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**Laudato Si': Love Natural Resources**

Did you know ? Bees help pollinate flowers and food crops, which helps them grow. Bees are the MVPs of our ecosystem. Taking care of the plants and flowers in your garden helps the bees do their job.



**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](mailto:wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or [ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto: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...**

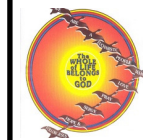
Let us ask the Lord to grant that the country may grow in the spirit of brotherhood, and that all hurts, fears and divisions will be overcome. We have spoken about the Holocaust. But let us think too that [in Ukraine] millions of people were killed [1932-1933]. They are a people who have suffered; they 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](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au) (select Parish)



**Office:** 306 Gregory St, Ballarat Nth **Phone:** 5331 1012  
**Email:** [ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:ballaratnorth@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

**Office:** 480a Gillies Street, Wendouree **Phone:** 5339 2302

**Email:** [wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:wendouree@ballarat.catholic.org.au)

**P O Box** 192, Wendouree

**School Principal:** Leigh Bradshaw

**School Co-Principals:** Bambi Afford & Shaun Mohr

**School Phone:** 5332 4894

**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 (Anointing)

**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 10.00 am  
Friday 10.00 am

**Readings for Next Weekend**

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11  
Ps 84:9-14 R. v.8  
2 Peter 3:8-14  
Mark 1: 1-8



**3rd December 2023 ~ First Sunday of Advent Year B**

**Focus on the Scriptures**

The first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the new liturgical year. It may seem strange to begin the church year with the parable of the watchful doorkeeper and a focus on the end or culmination of the present order of things. Is Advent not a time of preparation for Christmas, for the coming of the Christ child into the world? In contrast with Matthew and Luke, Mark has no account of the birth of Jesus or of the events leading up to his birth. From the very outset, Mark's interest is in the good news of Jesus the Christ and in the importance of "preparing the way" for the advent of God's reign of justice and compassion.

Our gospel reading forms the conclusion to Mark's so-called apocalyptic discourse. Apocalyptic literature emerged within Judaism in the context of crisis or persecution. Its message was that God's coming can reverse the sufferings of the present, a hopeful message for our troubled world, particularly if we envisage multiple "comings" and not simply an end-time return. Apocalyptic writings were intended to provide hope in the midst of disaster. While Mark's discourse is delivered as a farewell teaching to the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, the concluding verse indicates that it is intended for a wider audience: "what I say to you, I say to all..." Like Jesus' close followers, Christian disciples through the ages are invited to stay awake, to be on the lookout, to be alert.

The disciples are told to stay awake through the four watches of the Roman night: in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, and at dawn. The parable thus foreshadows aspects of Jesus' suffering that was to be compounded by the abandonment of his closest friends. Peter, James, and John will fall asleep in Gethsemane. While the women will remain faithful, the male disciples will disperse and Peter will deny Jesus. We find our own experience mirrored in that of the disciples. It is easy to lose hope in the face of overwhelming violence and even to lose focus and walk away.

Advent is about recognising our tendency to be less than vigilant and even to turn away when our presence is most needed. It is about allowing the grace of God to take hold in our hearts, keeping us watchful for the sake of those on the edge and for the sake of a regenerated Earth. Most of us would agree that our Earth communities are in crisis. We need to be alert to causes as well as to consequences so that the cycles of violence might eventually be broken. Our gospel asks no less of us. As I look up from my writing, I see the magpies in the yard, ever alert, rarely asleep, ready to protect their territory and their young. The creatures of the earth can remind us that "eyes wide open" is the proper stance for gospel people as well as for birds or black swans.

- Veronica Lawson RSM

**Responsorial Psalm:** (R.) Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation. Alleluia!

**Recently Deceased: We commend to God:** Fr. Gerard Dowling, Donna Flynn

**Anniversaries: We remember:** Michael Rix, Terry Carman, Mary McCauley, Dorothy Vaughan, Fr John Martin, Carmel Caligari, Trevor Jeffreys

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

**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 to 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, 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, contact Fiona Tonkin [Fiona.tonkin@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:Fiona.tonkin@ballarat.catholic.org.au). All welcome. Entry by gold coin donation.

**Anointing Mass** will be celebrated here at St Columba's on Wednesday, 6th of December at 10:00 am.

**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, December 7, 2023**. You may attend either the 10.00 am or the 5.30 pm session.

**OLHC Christmas Lunch- December 25th** OLHC Parish Wendouree volunteers are hosting lunch on Christmas Day in the Parish Hall, 480A Gillies Street, Wendouree from 12.00noon – 2.00pm. Bookings are essential as seating is limited, ph. 0419 975914. If you are able to volunteer on this day, please phone the number listed to register your availability.

