



▶ **SS PETER & PAULS**
701 FISKEN ST
BUNINYONG 3357



▶ **ST ALIPIUS**
82 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350



▶ **PARISH OFFICE**
84 VICTORIA ST
BALLARAT EAST 3350
PH 5332 6611
0437 505 517

22nd December 2024

4th Sunday of Advent

“Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?”

St Alipius parish

ballarateast@ballarat.catholic.org.au

www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/parish/ballar-at-east/

MASS TIMES

Thurs - Sat 9:30 am

St Alipius

Sat 6:00 PM Vigil

Sun 9:00 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th weeks)

10:30 AM (2nd & 4th)

Ss Peter and Paul's

Sunday 9:00 AM (2nd & 4th)

10:30 AM (1st, 3rd & 5th)

Rosary – Thursday 11:00 AM

New Year's Day Masses

9.30am Ballarat East

10.30am Ballan

Our Parish is committed to the safety, well-being and dignity of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

We acknowledge this land's traditional owners and custodians and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging.

WE PRAY FOR

Faithfully departed:

Kevin Andrews, Pam Hill,
Kath Richmond

Anniversaries:

Unwell: Kathy Towns,
Socorro De Chavez,
Sarah McLachlan,
Carole Simmons

PARISH TEAM

Parish Priest

Fr Justin Driscoll

Assistant Priest

Fr Matthew Restall

Parish Coordinator

Cathy Prunty

Administrative Assistant

Natalie Gleeson

Finance Officer

Jackie Wrigglesworth

Child Safety Officer

Emily Clarke

Principal – St. Alipius School

Phone: 5331 1816

PARISH VISION

The combined communities of St Alipius Parish reach out in the spirit of faith, hope, love, and acceptance, as God calls us to in the gospels.

PARISH MISSION

Our mission in the Parish of St Alipius is to actively engage and serve our combined communities, embodying the teachings of the Gospel. Strengthened in the spirit of faith, hope, love acceptance and Mercy, we strive to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment. Guided by God's call to service, we aim to build strong connections, provide spiritual nourishment, promote social justice, and offer support to individuals and families in their journey of faith. Through our dedicated interactions, we seek to deepen our relationships with God, inspire transformation, and make a positive impact in the lives of those we encounter, spreading God's love and compassion to all.



PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Thank you to all parishioners who contribute to our planned giving program. Your generosity is appreciated.

Supporting our parish priests	\$1015
Maintenance of parish buildings, office and administration expenses, grounds maintenance etc.	\$318.40

Counting Team this week: No. 4

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES ACROSS THE MINISTRY DISTRICT

Following consultation with the Bungaree and Gordon Parish Leadership Teams and the Ballarat East Parish Liturgy Team, the schedule for 2024 will be:

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Mercy Place Ballarat East

5.30pm Ballan

6.00pm Ballarat East

6.30pm Clarkes Hill

7.00pm Gordon

7.30pm Buninyong

9.00pm Ballarat East

12 Midnight St Patrick's Cathedral

Christmas Day

9.00am Ballarat East

9.00am Dunnstown

10:30am St Patrick's Cathedral

The above schedule is reliant on the generosity of Frs Kevin Maloney and Wally Tudor assisting Frs Justin and Matt.

PARISH OFFICE SUMMER HOURS

The parish office will be closed between Boxing Day and 20th January 2025. In an emergency please call 0437 505 517.

We wish you all a Happy Christmas and thank you all for your support throughout the past year.

Cathy and Natalie.

OLHC FREE CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

OLHC Wendouree offers a free Christmas Day lunch on Christmas Day, 12.00pm – 2.00pm (meal @ 12.30pm) at OLHC Hall 482a Gillies St Nth Wendouree, phone 0491 029 217. If you would like to volunteer please call 0467 683 504.

