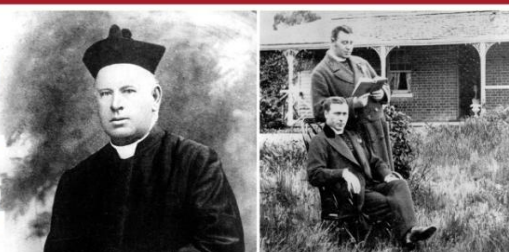




1876 – 2026

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.

Passion of the Lord (Palm Sunday)

29 March 2026



Readings for this week:

Isaiah 50:4-7
Philippians 2:6-11
Matthew 27:11-54



Readings for next Sunday:

Acts 10:34, 37-43
Col 3:1-4 or 1Cor 5:6-8
John 20:1-9 or Matt 28:1-10

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads. 'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him; let him release him if this is his friend.' **R.**

Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me. They tear holes in my hands and my feet. I can count every one of my bones. **R.**

SECOND READING

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! Christ became obedient for us even to death, dying on the cross.

Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

GOSPEL

Matthew 27:11-54 (Short Form)

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?' But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges. At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.' The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said 'Barabbas'. 'But in that case,' Pilate said to them 'what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' 'Why?' he asked 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, to a man, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified. The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him. On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene,

GOSPEL Cont... Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him. Above his head was placed the charge against him: it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. 'He saved others,' they said 'he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God." Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way. From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me!' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and see if Elijah will come to save him.' But Jesus again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit. *(All kneel and pause a moment.)* At that, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'

REFLECTION

Palm Sunday invites us into a powerful journey of joy, suffering, and hope. We begin with the crowd joyfully welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem, waving palm branches and shouting "Hosanna!" Yet, within a short time, the same voices turn against Him. This reminds us how easily human hearts can change. At times, we too praise God when things go well, but struggle to remain faithful in moments of difficulty. The first reading shows the suffering servant who trusts in God even in pain and rejection. This reflects Jesus' own journey—He does not turn away from suffering but embraces it with courage and obedience. The second reading beautifully expresses His humility: though He is divine, He empties Himself and becomes obedient, even to death on the cross. This is a call for us to live with humility and trust in God's will. The Passion Gospel invites us to walk closely with Jesus in His suffering. It challenges us to reflect, where do we stand? Are we like Peter who denies, or Simon who helps carry the cross? 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.

WEEKEND VOLUNTEER ROSTER

Date	Times	Laptop	Commentator	Reader	Eucharist	Offertory
28 Mar	6.00pm	Sr Liz	Anna Wise	Vince Brannigan	Kath Elliot	Dan Brown & Michael
29 Mar	9.30am	Adrian Daw	John Smyth	James Flynn	Denise O'Brien	J Berry & volunteer
4 Apr	6.00pm	Sr Liz	Shirley Kearney	Clare O'Brien	Cath Duncombe	K & S Chacko
5 Apr	9.30am	Oliver Raschke	Brian Higgins	Paddy O'Brien	Susie Buykx	Brierley Family

PRAYERS FOR

RECENT DEATHS: Anne Kerlin (mother of Sam Kerlin), Deb Higgins (niece of Neena Shanks), Sr Shirley Kimball (FCJ) and Colleen Young

ANNIVERSARIES: Ernest Straughair, Ian Macklan, Maree Lanigan, Lorna Burley, Sheila Belt, Pamela Mangan, Timothy Noonan, Florence McMahon, Gregory Cooney, Joan Laurie, Maureen Reilly, Rodney King and Peter Kealey

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, Trish McCabe, Sari Yoinco, Rebeeca O'Reilly and Paula McPherson



SANDHURST DIOCESE CHRISM MASS 2026

Tuesday, 31 March, 11.00 am Sacred Heart Cathedral

All parishioners of the Diocese are warmly invited to attend this very significant Mass in the life of our Diocese. Oils for use in the Sacraments in the coming year will be blessed by Archbishop Balvo, Papal Nuncio to Australia.

Light refreshments and drinks will be provided after the Mass on the



Cathedral lawns. Please note there will be no parking in the Cathedral grounds on Tuesday morning, not for choir members nor parishioners or visitors. Drop off for elderly and disabled will be available at the McKenzie Street side of the Cathedral, but strictly drop off, drive through and park outside the Cathedral grounds. Please allow time to find a suitable park in the nearby streets.

Fr Vijay - Sabbatical

The purpose of my sabbatical is to deepen my spiritual life, renew my priestly identity, and strengthen my pastoral skills so that I may return to my diocese with greater wisdom, maturity, and readiness for ministry. These months are dedicated to ongoing formation, renewal of mind and heart, and acquiring practical skills for compassionate pastoral care. