

WE THE PARISH OF BENALLA ARE WORKING TOWARDS BEING A WELCOMING, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY, WHICH ENCOURAGES ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN OUR LIFE. RECOGNISING AND RESPECTING THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL, AS WE JOURNEY IN LIVING OUT JESUS' GOSPEL MESSAGE.

We acknowledge the custodians of the land of the Yorta Yorta Nation which, includes the eight clan groups. We also acknowledge the Taungurung clan of the Kulin Nation whose lands are within our parish. We remember their ancestors with respect and commit ourselves to a better future through reconciliation and justice.

19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

9 August 2026



Readings for this week:

1 Kings 19:9 11-13
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:22-33



Readings for next Sunday:

Isaiah 56:1 6-7
Romans 11:13-15 29-32
Matthew 15:21-28

FIRST READING

When Elijah reached Horeb, the mountain of God, he went into the cave and spent the night in it. Then he was told, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' Then the Lord himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came the sound of the gentle breeze. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R. Lord, show us your mercy and love, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. **R.**

Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. **R.**

The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. **R.**

SECOND READING

What I want to say in no pretence; I say it in union with Christ- it is the truth- my conscience in union with the Holy Spirit assures me of it too. What I want to say is this; my sorrow is so great, my mental anguish so endless, I would willingly be condemned and be cut off from Christ if it could help my brothers of Israel, my own flesh and blood. They were adopted as sons, they were given the glory and the covenants; The Law and the ritual were drawn up for them, and the promises were made to them. They are descended from the patriarchs and from their flesh and blood came Christ who is above all, God for ever blessed! Amen.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night, he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. 'It is a ghost', they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord', he said, 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'

REFLECTION

Life often teaches us to look for God in the extraordinary: the dramatic breakthrough, the miraculous answer, the unmistakable sign. Elijah expected something similar. He searched through wind, earthquake, and fire, but the Lord came instead in the sound of sheer silence. God was present not in the spectacle, but in the stillness. Our lives can feel much like the noisy mountain. There are deadlines, worries, constant notifications, and endless demands for our attention. It becomes easy to mistake noise for importance and busyness for purpose. The Gospel invites us to pause long enough to notice the gentle voice of God already speaking in our hearts. He does not shout over the chaos. He patiently waits for us to become quiet enough to hear Him. Perhaps this week, the greatest act of faith is not to do more, but to be still for a few moments each day and whisper, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

REGULAR MASS TIMES

Weekends – Saturday 6pm. Sunday 9.30 am. Weekdays – Tues to Fri 9.15 am
Rosary and Exposition every first Friday of the month while Fr Vijay is on sabbatical.



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PRAYERS FOR

RECENT DEATHS: Pasqualina Grieco

ANNIVERSARIES: John Sikora, Jill Fraser, Leesa Purcell, Eufrozyna Bem, Olga Pyrcz, Doreen Balcombe, Kathleen Ann Quinlan (FCJ Sr Ben), Thomas Hales, Gerald Hickey, Kathleen Smith, Terrence Sydes, Peter Mangles, Doug Murphy, Kenneth Prowd, Kevin Reid, Sr Ben FCJ

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:

Skyler Levy, Susan Fitzgerald, Tracey Welsh, Elizabeth Waters, Anne Ryan, Duncan Carradice, Margaret McCrohan, Frank Levesque, Trish McCabe, Sari Yoiungco, Rebeeca O'Reilly, Paula McPherson, Julie Lynch, Anne Moore. Jacob Smith and Tony Meade

150th Jubilee 2026 – Commemorative Items Now Available!

Celebrate our 150th Jubilee with a special commemorative keepsake! Please complete and return order form to the Parish Office, 2-4 pm, Mon-Fri or email at benalla@sandhurst.catholic.org.au.

