

Sunraysia Catholic Communities

Parish Office: 5021 2872 Fax: 5023 0337
 257 Eleventh Street Mildura
 P.O. Box 10037 Mildura, Vic 3502
 Presbytery Mildura: 5022 9959
 Presbytery Red Cliffs: 5024 1966
 Parish House Merbein: 5025 2716
 parish@sacredheartmildura.org.au
 www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parishes

Newsheet: Week 51



Fr. Michael McKinnon PP Fr. James Kerr Fr. Pat Flanagan

Parish Secretary: Carmel Russo
 Office Hours: Tues - Fri 9:00am—4:00pm

Sacred Heart
Mildura

Our Lady of Lourdes
Werrimull

St. Francis Xavier
Irymple

St. Joseph's
Red Cliffs

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
Merbein

*The Sunraysia Catholic Communities are committed to ensure the safety of all children and vulnerable people in our care.
 Child Safety Officers:- Mildura—Christine Slattery, Merbein—Kevin Aston, Red Cliffs—Bernadette Gardner*

WEEKDAY MASSES

Changes to Weekday Mass times will be listed under Parish Heading

	MILDURA	RED CLIFFS	MERBEIN
MONDAY		9:30AM	
TUESDAY	6:00PM	5:30PM	
WEDNESDAY	9:15AM	9:30AM	
THURSDAY	9:15AM	5:30PM	AS ADVISED
FRIDAY	5:40PM	9:30AM	
SATURDAY	9:30AM	9:30AM	

WEEKEND MASS TIMES

	IRYMPLE	MILDURA	RED CLIFFS	MERBEIN
SATURDAY		6:00PM		
SUNDAY	8:30AM	9:00AM	10:00AM	10:30AM
		5:00PM		
WERRIMULL	11:00AM (LAST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH)			

MILDURA

Recent Deaths: Amelia Vidovich, Frank Cannizzo

Anniversaries:

Saturday 6pm: Domencio Ficarro, Leo & Antoinette De Maria
 Sunday 9am: Gennaro Palazzo

RED CLIFFS

Recent Death: Tom Baker

MERBEIN

Anniversaries: 23th Dec. Betty Stirrat; 24th Betty Clifford; 25th Marcel Meredith, Michael & Lee-Anne Rogers, Anne Cox, Richard McDonald; 26th Jessie Manno, Thomas Murchie; 27th Noreen Jenkins; 28th Mary Barling.

Only immediate family members of the deceased are permitted to arrange anniversary Masses.)



4th Sunday of Advent / Year A 21st & 22nd December 2019

One of my friends asked me what I would like for Christmas. "Nothing", was my immediate response. "I just want to spend time with community and family and friends, especially those who would otherwise be alone". And that's what I'll be doing, simply "being with". Being-with others in joy or sorrow or in the humdrum of life is probably the best gift we can offer and the best gift we can receive. It is not always possible to be present in person and, thankfully, true friends know that "being-with" is not restricted to physical presence. There is a sense in which those we love are always with us and we are always with them, even when the demands of life and our work or ministry choices separate us geographically. Real friends are "with-us" even in our absence and "being-with" in spirit or in person is closely allied with "being-for". Today's gospel affirms "being-with" as God's Christmas gift to us.

The first chapter of Matthew's gospel tells us that the expected child Messiah or Christ-child is "God-with-us", Emmanuel. The gospel will conclude with the assurance of the resurrected Christ, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20). As we celebrate the successive liturgical seasons in the coming year, we shall have the opportunity to enter into the gospel story of God-with-us and with all of creation, and to live out the pattern of the Christ story more fully in our lives.

There is no angelic annunciation to Mary in Matthew's gospel, no embrace of an expectant mother. There is no inn or innkeeper, no shepherds or shepherds' fields. These are all features of Luke's tableau. Matthew brings different features and different characters to centre stage. Chief among Matthew's characters is Joseph who, like Joseph of old, receives God's revelation in a series of dreams. The angelic announcement in today's gospel is to Joseph: he is not to be afraid, but is to accept the extraordinary ways of God which will bring salvation for God's people. Joseph trusts the word of God's messenger: he abandons his own plans and lives by faith in God.

If we try to harmonise the different gospel accounts of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, we may lose some of the wondrous mystery of the feast we celebrate. If, on the other hand, we attend to the awesome truth that God is with us, then we might be more attentive to how we are with one another. We may also come to acknowledge our presence or "being-with" as a precious Christmas gift. Those who distance themselves from the community of life run the risk of succumbing to fear and of losing the joy in living. Acceptance of the truth that God is with us has the potential to drive out fear and to draw us into the deepest mysteries of life.



Sr Veronica Lawson rsm

Our Parish Schools

Sacred Heart Mildura Principal: Des Lowry 5023 1204
 St Paul's Mildura Principal: Vince Muscatello 5023 4567
 OLSH Merbein Principal: Narelle Gallagher 5025 2258
 St. Joseph's Red Cliffs Principal: Mark Gibson 5024 1654
 St. Joseph's Secondary College Mildura
 Principal: Marg Blythman 5018 8000

**SACRED HEART PARISH OFFICE WILL CLOSE AT 4PM ON
 TUESDAY 24th DECEMBER 2019 AND REOPEN ON THURSDAY
 2ND JANUARY 2020
 ALL CALLS & ENQUIRIES TO PRESBYTERY 5022 9959**

Sacred Heart Mildura REGIONAL NEWS & EVENTS

Sacramental Life & Liturgy

BAPTISM

We welcome into our faith community Imogen & Paige Jukes, Olivia Cufari, Charlie Guthrie, Zoe Pelasio & Lucia Petrolo whose Baptism occurs this weekend.



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE CHRISTMAS MASSES. PLEASE SEE ROSTER SHEETS AT THE BACK OF CHURCH.

MASSES POST CHRISTMAS

There will be no Mass: Thursday 26th Friday, 27th December and Saturday morning 28th December

Community Life & Outreach

PLANNED GIVING

If you have Planned Giving envelopes numbered 146 please contact the Sacred Heart Parish Office on 5021 2872 as soon as possible.

Thank You Many thanks to those who assisted with the Working Bee this weekend including Friday. Much appreciated.

NATIVITY PLAY—CHRISTMAS EVE 2019

Children are invited to attend and be part of our traditional Nativity Play on Christmas Eve at 6pm. The second and final practice session, a dress rehearsal, will be held on Monday 23rd December at 4pm. For further information please contact the Sacred Heart Parish Office on 5021 2872.



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK

If you want a sick person prayed for, ask their permission. Names will be included for the duration of one month after which family or friends can request more time.

Mildura: Brian Weightman, Mary Flynn, Fr Denis Dennehy, Tere-sita Eliquen-Dy (Manila), Melita Suppa, Celia-Dy Dela Tena, Perla Tuionisio, Lily Chung, Lorna Kearney, Dien Brown, Sandra McCarthy, Brian Ramsey, Vince Alicastro, Hailey Crossan, Geraldine Brunner, Albis Dy

Merbein: Sr. Grace, Marin Rogers, Frank Chandler, Mary Avery, John Dorman

Red Cliffs: Maureen Lee, Edna Chua, Lily Flanagan, Barry Crosbie, Brendan Bell, Caterina Brizzi, Marie Adams, Reynaldo Chan, Albis Dy, Roman & Joe Dy, Robert & Elizabeth Young, Joe Cufari, Maurice O'Connor, Joe Mammone

GOODBYE AND FAREWELL

I would like to contribute a short word of thanks to this week's bulletin, this being my last week in the parish. I am truly humbled by and grateful for the incredible kindness and generosity shown to me by the collective churches of the Sunraysia Catholic Communities. I have had a very enjoyable and fruitful time ministering in Mildura, and have enjoyed particularly the change of climate! (It's a bit cooler in Melbourne). I have concluded even from my short time here in the Sunraysia, that the parishes of this region have their own unique and rich vibrancy which I haven't seen elsewhere throughout the Diocese. I urge you all to keep contributing your many wonderful and inimitable gifts and talents to the Parishes you inhabit to make them all the more, a beautiful and welcoming place for people to worship God and build up the communal body of Christ, the Church. Please continue to pray for Matthew, Cay and myself (our Ballarat seminarians) and all those discerning how best they can serve the Church. Every blessing to all for the Christmas season and into the New Year and I hope and pray that I will be able come back to all (at least to visit) in the coming months and years ahead.

Bill Lowry

MILDURA & REGION CHRISTMAS MASSES 2019

Christmas Eve

Mildura 6:00pm; 8:00pm; 12:00 Midnight
Werrimull 6:00pm
Merbein 7:30pm
Red Cliffs 7:30pm Carols; 8:00pm Mass

Christmas Day

Mildura 9:00am
Irymple 8:30am
Merbein 10:30am
Ouyen 9:00am

New Year's Day

Mildura 9:00am

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The Bishop's Christmas Appeal is one way by which the diocese can respond to the many communities from near and far who turn to us for assistance. Often these requests come through people who have bonds with the diocese of Ballarat. A second collection (not the normal Sunday Planned Giving collection) will be taken up after communion at each Christmas Mass for this appeal.

CONGRATULATIONS ST FRANCIS XAVIER IRYMPLE 60 (61) years

This Sunday the Community of St Francis Xavier Irymple celebrates 61 years since the establishment of the Church at Elm Street. We congratulate them and pray that God may continue to bless the life of this Eucharistic Community. A light luncheon followed by a book launch after Mass. Gold coin donation would be appreciated and goes to the Shared Table. All welcome.

Weekly Prayer Opportunities Mildura

Prayer of the Church: Tues/ Wed/ Thurs/ Fri. 8:40am

Charismatic Prayer Meeting: Tuesday 6:30pm

Devotions and Exposition: Friday 3:00pm

Reconciliation: Saturday 10:00am—10:30am

Christian Meditation: Sat 11:30 am Prayer Room

Merry Christmas



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE from Fr Michael

On behalf of Fr James and Bill (our resident Seminarian) I wish all the families of our Parish a very happy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing for the New Year. I am particularly mindful of families who have lost loved ones throughout the past year, and for whom there will be some sadness associated with Christmas. We continue to hold in our prayers families affected by drought, especially our families of the Millewa.

I am grateful to everybody who assists in any way throughout the year in the Parishes of Sunraysia and Ouyen. We are always so fortunate to be able to celebrate well planned and organised liturgies with great music, and to have a list of generous people who take communion to the sick and aged after Masses. Responsibility for sacramental preparation is in the hands of good teams of people, and each of the parishes have Parish Councils or the equivalent which enables good discussion of pastoral issues and future planning.

Communities also understand their responsibility for the ongoing financial sustainability of their Parishes and provide sound and practical advice and assistance as well as attending to the practical business of counting money and banking. I am also most grateful to those who keep Church grounds looking so lovely, and those who assist in the sacristies of each of our Churches, setting up for Masses and tidying up afterwards.

The St Vincent de Paul Society, the Soup Kitchen and the Knights of the Southern Cross continue to keep us focused on the pastoral responsibility towards those beyond the immediate life of our Parish Communities.

I thank the Principals of our schools, their staff, parents and children for another great year. All of our schools rightly enjoy extremely good reputations throughout the Sunraysia, which is a credit to them. On behalf of Fr James, I also thank St Joseph's College, the Staff and Students, for the valuable contribution they make to Catholic Education, and for their support of our ministry.

I especially acknowledge Carmel Russo whose workload as secretary has grown over the years as we've consolidated and centralised the administration of the four Parishes of our Region. Margaret McDonald keeps us on track domestically, for which we are extremely grateful.

To Fr Pat Flanagan, Sisters of Mercy, Sr Denise Cusack and the Sisters of Charity, a special thank you for your constant friendship and support, as well as the example of genuine Christian living that you provide for all of us.

I take this opportunity to inform Parishioners that 2020 will be my final year as Parish Priest of the Parishes of Sunraysia and Ouyen. This coming year will be my tenth, and so it is probably about the right time for a change for you all. I have always said that what would get me out of this part of the world sooner than I might otherwise choose would be the chance to go back to South America. The Bishop has allowed me to accept an invitation by the Columbans to work high up in the Andes near Cusco, southern Peru, among isolated and poor communities throughout that region. The town I will live in is called Yanaoca (in case anybody wants to google it) and it serves as a centre for a number of other smaller communities. If I am to take up this appointment, it will mean leaving after Easter this coming year. Plenty of time in the next months to talk about all that.

May God bless all of our families at this time of Christmas, and may the coming year bring us joy, as well as the courage and generosity to do what is asked of us, and the strength of faith which enables us to deal with sorrow or disappointment.

Fr Michael

SUPPORT FOR THE MILLEWA

Last Monday Fr. Mick, Bill, Lorraine and Denise (Vinnies), Ken and Mick (SJC) delivered 100 bags of toiletries, bags of toys, vouchers Knitted goods and much good cheer to the farmers of the Millewa. A huge thankyou to Vinnies, Knights of the Southern Cross, students of St Joseph's College and Sacred Heart Primary school, ladies from Ouyen Parish and the VERY generous parishioners from St Francis Xavier's Parish, Irymple. Whilst the journey is not completed, we continue to pray for our drought-ravaged brothers and sisters in their need. Our support will continue in 2020. Watch this space!



The worst drought in history is on our back doorstep. Mildura is plagued by dust storm after dust storm and the people of Sunraysia are wondering what it is all about. I decided to go out to Lake Cullulleraine, in the Millewa, far NW Victoria, to meet up with an amazing woman who is a third generation farmer. Her name is Annette and she, with her husband Pete are trying to make ends meet, despite everything being stacked against them.

You see, drought has been a big issue in NSW and in Qld, but nobody has thought about those in NW Victoria, or even in East Gippsland, until very recently. You need to understand that this is the worst drought anyone has seen. It is even worse that the '41-'42 drought, where all the farmers just walked off the land, taken into the city in buses. There was no water in their water tanks, no way to keep stock or people alive...just a dirt bowl that blew top soil hundreds of miles away.



It looks like that today...hot, dry, a desert.

Today the culmination of my first meeting with Annette took place. During my first meeting I asked Annette what the people of the Millewa needed. She said the women needed basic toiletries, because they are very expensive. I took this back to the parishioners of my Church the next Sunday and I walked out of that Church with \$600 in my hand and a carload of goodies the next week. That made up 100 bags of toiletries, one for every family in The Millewa.

I told Sacred Heart Conference, Mildura (Vinnies) about the plight of the people. Instantly they directed some of our Christmas funds towards purchasing \$50 vouchers for as many families as we could. With a most generous donation from the Knights of the Southern Cross we were able to buy lots!

Every Christmas the students of St Joseph's College Mildura and Sacred Heart Primary School purchase new toys and donate them to Vinnies. This year we put some of these aside...every child under 12 in the Millewa will receive a beautiful, hand-picked toy/gift...given with love and support, in the hope that that child's Christmas will be a little bit happier.

The ladies from St Joseph's in Ouyen were busy too...knitting up a storm and also making beautiful cards that you can purchase if you swing past Lake Cullulleraine store...all proceeds will go directly to the farmers. The generosity of ordinary people is amazing. All it takes is for people to be made aware and the rest is easy. You can donate easily:

MILLEWA-CARWARP FARMERS FUND...funds go directly to the farmers.

BSB: 063520 ACCOUNT NO. 10078126
Please put FD at the start of the reference.

The drought is not over. Our work has not finished. In the New Year I will again be in contact with Annette and her amazing team, so wait for the next instalment. In the meantime, give generously, pray vigorously for rain and give support where you can. Spread the word to everyone you know...we are one, big family in Christ. This is living Christ in our everyday lives.
Denise Knight

SUNRAYSIA CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES FINANCE

Last week's collections	Mildura	Merbein	Red Cliffs
1 st Collection (supporting Priests & Presbytery)	\$1676.20	\$127.05	\$238.25
2nd Collection (includes all EFT)	\$1399.00	\$170.00	\$433.00
Loose Plate	\$ 697.80	\$ 42.35	\$ 63.30
The Monaghan Centre	\$1000.00		
The Shared Table	\$ 62.00		

Our Lady Of The Sacred Heart Merbein St. Joseph's Red Cliffs

PARISH NEWS

Christmas Eve Mass: Any children who will be attending Christmas Eve Mass this year and who would like to take part in a very simple Christmas play would you please contact Sr. Carmel (0429149943) or any children who will be visiting families and would like to participate are most welcome. Those wishing to take part please be at the church by 7.00pm to be ready for Mass beginning at 7.30pm on December 24th (Christmas Eve) at, 7.30pm, at the Merbein Catholic Church. The usual 10.30 Mass will take place on Christmas Day.

