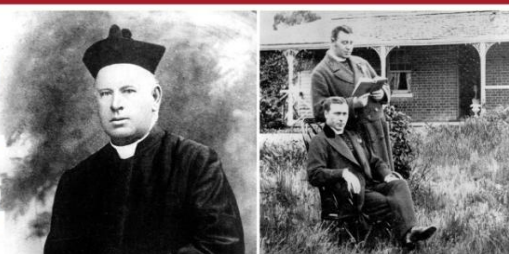




1876 – 2026

150 YEARS



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.

Third Sunday of Lent

8 March 2026



Readings for this week:

Exodus 17:3-7
Romans 5:1-2, 5-8
John 4:5-42



Readings for next Sunday:

1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

First Reading

Tormented by thirst, the people complained against Moses. 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt?' they said. 'Was it so that I should die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?' Moses appealed to the Lord. 'How am I to deal with this people?' he said. 'A little more and they will stone me!' The Lord said to Moses, 'Take with you some of the elders of Israel and move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river, and go. I shall be standing before you there on the rock, at Horeb. You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink.' This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel. The place was named Massah and Meribah because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, 'Is the Lord with us, or not?'

Responsorial Psalm

R. If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us. Let us come before him, giving thanks, with songs let us hail the Lord. **R.**

Come in; let us bow and bend low; let us kneel before the God who made us for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture, the flock that is led by his hand. **R.**

O that today you would listen to his voice! 'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert when your fathers put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work.' **R.**



Second Reading

Through our Lord Jesus Christ by faith we are judged righteous and at peace with God, since it is by faith and through Jesus that we have entered this state of grace in which we can boast about looking forward to God's glory. This hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us. We were still helpless when at his appointed moment Christ died for sinful men. It is not easy to die even for a good man – though of course for someone really worthy, a man might be prepared to die – but what proves that God loves us is that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ! Lord, you are truly the Saviour of the world; give me living water, that I may never thirst again. Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied: 'If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you: Give me a drink, you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.' 'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?' Jesus replied: 'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.' 'Sir,' said the woman 'give me some of that water, so that I may never get thirsty and never have to come here again to draw water. I see you are a prophet, sir. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said: 'Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know; for salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour will come - in fact it is here already - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth: that is the kind of worshipper the Father wants. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah – that is, Christ – is coming; and when he comes he will tell us everything.' 'I who am speaking to you,' said Jesus 'I am he.' Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done', so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them.

CONTINUE GOSPEL - He stayed for two days, and when he spoke to them many more came to believe; and they said to the woman, 'Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the saviour of the world.'

REFLECTION

The readings of this Sunday speak about thirst — not only physical thirst, but the deep thirst of the human heart. In the first reading, the Israelites complain in the desert because they have no water. They doubt God's presence among them. Yet God lovingly provides water from the rock. Even when we complain or lose faith, God does not abandon us. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds us that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Our real hope and strength come from this love. Christ died for us while we were still sinners. This shows how great and unconditional His love is. In the Gospel, Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. She comes looking for ordinary water, but Jesus offers her "living water" — the grace and eternal life that only He can give. Jesus knows her life, her struggles, and her past, yet He speaks to her with compassion and truth. Her encounter with Jesus changes her, and she becomes a witness to others. This Sunday invites us to ask: What am I truly thirsty for? Only Jesus can satisfy the deepest thirst of our hearts. Let us come to Him and receive His living water.

God Bless always, Fr Vijay



REGULAR MASS TIMES

Weekends – Saturday 6pm. Sunday 9.30 am, **Weekdays** – Tues to Fri 9.15 am
Thoon Mass – Third Sunday of each month, 12 noon



Subscribe and receive Parish Bulletin, Newsletter & updates about upcoming events: Subscribe by using the QR Code.

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



WEEKEND VOLUNTEER ROSTER

Date	Times	Laptop	Commentator	Reader	Eucharist	Offertory
7 Mar	6.00pm	Ryan Miguel	Anna Wise	Clare O'Brien	Cath Duncombe	K & S Chacko
8 Mar	9.30am	Max Rankin	Anne McLeod	Wendy Rettke	Oliver Raschke	P & J O'Brien
14 Mar	6.00pm	Sr Liz	Shirley Kearney	Cath Duncombe	Janene Humphries	K Elliott & Volunteer
15 Mar	9.30am	Oliver Raschke	Lisa Raschke	John Smyth	Joan Berry	T & N Pelly

LENT REFLECTION BOOKLET 2026

Preparing for Easter during Lent, you are invited into the Gospel stories of Lent (Year A) and the words of fellow travelers to reflect on Jesus and those who encountered Him during desert experiences in their lives. This reflection booklet, prepared by the Diocese of Sandhurst, is a resource for prayer and reflection. In 2026 it is offered in a single booklet covering both Lent and Easter, replacing the traditional weekly Lent leaflets. A couple of printed booklets are available in the narthex or you can read them online at the following link.

<https://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au/adult-faith-education/2453-lent-2026-rs/file>



2026 SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

First Eucharist (First Communion) and Confirmation – information night will be held on Tuesday 10th March at 5:00pm in the St Joseph's primary school library. If you have been through the Reconciliation program, now is the time to start the program for First Eucharist and Confirmation. The program is for children approximately 8/9 years and upwards. Please contact the Parish Office 5762 2060 benalla@sandhurst.catholic.org.au or Cath Duncombe on 0423 203 154 cath.duncombe@yahoo.com.au.

PRAYERS FOR

RECENT DEATHS:

Jean McKellar Christine Smith (nee Ryan)

ANNIVERSARIES: Douglas Murphy, Yvonne Flynn, Leo (Joe) Squires, Nadja Surdy, Mary McFarlane, Evan Callow, Malcolm Nelson, John Loneragan, Teresa Major, Anthony Todd, Alan Young, Agnes Da Pos

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK: Skyler Levy, Susan Fitzgerald, Tracey Welsh, Elizabeth Waters, Anne Ryan, Duncan Carradice, Margaret McCrohan, John Downie, Frank Leveque, Deb Higgs and Trish McCabe



Easter Calendar Dates

MARCH

Saturday 7th	Cuppa after Mass
Sunday 8th	Cuppa after Mass
Friday 13th	Stations of the Cross at 6 pm.
Thursday 19th	St. Joseph's Day-Patronal celebration on 21st & 22nd
Friday 20th	Stations of the Cross at 6 pm.
Saturday 21st	St Joseph's Day Celebration for 150th Anniversary
Sunday 22nd	St Joseph's Day Celebration for 150th Anniversary with St. Joseph's School children participating
Thursday 26th	Reconciliation at 6 pm
Friday 27th	Stations of the Cross at 6 pm.
Sunday 29th	Palm Sunday
Tuesday 31st	Chrism Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo

APRIL

Thursday 2nd	Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper at 6.30 pm
Friday 3rd	Good Friday Stations of the Cross 9 am, followed by hot cross buns
Saturday 4th	Easter Vigil Mass at 7.30 pm
Sunday 5th	Easter Day Mass at 9.30 am.

Benalla Catholic Parish St Joseph's Church

150 Year Jubilee

Photo Memorabilia Request

This year, **Benalla Catholic Parish** proudly celebrates 150 years of faith and community. As part of our Jubilee celebrations, we will participate in the Heritage Tours on 1-2 May and host a Jubilee Afternoon Tea on 25 October.

To help mark this significant milestone, we are gathering photo memorabilia from across the years and warmly invite parishioners to share their treasured memories. We are seeking photographs of: Weddings, Baptisms and other Sacraments, Altar servers, Parish picnics and events, Pre-fire photos of the church, Any other special parish memories.

If you are happy to contribute, please scan and email your photos to the Parish Office. When submitting photos, kindly include 1. Your name (who the photo belongs to) 2. What the photo is of (event, location, or item) 3. When the photo was taken (an approximate date is fine) 4. Names of people or items shown in the photo

Alternatively, you may bring a copy of your photo to the Parish Office. Please write the above details on the back of the photo or place it in a clearly labelled envelope. Our office staff will make a copy and promptly return your original.

Thank you for helping us celebrate and preserve the rich and wonderful history of our parish community as we mark 150 years of **St Joseph's Parish Benalla**.

LENTEN PROGRAM BOOKS

Lent reminds us that this is the season to turn away from our worldly distractions and journey home to God. We have Lenten Program books available, if you are interested, you can find one in the narthex. These Lent resources are from Diocese of Wollongong, available free for our parishioners.



... The woman put down her water jar and hurried back to the town to tell the people. 'Come and see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ?' This brought people out of the town and they started walking towards him.