Census & Time and Talent Forms

We warmly invite all parishioners to complete our Parish Census. Whether you are new to the parish, have been part of our community for many years, or worship with us occasionally, your details will help us stay connected, offer pastoral support, and plan for the future. Please take a few moments to complete a census, time and talent form. Thank you for helping us build a welcoming and connected parish community. **Census QR Code:**



Parish Office Notice

Please note that our parish staff will be out of the office on Aug. 25 & 26 while attending a conference. If you have pastoral concerns, please contact Fr. DJ at dj.suguitan@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

National Vocations Awareness Week- Aug 2-9

This week, the Catholic Church in Australia celebrates National Vocations Awareness Week, from 2–9 August, culminating in the feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, our nation's first saint. It is a time when we are invited to reflect on God's call in our lives, to pray for vocations, and to encourage one another especially our young people—to listen generously to the voice of the Lord. - **Bishop Rene**

No Friday Mass on Aug. 14 at the Parish House

There will be **no Friday Mass at the Parish House on 14 August**. Instead, the **FCJ Founders Day Mass** will be celebrated at **9:00 AM** at the **Marie Madeline Centre**. Everyone is warmly welcome to attend.

CALENDAR

Aug

7	Exposition & the Rosary
8	Solemnity of St Mary of the Cross(MacKillop)
9	Cuppa after Mass in Building 31
15	The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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INQUIRY INTO THE CATHOLIC FAITH

Are you interested in becoming a Catholic? Would you, or someone you know, like to know more about the Catholic Faith? We will be holding a series of inquiry meetings over the coming weeks for anyone who wants to join our Catholic community, or learn more about our Catholic faith and traditions. The first meeting will be held in St Joseph's Parish House, 42 Arundel St Benalla on Sunday, August 23rd at 7.00pm. The focus for the meeting will be "Concepts of God" and "What is calling you to the Catholic Faith?" If you know anyone who may be interested in becoming a Catholic, or is enquiring about the Catholic faith, please contact the staff at St Joseph's parish house by phone on 57622060 or email at benalla@sandhurst.catholic.org.au, or join us on Aug 23rd.



We wish to thank the
parishioners for their generous donations.
We received \$1,608. Thank you for your
ongoing support.

WEEKEND VOLUNTEER ROSTER

Date	Times	Laptop	Commentator	Reader	Eucharist	Offertory
8 Aug	6.00pm	Sr Liz	Cath Duncombe	Clare O'Brien	Janene Humphries Dan Brown	K Elliott & Volunteer
9 Aug	9.30am	Max Rankin	Anne McLeod	James Flynn	Denise O'Brien Louise Beling	Daw Family
15 Aug	6.00pm	Ryan Miguel	Pat McDonald	Sr Liz	K & S Chacko	Charlee & Kevin
16 Aug	9.30am	Adrian Daw	Brian Higgins	John Smyth	Joan Berry Susie Buykx	J Berry & volunteer

St Joseph's Parish is a Child Safe Parish, and we are committed to the wellbeing and dignity of all children and vulnerable adults.

The Diocese of Sandhurst Safeguarding Committee is part of the structure under the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, which is designed to be implemented by Catholic entities across Australia. Any questions, queries, comments or suggestions are welcomed by the Safeguarding team who can be contacted through the Parish House by phone or email. **St Joseph's Parish Child Safe Officers** – Xavier O'Kane and Cath Duncombe 0423 203 154



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A Pastoral Letter for National Vocations Awareness Week 2026

“The Harvest is Abundant” Pray the Lord of the Harvest

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

This week, the Catholic Church in Australia celebrates National Vocations Awareness Week, from 2–9 August, culminating in the feast of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, our nation's first saint. It is a time when we are invited to reflect on God's call in our lives, to pray for vocations, and to encourage one another—especially our young people—to listen generously to the voice of the Lord.

While this week shines a particular light on priestly and religious vocations, it also reminds us that every Christian has a vocation. Through Baptism, each of us is called to holiness and to participate in Christ's mission according to the unique path God has prepared for us. Yet, among all the invitations the Church offers during this week, there is one that comes not from a programme or initiative, but from the lips of Jesus Himself. In the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, we read:

“Jesus went about all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with compassion for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is abundant, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest.’” (Matthew 9:35–38)

It is striking that before Jesus sends the Apostles into mission, He first commands His disciples to pray.

The first response to the needs of the Church is not anxiety, planning or activity.

It is prayer.

These words have shaped my own vocation since I entered the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus. Our Congregation was founded by Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia, who recognised in this passage what he called the heart of the Gospel. He believed that Christ's command to “ask the Lord of the harvest” is not an optional devotion but a permanent mission entrusted to the whole Church.

Saint Hannibal taught that praying for vocations is much more than asking God for more priests and religious—important though that is. It is a prayer that the Lord will raise up holy labourers of every kind: faithful husbands and wives, loving parents, generous priests and deacons, consecrated women and men, dedicated teachers, catechists, missionaries, pastoral workers, and committed lay disciples. It is also a prayer that those whom God is calling will have the courage to respond with generous hearts.

This beautiful spirituality, known simply as the Rogate—a Latin word meaning “Pray”—belongs not only to the Rogationists. It belongs to the whole Church because it comes directly from the Gospel itself.

As I begin my ministry among you as Bishop of Sandhurst, I would like to offer this charism as a gift to our Diocese. Our Diocese has been richly blessed throughout its history with devoted priests, religious sisters and brothers, deacons, parish leaders, teachers, volunteers and families who have faithfully handed on the faith for generations. We thank God for every one of them.

Yet the words of Jesus remain just as relevant today as when they were first spoken.

The harvest is still abundant.

Many people long to know Christ more deeply. Families seek hope and encouragement. Young people search for meaning and purpose. Our parishes continue to proclaim the Gospel, celebrate the sacraments and serve those in need. The mission entrusted to us is as great as ever.

And so the Lord continues to say to His Church: "Ask the Lord of the harvest."

As your Bishop, I therefore invite every parish, school, family, religious community and ministry across the Diocese of Sandhurst to make this prayer a regular part of our spiritual life.

I ask parents to pray with their children for vocations. I ask our Catholic schools to encourage young people to discover the joy of asking not simply, "What do I want to do with my life?" but rather, "Lord, what are You calling me to become?" I ask those who spend time before the Blessed Sacrament to remember this intention each time they pray. I ask our parish prayer groups and ministries to include vocations among their regular intentions.

Above all, I invite every member of our diocesan family to adopt a simple prayer that has been treasured for generations within the Rogationist family: *Send, O Lord, holy Apostles into Your Church!*

It is a prayer that anyone can pray. A child can pray it. A grandparent can pray it. A family can pray it around the dinner table. A teacher can pray it with students. A parish can proclaim it together at Mass. Its simplicity is its strength.

May these words become familiar throughout our Diocese. May they rise each day from our churches, schools, homes, hospitals, farms and workplaces. May they become part of the spiritual heartbeat of the Diocese of Sandhurst.

Yet whenever we pray for holy labourers, we must also remember that the Lord often begins by looking into our own hearts. Every time we pray for vocations, we also pray that we may become labourers that Christ desires us to be.

Some are called to priesthood. Some to consecrated life. Some to marriage and family life. Some to generous service within the Church and the wider community. Every vocation, faithfully lived, becomes a sign of God's love for the world.

This National Vocations Awareness Week, let us renew our confidence that the Lord continues to call. He has not ceased speaking. He still raises up men and women of zeal and mercy to continue His mission. Our task is to pray with faith, to listen with open hearts, and to respond with generosity.

As your Bishop, I invite every parish in our Diocese, not only during this week but throughout the coming year, to conclude the Prayer of the Faithful each Sunday with this simple invocation:

Leader: Let us pray for Vocations: The harvest is abundant, but the labourers are few.

All: Send, O Lord, holy Apostles into Your Church!

May this prayer become part of our diocesan identity. May it continually remind us that vocations are born from the compassionate Heart of Jesus and sustained by the faithful prayers of His people.

Entrusting this intention to the intercession of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, who taught us never to see a need without doing something about it; to Saint Hannibal Mary Di Francia, Apostle of Prayer for Vocations; and to Mary, Mother of Vocations, who answered God's call with her wholehearted "Yes", I pray that the Lord will richly bless our Diocese with holy priests, faithful religious, joyful families, generous lay leaders and courageous young people who will answer His call with trust and love.

Together, let us never grow weary of praying:

St John Marie Vianney, Pray for us!

Send, O Lord, holy Apostles into Your Church!

With every blessing in Christ,

✠ Most Rev. Rene Ramirez, RCJ, DD
Bishop of Sandhurst

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