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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.



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...**

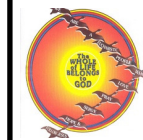
Let us ask the Lord to grant that the country may grow in the spirit of brotherhood, and that all hurts, fears and divisions will be overcome. We have spoken about the Holocaust. But let us think too that [in Ukraine] millions of people were killed [1932-1933]. They are a people who have suffered; they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

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

Email: 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 No Mass
Friday 9.30 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 10.00 am
Friday No Mass

Readings for Next Weekend

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11
Lk 1:46-50,53-54 R. Is 61:10
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28



10th December 2023 ~ Second Sunday of Advent Year B

Focus on the Scriptures

The first verse of Mark's gospel evokes the opening words of Genesis and thus situates the saving presence of Jesus the Christ in relation to the creation of earth and of all earth beings. The whole of Mark's story of Jesus is presented as a beginning. It is the beginning of a faith journey into which the listener/reader is invited. In some manuscripts of the Greek text, there are five words in this verse. In other manuscripts, there are seven. Our English translation requires twelve. The term gospel (euangelion) means good news. It referred originally to the news of victory delivered by a messenger, usually in time of war. The good news in this context is about Jesus, a name meaning "YHWH saves". The reader learns that this Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God, Israel's longed for Messiah. The actors within the story have to discover this truth as the drama unfolds. The two additional words present Jesus as "son of God", as one having the characteristics of God.

John the Baptizer is identified as the messenger who proclaims the need to prepare the way for the arrival of a new Presence in our world. Mark creates the impression that something momentous is happening here. John draws massive crowds from city and country alike. They come to him in the wilderness, the home of the other-than-human, home to diverse forms of life. At a metaphorical level, wilderness recalls Israel's experience in the Sinai desert. It is the place of testing and of new beginnings for God's people, the place of God's coming or God's "advent" to Israel. Jesus will be impelled by the Spirit into the wilderness where he will pass the tests that the people of Israel failed.

This reading invites us to prepare for God's advent or coming by ritualising metanoia (usually translated as "repentance"), and thus being ready for the one who comes. The translation "repentance" does not convey the nuances of the Greek term metanoia which literally means a "change of mindset" and suggests an "expansion of horizons". God's advent demands a new mindset that will predispose us to receive the gift of God's forgiveness and to be open to feel the pain of earth as well as the pain of those rendered poor.

Mark's depiction of John evokes the image of the prophet Elijah in 2 Kings 8 and the "hairy mantle" of the prophet in Zechariah 13:4. John is a prophet who, like the prophets of old, calls God's people to reconsider where they stand in relation to God. He is also the one who heralds the advent of the "stronger" one who will baptize "with the Holy Spirit", although there is nothing in the subsequent narrative about Jesus baptizing. As we reflect attentively on Mark's gospel during this liturgical year, we might ask ourselves what it means to "baptize" with the Holy Spirit and what it means to follow one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

- Veronica Lawson RSM

Responsorial Psalm: (R.) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

Recently Deceased: We commend to God: Patricia Hay, Carmel Waight

Anniversaries: We remember: Kathy Perkins, Maureen Casey, Greg Roberts, Joan Richardson, Eileen Segrave, Nance Reidy

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

Baptism This weekend we welcome to our Parish through the sacrament of Baptism:

Elizabeth Werts, Brian Alexander Werts and Michael Thomas Werts, children of Alexander and Amy.

“The Church gives the faith to your children through Baptism and you have the task to make it grow....” - Pope Francis

May Elizabeth, Brian and Michael grow in faith with the support of their family and our Catholic Community.

Prayer Vigil for Cay Trinh before Diaconate Ordination All are invited to join in prayer for seminarian Cay Trinh in the lead up to his **Ordination as Deacon next Saturday 16th December 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. A special way you might do this will be to join in a **Prayer Vigil on Friday 15th December at 6pm at St Patrick’s Cathedral Ballarat**. We will offer a Holy Hour for Cay as he prepares for this special step in answering God’s call to service, as well as prayer for vocations in our Diocese.

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 of the Pastoral Ministry Office to register your interest: email at julie.boyd@ballarat.catholic.org.au or ph. 5337 7159.

St Columba’s 17th Dec	(next week)	Sun 10.00 am
LEADER OF SONG		Terry Ranger
COMMENTATOR		Vicki Moroney
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Min Myers
COMMUNION MINISTER		Gina Hinchey
DIGITAL PROJECTOR		Fiona Newton
SACRISTAN		Barb Brown / Norah Moloney / Josie Crowe

Collections Last Weekend Columba’s Thank you for your contributions.
 Presbytery: \$ 413.15 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 1,181.50

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.

A letter from Bishop Paul Bird CSsR, Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat

Over the past few months, our Diocesan Pastoral Planning Panel has met with priests and parishioners of parishes in the Ballarat region to review the ministry districts proposed in our Looking Forward Pastoral Plan.

The timing of this review is linked with some changes in appointments that we are anticipating in the coming months. Fr Eugene McKinnon has indicated that he would like to retire from his responsibilities as Parish Priest of Redan, Sebastopol and Linton when he turns 75 in April 2024. Also, Fr Jorge de Chavez has advised that his Congregation, the Oblates of St Joseph, plans to transfer him from his current role at Ballarat East to serve in a parish in Western Australia. Another Oblate priest will come to serve in our diocese. In the context of these expected changes, it seems opportune to review the appointments to the Ballarat region parishes generally.

In the light of the recent discussions, I am pleased to announce the following ministry districts, with the new grouping of parishes to take effect after Easter 2024. The new ministry districts will be:

Cathedral Parish, Ballarat North Parish and Beaufort Parish

Ballarat East Parish, Bungaree Parish and Gordon Parish

Redan Parish, Sebastopol Parish and Linton Parish

Wendouree Parish, Creswick Parish and Daylesford Parish

The priests who are currently serving in these parishes will continue in their current appointments until April 10, 2024. They have agreed that they will then conclude their appointments to allow new appointments to be made corresponding to the new ministry districts. I will contact priests throughout our diocese inviting them to express interest in serving in any of these ministry districts.

In consultation with our Diocesan Personnel Board, I will consider the expressions of interest early in the new year, with a view to making appointments to take effect on April 10, 2024. I hope this advance planning will be helpful in allowing time to prepare for the transition to the new arrangements.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul
 Paul Bird CSsR



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 Beaufort 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.

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

SEW and SO on Thursday 14th December 2023 at 1.30pm, St Columba’s Church Foyer. Our last gathering till February. Come and say hello and have a cup of tea. All Welcome. Wishing you all a Happy and Holy Christmas as well as a Safe and Peaceful 2024.

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.

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, February 1, 2024**. You may attend either the 10.00 am or the 5.30 pm session.

OLHC 16th December	(next week)	Saturday 6.00pm
LEADER OF SONG		Corrie Harbour
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL		Volunteer, please
MINISTER OF THE WORD		Vin Dillon & Zeena Lazarus
COMMUNION MINISTERS		Frank Hogan & Helen Feely
SACRISTAN		John & Sue Calistro

Collections Last weekend OLHC Thank you for your contributions.
 Presbytery: \$ 564.90 Parish: (Env, loose, DD, CC etc) \$ 1,580.00