ANNIVERSARY MASS THANKS

Many thanks to all who contributed to the events of Saturday evening that was the culmination of so much preparatory work by so many parishioners. Our Mass together with Bishops Paul and Peter and many of the priests who have been associated with St Alipius Parish over many decades (and those who joined after the Masses they'd celebrated elsewhere), the Sisters of Mercy, reps from our Catholic Schools, the music and song of Geoff Martin and Majella Muller, the procession of symbols and presence of so many current and former parishioners was such a worthy celebration of each of the significant anniversaries. So too the amazing display in the Hall of the many and varied aspects of our Parish life across the years including the stories of so many of the elders of our community. The ideal weather conditions for the picnic/bbq meal that was so well arranged and catered for with generous hospitality and the team work of many to stack chairs and tables at the end of the evening - thank you to all!

The event has now gone live on the diocesan website - Please see this link -

<https://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/pnews/anniversaries-at-st-alipius-ballarat-east-2/>

WORLD DAY OF PEACE JANUARY 1ST

Hope has been a constant theme in all of Pope Francis' World Day of Peace messages. This is all the more true in his message for the 58th World Day of Peace, which will be marked on January 1, 2025, as the Church begins the Jubilee of Hope amid an unprecedented combination of challenges facing the world today. Read the Pope's message for World Day of Peace at

<https://shorturl.at/6DZCp>.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2024

A collection for the annual Christmas Appeal in the Ballarat Diocese will be taken up at all Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This appeal allows the Diocese to respond to communities in need of assistance. The 2023 appeal was distributed to Caritas (Lebanon Appeal), Catholic Mission (Myanmar Appeal), St. Columban's Mission, Peru, Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), St. Vincent de Paul, CatholicCare Victoria and Nazareth House. Donations to this appeal can also be made via the [Diocesan website homepage](#). Click on "Parish Giving" at the bottom of the homepage, select your parish then from the drop down box "My Giving is for" and select "Christmas Appeal."

BISHOP'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

In these days leading up to Christmas, I'm very pleased to have the chance to say hello and offer you my best wishes as we prepare for the feast. I wish you peace and joy as we celebrate the birth of Christ. I hope your Christmas has something of the joyful spirit of the recent celebration at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

Five years ago, Notre Dame was severely damaged by fire. Yet, through the wonderful work of many people, the cathedral has been restored to its former beauty.

The restoration is a tribute to the cooperation of a team of dedicated workers. Architects planned the project. Carpenters fashioned the oak beams that support the roof. Workers in stone carved the figures that adorn the cathedral. Experts in stained glass restored the windows. So many skilled people combined their talents to achieve a magnificent result. Together they rebuilt the cathedral and the reopening was celebrated with great joy.

Sadly, this contrasts with the pain of other events in our world at the moment. For many people, this is not a time of celebrating the joy of building. Rather, it is a time of feeling the sorrow of destruction.

So many places are enduring the devastation of war – the destruction of buildings and the destruction of people's lives. There is suffering in Ukraine and Israel and Gaza and Lebanon and many other places. In each case there is destruction and sorrow.

In a few weeks' time we'll be celebrating Christmas. We'll read of the angel appearing to the shepherds, announcing the birth of the Saviour. We'll hear that a host of angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace." (Luke 2:8-14)

We might feel some sadness in hearing these verses as we think of the strife in so many countries. Yet, it's important not to lose hope. Pope Francis has highlighted this in the theme for the coming Holy Year. The theme is "Pilgrims of Hope". The Pope is encouraging us to be pilgrims of hope, to walk on together in a spirit of hope – hope in God and hope in one another as brothers and sisters in the one human family. Hope can give us the strength to persevere in our search for peace.

Jesus said to his first disciples, "Peace be with you." As we move towards Christmas, I pray the same for you.

Peace be with you. We reflect in sorrow on the suffering in so many places. Yet, we continue to pray that conflicts might be ended and sorrow might turn to joy.

May this Christmas bring peace and joy to you and your family. May this Christmas bring peace and joy to our world. Merry Christmas, one and all. God bless us, everyone.

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR

MORE FROM THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

This week both Mark Conlan (Ballan parishioner and Leadership Team member) and Marty Ryan (Buninyong) offer their reflections on the Assembly.

Mark Conlan (Ballan, Gordon Parish) Delegate

The event was well structured and the offered all attendees an opportunity to contribute.

