

CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE  
of  
BALLARAT



# OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY

News around the Diocese

No. 73 July 2024



# Travelling Through History

*In February this year, I began a series of visits to parishes throughout the Diocese of Ballarat. These visits are to mark our diocese's 150th anniversary.*

*When Pope Pius the Ninth set up the Diocese of Ballarat in 1874, he did so in order to provide pastoral care for the growing population of our region. He wrote, "Lest spiritual helps become lacking to the flock of believers, we are accustomed to increase the number of bishops for their assistance and convenience when we learn that the number of the flock has increased." From the 1850s, the number of people living in the Colony of Victoria increased dramatically, with newcomers being drawn particularly to the goldfields. By the 1870s, the population had grown so much that the Pope appointed bishops in Ballarat and Sandhurst (Bendigo) to care for the thousands of people throughout the goldfields and beyond.*

*Just as the appointment of a Bishop of Ballarat in 1874 was in order to bring spiritual help and encouragement to people of the region then, so I hope my visits to communities around the diocese this year will bring spiritual help and encouragement to people today.*

*As I visit each parish, I sense something of the history of each place. Some of the parishes were already vibrant Catholic communities when the diocese began. They have been part of the history of the diocese since the beginning. Other parishes were established later but they have still shared in a large slice of the history of the diocese.*

*I started my visits in the oldest parish in our diocese – the Parish of Portland. The first Mass in Portland was celebrated by Archbishop John Bede Polding from Sydney in 1844. Archbishop Polding travelled by ship from Sydney to Melbourne and then to Geelong. From there he travelled overland to Portland where he celebrated Mass. In the next few years, the Catholic community there grew quickly and Portland became a Parish just three years after Archbishop Polding's visit. The historical accounts tell us that it was in 1847 that Father John Kavanagh became the first resident Pastor of Portland. So, when the Diocese of Ballarat began in 1874, Portland was one of the founding parishes. In travelling to Portland and hearing of the early days of All Saints Parish and All Saints School, I had a sense that I was travelling through history.*

*In the following weeks I visited communities in the Port Fairy - Warrnambool region. In the early days, Port Fairy was called "Belfast" and Fr John Kavanagh used to refer to himself as "Minister of the Portland-Belfast Mission". Port Fairy became a Parish in 1849 and Warrnambool became a Parish in 1853. I sensed a long history also in my visit to Colac. I understand that the first Mass was celebrated in Colac in 1857 and that Colac was established as a Parish in 1864. Mortlake became a Parish in 1869. So the Catholic communities in those parts were well established by the time the Diocese of Ballarat was formed. I have cherished the opportunity to visit these communities and savour something of their early history.*



*Other parishes have been established more recently, but the local communities have been part of the life of the diocese for many years. Terang is listed as a Parish from 1908 but I understand that the original Catholic church in Terang was opened in 1869. The Catholic community of Terang has shared in the life of the diocese for many generations.*

*On the feast of the Ascension, I visited the communities of Lorne and Apollo Bay. These are both popular holiday places for those who like to relax by the beach. In the busy times, the walls of the church in Lorne can be opened up so that the congregation can flow out onto the balcony. From the church at Apollo Bay you can admire the beautiful view that takes in the long stretch of sand and surf and the hills in the distance. Both churches bear the name of Mary. Apollo Bay has the church of Our Lady Star of the Sea, opened in 1952. Lorne has the church of Our Lady of Fatima, opened in 1956. These churches, along with many others in the diocese, witness to the devotion to Mary that has been part of the life of our communities all through the years. The churches at Apollo Bay and Lorne also reflect the role that prayer can play throughout our lives. The many holiday makers who have come to Mass in these churches over the years have made prayer a part of their holidays. Their holidays have also included holy days.*

*On Trinity Sunday I joined the communities of Coragulac and Pirron Yallock for a combined celebration in St Brendan's Church, Coragulac. Near the entrance to the church, I noticed two foundation stones. One had the date of 1898, the other had the date of 1939. The first was the foundation stone for the first St Brendan's. A photo of that first church shows a large and finely decorated brick building, a sign of the strength of the local Catholic community at the time. Unfortunately, that first church was destroyed by fire in 1938. However, the spirit of the community was undaunted and a new St Brendan's church was built in 1939. This is the church the community gathers in today.*



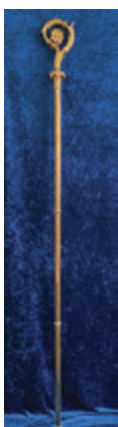
Since the Mass on Trinity Sunday was to include some parishioners from Pirron Yallock, I did a little research into the local history there. I found some references to ceremonies in St Joseph's Church, Pirron Yallock, from quite early days. In the Melbourne Advocate of 9th March 1918, for example, we read that one of the oldest residents of the Colac district, Mr Daniel Donovan, passed peacefully away, fortified by the rites of Holy Church, at his residence, 'Mamre', Pirron Yallock, on February 24th, at the age of 84 years. Requiem Mass was celebrated for Mr Donovan in St Joseph's Church, Pirron Yallock. In the Geelong Advertiser of 23rd June 1926 we read, "A pretty wedding was celebrated at St Joseph's Church, Pirron Yallock, on Saturday June 12, the contracting parties being Mr Daniel McGuane and Miss Mary Roach". These brief notes about Mr Donovan's funeral in 1918 and the "pretty wedding" in 1926 provide us with a glimpse of life in the little town of Pirron Yallock many years ago. Such events have happened year by year, in Pirron Yallock and in Coragulac and in towns throughout our diocese, generation after generation. As I have gathered to pray with descendants of families from the early days of our parishes, I have felt privileged to share something of their history.

In visiting the parishes, I have also carried a part of history with me. I have taken a crozier that was used by the second bishop of Ballarat. We have a photo of Bishop James Moore holding this crozier. Bishop Moore led the diocese from 1884 till 1904. In carrying his crozier into each church, I have felt a link with the pioneering days of our Catholic communities. In the months ahead, God willing, I will carry that crozier to all the other parishes of our diocese. As I do, I will remember those who have gone before us, those who have laid the foundations of our parishes and schools. I look forward to praying for continued blessings on each community, that we might build on the foundations that earlier generations have laid and that we might live as truly Christian communities in our time.

*+ Paul Bird CSsR*

Bishop Paul Bird CSsR

Photo above: Bishop Paul holding the crozier at Coragulac



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### OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY (ODC)

A joint publication of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and Catholic Education Ballarat.



The Editorial Committee of ODC wishes to thank the many people who have contributed to this issue. We also acknowledge the support through sponsorship of the Ballarat Catholic Development Fund and Australian Catholic University - Aquinas Campus.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Sr Geraldine Mugavin, Mrs Julie Boyd, Ms Kate Lawry, Ms Fiona Tonkin, Dr Susan Crowe, Mrs Bernadette Lynch, Fr Adrian McNerney, Mrs Jane Collins.

The next ODC will be in October 2024. All contributions to ODC may be forwarded to:  
 OUR DIOCESAN COMMUNITY,  
 PO Box 576, Ballarat 3353.  
 Phone: (03) 5337 7179  
 Email: [odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:odc@ballarat.catholic.org.au)  
 Web: [www.ballarat.catholic.org.au](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au)



## OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION

Opening the Doors Foundation (OTDF), an Aboriginal-led community organisation supporting educational opportunities for Aboriginal children, is the recipient of a multi-year commitment from the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation (CDBF) and in 2023 received \$20,000.

This \$20,000 grant supported the school education expenses of 28 First Nations students in the 2023 school calendar year attending Catholic schools within the Diocese of Ballarat. The grant was spent on uniforms, books, IT, extra-curricular levies, sport shoes and school shoes.

This funding has helped support an increased demand in student grants and enabled students to attend the school of their choice. It has supported OTDF in its mission to assist as many First Nations students as possible to self-determine their education path and remain in education, thereby assisting to achieve the Closing the Gap education goals and ensure equal opportunity in education.

Opening The Doors Foundation appreciates the long-standing generous support provided by the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation and in their report to the Foundation expressed their gratitude. The report also includes expressions of thanks from families supported in 2023. \*Names of students have been changed to protect their identity\*.

**Grace - Grade 3 student – St Mary’s Primary School Swan Hill:** Grace has loved moving into her new school and has made so many friends and recently won student of the week. Opening the Doors has made this possible by cutting the cost and paying for uniforms which has meant a young Aboriginal girl is having the best schooling experience possible. This grant is a big weight off our shoulders. We are a week-to-week household and because of the grant, we can focus on the fees.

**Melanie – Grade 4 – St Alipius Parish School Ballarat East:** Melanie had a shaky start to 2023. She went through Prep during COVID so I think this has affected her in different ways across her journey so far. Friendship groups have changed and she seems a lot more settled now. This year she has really thrived in her performing arts which I love to see. The school have an end of year performance coming up in November and I’m really excited to see her do well. During the year Melanie attended her very first school camp. Without help from the Foundations grant she wouldn’t be able to have such a wonderful exposure to new and exciting experiences. So much fun was had!!

**William – Grade 4 student – St Mary’s Primary School Hamilton:** William has been diagnosed with ASD and ADHD, so he struggles with his attention span during class. William is behind in maths but is at level in English. While he is behind with maths, his teacher has said he has made progress. His teachers are all happy with his progress. He has been enjoying art and STEM (science, technology, math) and has loved choir. Given William’s difficulties with attention span, having the option to attend a Catholic school has been important. The class sizes are smaller than the local state school and there seems to be more support available from Learning Support and Development Officers in the Catholic system. The financial assistance from the Foundation has been extremely helpful, especially as everything has become so expensive over the past few years. The grant essentially gives us the freedom of choice as to where William would best succeed at school.

**Kylie – Year 8 - Damascus College Mount Clear:** During 2023, Kylie has become more confident in communicating her needs, both mental health and learning dispositions. Kylie has been supported through some tough cultural situations with other students within the school, which Damascus has dealt with beautifully. Her academic progress is on-par with her age and stage of development and with continuous support from the health and wellbeing team, she is becoming more resilient and building her life skills toolkit. Kylie has also grown her confidence enough to engage in a team club sport within the school setting - rowing. This has been a great addition to her life in many ways and couldn’t be possible without attending Damascus in which OTDF supports. Damascus has supported Kylie in attending the Nallei Jerring program auspiced by the Western Bulldogs Youth Engagement Team - Aboriginal Liaison. This supported Kylie to make

wider connections with youth from the Aboriginal Community, build on her resilience, pride and leadership skills. With the support of Damascus College, Kylie graduated from her first year of the program early October 2023.

The latest Closing the Gap 2022 Report has revealed progress made in education for First Nations students. The target to increase the proportion of First Nations students attaining Year 12 or equivalent to 96% by 2031 is slowly on track. The baseline proportion in 2016 was 63%. The most recent level, using data for 2021, is 68%. This is below the target trajectory proportion for 2021 of 74.1%. Because of the support of CDBF, OTDF has made a direct and tangible contribution to this goal. We have offered direct support to First Nations students and their families, ensuring they are able to seek and choose the quality education they are entitled to, are retained, and supported in education - ensuring they have the same opportunities as any other Australian child, thereby reducing inequalities.

Thank you to the Bishop of Ballarat, Paul Bird and all Trustees from the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation (CDBF). Opening the Doors Foundation look forward to continuing to work together to make a tangible impact and difference to First Nations students.

Taken from Funding Report - Opening The Doors Foundation (OTDF) and the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation (CDBF), and the Bishop of Ballarat – Bishop Paul Bird by Michelle Gale. March 2024

Sunday, May 26, 2024 was a very significant day in a number of ways – six students completed their initiation into the Catholic faith community of St Joseph's Parish Charlton, receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist for the first time. Congratulations to Megg, Macey, Flynn & Maddie from St Joseph's School and Eadie and Harrison from Charlton College. Many thanks to Bernadette Zagame for preparing the candidates, to Naomi Fitzpatrick for making the celebratory cupcakes and to all those who helped in any way. On the national calendar, Sunday was also Sorry Day, which marked the start of Reconciliation Week. The purpose of Reconciliation Week is to foster reconciliation and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. It is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to on-going reconciliation in Australia. This was very fitting, as the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist, can contribute to the themes of reconciliation and social justice that are celebrated during National Reconciliation Week.

## Sacrament Time at St Joseph's



Mary Hogan - Principal

L-R Flynn Zagame, Maddie Lanyon, Megg Fitzpatrick, Eadie Ash, Macey Revell and Harrison Stahl with Fr Gerry Prunty

## Significant Aspects



At the end of last term, the school community at St Joseph's Coleraine gathered to commemorate some of Holy Week's significant aspects. Firstly, students entered the church and joyfully walked down the aisle, holding palm branches aloft. The children's faces radiated excitement and reverence as they participated in this symbolic reenactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Secondly, in a profoundly moving reenactment of Jesus' act of humility and service, our Social Justice Leader, Carter Soulsby, with the assistance of Fr George, washed the feet of six students, symbolising Christ's washing of his disciples' feet. This ritual was a powerful reminder of the importance of servant leadership and humble service within our faith community.

Finally, Fr George explained the sacred ritual of Holy Communion, which commemorates Jesus' institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Thank you, Fr George, for explaining the signs, symbols and rituals of the Mass and for allowing the students at St Joseph's Coleraine to participate in our school Masses in such a hands-on way.

Karl Dwyer - Principal

## On the road: acknowledging our 150th anniversary together

In conjunction with Bishop Paul's visits to parishes this year to mark the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat, the Diocesan Archives have put together a travelling display of items important to the history of the diocese.

In early March this year, exhibits were held within the Parish of South West Coast to highlight this important event. Historical material from St Joseph's Warrnambool, Our Lady Help of Christians Warrnambool East, St Pius X Warrnambool West, Infant Jesus Koroit, St Patrick's Port Fairy and St Anne's Purnim were put on display.



Church items from these locations revealed the important role the Catholic Church played in establishing these areas of Victoria from the mid-late 1800s onwards. Photos and documents were presented for parishioners to view, many of which focused on the various clergy and religious sisters who dedicated their lives to ministry in these locations.

The display also included items from the Ballarat Historical Commission archives such as the first vestments purchased by Bishop O'Connor in 1882, bishops' croziers, silver chalices and a collection of photos of the first priests who travelled through western Victoria.

The travelling display allowed for an exchange of historical information with parishioners about all the churches of their parish which provided important information to be added to the archive collection.