**Position Vacant – Secretary in the Bishop's Office** Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the position of Secretary in the Bishop's Office, 2-3 days per week. Position and application details on the diocesan website <https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/our-diocese/employment/>

St Columba's 10th Dec	(next week)	Sun 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG		Mark Lacey
COMMENTATOR		Judy Brown
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Terry Ranger
COMMUNION MINISTER		Colleen Wakefield
DIGITAL PROJECTOR		Kathleen Keogh
SACRISTAN		Barb Brown / Norah Moloney / Josie Crowe

**Collections Last Weekend Columba's** Thank you for your contributions.  
 Presbytery: \$ 417.50 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 1,265.00

### 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.*

**International Volunteers Day – December 5, 2023** Volunteering Australia proudly supports International Volunteer Day (IVD) to raise awareness on the important role volunteers play in responding to challenges facing the world. The 2023 theme is "If Everyone Did". If everyone volunteered, the world would be a better place. Imagine more than eight billion of us volunteering. Limitless possibilities for sustainable development– food and education for everyone, clean environment and good health, inclusive and peaceful societies and more. IVD is an opportunity to acknowledge, thank and shine a light on the important work of volunteers. Resources available at <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/get-involved/events/international-volunteer-day/#>

#### Blessing Prayer for Volunteers (taken from the Order of Blessings):

*God of glory,  
 your beloved Son has shown us that true worship  
 comes from humble and contrite hearts.  
 Bless our volunteers  
 who have responded to the needs of our parish  
 and wish to commit themselves to your service.  
 Grant that their ministry may be fruitful  
 and our worship pleasing to you.  
 We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**A heartfelt thank you to our St Columba's parish volunteers for your generous sharing of your time and talents! God bless!**

**Ordination to the Diaconate** Seminarian Cay Trinh will be ordained Deacon for the Diocese of Ballarat on Saturday, December 16, at 10.00am St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat. All welcome to attend. This Mass will be livestreamed at [https://youtube.com/live/fy7Ze\\_ysi\\_4?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/fy7Ze_ysi_4?feature=share).

**Choir for the Ordination to the Diaconate Mass for Cay Peter Trinh – Saturday, December 16, 2023** Singers and musicians in the diocese are invited to join the music group which is being formed for Cay Trinh's Ordination to the Diaconate Mass on Saturday, December 16, 2023 at St Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat at 10.00am. We especially invite parishioners from the parishes of Camperdown and Western Border, where Cay has been part of these communities during his pastoral work. Roger Hillman will be conducting the choir and Geoff Martin will be playing the organ. Practice times are Sunday, December 3 and Sunday, December 10 at the Cathedral at 6.30pm (following 5.00pm Mass). There will also be a run through prior to Mass on December 16. Please contact Julie Boyd in the Pastoral Ministry Office to register your interest [julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or ph. 5337 7159.

**Tea and Coffee after Mass today and every first Sunday of the month at St. Columba's** Please join us for a cuppa after mass today!

**Fundraiser for our Seminarians - St. Patrick's Cathedral Ballarat** The Cathedral Branch of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) will hold a cake stall outside the Cathedral after each Mass on Sunday December 10th. We are having a competition for a decorated Christmas cake as well and will sell tickets after the Masses the week before this. CWL members will also be selling tickets prior to the event. Funds raised will assist our Seminarians for the Ballarat Diocese (Simon, Channa, Lam and Peter). Donations of cakes and produce are welcome. Please support our future priests. If you can assist by baking, donating or helping on the day, please contact - Inquiries - Carmel 0401-175045 or email: [annekav1234@gmail.com](mailto:annekav1234@gmail.com)

### Christmas Mass Times

St Columba's	Sun 24th at 5:00 pm Christmas Eve
OLHC	Sun 24th December at 7:00 pm. Christmas Eve
Beaufort	Sun 24th at 9:00 pm Christmas Eve
Waubra	Mon 25th December at 8:30 am Christmas Day
St Columba's	Mon 25th at 10:00 am Christmas Day

**Please note:** there will be Mass at OLHC at 6:00 pm on Saturday 23rd. **No Masses** on the morning of 24th December, Sunday, at either Waubra or Ballarat North.

**Volunteers for Christmas masses** Volunteers needed please for our Christmas Eve mass, 24th December, Sunday at 5pm and our Christmas Day mass, 25th December, Monday at 10am. Please write your name on the sign-up sheet at the church foyer if you're happy to help out.

**Pope's intention for December: For persons with disabilities** We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation. Lord, hear us.

OLHC 9th December	(next week)	Saturday 6.00pm
LEADER OF SONG		Vin Dillon
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL		Volunteer, please
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Jennifer Adams & Ena Bruty
COMMUNION MINISTERS		Helen Rieniets & Pauline Newman
SACRISTAN		Tony & Pauline Newman

**Collections Last weekend OLHC** Thank you for your contributions.  
 Presbytery: \$ 285.15 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 245.00