Next Sunday we will be having our Lay-led gathering. As it will be between Christmas and New Year it has been suggested that we make our usual cuppa after our Liturgy into a Light Lunch to celebrate and give thanks for 2019 and a welcoming in of 2020. It would be much appreciated if you can manage to bring along some finger-food to share. Thank You!

Plenary Council:

Bishop Paul Bird is inviting us to nominate delegates from our diocese for the sessions of the Australian Plenary Council to be held in 2020 and 2021. Copies of Bishop Paul's letter are available through parishes and through our diocesan website at www.ballarat.catholic.org.au Nominations need to reach Bishop Paul by Friday, February 7th, 2020. Copies of Bishop Paul's letter and Nomination Forms can be viewed on the notice Board

ST VINCENT DE PAUL MEMBERS

Thank our Parish school community for their generous donations of gifts they received which will be distributed for Christmas.

The members also wish to thank everyone for their support of Vinnies throughout the year and wish you every blessing for this Christmas Season and the New Year.



WEEKDAY MASSES

Unit 9—Mon, Tue, Fri, Sat: 9.30am Thur: 5.30pm

CALENDAR

Sunday 29 Dec: Feast of the Holy Family

Wed 1 Jan: New Year's Day & Feast of Mary, Mother of God. Mass in the church at 10.00 am.

Sunday 5 Jan: Feast of the Epiphany

Sunday 12 Jan: Baptism of the Lord

CLEANING BEE—THANK YOU

Many thanks to all who came and helped clean the Church. It was a tremendous effort by all.



CHRISTMAS MASS ROSTER

Eucharistic Ministers: As per sheet provided.

Thurible: Ella Briggs & Katie Hawkes

Candles: Jessica & Tenzin Bertoli

Book: Elektra Papanicolaou

Cross: Rustyn McCarthy

BAPTISM

We welcome into our Parish Community Isla Hensgen and Archie & Charlotte McRae.



ROSTERS 2020

New Rosters for 1st Quarter 2020 January 5—29 March are now available. Please collect a copy and mark on your 2020 calendar any dates that you are rostered on.

Church Cleaners—if you are unable to clean the church on your rostered weekend please arrange a group swap. By not cleaning the church on a regular basis takes the next group longer to clean.

NEXT WEEKEND'S ROSTERS AND READINGS 28th & 29th December 2019

First Reading: Book of Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14

Responsorial: Ps 127:1-5

Response: Happy are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Second Reading: St Paul to the Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23



Werrimull Last Sunday of each month 11am	Sacred Heart Saturday 6pm	Sacred Heart Sunday 9am	Sacred Heart Sunday 5pm	Irymple Sunday 8:30am	Red Cliffs Sunday 10:00am	Merbein Sunday 10:30am
Leader / Reader	Christine Carmichael	Jill Joslyn	Inez Sullivan	M Smith	J Divola M Bell / J Cameron	Nancy Prevedello
Music	Singing Group M Sullivan	M Guthrie All welcome	Lam Duy L Ljubic		Guitar	
Offertory		Mary Gobbo			G Brizzi	Nemtsas Family
Children's Liturgy		To start March 2020				
Altar Servers	Volunteer Please	Volunteer Please	Volunteer Please		GROUP 5 G Strangio	Volunteer Please
Eucharist Ministers	Anne-Maree Greville	Rose Op't Hoog	Clem Carlucci	R Hill	M Gibson	Sr Carmel Setford
	Taiana Fatai	Rini Op't Hoog	Vittorio Carlucci		A Higham	Lisa Ryan
	Margaret McDonald	Cora Howell	Jacinta Macri	OASIS AGED CARE	P Hill	LAY-LED LEADERS December 29th Nancy Prevedello Kevin Aston
	Paul Kerr	Narie Lewis	Paula Cox	M Hoy	CUPPA'S	
	Anita Naray	Renata Byra	Jennifer Boord		To commence	CHAFFEY AGED CARE Vi Barling Margo Farnsworth
	Ryan O'Callaghan	Kapeli Mapapalangi	Volunteer please	LAY LITURGY LEADERS	January 26th—2020	
	Catherine McErvale			FLOWERS J Cameron		
Counting Team	TEAM 8	TREVOR AUST 5023 6597			C Dichiera	As per arrangement
Church Cleaning	As per arrangement				Volunteers	As per arrangement