Many Samaritans of that town had believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony when she said, 'He told me all I have ever done', so, when the Samaritans came up to him, they begged him to stay with them. *From the Gospel for today: John 4:7-2*

FROM FELLOW TRAVELLERS

In an act of discipleship parallel to that of the Galilean fishermen who left their boats and nets, "the woman left her water jar."

Heading into town, she announced her discovery to the people. Many came to believe in Jesus "through the word of the woman bearing witness." They persuaded him to stay two more days, and they came to see for themselves that "this is truly the saviour of the world" (John 4:4-2).

Elizabeth Johnson, *Abounding in Kindness*, Introduction.

Steam It Up CARPET CLEANING Jason Blyss 0407438219	gmcu. Goulburn Murray Credit Union 30-32 Bridge Street PH 5762 3380	SMITH DOSSER Accountants Income Tax Returns Business Advisers 107 Bridge St Benalla Ph 5762 1588
MAHERS TREE SERVICE JOHN MAHER M: 0413 842 525 For all your tree needs, tree tidy up, complete tree removal, tree stump removal, woodchips Dam cleanouts 	HAIR Manor Alana Robertson 50 Church Street Benalla 3672 Salon 5762 6006	Currie ELECTRICAL Expert Electrical Services in Benalla Ph 0408 572 766
COOKS KERB CONCRETE EXCAVATION PHIL & DEBBIE COOK 0409 950 046	N.J. TODD Funeral directors Phone: (03) 5762 2461 FEEHAN FAMILY Est. 1938 - AFDA Member 81 Baddaginnie Road, Benalla	

Recently an elderly woman was telling me of her sorrow at the realisation of her unkindness to her parents long ago. They were dead and she had no means of showing them her sorrow and love. Sorrow was with her night and day and could easily have been nothing but fruitless remorse ... She was in a painful situation where people were unkind to her. She could have got out of it but not without hurting others. She realised that here was her chance to make reparation, reparation in the true sense – not mere submission to suffering as though God or anyone else benefitted by that, but by loving those people who were unkind to her. 'I have failed in life and this is my chance to love.' This is the sort of knowledge I mean. The Holy Spirit inspires these open, loving hearts with the sentiments of Jesus. Ruth Burrows, *To Believe in Jesus*, Chapter 2 'Who is he, Lord?'

There are wells hidden in the hearts of all the thirsty strangers we meet along the way. Sometimes, our honest search for living water can lead us to these wells, and exchanges can be made that quench our thirst. After the woman at the well received her drink from Jesus she became a well for others to drink from (John 4:39). Macrina Wiedekher, *Seasons of Your Heart*, 168

O Infinite God ... He has spoken to us in human language ... If this human heart loves us, the heart of Your Son, the heart which – may You be praised forever! – is finite like my own poor heart, then my heart is at peace ... Jesus has really told me that He loves me, and His word has come from the depths of His human heart. And His heart is Your heart, O God of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Karl Rahner SJ, *Encounters With Silence*, 16-17.

"The desert is beautiful ... What makes the desert beautiful," said the little prince, "is that somewhere it hides a well ..."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, 73.

FOR THINKING AND TALKING

- Something is standing out for you here? What might it mean for your life?
- To the Samaritan woman, and to you and me, Jesus longs to give living water, 'welling up for eternal life'. How do you understand what Jesus is saying?

REVIEW OF LIFE

A prayerful review of each day or week can help us to grow in closeness to God in Jesus, drawing from the life-giving spring of his life and love. Allow 10-15 minutes for prayer. You may like to light a candle. Become aware of God's loving presence. Ask for help and guidance:

- For what moment, event or person are you most grateful?
For what are you least grateful?
Talk with God in Jesus about what has come to mind.
- Ask for wisdom and guidance for tomorrow.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Imagine Jesus speaking these words to you:

What makes this world so lovely is that somewhere it hides a well.

Something lovely there is about a well

So deep unpiped and real

Filled with buckets and buckets of that life-giving drink.

A faucet will do in a hurry,

but what makes the world so lovely

is that sometimes

people are like wells

deep and real

natural (unpiped)

life-giving

calm and cool

refreshing.

They bring out what is best in you.

They are fountains of pure joy

they make you want to sing, or maybe dance;

they encourage you to laugh even, when things get rough.

And maybe that's why things never stay rough once you've found a well.

Some experiences are like wells, too.

People create them;

they are life-giving happenings

they are redeeming experiences

they are wells,

wells of wonder

wells of hope.