office have provided materials for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. More resources at diocesan site: <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/109th-world-day-of-migrants-refugees-sunday-september-24-2023/>

Synod on Synodality Ecumenical Prayer Vigil Catholic communities around the world are invited to host an ecumenical prayer vigil on the weekend of Sep 30 – Oct 1 in solidarity with a major international gathering in Rome ahead of the first session of the Synod on Synodality. 15 people from Australia will be participating in the Synod and they have asked for the Catholic community's prayers as they prepare for their important task. A prayer vigil would be a great way to respond to their request and to gather with Christian sisters and brothers in our shared faith. Find out more and register your vigil at <https://together2023.net/>

Tea and Coffee after Mass every first Sunday of the month at St Columba's You are all warmly invited to tea and coffee after mass every First Sunday of the Month. Looking forward to having a cuppa and catch up with you on the 1st of October 2023.

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, 5th October 2023**. You may attend either the 10.00 am or the 5.30 pm session.

Sacred Heart College Ballarat Reunion A reunion of SHC Ballarat East class of 1965 plus anyone who attended SHC, will be held on Sunday, October 15, 2023 at GC's Ballarat from 11.00am – 3.00pm. To attend email loisknights345@hotmail.com or ph. 0419 902538

St Columba's 24th Sept	(next week)	Sun 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG		Terry Ranger
COMMENTATOR		Fiona Newton
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Vicki Moroney
COMMUNION MINISTER		Volunteer please
DIGITAL PROJECTOR		Bruce Chapman
SACRISTAN		Barb Brown / Norah Moloney / Josie Crowe

Collections Last Weekend St Columba's Thank you for your contributions
 Presbytery: \$ 693.75 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 680.00

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.

Laudato Si': Everything is connected In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that everything is connected. Our relationship with nature is not separate from our relationship with God and others. This concept of integral ecology encourages us to care for the Earth and each other. It calls us to action.

The Diocesan Social Justice Commission, in collaboration with Caritas (Diocese of Ballarat), Earthcare Ballarat and the Pastoral Ministry Office, is providing monthly *Laudato Si* banners for use in parish bulletins. The banners include a quote taken directly from the encyclical with the reference number provided for parishioners to look up and read more deeply about that area. The banners (as below) are designed to help reflect and respond to the encyclical and foster faith and action:



The Season of Creation celebration **began September 1**, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and **ends October 4**, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations. Every year Catholic Earthcare Australia (Caritas and the Australian Bishops Conference) joins with Christian communities globally to celebrate the Season of Creation, to celebrate the gift of our common home. The theme for 2023 is "Let Justice and Peace Flow" drawing on the river imagery in Amos 5:24. It challenges us to act for ecological justice, creating change and speaking out with communities most impacted by rising sea levels, biodiversity loss and other consequences of climate change. More resources for the Season of Creation are available at <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/welfare/catholic-earthcare-ballarat-diocese/season-of-creation-2023/>

We encourage you to help our community to change the world!

Close the Fridge Door Leaving the Fridge Door open releases all the cool air and turns the food warm. Keeping the door closed will reduce your electricity bill and limit food waste.

Ballarat Clergy Support Fund: Collection for Sick and Retired Priests Creating a secure retirement future for the priests of the diocese is a duty and care in which we can all participate. Seventeen retired priests are currently supported by this Fund. Some live privately, some are retired in units in Ballarat or elsewhere, others live in supported accommodation. A credit card facility is available for your convenience, and contributions over \$2.00 are tax-deductible. *Caring for those who care for us – the Church community's responsibility.*



Please join us for a Kitchen Table Conversation! A Kitchen Table Conversation is a wonderful opportunity to join with others and listen, learn and reflect on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament referendum that will be held in the coming months. The final session will be held on September 28 from 3.30-4.45pm online via Zoom. More information available at: <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/services-agencies-2/pastoral/aboriginal-catholic-ministry/>

A day of Reflection The Legion of Mary will host a 'Day of Reflection' on Wednesday, 27 September 2023 to commemorate their 1001st Legion of Mary Meeting. Father John Corrigan of Mildura, will be the Keynote Speaker for the day. All members of the Legion of Mary Family, active, auxiliary and past members, including parishioners from all Parishes of Ballarat, are cordially invited to join us in celebrating this milestone that the Legion of Mary, Our Lady of Nazareth Praesidium, Ballarat, has achieved. The day will start at 9.00 am and conclude at 3.15 pm.

Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea Chapter ISMAPNG would be grateful for your prayer, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, during the coming weeks as they gather for their Chapter – a time of evaluating the past and planning for the future. Venerable Catherine McAuley, pray for us.

OLHC 23rd September	(next week)	Saturday 6.00pm
LEADER OF SONG		Corrie Harbour
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL		Laureen Rhodes
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Harry Kennedy & Pauline Newman
COMMUNION MINISTERS		Helen Rieniets & Trish Lawson
SACRISTAN		Geoff & Marg McLean

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 Presbytery: \$ 237.75 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 435.00