*Dr Samantha Fabry - Diocesan Archivist*

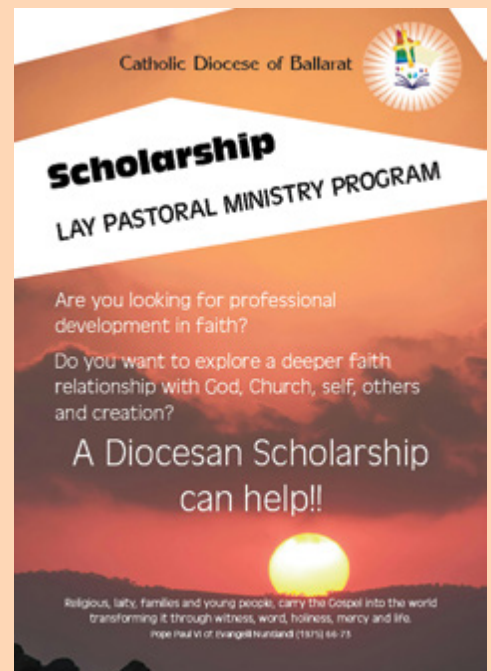
## PENTECOST SUNDAY COMMISSIONING AND SCHOLARSHIP LAUNCH

*On Pentecost Sunday, May 19, in marking 150 years of the diocese, parishes were encouraged to acknowledge and commission those who have roles within their parish – including priests. A concrete appreciation and a way to reflect on the continuing work of those working for the mission of the church in parish communities.*

*Resources were provided to assist in the liturgy and included Homily Notes from Fr John McKinnon and Clara Geoghegan, ACBC Executive Secretary Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry & Bishops Commission for Life, Marriage and Public Engagement.*

*St Patrick's Cathedral Parish commissioned those involved in various ministries of their parish, including: Parish Pastoral Council; Funeral Ministry; GodStart Post-Baptism Support; Hospitality; Ministry to the Sick & Housebound; Passionist Family Groups; Pastoral Care (Health Services); Playgroup Visiting Team; St Patrick's Youth Group; St Patrick's Young Adult Group; Parish Earthcare; Alpha; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; Rite of Christian Initiation for Children of a Catechetical Age; Sacramental Team; Liturgy Preparation Team; Cathedral Choirs; Cathedral Cleaning Teams; Cathedral Counting Teams; Finance Committee; St Vincent de Paul Conference; Catholic Women's League; MenAlive; and many more. The St Patrick's Cathedral Parish continues to be blessed by all those involved within these ministries.*

*Also in marking 150 years, the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is aiming to support the mission formation of people in parishes, Catholic organisations and schools by offering six scholarships to study a certificate in Pastoral Ministry or Youth and Young Adult Ministry. These certificates are part of the Lay Pastoral Ministry Program and aim to provide formation for ministry and mission in the diocese. For more information and to apply please contact the Bishop's Office: email: [bishopsoffice@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:bishopsoffice@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or ph: (03) 53 377 121*



# Becoming Catholic



At the 2024 Easter Vigil, St Augustine's Parish Creswick celebrated the culmination of the RCIA process with Claire Hepper, Cheryl Bullen and Liz Toohey. It was a memorable celebration, with the Easter fire and symbolism of darkness and light, the extended liturgy of the Word, the liturgy of Baptism, Reception into full communion with the Catholic Church, Confirmation, Liturgy of the Eucharist and procession to Holy Communion led by Claire, Cheryl and Liz. After the Easter Vigil the "resurrection party" held in the former presbytery gained momentum with generous hospitality offered and presentations of Sunday Missals to the three Easter Catholics.

The stories of these women, each so very different from the other, are offered to inspire, encourage, prompt and remind those of us who are 'cradle Catholics' of the incredible courage such a leap of faith takes.

## Claire Hepper

I had a difficult relationship with religion as I grew up and in my early adult years. In my distress, I confused religion with faith and basically opted out of any discussion about anything about my beliefs for the next twenty years. As a very wise person said to me (Father Justin!) you can't simultaneously be angry with God and not believe in him.

It was the first Easter Vigil I have attended and I don't think there are words to adequately describe how welcome and embraced I felt by the whole parish community.

I was initially hesitant to explore the RCIA process and worried that I would do something wrong or be judged as being 'not worthy'. Being a Catechumen was like a cool balm to the angry burn of my past experiences. The support I received, and continue to receive, from my husband Jeremy, my Godmother Sister Louise, Fr Justin and the Creswick Parish have been a blessing. No question was too minor and they allowed me to grow and explore at my own pace. They have shown me the joy in being open to the Word of God and I see the RCIA process as just the beginning in me developing my personal relationship with God and devoting myself to service in God's name.

Thank you to everyone who has worked hard to make the RCIA process accessible and helped me start a new chapter in my life and expanding my understanding of my place in the world.

## Cheryl Bullen

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil and Mass 2024 marked a significant moment in my life, my reception into the Catholic Church. Although it culminated in one remarkable evening, many milestones and inspiring individuals have punctuated my journey thus far.

When I arrived in Australia in 2000, I began working at OLSH College, Bentleigh. The College gave me a strong foundation and understanding of the Catholic faith. The connection to my faith developed throughout my teaching time at the College, with the encouragement and guidance of the leadership of Anne O'Loughlin, Judy Lamb, Sr Jenny, and Elizabeth Maguire. Some of my most valued friendships were formed during my time at OLSH, in particular with Bernadette Anderson, who taught me humility, how to serve others, kindness and the importance of a faith-based education. I left OLSH College in 2019 for a life in the country to Creswick.

When I joined the parish of St Augustine's Catholic Church, Creswick, I was apprehensive, because I wasn't Catholic, I was Christened into the Church of England. I didn't know how I would be received, yet the call to attend and deepen my connection with God was stronger than any nerves I felt. There I met Irene Martin. She made me feel welcome and gave me an immediate sense of belonging, which was extended when I became familiar with many of the other friendly, open-hearted and warm parishioners. Irene kindly accepted to be my sponsor; I really appreciate every piece of advice she gives to me.

Fr Justin, (former) Parish Priest, fosters a unity within the parish and through his openness, and inspiring conversations, supported me in becoming Catholic. I feel blessed and grateful that he was there to guide me.





*As a baptised candidate, I joined Liz, also a candidate and Claire, a catechumen, in our Reception and Confirmation ceremony. The Rite of Election at St Patrick's Cathedral in Ballarat was a very special ceremony, in which we were presented with our sponsors to Bishop Paul. We've been guided on an evening sensory tour of St Augustine's Church to further deepen our understanding of the different rituals of the Catholic faith, members of the Parish and our sponsors gave their time and knowledge. It was an enlightening evening that answered many of our questions.*

*Our Preparation Rites were held at St Augustine's Church, on the morning of the Easter Vigil and Mass, which allowed us to gather ourselves and prepare to be received into the Catholic Church. It was such a wonderful, friendly and caring atmosphere as we prepared for the evening ceremony. The Easter Vigil and Mass was a cherished memory. Each part of the ceremony was emotional, beautiful and will always be a treasured memory as we committed to our faith and belief in God.*

*I feel blessed that I have been given the opportunity to proclaim my faith and commit to God in the Catholic Church and to have the support of my husband Chris, children Luke and Chloe, family and wider community and know that I belong to the Catholic Church.*

*This verse of 'The Summons' resonates with me, as I continue to deepen my faith:  
 Lord, your summons echoes true  
 When you but call my name.  
 Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
 In Your company I'll go  
 where Your love and footsteps show.  
 Thus, I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.*

**Anna Schlooz writes about "Accompanying and Journeying in Faith" with Liz**

*Recently I accepted the call to accompany someone in their journey of faith. To be a sponsor. The journey to becoming a Catholic at the Easter Vigil was truly momentous for Liz and for myself.*

*The experiences that led to this moment invited both of us to experience God's love in so many ways - particularly through building on understandings of the sacraments and then the actual experiences of them.*

*Celebrating Liz' journey to become a Catholic brought both of us in union with others who joined our faith community as well. This included parishioners who were present constantly expressing a welcoming that felt beautiful to witness.*

*I felt very privileged accompanying Liz in her journey of faith to become a Catholic and am grateful for the opportunity.*



## Early Career Teacher Induction

Around thirty beginning teachers from around the Diocese gathered for the first of DOBCEL's early career teacher program days – a three-year integrated program designed to support early career teacher induction into the diocese and the teaching profession, within the context of Catholic education.

In welcoming the early career teachers, Executive Director, Tom Sexton, reminded them of their vital role and responsibility in the lives of

their students. "You will have already experienced the joy of seeing children learning and growing in your classes but be assured your influence and impact will be lifelong and may not be realised until many years down the track."

The early career teacher's program reflects the partnership between DOBCEL and schools, who together support their professional growth. Elements of the program presented through the dedicated

days complements formation opportunities initiated by school communities.

*DOBCEL Communications*





# AUSLAN GROWS IN PROMINENCE

With Auslan becoming an increasingly popular choice of second language for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ballarat, more than two hundred teachers and deaf community members came together on Monday, April 15 for professional learning focusing on promoting inclusion through the Auslan Teachers as Co-Learners (TCL) program.

Auslan TCL provides an innovative pedagogical approach to language learning in Victorian Catholic schools which is underpinned by research in best-practice languages programs and inclusive education programs.

Catholic Education Ballarat Leader of Teaching and Learning, Joe Ewing says seventeen Catholic primary schools across the Diocese of Ballarat now offer Auslan as their language program. “Learning both English and Auslan – one auditory and one visual language – offers many social, emotional, and educational benefits,” he says. “We know that learning a second language helps students understand how languages work, which leads to improved literacy, critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills. Auslan allows children to not only reap these benefits, but also grow in appreciation of the importance of inclusivity and empathy for people with needs and contexts different to their own.”

“The TCL program also allows deaf students the opportunity to interact with the whole school community, engage with peers and enjoy full inclusion in the school community through language equality. The program has been developed in respectful consultation with members of the deaf community. Each TCL Catholic school employs a language assistant, a native signer and member of the deaf community, to ensure lessons are culturally sensitive and reflect the language used within the community. Critical to learning Auslan is developing an understanding of its cultural heritage as an Australian language, and this gives learners an opportunity to develop intercultural capabilities, understanding and respect for others. Auslan provides wonderful opportunities for students to grow through engagement with deaf students and members of the deaf community,” Mr Ewing said.

The conference aimed to provide practical strategies and theoretical understandings to further educate teachers about effective Auslan TCL strategies through a culturally sensitive approach which focuses on deafness as being a part of a cultural and linguistic community. The conference sessions included deaf presenters throughout the day, combining hands-on practical activities, knowledge of theory, networking and opportunities to ask questions to deaf community members.



DOBCEL Communications

## SAFEGUARDING

*The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and at risk adults as central to the fundamental responsibilities of the Church.*

*This commitment is drawn from and is inherent in the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the fundamental sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel.*



*in the Parishes of Gordon and Bungaree, held sessions outlining the training. The in-person training was offered in Ballan (pictured left) on May 30 for those in the parish who do not have access to online training resources. The training followed the weekly Thursday Mass and morning tea and was well received by the fourteen parishioners who attended. On May 31, a session was held at Bungaree (pictured above right) and was also appreciated by those in attendance.*



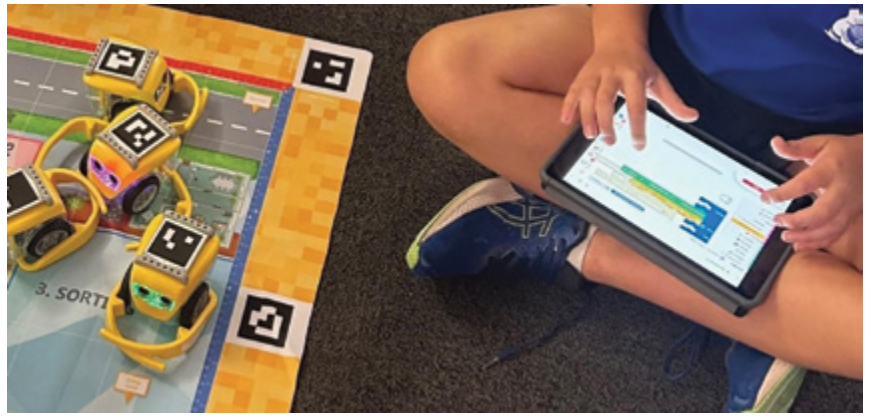
*All clergy, staff and volunteers in the diocese are required to undertake Safetrac compliance online training in the area of safeguarding.*

*Aileen Toohey, Parish Safeguarding Officer*

Fr Justin Driscoll – Parish Priest

## ST COLUMBA'S LEADS THE WAY

St Columba's Primary School, Ballarat North is one of the first schools in Victoria to better support student engagement with the Digital Technologies curriculum by utilising a range of learning tools available for borrowing from the Computer Science Education Research Group (CSER), based at the University of Adelaide. The CSER National Lending Library program, supported by the Australian Government Department of Education, provides schools with access to the latest equipment for the classroom.



In Term 1, St Columba's worked with the 'Kai's Clan Kits', a collaborative, all-in-one coding platform that encompasses several technologies including robotics, augmented reality, virtual reality and artificial intelligence. Melissa Wood, Digital Education Leader and STEM Teacher at St Columba's, said the Kai's Clan Kit provided a dynamic and interactive platform with hands-on activities, enabling students to witness firsthand the exciting possibilities that STEM fields offer.

"The kit was a user-friendly interface and the lessons provided a diverse range of challenges, encouraging students of varying skill levels to participate and succeed, thus building their confidence and competence in these critical areas of STEM. Our favourite lesson idea was the concept of students working towards gaining their L and P plates as they mastered new skills in coding a robot to move in different ways," Melissa said.

The lending library program enables schools to integrate a huge range of exciting and motivating Digital Technologies educational equipment into the classroom and includes merge cubes, Virtuali-tee, Virtual Reality headsets, AR space kits and more.

Schools can request to borrow, for free, a selection of Digital Technologies educational equipment accompanied by lesson plans designed for different age groups and mapped to relevant content descriptors in the Australian Curriculum: Digital Technologies learning area.