Concerns raised by the group

That the Assembly was not to be a talkfest and there were tangible actions emanating from the event.

Clearly Trust had to be re-established and that would be an issue that would not be easily re-established.

I also raised the need to improve our presence on social media as that is the platform to engage with the youth. I believe that Trust and Social Media are the two elephants in the room that the Diocese has to clearly address. Themes discussed;

The concept raised by Pope Francis that our church not be simply a place of worship but more like a field hospital where the needs of the broader community are addressed.

Our group noted that men's groups, play groups and other groups had been established along this theme.

Steve Bigarelli gave a brief update from the Catholic Diocesan Foundation and noted its willingness to provide funding parishes for some projects that may align to this theme. I was not aware of this Foundation and the opportunity it could provide to assist our parish.

Fr Justin gave a new perspective to the Holy Spirit and the analogy of the Wild Geese. The traditional image of the Holy Spirit taking on a Dove like presence was contemplated. The Wild Geese analogy provided the image of a Spirit that is challenging, wild and unpredictable. Having reared geese as a young boy I remember their wild noisy temperament.

There was also the theme of synodal discernment and how it would be enacted at the assembly.

I was impressed with the creativity of the groups and there were some good news stories coming from the group and it was not all glum tidings.

Marty Ryan (Buninyong, Ballarat East Parish), Facilitator

There was a terrific atmosphere of joy and hope as we gathered to share and listen to the stories of the peoples across the Diocese. The many stories were distinctive and unique to their context yet similar in many ways to *the stories of others*. *Participants finished the day on Saturday with their cup a little fuller than what it was when they arrived, and they left with a more clear understanding of what it was they were now called to do.*

A Time to Nurture the Life that is Coming to Birth

Reflection on the Gospel- 4th Sunday of Advent

(Luke 1:39-44)

The fourth Sunday of Advent draws us closer to the celebration of the Christmas mysteries. The gospel offers the story of the young pregnant woman, Miriam of Nazareth, travelling purposefully from her home town of Nazareth to the hill country of Judaea, some 130 kilometres to the south, to be with an older woman who is also pregnant, her cousin Elizabeth. Mary enters “the house of Zechariah” who remains in the background. While Zechariah is the householder according to Jewish law, his earlier reluctance to believe renders him silent and powerless to offer hospitality. Elizabeth’s contrasting openness to recognise and to affirm the living presence of God in their midst makes her the true householder and foreshadows the reversal that is to characterise the new order, an order that is yet to be fully realised. The two women embrace and, in their loving embrace, the Spirit-filled life gestating within Mary encounters and physically affects the life that is coming to birth in Elizabeth. Elizabeth’s words resound throughout the ages in the prayer we know as the Hail Mary: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb....” These are the words of one prophetic woman to another. Elizabeth recognises that Mary is blessed by God because she believed that God’s promise to her would be fulfilled. As God’s prophet, Elizabeth gives expression to the faith that is to be embraced by all who accept that Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Miriam of Nazareth, is the Holy One of God (Luke 1:35). The lives of both women prophets have been transformed through the power of

God’s Spirit. Their respective children will bring to birth unprecedented events in human history.

Elizabeth’s proclamation of the blessing of God on Mary is found daily on the lips of countless faith-filled Christians across the globe. It

echoes the blessing prayer of Moses to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 28: 2-4): “May you be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. Blessed is the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil and the offspring of your livestock....” This ancient blessing recognizes the interconnection of all God’s creation. We might make it our own blessing prayer.

In our times, God’s blessing on the whole Earth community can only become a reality when we stop playing politics in the interests of short-term gains or personal greed, when we read the signs of the times and work together to address the underlying causes of global warming and its effects. Advent is not a time of passive waiting. It is a time to ponder the various ways that God sustains life in its diverse forms. It is a time to become householders, like Elizabeth, who clear the paths and open our doors for the God of life to enter in. It is a time to embrace, to “be there” for one another and to nurture the life that is coming to birth.

-Veronica Lawson RSM



THIS WEEK’S READINGS

4th Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Micah 5:1-4
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-44

NEXT WEEK’S READINGS

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
John 3:1-2, 21-24
Lk 2:41-52