DOBCEL Communications

## CELEBRATING BIRTHDAY OF FOUNDER

*Monivae College, Hamilton along with all other members of the extended Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) family, celebrated the 200th anniversary of the birthday of the founder, Fr Jules Chevalier on March 15, 2024. This day was celebrated throughout the entire MSC community worldwide.*

*Fr Jules Chevalier was deeply moved by the evils that afflicted the people of his time. As he contemplated the Heart of Christ, in whom is revealed the compassionate love of the Father, he discovered there the remedy for the ills of the world. Inspired by that love and guided by the Holy Spirit, he founded within the Church the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.*

*As part of our day of celebration, we took time to recognise the impact on our lives the MSC has made. We also celebrated in true birthday fashion with students wearing 'Jewels for Jules', music, birthday cake and frivolity in the courtyard at lunchtime. The school community also gathered in the shape of a heart for a commemorative photo opportunity.*

Mr Danny Franc - Director, Faith and Mission  
Image captions: Monivae School Community Heart



# A rewarding role

*The role of Sacramental Coordinator in the Ballarat East Parish is a rewarding one which encompasses the administration and coordination of all sacramental programs, with the main focus being on the Sacraments of Initiation.*

*The Sacrament of Baptism calls on parents to attend an information session which is run by priests and co-ordinators from Ballarat parishes. We are rostered on to do this two or three times a year and it's great to meet young parents and the children which the parents have asked to have baptised. These sessions are offered morning and evening on the first Thursday of each month. During this time parents are provided with education on the Sacrament of Baptism as well as how the actual ceremony will look on the day. Practicalities are discussed, with lots of great questions being asked and answered. At St Alipius we have baptisms each weekend during and following our 10.30am Masses at both Ballarat East and Buninyong.*

*Having three Catholic Primary Schools within our parish boundaries, as well as a number of government schools, usually means in excess of one hundred children preparing for the sacraments of Confirmation, Reconciliation and Eucharist. As parents are recognised as the first teachers of their children, the preparation for each of these sacraments is their responsibility, but programs including information sessions and materials are co-ordinated by the parish to ensure that parents feel well supported. Prior to preparation for each of these Sacraments we take time to provide parents with information to ensure that they feel confident in preparing their children at home. The materials provided by the Diocese of Ballarat mean that parents have everything they need to do this, with families encouraged to sit down together during this time. This preparation is supported by our schools and their RE program with relevant units of work being taught during the time of preparation.*

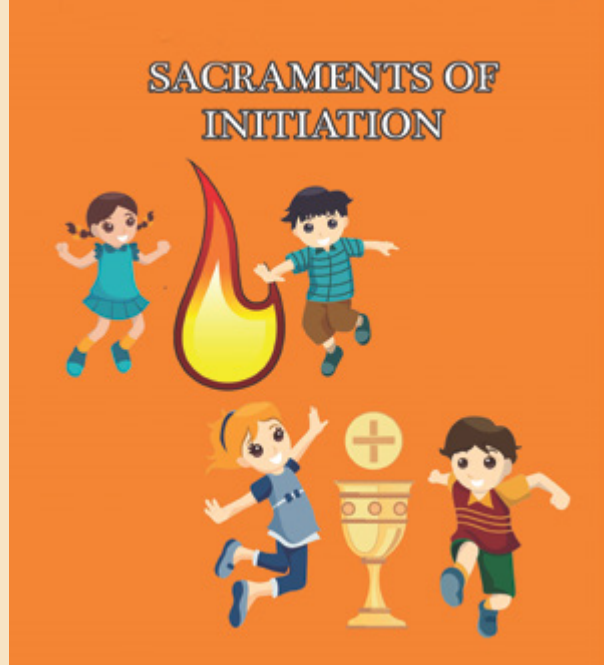
*The support from the Religious Education Co-ordinators in schools makes life much easier as we work together to organise the various Masses and liturgies during which the various sacraments are celebrated. Schools participate in different ways according to the capacity of their staff members, but always provide beautiful liturgies for the children and their families.*

*With each Sacrament, a record is provided to families in the form of the Diocesan tri-fold certificate which holds the relevant details which are also transferred to registers in the parish office. The information in these records is called on often as children begin school, adults getting married or people looking into family history.*

*The Rite of Initiation of Adults for Children of Catechetical Age is a program we provide for older children who have not been baptised. This program often sees more than one child from a family preparing for all Sacraments over many weeks, with Sacraments being received at the Easter Vigil. It is always a pleasure working with these families and getting to know them over a period of time.*

*While the role of Sacramental Co-ordinator is a busy one for three terms throughout the year, I love the opportunity to work with families and schools as we prepare these children together.*

Cathy Prunty - Parish Coordinator



## Recognising 150 Years

Parishioners of St Joseph's Hopetoun gathered to recognise 150 years of the Diocese of Ballarat during their usual weekend Lay Led Assembly on Sunday, April 28. Marilyn and Donna welcomed all to the service and took the time to explain the logo for the 150th anniversary.

Bishop Paul's homily, written especially for this occasion, was shared. A memorabilia display was at the back of the church, which all enjoyed viewing. Parishioners took delight in finding their ancestors names in old parish journals and wondered over the plans for the current church, noting that the planned choir loft was not built. Following the service and viewing the memorabilia, all enjoyed a special morning tea.

Cynthia Maiden

# Catholic Mission Immersion

Easter Monday, April 1, I began a journey unaware of what to expect of Catholic Mission's Immersion 2024 program. Keeping an open mind, I boarded the flight to Phnom Penh with my companions from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and our Catholic Mission facilitator, Sr Veronica Rosier OP. Cambodia has a total population of 17 million and the capital, Phnom Penh, has 3 million. Pisay and Rath, Catholic Mission representatives, received us with a very warm welcome at Phnom Penh airport.

An hour and a half later we arrived at our destination, which was to be our home for the next four days, St Francis General High School and its associated Technical High School, where the Catholic Community plays an important role in education. The beginnings of St Francis General High School are very interesting. Bishop Olivier of Phnom Penh Diocese has a far-reaching vision, 'education' the answer and number one priority to improve and uplift the community.

Bishop Olivier, who began the school with the help of Catholic Mission, has achieved, what is today, the model for all the other schools in the country. The school has 230 high school students, 240 primary school students and 150 kindergarten students. Not all are Catholic. Of thirty five schools in Phnom Penh, fifteen students from St Francis were in the top ranks. Admission into the school is in great demand, not only for its academic success. It seeks to form students to be "competent and honest, respectful of the other; free and responsible - to build up their life in dignity and harmony." St Francis General is seen as the model to follow by the Cambodian public education system. There are no hired hands involved in the cleaning of the school, the students do it all, from the classrooms, the school grounds to the toilets. Religion is taught only at weekends, not during school hours. All the children from kindergarten to high school, including staff, have lunch prepared fresh on the school premises. Education is free; however, parents are encouraged to pay a small subsidy towards the meal, if they can afford to. All students wear a uniform which creates a sense of community and identity.

Education is not the only area in which the diocese is involved in. The needs of the marginalised are ever in the fore front and to this effect a variety of small industries have been established. A sewing group has been set up and the majority of the employed have some form of disability. The uniforms for all the catholic schools and universities from kindergarten to high school, including all staff, are tailored here by women who have been maimed by landmines and have lost a limb. Looms and Spindles are still used in traditional weaving, another area which gives these bruised women not just a livelihood but independence and dignity.



Another industry that Bishop Olivier has introduced is the usage of every part of the coconut tree, where the disadvantaged are given an opportunity to make a living with dignity. The inside of the whole coconut

is hollowed out to fit a teapot to keep the tea hot with a top, the coconut shells are used to make lampshades; there is no wastage, every part becomes a piece of art and like other crafts produced here, is for sale.

The government began a colony for those suffering with HIV, however after COVID, it was closed and so the Bishop bought the land and turned it into an oasis. The place is called 'Eden' surrounded by tropical fruit trees and has a number of one-bedroom units that are used as weekenders, mostly for couples, to enjoy the pristine countryside, peace and quiet. It provides a source of income to support the many diocesan projects.

We next visited the 'Farm', a brainchild of Bishop Olivier. The Farm has a double purpose, a tourist attraction as well as providing a hands-on opportunity for students entering the hospitality and farming industries. Here the students from the Agricultural University have a 'hands-on' experience in animal husbandry. The farm has cows, goats, pigs, horses, etc... and the produce is used locally. To attract tourists sculptures of life-size statues of various wild animals dot the landscape. A "bamboo train" provides transport around the farm - it is a motorized wheeled vehicle that runs on rails with flat bamboo slats to sit on and powered by a motorbike engine.

The focus of St Francis Private Technical High School is training the students in agriculture and hospitality. The different courses in the school are identified by their uniform. This made it easy to identify what the students were studying - agricultural students wore green tops, representing the environment and the hospitality students orange, representing the ingredients used in cooking. We interacted with the students in their classrooms. Garrett, using his phone, explained to the class the rudiments of surfing. The students were just enthralled and open-eyed!



St Francis Technical School has a laboratory where research is carried out to improve and enrich production of fruit and vegetables. The laboratory experiments in various ways to improve quality of produce. Currently they are working on the grafting of a tomato plant with an eggplant. The experiment had to be reversed because the stem of the tomato plant wasn't strong enough to take the weight of the eggplant. They are still waiting on the results of the grafting. The hospitality students gave us a lesson in cooking and then cooked lunch for us. This was followed by a tour of the college and the garden where vegetables, mostly tropical, are grown. There were rock pools in which frogs were kept for consumption.

We visited the S21 genocide museum and the Killing Fields of Cambodia and saw where the unspeakable cruelty took place. Schools and universities turned into prisons and torture chambers where even children were not exempt. Pol Pot massacred all intellectuals, professionals and middle-class people, leaving the

commoners to till the rice fields. Even these poor people did not escape the tortures vested on them, as they were often considered to be spies. Mass graves still stand in silent proof of live burials. It was horrifying, unimaginable, how anyone could possess such a cruel strain in them to inflict such evil.

The Royal Palace visited was a place of beauty with much wealth invested - a life-size statue of the King in pure gold weighing over 90 lbs, crown jewels, royal robes for the coronation and the floors laid with silver were on site. The royal robes and crown are used only once during the lifetime of the King and that is on the day of his coronation and later on display. The grounds are beautifully manicured, with flower beds and magnificent trees. The day we visited the Royal Palace the King was not in residence, having gone to Japan.

The Cambodian Landmine Museum is more than just history, it is a Non Government Organisation (NGO) helping Cambodians to build schools, clear landmines, care for kids and help pay for scholarships. Sr Denise, a Mercy Sister from Brisbane, who has been in Cambodia for the last thirty six years, is heavily involved in this project which the Salesians (St Don Bosco) supports. Next year 2025, a delegation of nine hundred delegates from all over the world will be coming to Cambodia to discuss and try to find the best mode of dismantling hundreds of thousands of mines still scattered around villages. This NGO was started by an ex-soldier of Pol Pot's army. As a youngster he was kidnapped by the Khmer Rouge to be a boy soldier trained to hold an AK40, load bullets, aim and fire in less than a minute!! He also learned to detect land mines that have maimed thousands of men, women and children. Once the war ended, he turned this knowledge to single-handedly decommissioning these mines around towns and villages. Mr Aki Ra has set up a museum and appeals to the international community for help so that the land will someday be free from these dangerous objects. Australian Sr Denise RSJ has been involved at the Siem Reap Jesuit Refugee Centre for decades and has been working to rescue women from trafficking. JRS has been campaigning against landmine and cluster munitions since 2008. Sr Denise is currently involved in planning the upcoming international conference. Tragically, millions of landmines are being planted in Ukraine.

The Arrupe Centre at JRS is also involved in the manufacture of wheelchairs. This workshop is the only one in the world and it was started by Br Noel Ashley SJ as a Jesuit student, as 'Group Motivation'. The wheelchairs are manufactured in five districts. As a symbol of reconciliation, each district manufactures a single part of the wheelchair. These are distributed to anyone who needs them.

There are various congregations involved. The Jesuits run a school of seven hundred children, Salesians have the Don Bosco and Vary Guesthouse, the Franciscans and Dominicans all play a part in the rebuilding of the country in various ways. The quality of education is high, committees make decisions on all school matters, the Church is there to 'do good' and it provides a 'No Exploitation' Policy. This is Pope Francis' understanding of the Church's mission to 'be involved at the peripheries'.

We visited Angkor Wat at Siem Reap where hundreds of Hindu Temples were discovered. The stories of the Hindu Myths are meticulously carved in minute detail. They are tall buildings and the steps leading to each floor are narrow, no handrails and steep. The country takes on the religion of the King. If he favors Hinduism then the whole country follows his footsteps. Today the religion of the country is Buddhism, because the present King follows Buddha, hence, 94% of the population are Buddhists, 6% are Catholics. Mass is celebrated only during the weekend for the lack of priests. At the weekend Mass I attended at Siem Reap, the majority of the faithful were Filipinos.

Catholic Mission has a 40% - 60% involvement in these projects and the office is manned by three personnel, all Cambodians. On April 11, we boarded our respective flights back home after experiencing a heart-warming, but also a challenging experience, in a country striving for excellence.

*Doris Bastian - St Patrick's Cathedral Parish Ballarat*

# Catholic Education Week 2024



During Catholic Education Week students and staff gathered on the old Sacred Heart convent site at Casterton to celebrate Catholic Education Week with the primary schools in our **Mackillop Network**. This large group of friends journeyed from St Mary's Hamilton, St Joseph's Coleraine, Sacred Heart Casterton, All Saints Portland, St Joseph's Penshurst and St Malachy's in Edenhope. This year we celebrate 150 Years of the Diocese of Ballarat from the Murray to the Sea. We welcomed Fr George Kuruvila, Parish Priest representing Casterton, Coleraine and Edenhope, with guests from the DOBCEL Board and Educational Consultants.



A celebration Mass was held in the beautiful Sacred Heart Church where members of all schools mingled. As part of the entrance procession, a jar of water was brought forward from each of our towns. We were reminded how precious water is to us because of our health and wellbeing, our crops and our links to the Sacrament of Baptism. We are all connected by this water in each of the six schools in the Mackillop Network represented.

Our children celebrated this special event with an active morning of interactive sports provided by Kaboom Sports and a chatty lunch together. Not only was this a diocesan celebration of education, it was an outstanding opportunity for our students in rural schools to connect once more from past sporting and camp experiences.

John O'Sullivan - Principal, St Malachy's Primary School Edenhope

## ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL CHORAL AND ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation provided St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat with funding to implement Choral and Organ Scholarships in 2023. The Choral Scholarships are for children currently in Grades 3-6 who have musical interest and aptitude. They provide children with annual scholarship payments towards their general education or musical tuition in return for regular participation in rehearsals and Masses at the Cathedral.

A Choir Director (Mr Vincent Sully) and Pipe Organist (Miss Lillian Lindorff) have been appointed. Following extensive recruitment efforts last year involving Catholic schools, music theatre groups and singing teachers, Choral Scholarships have been awarded to eight students from schools and colleges around Ballarat and the broader region.



The Choral Scholars sing twice a month at St Patrick's Cathedral and they are being trained in traditional styles of sacred music such as Gregorian chant and polyphonic motets. Recently the Choral Scholars completed a music workshop with Mr Ronan Reilly who is the Director of the Jubilate Deo programme. Following the workshop, the Choral Scholars led a sung Gregorian chant Mass at the Cathedral.

On Sunday, April 28, 2024, Bishop Paul presented certificates to the recipients of the inaugural St Patrick's Cathedral Choral Scholarships. The recipients were: Francesca Skyrme, Emmaus Catholic Primary School; Alira Hately, Emmaus Catholic Primary School; Amelia Sharer, St Patrick's Primary School; Bodhi Hoiles, St Patrick's College; Mariana Vadysinghe, Ballarat Clarendon College; Christiana Vadysinghe, Ballarat Clarendon College; Ciara Paolini, St Brigid's Primary School; Angelina Paolini, St Brigid's Primary School.

Additional Choral Scholars are required. To support continuing recruitment efforts during 2024, a promotional video for the Choral Scholarships is being finalised. If you would like to know more about the Choral Scholarships, you can contact the Choir Director at [vincenzo101923@gmail.com](mailto:vincenzo101923@gmail.com) or 0407 310 115.

Vincent Sully, Choir Director - St Patrick's Cathedral Choral and Organ Scholarships

# The Damascus B2B journey



Damascus College Ballarat Principal Steven Mifsud led a poignant send-off for the Sustainable Racing Team as they embarked on their B2B journey from the SRT shed early on Friday, May 3. Standing before a crowd of supportive staff and family, Mr Mifsud commended the fourteen students for their unwavering commitment to Mercy values and

sustainability, setting the tone for a heartfelt farewell. Veronica Lawson rsm, her words filled with admiration, spoke passionately about the students' courage and their dedication to making a positive impact on the world.

Alan Strange, the tireless SRT coordinator, stood alongside dedicated staff and volunteers whose collective efforts made this journey possible. Their unwavering support underscored the depth of community spirit driving the team forward. Cathy Prunty, with a heart full of gratitude, honoured her son Connor's memory and the team's noble purpose, a poignant reminder of the personal stakes involved in their mission.

During the bus journey from Ballarat to Broken Hill, they took the opportunity to test the Starlink system, ensuring its functionality for the adventure ahead. Despite enduring rain throughout the night, their spirits remained high during their inaugural camping experience, fostering a sense of camaraderie and anticipation among the team. While in Broken Hill, the crew explored local attractions, notably the Broken Hill Miners Memorial, a site of solemn reflection. This visit served as a poignant reminder of the purpose driving their journey—to raise awareness and support for the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute.

With a wealth of knowledge about the technology at their disposal and a sense of unity forged through shared experiences, the team faced a minor setback with motor issues. But true to their spirit, they rallied together, overcame the challenge, and hit the road again to finish their ride for the day. The Sustainable Racing Team's (SRT) epic journey from Broken Hill to Ballarat (B2B) reached its triumphant conclusion as they arrived back home to Damascus College on Friday, May 10. The atmosphere was electric as a sea of proud and enthusiastic staff, students and families gathered to welcome them back with open arms. Spanning a distance from Broken Hill to Ballarat, the B2B journey embodied the Mercy values of compassion and service, showcasing the SRT's unwavering dedication to pushing the boundaries of sustainability and raising vital awareness for cancer research.

As the team rolled back onto the Damascus College grounds, hearts swelled with pride as Year 10 student Isabella Fensling was honoured as the final rider, symbolising the culmination of their extraordinary journey. The sight of the Buninyong-Mount Helen Fire Brigade truck, proudly bearing Connor Prunty's name, and the presence of brigade members, served as a poignant reminder of the journey's deeper purpose and profound significance to the Damascus College community.

Though the physical journey may have come to an end, the impact of their efforts continues to resonate. Generous donations to the Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute (FECRI) are a testament to the enduring legacy of the team's mission. The team raised in excess of \$10,000 on this journey. Congratulations to all the members of the team for their remarkable achievements and unwavering resilience throughout the B2B journey. Your dedication, courage and spirit exemplify the very essence of Mercy values, inspiring us all to strive for excellence and make a meaningful difference in the world.

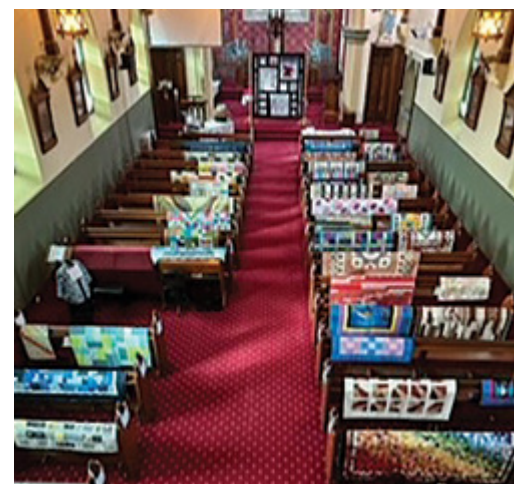
*Korina Hegert - Alumni & Development Officer*

## A TAPESTRY OF CREATIVITY AND COMMUNITY

*Over the June 8 – 9 long weekend, St Peter's Church in Daylesford was the proud venue for the Spa Quilters Guild Quilt Exhibition. The event marked a dual first - the guild's display of their stunning patchwork and quilting creations in a unique venue and St Peter's hosting such an event.*

*The exhibition served as a fundraiser, aiding the Guild's mission to craft quilts for local foster and aged care facilities. The event was met with resounding success, drawing numerous visitors who were eager to admire both the intricate quilts and the architectural beauty of St Peter's Church, many experiencing it for the first time.*

Leonie Keynes - Parish Administration Officer Creswick and Daylesford Parishes



## Retirement of a valuable member

*Sue Searls recently retired from the Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission. Sue was a foundation member of the Commission which was established by Bishop Emeritus Peter Connors in February 2011. During her thirteen years on the Commission, Sue has made an invaluable contribution. She has introduced many items for consideration as well as making additional contributions “behind the scenes” in between meetings. During her time on the Commission, Sue was a member of Planning Committees set up to oversee Open Forums convened by the Commission on Refugees, Domestic Violence, the Environment and Family Matters.*

*A tireless and committed advocate for social justice, Sue was the Caritas Diocesan Director (2016-2021) and Diocesan Director for Catholic Missions (2007-2021) and provided insights on both organisations to the Commission which were of significant value and interest to the members.*

*On behalf of the Commission, Sue spent a considerable amount of time contacting the parishes within the diocese following up social justice issues – a monumental task! In addition, Sue was also a member of Rural Australians for Refugees and again shared her experiences with members. Compassion and Action are two dominant values in Sue’s Dictionary of Life, and she has abundantly demonstrated those values for the benefit of the community and the Social Justice Commission. Bishop Paul and members of the Commission formally thanked Sue for all her contributions at the March meeting, noting that her valuable insights and understanding of social justice issues in the community have been a valuable resource to the development of the Commission. Thank-you Sue. Your presence at the meeting table will be missed, as will your smile.*



Jim Ryan (Member of the Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission)  
Sue, above, pictured with Bishop Paul

## BENEFITING FROM NEW LEARNING SPACES



Students and teachers at St Alipius Parish Primary School, Ballarat East are benefitting from recently completed building works and refurbishments that were officially opened and blessed on Friday, May 3.

The building project at the school has included:

- extension to the multi-purpose hall, comprising a new acoustically designed specialist general learning area utilised for the music and Japanese language programs.
- alterations and additions to the multi-purpose hall including installation of large glass doors and glazing enabling more natural light into the hall and enhancing connection between the hall and the school yard from indoors to outdoors.

- covered areas to facilitate greater connection between buildings and to enhance outdoor learning opportunities.
- refurbishment and extension of the administration building to provide for dedicated staff amenities and administration spaces.

St Alipius School Principal, Emily Clarke, said the enhancements to the campus were delivering benefits across the school community and provided specific improvements to learning opportunities for students. “It is vital we are able to offer a contemporary learning environment for our students and teachers, and we are thrilled with the new and refurbished facilities,” she said. “In particular, to now have an acoustically designed, specialist learning area for our music and Japanese language programs is invaluable. This facility is also being utilised by the wider community and for private music tuition. The greater connectivity between our buildings and the new outdoor learning spaces also provides additional options for learning activities to help keep the students fully engaged,” Ms Clarke said.

The works, delivered with combined support of the school community (\$656,934) and Australian Government funding (\$1.05m), were blessed by St Alipius Parish Priest, Fr Justin Driscoll and opened by The Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Member for Ballarat.

*DOBCEL communications*

*L-R: Principal Emily Clarke, Catherine King MP, Tom Sexton  
DOBCEL Executive Director and Fr Justin Driscoll, Parish Priest*





## Celebration of Service to CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Spirit of Catholic Education Award recipients 2024 (from left) Tom Sexton, DOBCEL Executive Director, Cathy Prunty, Cynthia Maiden, Tony Haintz and Dr Berenice Kerr (Deputy Chair, DOBCEL Board).

Catholic Education Week (April 29 – May 3) is an annual opportunity for Catholic schools across the Diocese of Ballarat to celebrate their distinctive ethos and mission with their school and wider communities. In 2024, 52 primary schools and 11 secondary Colleges, educate more than 18,500 students and employ over 2,500 teachers and staff, from Mildura in the north, Portland in the south and west to Edenhope and Nhill.

“Catholic schools offer a high-quality, faith-based, holistic education choice for families across Western Victoria and currently educate around 25% of all students,” Executive Director, Tom Sexton said. “There was a wonderful array of school and community activities held across the diocese, with the week also having special significance this year as our community of schools recognised the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat. We also especially acknowledged our oldest school in the diocese – All Saints Portland – and we offer best wishes to the school community as they celebrate a remarkable 175 years of service this year,” he said.

“In addition, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat, and in recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers who have educated their people on this land for thousands of years, four Message Sticks will be commissioned at the Mass and will simultaneously begin a journey to every Catholic school across the four education zones of the Diocese,” Tom said.

The week closed with a Diocesan Catholic Education Week Mass and Dinner in Ballarat on Friday, May 3 where outstanding contributors to Catholic education were recognised. Three outstanding educators received the Spirit of Catholic Education Award, chosen from seventeen nominees from across the diocese, along with a remarkable thirty-four teachers and staff who have given thirty years of dedicated service.

DOBCEL is proud to continue sponsoring an award aimed at recognising the outstanding service and leadership within Catholic education throughout our Diocesan school communities and Catholic Education Office. In 2024, the refreshed awards align with the DOBCEL strategic priorities, which are positioned to support the DOBCEL vision “as partners in Catholic Education and open to God’s presence, we pursue fullness of life for all.” All Catholic education communities were encouraged to nominate an individual or team who consistently performs in an exemplary way. Nominations were from any of the following five categories:

- ◇ Building inclusive Catholic learning communities.
- ◇ Empowering all to flourish.
- ◇ Fostering inspiring leadership.
- ◇ Achieving best practice.
- ◇ Enhancing family engagement, governance and stewardship.

The three outstanding educators for 2024 are:

- Tony Haintz – Damascus College, Ballarat, for *Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities*.
- Cynthia Maiden – St Joseph’s Primary School, Hopetoun, for *Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship*.
- Cathy Prunty – Damascus College, Ballarat, for *Empowering all to Flourish*.

Tom said the Diocese is blessed to have teachers and leaders of the calibre of Tony, Cynthia, and Cathy, along with the other fourteen nominees, working in its schools. “We want every student to have the opportunity to flourish fully in Our Diocesan Community - July 2024

their learning in schools that are caring, committed to excellence and live out the Catholic faith, in partnership with families. Tony, Cynthia and Cathy and the other nominees, exemplify the approach to teaching and genuine care for their students and communities, that allows our schools to live out these values. I thank them for their wonderful work and congratulate them on their well-earned recognition.”

Special congratulations to all nominees for the Spirit of Catholic Education Awards in 2024: Christina Sofis (Loreto College, Ballarat) – Fostering Inspiring Leadership; Sharon Dwyer (OLHC Warrnambool) – Empowering all to Flourish; Kevin Brodie (DOBCEL Ballarat Office) – Empowering all to Flourish; Finance and Compliance Team (St Brigid’s College) – Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship; Cynthia Maiden (St Joseph’s, Hopetoun) – Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship; Olga Lyons (St Patrick’s, Port Fairy) – Fostering Inspiring Leadership; Breeana Wade (DOBCEL Mildura Office) – Empowering all to Flourish; Caitee Carter (St Alipius School, Ballarat) – Enhancing Family Engagement, Governance and Stewardship; Simone Jans & Sarah Goodbourn, Da Capo Instrumental Music Program (Loreto College, Ballarat) – Achieving Best Practice; Eliza Dwyer (St Patrick’s School, Port Fairy) – Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities; Brooke Nester (DOBCEL Ballarat Office) – Empowering all to Flourish; Bernadette Lynch (St Aloysius’ School) – Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities; Mark Vanderkley (SIMON, DOBCEL Office, Ballarat) – Empowering all to Flourish; Tony Haintz (Damascus College, Ballarat) – Building Inclusive Catholic Learning Communities; Lindy Crowe-Procaccino (Loreto College, Ballarat) – Empowering all to Flourish; Religious Education Curriculum Team (DOBCEL Office, Ballarat) – Achieving Best Practice (Bernie Tolan, Justin McInerney, Jo-anne Van der Voort, Kim Hawkes, Bernadette Luckman); Cathy Prunty (Damascus College, Ballarat) – Empowering all to Flourish



A remarkable thirty-four teachers and staff who have committed their gifts and talents over thirty years of service to Catholic education were also recognised at the celebration. They are: Christine Carmichael, Annemaree Chapman, Jane Clark, Carolyn Clementson, Paula Cox, Andrea Cox, Cathryn Harrington, Janet Cain, Timothy Kermeen, Jamie Lamb, Gavin Lang, Sheelagh Leary, Kellie Lee, Clare Levings, Michael Mahoney, Hamish McCrum, Justin McInerney, Steven Mifsud, Marie O’Donnell, Tim O’Farrell, Giorgio Paolucci, Carmel Parker, Lesley

Pearce, Kym Penry, Jacqueline Pierce, Cathy Prunty, Maria Richards, Maria Salvo, Nerida Thurn, Dymrna Turner, Judith Vanderkley and Mark Vanderkley. Congratulations to the 30 Year Service Award recipients for 2024. We thank you for your dedicated service and recognise the profound influence you have had on the generations of young people in your care.

*DOBCEL Communications*

## Mini Vinnies St Joseph’s Warrnambool

*On Monday, March 25, the Mini Vinnies and the St Joseph Primary School community organised a fun day for all year levels ranging from Foundation to Year 6. On this day we managed to let everyone have a variety of fifteen activities. Some of the students favorites included mini golf, the big Lego and having fun with the parachute. Before this event, we asked all the families to give a gold coin donation.*

*We managed to collect \$750 to help communities around the world through Caritas Australia. All the Mini Vinnies were a great help and contributed with organising these activities for the year levels. A big thanks to Mini Vinnies leader Mrs Brown.*

Paddy Ward and Jessica Happ, Year 6 Mini Vinnie Students.



# THANK YOU

*Caritas Australia thanks all our Ballarat Diocesan schools, parishes, families and individuals who generously gave to Project Compassion during Lent. Your generous donations and activity-based awareness raising have made a difference to those in need now and for all future generations.*

*Caritas Australia's annual Lenten fundraiser, Project Compassion, has succeeded this year thanks to the dedication and support of over 1,700 schools and 1,200 parishes nationwide.*

*As Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia, said "I am always in awe of how schools and parishes unite to raise funds for Project Compassion. Whether donning aprons to cook traditional Shrove Tuesday pancakes or hitting the pavement for Caritas Ks, your efforts are truly inspiring."*

*"These activities are very in keeping with the spirit of Lent, as they allow us to reflect on the experiences of our brothers and sisters across the world, engage in almsgiving and come together as a global community."*

*For information on Caritas programs please contact Jillian Hogbin at [caritas@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:caritas@ballarat.catholic.org.au)*

*Photo: St Thomas More Primary School Alfredton students completed an awareness-raising activity by putting themselves in the shoes of those who cart water for everyday necessities through whole-school participation in Caritas K's*



## CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK IN HORSHAM



are currently displayed in our school foyer in the shape of a big 150, to represent the 150th anniversary of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Ballarat.

Our theme for Wednesday was REVITALISE. We decided to mix things up with a Mystery Teacher afternoon. Our classes swapped teachers across the whole school and we had a fantastic time getting to know new people.

On Thursday our theme was HOPE and all our staff and students wrote about their hopes and dreams for our school over the next 10 years. The responses were gathered with some meaningful objects and symbols and stored in a time capsule that will be opened in 10 years.

On Friday our theme was CELEBRATE and we gathered with the students and staff at St Brigid's College for a shared Catholic Education Week liturgy and sausage sizzle. It is an exciting time to be involved in Catholic Education in our parish and we hope everyone enjoyed celebrating this week.

*Ally Brennan, Religious Education Leader - Ss Michael & John's Catholic Primary School*

## Saint Archbishop Oliver Plunkett relic held

A small hand-sewn silk burgundy zucchetto is kept in the Ballarat Diocesan Historical Archives which dates back to the 1660s. Both the maker and provenance remain unknown. A zucchetto is a small skullcap worn by Roman Catholic clergy. It is often worn on its own or under the mitre. What elevates this particular item's significance to both a national and international level is its direct link to Saint Archbishop Oliver Plunkett of Armagh, Ireland (inset left). A small handwritten note by Rev John Curry from Drogheda Ireland, written in brown ink, further enhances its historical value:

*"Worn on the head of the Martyr Primate, the Ver. Oliver Plunkett. Archbishop of Armagh. Ta Lestor [Testator?] Joannes [John] Curry."*

Born in 1625 in Loughcrew, County Meath, Oliver Plunkett was a grandson of the 7th Baron of Killen and Earl of Fingall. Admitted to the Irish College in Rome, he was ordained at 24 in 1654. During the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland (1649-53), Plunkett was appointed professor of theology at the College of Propaganda Fide in Rome. He was ordained Archbishop of Armagh on July 9, 1669, at Ghent, Belgium. Due to his doctrinal views and political beliefs, he would eventually go into hiding and travel throughout Europe. He was ultimately captured in Dublin on December 6, 1679 and imprisoned in Dublin Castle. A few years later, he was tried and found guilty of conspiring against the state and 'promoting the Roman faith'. For this, he was hanged, drawn, and quartered on July 1, 1681. Nearly 300 years later, Plunkett was eventually beatified in 1920 by Benedict XV and canonised in 1975 by Pope Paul VI.

The zucchetto was believed to belong to Very Rev Fr William Matthew Plunkett CSSR (inset right), the first Irish Redemptorist. He was also the third son of Arthur James Plunkett, Earl of Fingall and a relative of Archbishop Oliver Plunkett.

At 65, Fr Plunkett offered his services to Bishop James Moore in the new foundation of the Redemptorists in Ballarat in 1888, where he worked tirelessly with men half his age. Exactly how the zucchetto came into the diocesan collection remains a mystery. Perhaps it was donated by Fr Plunkett to Bishop Moore. Fr Plunkett died on September 9, 1900, at the age of 77, after spending twelve years in Australia.

Samantha Fabry – Diocesan Archivist



## 60th Anniversary

On Saturday, June 15, Our Lady Help of Christians Murtoa celebrated their 60th Anniversary. The date slipped by last year (1963 - 2023) but we wanted to acknowledge it therefore we invited all past and present students, families, staff and community members to come and join us in marking this milestone.



We would like to acknowledge the history of our school, and all the effort that went into the building of this special place, before the original building is replaced later in the year.

It was a lovely day, catching up with past staff, students and families. Some of our students sang, before Principal Chris McCumstie thanked the people who were a part of building Our Lady's into a great school. Mons Glynn Murphy and Sr Jacinta Rice csb also spoke. It was an opportunity for staff, students, families, parishioners and alumni to join in conversation, enjoy lunch, share memories and celebrate our school's 60 year history.

A tree was also planted commemorating the occasion.

Chris McCumstie – Principal





## Sorry Day Marked

On Friday, May 24, students from Loreto College Ballarat, St Patrick's College Ballarat and Damascus College Ballarat came together to acknowledge National Sorry Day at a ceremony hosted by Loreto College. National Sorry Day acknowledges the strength of the Stolen Generations Survivors and the intergenerational trauma that has followed.

Our Dhurrung and Year 8 students joined with Indigenous and Year 8 students from St Patrick's College and Damascus College. Year 8 students were selected to participate as the event linked with their curriculum towards deepening their knowledge of Australia by engaging in the world's oldest continuous living culture.



The event began with a traditional smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country conducted by traditional owner Macaylah Johnson, a Wadawurrung Woman (Class of 2019). Macaylah spoke to the confronting statistics that exist for First Nations people and emphasised the importance of reconciliation being everyone's business, encouraging everyone to have those tough conversations and to "walk together in peace and take care of one another".

As part of this event, Loreto College First Nations Captain, Ella McCormack said, "We felt it was important to recognise the collaboration of the three catholic secondary schools in Ballarat coming together for this ceremony by emulating the ancient practice of passing the message stick." Message sticks were traditionally passed to an Elder of a country that is not your own when you wanted to ask permission to enter. These days the message stick can also reflect the peaceful unity of coming together. A pre-recorded exchange of the message stick also provided an opportunity on this day to highlight the historical origins of seeking permission from the Traditional Owners to walk on their country.

Following this, student representatives from Loreto College, St Patrick's College and Damascus College led an assembly where we had the privilege of hearing Uncle Alan Harris, a Noongar Elder and long-time resident of Ballarat, who shared his story, the importance of Sorry Day for healing and how we can move forward as a community. Uncle Alan encouraged everyone in attendance to be 'beacons of change' amongst families and friends. Ella then shared her powerful message about the importance of recognising the suffering of the Stolen Generations and the rippling repercussions still being felt in subsequent generations.

This was the first year all three Ballarat Catholic secondary schools participated in the event. When reflecting on the significance of this event, Ella said "This is an important event for our schools where we can learn from each other, foster cultural identity and pride, and raise awareness of the importance of Sorry Day to Survivors of the Stolen Generations". Next year, Damascus College will host this event, continuing the importance of our community coming together to acknowledge and play our part in truth-telling and reconciliation, where together we can move forward as a community.

Jayde - Marketing and Development Office, Loreto College

## The Poppy Project

Catholic school communities across the Diocese of Ballarat recognised ANZAC Day through participation in both school and wider community commemorations. On Monday, April 22, seventy students from Siena Catholic Primary School, Lucas participated in a project to mark three thousand graves in Ballarat cemeteries with Australian flags, in honour of those who served their country. The students visited the Ballarat Old Cemetery, looked for the graves of 230 WWI and WWII returned service people and planted a flag for each grave. The Poppy Project is an ANZAC Commemoration Project aimed to bring community inclusion and education around ANZAC Day and the Soldiers commemorated by the Avenue of Honour. The Poppy Project Lucas in 2023 had 1000 poppies planted following community contribution to paint them. In 2024 around 3000 poppies were distributed. Siena Catholic Primary School is very proud of the students who spent time at the Ballarat cemetery placing Australian flags. The students reflected on this as "being a very emotional and moving experience."



Siena Catholic Primary School

# GOLDEN JUBILEE

St Mary's Parish in Colac were delighted to celebrate Fr Michael O'Toole's Golden Jubilee across the weekend of May 24 - 26.

Fr Michael was ordained on May 24, 1974 in Koroit and has served the Diocese of Ballarat for 50 years, the last fifteen in Colac. This tenure has followed service in Nhill, Horsham, Camperdown, Quambatook, Gordon/Ballan. Parishioners in those parts of the Diocese will be pleased to know that he speaks of you all often and fondly!

During the last fifteen years Colac has developed into a much more multicultural community and Fr Michael has been a generous resource, welcoming parish leaders for new communities from South Sudan, The Philippines, Timor Leste and more as these people have been brought into our community, broadening all of us and making us all better people.

Fr Michael's example is a lesson to us all.

Certainly these communities were involved in our weekend celebrations and the Filipino community went to a lot of trouble to cater our brunch following our 11:00am Mass on Sunday, May 26. Delicious!

Fr Michael has instituted a Christmas lunch in Colac where as many as three hundred sit down and take away meals are provided for anyone who needs one. A big "Thank You" to the band of Parish volunteers who have supported his reminder to feed those in need.

Fr Michael is cherished by our four local Catholic schools and the children were very much included in his celebrations! All students from St Brendan's Coragulac, Sacred Heart Colac and St Mary's Colac were joined by the student leaders from Trinity College as well as a class of students from Thomas Carr College who happened to be boarding at their Coragulac Campus (the former Good Sam convent) attended Mass together on Friday, May 24. The schools filled the Church to overflowing for a joyous Mass that both celebrant and congregation enjoyed enormously - especially the slide show with so many photos of our Parish Priest with HAIR!!!

After Mass Fr Michael was led to his "Surprise Party" on the courts of St Mary's School. He ran through a banner in the colours of his beloved Geelong Cats to greet the children who all waved their blue and white streamers and sang: **"He loves Geelong, the greatest priest of all; He loves Geelong, he also loves us all. He prays the prayers as they should be prayed. At home or far away. Our banners flying high, from lofty perch down at St Mary's Church" (to the Geelong FC song)**. The kids were delighted that Fr Michael ran a lap of the courts while they sang and cheered. Mr Mahoney from St Mary's made a great speech. Fr Michael thanked him, cut the cake and the kids all enjoyed a cup cake and the staff a coffee from our local coffee van.

*Jack Lenaghan - Principal, Sacred Heart Primary School*



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\*rate subject to change. Interest paid on maturity





## Stewardship of Creation

*At St James' Primary School Sebastopol, we pledge to raise awareness about the stewardship of creation. Our environmental education program draws on the call for action raised in Pope Francis' Laudato Si', to be "protectors of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and the environment".*

*Our school has fostered a unique approach to learning and teaching about our natural world, with our students taking an active role. Each week, students from Years 3-6 embark on a journey to a local area of Yarrowee Creek. Here, they not only test water quality and observe change but also connect with the natural world, journal their thoughts and even build relationships. They have the freedom to explore, play and take calculated risks, with nature as their playground.*

*St James' has been recognised for their sustainability program through nominations for two categories in the recent ResourceSmart Schools Awards, for both Community Leadership and Curriculum Leadership in Sustainability. These awards are presented by Sustainability Victoria and provide a wonderful platform to celebrate our deep commitment to ongoing sustainable practices and UN goals of Sustainable Development.*

*Future projects are underway at St James' to ensure that our school educates children and community members about the need to protect our natural world and one another. A new outdoor environmental education centre is being researched and constructed in the school's natural bush space. This space will be a wild space, replicating the landscape of Yarrowee Creek so that students can connect to natural spaces deeply.*

Maree Reus - Teacher



## Thank you, Anthea

*Anthea Hinchey retired from the Ballarat Social Justice Commission in March. Anthea joined the Commission in 2016 and was Chair from 2018 until her recent retirement. Anthea was an extremely effective Chair, an excellent communicator and conducted very efficient meetings. She was tireless in her role and was involved in every aspect of the Commission.*

*Her involvement included, among other things, the detailed planning and preparation of forums convened by the Commission on Refugees, the Environment and Family Matters, steering the Commission through*

*COVID, and overseeing the discussion and subsequent clarification of the Strategy, Vision and Purpose of the Commission. Anthea also helped to promote Laudato Si' and environment issues in the parishes and schools, shared Social Justice news with the community and drew together previous reports to enable the work of the Commission to be summarised.*

*At the March meeting Bishop Paul and members of the Commission formally thanked Anthea for her invaluable contribution in promoting Social Justice and Environmental issues on behalf of the Commission and in particular noted that she had been Chair for six years. Anthea's infectious enthusiasm, initiative and drive will be greatly missed as will her cheerful and positive outlook. Thank-you Anthea.*

Jim Ryan  
(Member of the Ballarat Diocesan Social Justice Commission)

*"Let us care for one another and let us be loving custodians of creation." Pope Francis*

# REST IN PEACE



Bishop Paul Bird, Bishop Emeritus Peter Connors, the priests, and people of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat are saddened by the passing of their brother and friend, Fr Thomas Brophy (Tom)

aged 84, who died peacefully on Sunday, April 28, 2024, at Justin Villa Age Care.

Fr Tom was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Ballarat on May 20, 1972 at St Patrick's Cathedral. He served as Assistant Priest in a number of parishes throughout the Diocese as well as being Parish Priest at Penshurst, Terang, Sea Lake, Ouyen, Ballarat North, Mildura and Wendouree, before retiring in 2015.

Fr Tom will be known to many across the Diocese. May Fr Tom now enter into the fullness of life promised to all who preach the Gospel and may he rest in peace.

On Friday, April 12, Sr Mary Madden rsm, died peacefully at Mercy Place, Ballarat.



Mary was a Mercy woman of deep faith, committing her life to others through education as a teacher and principal in schools throughout the Diocese of Ballarat. Completing further studies, Mary also worked as a Welfare Officer and Parish Pastoral Associate.

Mary was an exceptionally kind person, gracious and welcoming to all with whom she came in contact.

Mary is now reunited with her two sisters - Sr Agatha and Sr Christina who pre-deceased her. Together, they are a trinity of Madden Mercies held in the embrace of their loving God. The Funeral Mass for Sr Mary took place on Tuesday, April 23, at St Alipius Church, Ballarat East.

*DOBCEL Communications*

*Sr Joan Dagleish rsm died peacefully at Nazareth House, Ballarat on Saturday, March 9, 2024.*



*Joan was a deeply committed Mercy woman who dedicated her life to others through education as a teacher, principal and librarian in schools within the Diocese of Ballarat including Ballarat, Edenhope, Clarkes Hill, Bungaree and Manangatang. A change of ministry led Joan to engage wholeheartedly in Industrial Chaplaincy and Counselling, followed by ministry in Pastoral Care, accompanying those in bereavement.*

*Joan was grateful for the quiet presence of the Sisters and staff who supported her during her time at Nazareth House, accompanying her to the moment when she was taken into the loving embrace of her God whom she served so faithfully.*

*Her Funeral Mass was held on Monday, March 18 at St Alipius Church, Ballarat East.*

*DOBCEL Communications*

*It is with sadness that I inform the Sunraysia Community of the death of Sr Marion McDonald rsm on March 7, 2024. Our prayers are with Sr Marion's Family, the Sisters of Mercy and also the communities in which she served and ministered.*

*Sr Marion was a Principal at St Joseph's College and for eighteen years was the Parish Leader at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish Merbein from 1999 - 2017.*



*Sr Marion spent the next stage of her life at Rice Village Geelong.*

*Her contribution to the Merbein Parish will be long remembered and fondly recalled well into the future.*

*She was an inspiration to some and an example of hospitality to others, but most of all she was a friend to all she met. Let us pray that God now welcomes her into his eternal love.*

*Fr Matt Thomas - Sunraysia Parish Priest*



# BIODIVERSITY DAY

# WATER DAY



## Community Leadership School of the Year

Huge congratulations to St Patrick’s, Primary School Port Fairy on receiving Sustainability Victoria’s ResourceSmart Schools award for “Community Leadership School of the Year,” alongside Tecoma Primary School. St Patrick’s Principal, Olga Lyons said the award was wonderful recognition of the outstanding work of staff and students over the past several years. “Our school community has always been aware of the beautiful natural environment we have here at Port Fairy and our deep responsibility to care for it. Such is the enthusiasm for sustainability, 82 students across all year levels this year volunteered to join the student action team to plan and help deliver the programs and activities across the school,” she said.

St Patrick’s Sustainability Leader, Benson Steere, said students took on projects each year around the four key areas of waste, water, energy and biodiversity. “The student action team plan and deliver full day programs for the whole school each term, focused on each of the key action areas. Our students work closely with the Port Fairy Coastal Care group to monitor beach erosion, grow seasonal produce at the school, recycle linen and materials into pencil cases for children in a Tanzanian school founded by parents of the school. These are just a few of our current projects. We are very proud to have a vibrant program that complements the curriculum and helps students develop a deeper understanding of the principles and importance of sustainability,” Mr Steere said.

Ms Lyons said the award is testament to the hard work of the Sustainability Student Leaders and staff over the last few years as well as support from the entire school community. “The energy and expertise of Andrea Lane, who has since moved to another school, along with recently retired Deputy Principal, Peter Sanderson, and now Benson Steere, along with all our staff, have been instrumental to the rich learning opportunities provided for the students,” she said.

Matt Genever, CEO at Sustainability Victoria, said the award winning ResourceSmart Schools have shown that they are not only participants in sustainability but are leading the way as custodians of the future environment. “Their initiative, creativity and dedication has allowed sustainable practices to flourish on their campuses and into their local communities,” he said.

DOBCEL Communications

St Patrick’s College Ballarat Year 10 students were invited to participate in the **One Night of Homelessness** from 7pm on Thursday, May 23 to 7.30am on Friday, May 24. The purpose of this evening was to learn about their impact on the world and how they can contribute to making the world a better place, starting at the community level.

The **One Night of Homelessness** was challenging and at times confronting experience that introduced the students to just some of the conditions that approximately 36,000 young people in Australia experience on any given night.

**One Night of Homelessness** consisted of a range of challenges and experiences including eating a meal from a soup kitchen, sleeping with the comfort of just a blanket, exposure for a small period of time to the elements of nature, and informative sessions from outside agencies working with homeless youth daily.

It was an evening filled with empathy and reflection.

Karina Dunne – Head of Middle School



## One Night of Homelessness



# RAVEN COLLECTIVE



Raven Collective won the most votes from members on the night and received the \$20,000 grant. The two remaining programs each received \$2,500. Congratulations to all three programs.



The evening was hosted by Loreto College Ballarat students, Lucy Eales, Matilda Carli and Ella Demunk, along with St Patrick's College Ballarat students, Noah Quick, Paterson Meneely and Angus Rothe. The students also gave their insights about what gender equality means to their generation.

Raven Collective is centred around providing a safe and supportive environment for women who have experienced domestic abuse. They recognise the challenges women face and are dedicated to helping them develop the necessary skills to seek and sustain ongoing employment, ultimately empowering them to become self-sufficient.

Through their 10-week program, Raven Collective offers paid practical employment opportunities that combine training and education. Their goal is to upskill participants, equipping them with the tools they need to access long-term employment or pursue further education upon completion of the program. In understanding that healing and accessing a better future requires more than just employment, they have partnered with local organisations that specialise in supporting the emotional growth and well-being of the "Women of Raven" within a therapeutic environment. By packing the gift boxes that are purchased through their platform, they not only create sustainable and meaningful employment but also contribute to driving social change.

Raven Collective's commitment goes beyond providing employment and training. They are dedicated to promoting social change, fostering personal growth, and building a community that values resilience and empowerment. At Raven Collective, they feel assisting women who have experienced adversity to learn and develop independence is of the utmost importance. A necessity in ensuring women gain the skills and confidence to live a life of success and fulfilment that is founded on their accomplishment and is the key to avoiding women escaping abusive relationships and from returning to their abusers or experience homelessness.

*More information at <https://www.ravencollective.org/>*

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation supported the Ballarat Women's Fund through a grant of \$20,000. Sandi Murphy, from the Ballarat Foundation spoke with the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation members at a recent meeting. The Ballarat Women's Fund (an appeal of the Ballarat Foundation) enables community members to participate in collective giving to influence positive responses to gender inequality.

The Ballarat Women's Fund has been created as a direct response to the need of our community. The fund has been established to address issues that women face such as:

- Domestic or family violence;
- Safe, affordable rental housing for low-income earners;
- Equal opportunities in the workforce.

Using a giving circle model, where by individuals donate to a pooled fund and together the group decide how to allocate funds. Each member is able to vote for projects to receive grants. It is an opportunity for all members of the community, men and women, to address the societal issue of gender inequality in Ballarat.

The Ballarat Foundation held the inaugural **Pick Our Project Evening** on the eve of International Women's Day, March 7, 2024. This was the first opportunity for members of the fund to listen to pitches and vote for one program that will create positive change for women in Ballarat.

The three shortlisted programs who pitched were:

- Create-Respect Ballarat (Child and Family Services Ballarat)
- Frida's Daring Voices (WRISC Family Violence Support)
- Raven Collective Services (Raven Collective Services and Training)

## FIRST RECONCILIATION



*Nikayla Oto Muliawan lit her Baptism candle after her first Reconciliation in St Joseph's Church Timboon. Congratulations to her parents who prepared Nikayla at home from resources supplied by the parish.*

Ruth Hoffmann - Timboon Parish Sacrament Coordinator

Our Diocesan Community - July 2024

## Meet Eric, Bachelor of Nursing graduate

Eric accepted his testamur on Friday, April 12 at the Australian Catholic University's first graduation ceremony in Ballarat. Eric also gave the vote of thanks speech to his graduation cohort. Congratulations Eric!

### What are your plans now you have graduated?

My passion lies in healthcare and I aspire to continue my journey as a healthcare worker. I aim to make a meaningful impact by contributing to the improvement of people's health and wellbeing.

### What did you enjoy most about your time at ACU?

Every moment at ACU was valuable to me. From lectures to assignments and late-night study sessions, each second represented my journey towards adulthood and my goal of making a positive difference in the world. I cherished the opportunity to learn and grow, both academically and personally, during my time at ACU.

### What advice would you give to a current ACU student?

My advice to current ACU students is simple: embrace every aspect of university life. Don't hesitate to ask questions; it's a natural part of the learning process. Enjoy the journey, be yourself and seize every opportunity to expand your knowledge and skills.

Again, congratulations Eric and the best of luck with your Nursing career!

ACU - Aquinas Campus



## Message Sticks tour

To mark the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat, and in recognition of, and sensitivity to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers, four Message Sticks will simultaneously journey to each Catholic school across the four education zones of the Diocese. A Mother Stick will remain in the central Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) Office to which the four travelling Message Sticks are indelibly linked.

The Message Sticks were crafted by Trevor Clark and Vicki Clarke OAM, a DOBCEL Board Director and founder of The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry of Victoria (ACMV).

They were blessed by Fr Marcello Colasante, Vicar General and presented to representatives of the four diocesan education zones during the Catholic Education Week Mass in Ballarat on May 3.

The Message Sticks are now journeying across the Catholic schools of the Diocese, remaining with each school for approximately one week, before being handed onto the next school community, connecting over time, community to community.

At the conclusion of their journeys, the four Message Sticks will find a home in a prayer space within each one of the Catholic Education Ballarat offices.

They will journey outwards to further gatherings with their presence in liturgies symbolically reminding all that, from the Murray to the Sea, we are a hope-filled Catholic community of communities.

Gerard Delaney - Manager: Marketing and Communications

Photo above: Catholic Education Ballarat Zone representatives and Executive Director, Tom Sexton being presented with the Message Stick by Vicki Clark. L - R: Gerard Raven (Mid Northern), Shelley Ryan (Central), Cynthia Maiden (Northern) and Peter Morgan (Southern).





# McAuley House

McAuley House provides medium-term accommodation and outreach support for women who have been homeless or are at risk of homelessness in and around Ballarat. Michaela Settle MP and State Treasurer Tim Pallas visited McAuley House Ballarat to announce funding for the facility has been extended for another year.

So far in 2023-2024, nineteen women have been supported while living at McAuley House with a further twenty eight women supported who were living in

the community. McAuley House brings McAuley's model of integrated support – a proven method of eliminating homelessness for women – into regional Victoria. It provides programs to develop skills and reconnect women to food and cooking. Women have access to case management support as well as extended supports to assist in their recovery and to rebuild their lives.

In the 2022/2023 financial year:

- 15 women were given a safe place to live;
- The average length of stay in McAuley accommodation was 166 days;
- The average age of our residents was 38.4;
- Almost 40% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

"I came to McAuley House at the lowest point in my life. I was scared and confused. My little unit became my safe place. Gradually, I regained some direction in my life," says a former resident. With funding extended into 2025, McAuley will continue to provide this vital and unique service to some of Ballarat's most vulnerable women. McAuley CEO, Jocelyn Bignold OAM says "It's always a tremendous relief when our funding for this site is extended. It's such vital work in a place that has a very real need for supported accommodation like ours."

Hayley Marriott - Fundraising & Engagement Advisor

People in the photo: Juliana Addison, Tim Pallas, Michaela Settle, Jocelyn Bignold, Martha Haylett



## Hearts and Hands, Compassion and Justice

*You must love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:31)* The annual collection for the St Vincent de Paul Society was another huge success at Mary MacKillop College Swan Hill. The generosity of all people within our community was evident with over forty shopping bags full of food, toiletries and blankets being offered at our *Hearts and Hands* Mass. Representatives from the local St Vincent de Paul Conference, Mr Mully Pearse and Ms Jocelyn Ingram, were overwhelmed with the amount of items collected, saying these donations will go directly to people and families struggling this winter. Sincere thanks to all involved in the Mass. Being held first thing in the morning was a little different (and a bit colder!), however, the reverence shown by all staff and students was great.

Alison Wright - Director of Faith & Mission

Our Diocesan Community - July 2024

# ausDANCE VIC



## VET - DANCE

It was an honour, a privilege and a joy to accompany a group of Vocational Education Training (VET) Dance students to Melbourne for their Industry experience day. There were ten students overall with their dance teacher and five of these young people were from Damascus College Ballarat.

The day began early – with two train cancellations which had the teacher a little stressed, but our students took it in their stride. Arriving right on start time at the venue, they quickly prepared themselves for the first session, a Broadway Jazz class, and after a warmup session participated with great enthusiasm with thirty others in the group. At the same time four other workshops were being held in a variety of dance styles, altogether one hundred and fifty students, and at the end of the session all groups presented to each other a dance that they had learned during the class. These amazing students learned and presented a dance in just over an hour of tuition.

Following this short break of viewing others learning, they moved to yet another style of dance and again learned and presented to the whole group a style that for some was new and unknown. Everyone wholeheartedly threw themselves into each class and participated with enthusiasm and in a very professional way.

The final sessions for the day were “mock auditions”. Again a variety of dance styles were offered and our group participated in a mock audition for Wicked. The teacher selected different students for a variety of reasons, to give a final performance to the whole group – as if they had been successful in an audition.

The trip home was relatively quiet as very tired dance students made their way home via a train that was running on time, back to Ballarat. Thank you for inviting an ‘old dancer’ to be part of your day.

*Dr Susan Crowe - Catholic Education, Ballarat*

## CONFIRMATION CONGRATULATIONS



*On May 16 and 17, Year 3 and Year 5 students from St Joseph's Primary School Warrnambool participated in the Sacrament of Confirmation.*

*After four weeks of preparation and reflection, students eagerly entered the St Joseph's Church foyer to commence their Sacrament liturgy. During Confirmation, candidates confirm that they want to continue their faith journey in a formal way and through participation in this very special sacrament. As we gathered in the foyer, there were nerves and there was excitement.*

*The ceremony was a fantastic celebration of unity and all candidates should be very proud of themselves. Congratulations to the students who celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation.*

*Matthew O'Brien – Principal*

## Feast Day Celebrations

making sure everyone is included in all our games and activities. This term has been so inspiring for us, teaching Marilly and I a lot of new and exciting things that will definitely help us in the future. Thank you....and Happy St Joseph's Day!"

After a treat of green jelly and celebration cupcakes, students worked in multi-aged groups to learn a little more about St Joseph. The three groups completed portraits of St Joseph made origami white lilies and even dressed up as St Joseph.

After recess, paying homage to St Joseph's skill as a carpenter, the tools came out! The Junior grades hammered, created and painted to create their own unique craft works while the Grade 3-6 students worked in groups to make a set of school billy karts.

The highlight of the day was definitely seeing the students try new things – hammering, using power drills, riding billy karts, gold leaf decoration on our cupcakes and singing "Happy Feast Day to You".

Mary Hogan - Principal, St Joseph Primary School Charlton

Image: The Billy Kart Crew



Tuesday, March 19 marked the annual Feast Day of St Joseph and the day was celebrated with great gusto! The day commenced with a Mass of celebration, honouring St Joseph and remembering all that is great about our school community. During the Mass, Term 1 leaders reflected on what they value about St Joseph's School.

Marilly felt that.... "St Joseph's is a small, caring and welcoming school community with lots of great, unique students. Our teachers are very nice, kind and caring. They care about our wellbeing and never put us under too much pressure. And that is why I think St Joseph's is an amazing school."

Rosie added .... "As school leaders, it is our responsibility to make sure we set a good example to others around us,

## MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS FEAST DAY

*On the recent celebration of Mary Help of Christians Feast Day on May 24, Mass was held at St Michael's in Wycheproof to beseech Our Lady Help of Christians in prayer. Mass was celebrated by Fr Gerry Prunty, while the readings were read by Jo Russell from Charlton. Fr Gerry explained in his reflection that in Mary's great prayer, which we call the Magnificat, it is one of great thanks for the blessings she has received, and Mary's wonderful trust in God. It is one that can inspire us to do the same in our prayer for ourselves and fellow Australians on this feast day.*

*Guest speaker was Fran Haddrick from Birchip. Fran recalled her life as the second child of six children as one of hard work, as she was required to assist her mother with caring for her younger siblings, when many times she just wanted to be a child herself. Fran left school and joined the Sisters of Mercy, but four years later, after taking her vows, she decided it was not the journey God asked of her. Isaiah 43 tells us that "God will make a way", or "God will show us the way". God led Fran to her husband of 55 years, Richard, and four children of her own.*

*Fran referenced times that Mary, Our Lady Help of Christians, was put in a predicament as a mother but had unwavering faith in God's choices for her; Immaculate Conception for one! Jesus aged 12, going missing only to be found in a temple days later; at the foot of the cross as her son was dying. Motherhood, in so many instances, can be difficult. Mass was followed by the rosary and a morning tea. East Wimmera Parish hope this is the beginning of a new tradition going forward, with St Mary's in Birchip offering to host the Mass next year.*

*Historical Information: During Napoleon Bonaparte's tumultuous reign, Pius VI was unjustly imprisoned and died in captivity in France. Several years later his successor, Pope Pius VII, was captured and faced the same fate. In a pledge to God, Pope Pius VII vowed to establish a special feast in honour of Mary, should he be restored to the papal seat. He asked all Christendom to pray the rosary to Our Lady Help of Christians for this intention. Eventually, military pressure compelled Bonaparte to release the Pope. He returned triumphantly to Rome on May 24, 1814 and officially decreed the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians to be observed on this date a year later. The infant church in Australia had a special reason for turning to Mary. In those early days, with very few priests around, it was largely the rosary that kept the faith alive. Catholic Australia remained faithful to Mary, and was the first nation to choose her, under the title Help of Christians, as Principal Patroness. A title now shared with Mary of the Cross MacKillop.*



Historical Source: [www.theworkofgod.org/library/maryhelp/patroness](http://www.theworkofgod.org/library/maryhelp/patroness) & [www.catholicweekly.com.au](http://www.catholicweekly.com.au)  
Noeline Hogan - Parish Coordinator

# CELEBRATING THE SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL WORK OF WOMEN

Although it was a typically chilly Ballarat day, the sun shone and the friendly company, the welcoming conversations, excellent talks and hearty lunch contributed to a lively and hope-filled day for the 2024 Diocesan Conference of the Catholic Women's League.

The Conference aimed to celebrate the history of women's contribution to the life of the Church in Ballarat and to discern how the CWL in Ballarat might address the needs of people - particularly women and children in our region.

The Conference opened with Mass and choral celebration of the Australian Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians.

Over 35 registrants, including new members and many other valued casual visitors joined us for lunch including Bishop Paul Bird, members of one of the Cathedral choirs, Cathedral priests and members of various ministries and groups.

The Executive and Ballarat Cathedral community for the Conference and CWL members Colac, Ararat, Stawell, Dunkeld, Timboon and Cobden travelled to join the day.

Dr Samantha Fabry, the Ballarat Diocesan Archivist, gave an excellent presentation about the archivists who had preceded her (the first woman archivist in this role) with absorbing details about the importance of these figures in preserving the ecclesial and social history of this area.

In the afternoon the Conference considered its present and future mission – in conversation with Liz McCartin, the Team Leader of Family Services at CatholicCare Ballarat, of the complex plight of children and families.

Anna Krohn - CWL



## THE JOURNEY OF THE MESSAGE STICK



On Monday, June 17, St Aloysius Primary School, Redan celebrated the receiving of the Message Stick from St Patrick's College with a beautiful liturgy shared with students and staff from both schools.

The theme of the liturgy was "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction and faithful in prayer", the scripture verse chosen for our diocesan 150th Anniversary year and reflects various elements of our vocation as a Christian community. Students from both schools shared in leading the liturgy. Students from St Patrick's sang the anniversary song, "Together we build our place" and at the conclusion of the liturgy the children of St Aloysius presented the St Patrick's staff and students with an indigenous ribbon.

This message stick is one of four message sticks that are traveling around the Diocese to celebrate the 150th Anniversary - one to the north, south, east and west. These message sticks are being carried from school to school to remind us of the interconnectedness of all our schools, from the Murray to the Sea.

Bernadette Lynch - Religious Education Leader

# FR PADDY MUGAVIN



Born in 1950, Patrick (Paddy) Mugavin is the second child in a family of nine, and was raised on a dairy farm at Wollaston, just outside Warrnambool. Despite a life-time desire to pursue a career in agriculture, the prayers of his grandmother prevailed that he might one day be a priest.

Paddy speaks glowingly of the influence and encouragement given by his teachers at CBC. Grateful for the opportunity to develop a wide range of interests both sporting and cultural, as well as personal and spiritual development, he was humbled to be chosen to take on the responsibility as school captain in his final year. Enduring friendships with teachers and fellow students from those days have enriched his life to this day.

His seminary studies over seven years beginning 1968, saw him being one of the few student-priests spanning three different campuses in Werribee, Glen Waverley and Clayton, which signified major changes in the church following Vatican II. Vibrant world class lecturers, especially at Glen Waverley under the Jesuits, inspired him in a life time pursuit of further study and contemplation.

The Columban Missionary magazine, *The Far East*, which arrived each month in the family home, inspired him to a world wide vision of the church and social justice, which saw him serve during the summer vacation on isolated mission stations in the jungles of Papua New Guinea, on three separate occasions during his seminary years. Such experiences sensitized him to the immense challenge of inculturation of the gospel message in different cultures, including the rapidly changing modern culture.



Having been ordained in Warrnambool in 1974, he then served in parishes in Horsham, Mildura and Ballarat. While in Ballarat he was deeply involved in youth ministry and was named as the inaugural director of youth ministry in the Diocese of Ballarat. It was a vibrant and exciting time with many of our tertiary students at Aquinas and St John of God Nursing School participating

in activities and liturgies (now combined as Australian Catholic University.)

In the meantime, a visit to India in 1978 exploring Eastern spirituality had a profound effect on Paddy and provided the doorway for him to rediscover our rich Catholic heritage of meditation and contemplative practices. He has since been involved in leading and conducting meditation courses and groups in successive parishes, including his current parish of Western Border.

The Ballarat diocese has a long history of giving its priests the opportunity for a cross cultural mission experience in Papua New Guinea or Chile. Paddy seized on this opportunity and served with the Columban Missionary Society in Chile between 1985 - 1991. They were tumultuous times under the cruel dictatorship of General Pinochet. Working with the poorest of the poor in marginal shanty towns, his parish shared the persecution endured by the marginalised. In endeavoring to be the voice of the voiceless, and in taking the side of the powerless, the priest and parish was treated as an enemy of the state, which led to much tension with the authorities.

In Paddy's time ministering on the outskirts of Santiago in this atmosphere, he learned much from the deep faith and hope of inspirational Chileans, who though poor, were rich in solidarity with one another. He came to experience first hand God's preferential option for the poor and learned to read again the gospel from the perspective of the poor (which is the call of Pope Francis to the church today.) During this time Paddy was especially inspired by his experiences of the great courage and faith of the victims of torture and the families of the disappeared. Such lessons remain vivid for him to this day.

Returning to the diocese he soon found himself once again in Mildura, part of an experimental team ministry approach. It was during ten years in Mildura that he was exposed to the horror and destructiveness of past clergy abuse. Subsequently, along with the Parish Pastoral Team, he was able to confront such crimes and work with survivors and their families, as well as the wounded parish community, towards some healing. Extensive media appearances, public meetings, cleansing rituals, symbolic actions, removal of names from church foundation stones, were some of the actions he led in this sad and traumatized time. Paddy has continued to be involved with many such survivors and their families over succeeding years.

His capacity to minister in such traumatic circumstances was enhanced by a year's sabbatical in Chicago in 1999/2000 at the Institute for Spiritual Leadership. The formation accorded him in this twelve months has had a profound enriching effect on him and his way of ministering.

Paddy sees the repercussions of the scandal of clergy sexual abuse to be the greatest challenge our church faces in these coming years. He feels that until there are significant prophetic actions by the church towards the healing of victims and their families, our church will



struggle to reach the hearts of new generations. Paddy's desire is that the church of the future be more humble, more inclusive of women, ever ready to listen to and learn from the voices of the wounded and ever ready to engage creatively with the culture of our day.

Paddy commenced as Parish Priest of the former St Mary's Parish Hamilton in 2003. In 2018 the parishes of Hamilton, Edenhope, Coleraine, Casterton and Harrow were merged to form St Mary MacKillop Parish, Western Border.

Upon the arrival of Fr George Kuruvila in 2020, Fr Paddy and Fr George were appointed Co-Pastors with Fr George pastorally caring for the communities in the west and Fr Paddy caring for those in the east of the Parish.

Underpinning Paddy's story is the unconditional love given him by his parents, family, and special friends, mirroring the source of all love.

*First printed at <https://www.emmanuel.vic.edu.au/alumni/alumni/fr-patrick-mugavin>*

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On Sunday, May 19, 2024 the Western Border Parish celebrated the 50th Anniversary of **Fr Paddy Mugavin** being ordained a priest. It was a wonderful celebration, attended by parishioners, the school community, family and friends. Following are the words from Luella Causer, one of our 2024 School Captains, spoken on behalf of our school students.

*"Fr Paddy, you always make sure everyone is welcome in our community. We love the way you stand at the door at the end of Mass and chat to us as we head home. All students love when you come for your weekly visits to our school. You are always very kind and caring and interested in what we are doing. You come to the events we have on at school, like our Mother's Day celebration recently. Thank you for showing us how to live like Jesus and teaching us how to follow in His footsteps. Congratulations on your 50 years of being a priest."*



Terrielynn Groves - Principal, St Mary's PS Hamilton

## REFUGEE WEEK 2024

Refugee Week in Australia is always held from Sunday to Saturday of the week which includes June 20 (World Refugee Day). For 2024, it was held from Sunday, June 16 - Saturday, June 22.

*The aims of Refugee Week are: to educate the Australian public about who refugees are and why they have come to Australia; to help people understand the many challenges refugees face coming to Australia; to celebrate the contribution refugees make to our community; to focus on how the community can provide a safe and welcoming environment for refugees; for community groups and individuals to do something positive for refugees, people seeking asylum and displaced people, within Australia but also around the world; and for service providers to reflect on whether they are providing the best possible services to refugees.*

*Trinity College Colac celebrated Refugee Week with guests from the Colac and District Rural Australians for Refugees, sharing a special lunch prepared by students. While students, staff and visitors enjoyed the warming food, we were privileged to hear a little about the activities that the group engage in to assist refugee families in the area and how they make a difference to their lives. Thank you to everyone who helped out and a big thanks to our wonderful cooks!*

Trinity College facebook  
<https://www.refugeeweek.org.au>



# Sharing the Experience of Marriage Encounter

Jordan and Ah Kwi Lan from the Northeast Mallee Parish, shared their reflections and thoughts on a Marriage Encounter weekend recently at Sunday Mass.

**JORDAN:** Hello everyone and hope you are all well! For those who don't know us, my name is Jordan and this is my lovely wife Ah Kwi Lan. We are both locals and we are very blessed to be part of this wonderful parish community. The community spirit is strong because we always get together during difficult times to give a small helping hand to those in need and that makes a big difference in their life.

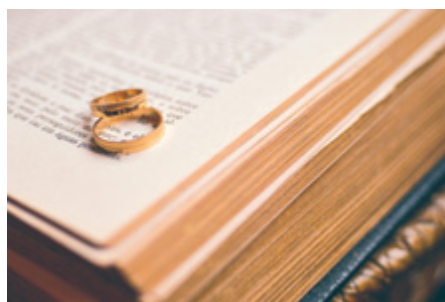
We are both here to talk about Worldwide Marriage Encounter and to invite married couples to experience a Marriage Encounter weekend. The origins of Worldwide Marriage Encounter go back to 1952 when a young Spanish priest, Father Gabriel Calvo, developed a series of conferences for married couples. For more than 50 years, Worldwide Marriage Encounter has helped over 3.5 million couples in more than 100 countries. It came to Australia in the 1970's.

It is quite normal for us to lose touch with our spouse due to our everyday life challenges with kids (when dealing with teenagers), school and work life. A Marriage Encounter weekend brings a unique opportunity to rekindle loving relationships. Thousands of couples around the world have nurtured their relationships this way.

So, what's a Marriage Encounter weekend? It runs from Friday evening through to Sunday afternoon. It provides you with tools for improved communication, better listening, acceptance of each other for who we are and leads to greater intimacy in our married relationship. Throughout the weekend, there is no group discussion or marriage counselling. It's private and dedicated time for just the two of you, to allow you to focus on your relationship.

**AH KWI LAN:** Jordan and I have known each other for 28 years and we have

been married for 22 years. During our marriage, we have shared lots of wonderful times together. Every moment spent together is a gift – a chance to share our unconditional love and appreciation for each other. However, we have also had difficult times; times when we are not as connected as we could be, which is part of being married.



We decided to go to our first Marriage Encounter weekend last year in Melbourne when we saw this announcement in one of the church bulletins. We told Fr James that we were very interested to do it. However, we really did not know what to expect, but Jordan and I were very keen to go and experience it and glad we did!!

We had some communication gaps in our married life due to our daily routine; kids, studies and work. We had no idea what a weekend could bring for the mutual benefit of our relationship. We were a bit nervous at the start, but we came out of the weekend revitalized; really appreciating each other and much more connected. The Marriage Encounter weekend has helped us to have new hopes for a better married life and this experience has also reminded us that our marriage is the most important relationship to cherish and to preserve.

**JORDAN:** So, who is a Marriage Encounter weekend for? The weekend is mostly suited for 'good marriages' but has also helped couples who have said they were struggling. However, it's not really suited for couples with very serious problems.

On the weekend, there are a series of talks given by two or three married couples and a priest. The team are

not counsellors, but they are normal couples like us. They share their own stories of ups and downs and open the door to exploring how we communicate, how we listen to each other and how we can choose to make loving decisions that support our married relationships.

At regular times throughout the weekend, couples have sufficient time alone to explore the topics being presented. This time is private and there is no group sharing!

The weekend is honestly a gift. You don't "need" a weekend – you deserve one. It's really about the two of you deserving it.

A Marriage Encounter weekend is based on Catholic values but it's also worth mentioning that couples of all or no faith are very welcome. It's for all married couples; no matter how many years you've been married.

**AH KWI LAN:** We recognise that our marriages are important. Of course, it's worth spending time to focus and nurture our most important relationship. Why just settle for 'OK' or 'Good' when you can have a great or even better marriage? And it's not just you who benefits – your family and friends especially your kids (even adult kids) get to see and feel a difference in your relationship.

**JORDAN:** When is the next weekend available? There is one more available in Victoria for this year and it is on October 4-6. It's a live-in weekend at St Paul's Missionary College in Wantirna South (it is a suburb in Melbourne). It's a different kind of "weekend getaway" so you can get away from the pressures and distractions of daily routines to focus on just the two of you. There are also private rooms for couples available on the premises.

To conclude, we do hope that every married couple takes just a few minutes to consider whether you would like to attend the weekend. To this day, we are very glad we did as it is having lasting effects on our relationship. Thank you, Fr James for allowing us to speak and to all of you

for listening. Before we go, we would like to share with you a beautiful quote on "Marriage".

Marriage is not about a wedding. It's about the years of growing together and as individuals and not giving up on one another.

It is also an important reminder for us to pray for all couples. God bless you! Thank you!

Fr James thanked Jordan and Ah Kwi Lan for sharing their experience so beautifully.

For more information on Worldwide Marriage Encounter visit <https://www.wvme.org.au/>

First published on <https://northeastmallee.org.au/2024/03/02/worldwide-marriage-encounter/>  
Images: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)



## Grandparents share stories of life and learning

More than sixty grandparents visited St Patrick's Primary School, Ballarat on May 30 to share their stories as part of a school-wide focus on 'story' and recognition of the school's centenary on its Drummond Street site. "Today has been incredibly heartwarming and enriching for students, grandparents and staff alike," Principal Ben Shields said.

Throughout the morning, rooms were filled with laughter, nostalgia and the sharing of cherished memories. Grandparents recounted tales of their childhood, adventures and the lessons they've learned along the way. These narratives enrich the students' understanding of history, culture and the power of storytelling, as well as instilling a sense of community and belonging and bridging the gap between generations.



"Our school focus on story in our centenary year has also included visits from renowned children's authors, a variety of local excursions and interactive sessions like today, where the narratives of important people in our lives, such as our grandparents, take centre stage. More broadly, as we celebrate one hundred years of Catholic education on our Drummond Street site, events like grandparents' morning highlight the enduring values of family, community and the importance of preserving and sharing our stories."

"We continue our commitment to holistic education, where learning extends beyond textbooks and classrooms, fostering a deeper appreciation for human experience and connection. We are grateful for the warmth and generosity of the grandparents who were able to join us, along with their rich contribution to the vibrant and dynamic learning environment of St Patrick's," Ben said.

DOBCEL Communications

"God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to put on faith, hope and love as we go out into the world and become the word in body as well as spirit." Pope Francis

# Cororooke Parish



came before us, we also acknowledged the contribution of those who continue to nurture the faith life of our parish.

Gratitude was expressed to Maureen Finn for her dedicated pastoral care and leadership as she concluded her term as Moderator within the Parish Leadership Team. The Parish Leadership Team members commissioned by Bishop Paul were Delia Melville, Margaret Allan, Michelle Gorwell, Bronwyn Hickman, Jill O'Dowd, Pat O'Shea and Lucy Darcy. Lucy Darcy was appointed as Moderator for the Parish of Cororooke. Fr Michael O'Toole was appointed as Supervising Priest for the parish in 2020 and continues to generously serve in collaboration with the Parish Leadership Team.

Following Mass, the community enjoyed lunch in the parish hall, where a display depicted the history of our parish. We were conscious of the spirit of gratitude present – gratitude for the faith and vision of those who came before us and for all who, in this year of renewal for our Diocese, continue to communicate joy and hope, encourage the heart, inspire a shared vision and live out their Baptismal call.

On Trinity Sunday, May 26, 2024, the communities of St Brendan's Coragulac and St Joseph's Pirron Yallock gathered to celebrate the Eucharist with Bishop Paul Bird as celebrant. It was a fitting occasion to respect and acknowledge the heritage of the Cororooke Parish and the traditions of the faith communities of St Brendan's and St Joseph's, especially in the context of the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of Ballarat.

As the banner in the church expressed, "The Cororooke Parish – Together we come", we welcomed all, from the youngest 9-month-old Dorothy Allan to the senior member and pillar of our community, Keith Lenehan. Conscious of standing on the shoulders of those who

*Liz McGuane*

*Photo: Bishop Paul, Parish Moderator: Lucy Darcy, Leadership Team: Pat O'Shea, Delia Melville, Michelle Gorwell, Margaret Allan, Jill O'Dowd (Absent - Bronwyn Hickman)*

## Celebrating fifty years

On May 18, 2024, Fr Eric Bryant celebrated his fiftieth anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. A thanksgiving Mass was celebrated on Sunday, May 19 at 10.30am in the St James Parish Church, Sebastopol. Bishop Emeritus Peter Connors and Fr Eladio Lizada concelebrated with Fr Eric. After Mass, a morning tea was held in the church foyer and parishioners gathered to celebrate with Fr Eric.

Fr Eric was ordained in Ballarat in 1974 and retired due to ill health in 2020. Fr Eric held Assistant Priest positions in Colac, Portland and Cathedral Parishes. He has been Parish Priest in Hopetoun, Portland, Koroit, Port Fairy and Stawell, from where he retired to Ballarat. Congratulations Fr Eric on your golden jubilee.

*Pauline O'Brien - Parish Coordinator*

## Retirement news

*Fr Eugene McKinnon has celebrated his final Mass as a Parish Priest in the Diocese of Ballarat, retiring on April 7, which was also his 75th birthday. Fr Eugene will take a sojourn in the Sandhurst Diocese before returning to retirement in Ballarat.*

*East Wimmera Parish in the Northwest of the diocese acknowledged this occasion as Fr Eugene had spent several years in the parish from 2012 to 2021.*

*There was also an opportunity for the parishioners of Redan and Sebastopol to farewell Fr Eugene at a supper after the 6.00pm Mass at St Aloysius on Saturday, April 6 and then at a morning tea after the 10.30am Mass at St James' on Sunday, April 7. Congratulations Eugene and many happy returns for your birthday!*



*Photo taken from East Wimmera Parish Facebook*

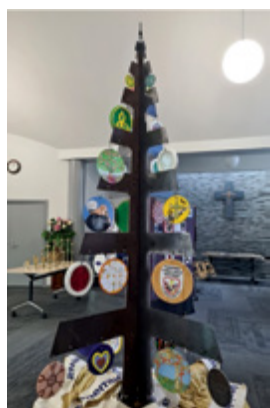


# Emmanuel College Warrnambool News

**Catholic Education Week:** To celebrate Catholic education Week this year, Grade 6 children from Catholic primary schools in Warrnambool joined the Emmanuel Year 7 students for recess, followed by a musical masterclass with Tom Richardson. Tom was familiar to many as he is the musician and 'conductor' behind the all abilities, 'Find Your Voice' Choir. It was great to see all our young people find their voices during this fun and entertaining time together whilst recognising the wonderful contribution Catholic schools and Catholic education make to our local community.



**Message Stick Liturgy:** To celebrate the arrival of one of four message sticks at Emmanuel College, two of our Year 7 classes participated in a liturgy. We are very grateful for all those who read so well and participated in the liturgy. Students were told of the importance and story of the message stick and what the symbols represent. The liturgy concluded with a prayer and a reflection song about reconciliation by Yirrmal and Jordie Lane 'For Everyone.'



**Tree of Life:** Our local Star of the Sea Parish also acknowledged the 150th anniversary of the diocese. The joyous occasion was made memorable by the hospitality, music and diversity of the congregation. There has been a gradual change to the make-up of our local church community with an increasingly diverse and multi-cultural community now evident. Such richness and diversity were highlighted with the launch of the 'Tree of Life'. Many thanks go to the Emmanuel staff and students for creating the metal structure for the tree of life on which various 'leaves' already hang, some of which were produced at Emmanuel.

**Caritas Australia Project Compassion Appeal:** This year Emmanuel participated in a free dress day where students made a contribution to the Project Compassion boxes raising \$1250.35. Emmanuel's Social Justice Team also coordinated the Athletics day BBQ and raised an additional \$932.84. Combined we have been able to send \$2183.19 to Caritas to help vulnerable people around the world, now and for all future generations.

Montanna Macdonald - Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator



## A STRONG CONNECTION

The news my cousin Margot shared - "I don't think Pa was baptised a Catholic" came as quite a shock, because our grandparents Clara and Allan Hood were devout in their faith and had been active members of the St Alipius Parish in Ballarat East. One of my great joys during their final years of life was being able to take communion to them. Margot's detailed genealogical research did not show evidence of Allan or his siblings being baptised in the Catholic church. We knew that his grandfather was Anglican, because of his King James bible, which was given to him in 1856 when he moved to Australia, and in which multiple generations had recorded family births and deaths.

As luck would have it, I had just started reading a copy of *People of Golden Faith: windows into St Alipius*, a history of Ballarat's oldest parish from 1853 to 1993. My wife Terresa's aunt, Francis Fitzpatrick, had been one of the researchers and authors of the book. Included was a list of people baptised in the parish dating back to 1904, including my grandfather and his siblings.



The book also revealed photographs of my grandparents as children participating in the life of the parish. I'm sure they'd have been delighted knowing that their family still has a strong connection with the St Alipius Parish today. A hundred years after Pa had been an altar server at St Alipius, his great-granddaughters Tess and Claire (pictured left) were performing the same task.

Jason Fletcher

**CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
BALLARAT  
FOUNDATION**  
(incorporating the  
Catholic Bishop's  
Charitable Fund)



The Foundation is a response to changing needs within the Diocese. The Foundation was established in 1986 to raise funds to assist the Bishop fund the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Ballarat. The faith and generosity of earlier generations endowed us with churches, schools, presbyteries and other facilities. The present generation is faced with the challenge of providing services to the people of the Diocese amidst its changing demographic.

The Goals of the Foundation is to financially assist the Diocese in its mission to grow Christ's kingdom here on earth and the charitable works of the Diocese, and to provide for relief, support and comfort of those suffering from disadvantage within the Diocese: from unemployment; low income; age; physical or mental disability; language difficulties; or social or economic isolation.

The Foundation has its own rules, constitution and board of management; and operates as a distinct entity from general diocesan finances. It has grown and now holds net assets of \$11.9 million as at December 2023.

During 2023 over \$600,000 was distributed to and throughout the Diocese. 2023 saw the continuation of a number of longer term partnerships which included: Opening the Doors Foundation; Warrnambool & District Food Share; St Patrick's College Chris Yeung Fund; and CatholicCare Victoria; Other grants approved included support for: Hepburn Regional Community Cheer; St Patrick's Cathedral Choir/Organ Scholarship Program and the Ballarat Womens Fund.

Supporting the Foundation: The Foundation relies on donations to continue to build its investment reserve to fund its activities. You can assist by making a donation (all donations, regardless of the amount, are gratefully received); through a pledge (individuals or families can choose to commit to a pledge of a chosen amount on a yearly basis, or for a set period of time); or a bequest via your will.

All donations made to the "Ballarat Catholic Bishop's Charitable Fund" are tax deductible. Should you require details on how to make a contribution to the foundation or the Catholic Bishop's Charitable Fund, please contact the foundation by email [foundation@ballarat.catholic.org.au](mailto:foundation@ballarat.catholic.org.au) or 53377127 to organise an electronic payment over the phone.

"Let us pray for peace: peace in the world and in each of our hearts."  
Pope Francis

## IDAHOBIT

*St Joseph's College Mildura strives to be a place of diversity where everyone is welcomed and celebrated for who they are. IDAHOBIT Day is held annually on May 17. On this day LGBTQIA+ people and their allies seek to raise awareness and understanding of the issues that LGBTQIA+ people face. While it is a day for celebration (it commemorates the date on which the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from its classification of 'diseases'), it is also a day on which we acknowledge that many LGBTQIA+ people in the world still face prejudice and discrimination.*

*Amanda Morrison with the Rainbow Alliance student group set up tables to sell cupcakes and offer free face paint 'glitter glow-ups' to their classmates. The Rainbow Alliance also created a rainbow mural in chalk in the courtyard and encouraged staff and students to contribute to it. This day means much to our LGBTQIA+ students and was a great event.*

Heath McClair - Deputy Principal Students

Our Diocesan Community - July 2024

# CEW 2024

*Celebrating Catholic Education Week and 150 years of Catholic education in our Diocese - stories about Catholic Education Week celebrations from around the diocese:*

**St Paul's Primary School Mildura, along with other Catholic Primary schools from Mildura, Merbein and Red Cliffs, gathered at Sacred Heart Church for a special Mass. Huge thanks to Fr Matt Thomas, Fr John Corrigan and our Religious Education Leaders for their dedication in making this event memorable for everyone.**



**Our Lady Help of Christians School, Wendouree** - People were invited to step into the world of joy, patience and faith at OLHC's captivating display for Catholic Education Week! Each leaf in the stunning arrangement represented a student's heartfelt response to the theme: being joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Special mention to incredible teacher and author, Jodi Toering, for bringing this vision to life! As we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the formation of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, we're reminded of our rich heritage and unwavering commitment to education and faith.

**St Patrick's Primary School, St Arnaud** - we gathered in Charlton to celebrate Catholic Education Week as a community with St Joseph's Charlton and St Mary's Donald. We celebrated Mass together, planted a tree in recognition of the three schools celebrating 150 years of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat, had fun with KaBoom Sport and enjoyed a shared lunch.



Taken from various sources

## Special Blessing

On Sunday, May 26 at St Brendan's Church Coragulac, Mr Patrick Keith Lenehan, known as Keith, received a special blessing from Bishop Paul Bird. Keith's family's long association with St Brendan's began when his mother, Mary Baggot was born in 1912 and baptised at St Brendan's Church. When Mary married Michael Lenehan from Crossley in 1933, it was at St Brendan's. It was also at St Brendan's that all sixteen of their children were baptised, of which Keith was the third.

It was Mary's great and inspiring Catholic faith that played a large part in the family. It could be said that it was Mary's faith that was the centrepiece of the family and saw the Lenehan Family become one of the cornerstone families of the St Brendan's Community. Keith, along with all his siblings, followed in his mother's footsteps and attended school at St Brendan's. On leaving school, Keith joined his father and his older brother, Jim, to work on the farm, as did many of his brothers who came after him.

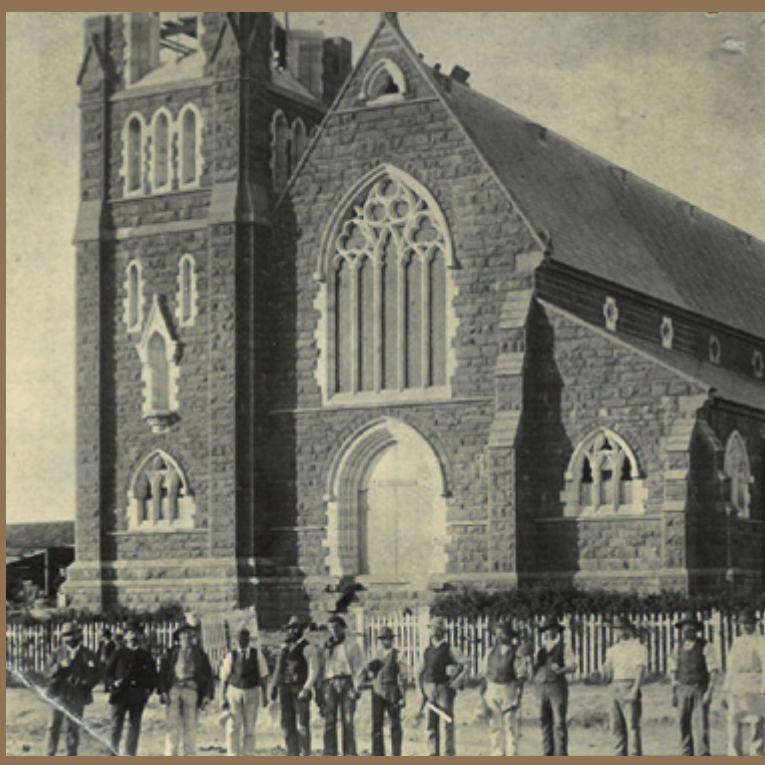
The original St Brendan's church burnt down in 1938, with the last ceremony in the old church being the christening of Mary and Michael's fifth child, Loretto, on the evening of the fire. The new (and current) church was opened the following year. As a family, the Lenehan Family have celebrated many wonderful occasions at St Brendan's, including numerous family christenings and weddings (including Mary and Michael's Golden and Diamond Wedding Anniversaries), and sadly, funerals. Francis, the fourth child and avid gardener, provided the flowers for many of the celebrations in St Brendan's.

Keith, along with his younger brother Les, were the last two members of the family to belong to the parish, as they never married and remained on the family farm. Sadly, Les died last year and Keith has gone into care in Colac. Keith and Les have been great supporters of the church and its community and have been very generous in helping with both the maintenance and improvements to the church, including being instrumental in helping restore the bell tower.



The St Brendan's community continue to remember Les, with an ongoing "Les Sat Here" tribute in the pew where he always sat. Keith can no longer attend regular services as he is now in care, but he is still very much included in the parish. Keith enjoys attending celebrations at St Brendan's when he is able. He truly appreciates the care extended to him by the parishioners. It was at the 150th Diocesan Anniversary Mass at St Brendan's where Keith received his special blessing from Bishop Paul.

Josephine & Angela



In considering the deliberations of the Australian Plenary Council and the ongoing Synod on Synodality called by Pope Francis, the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is planning an assembly for November 15 and 16 this year on the theme of leadership and governance in a synodal way.

In preparation for the assembly, there are formation sessions being held around the diocese with this focus. Fr Justin Driscoll is leading the sessions. The formation opportunity is for Clergy, Parish Leadership Teams, Leadership in Schools, Diocesan Committees and Commissions, Religious Orders and Catholic Organisations.

The Diocesan Assembly in November will bring together Clergy, delegates from Leadership Teams in Parishes, Schools, Diocesan Organisations, Religious Orders and Catholic Organisations to consider how we might develop leadership and governance in our communities in the future.

*Photos: Front cover: All Saints Parish Church Portland. Back cover: 1. St Patrick's Church Port Fairy 2. St Mary's Church Hamilton c. 1910. 3. Third Catholic Church in construction Warrnambool 1887. 4. Early St Mary's Catholic Church Colac*

We are a community of communities from the Murray to the sea. Inspired by the Gospel and nourished by the Eucharist, we follow the example of Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, reaching out in joyful and humble service, caring for all of God's creation, growing in love day by day and looking forward to life with God forever.

Vision Statement for the Diocese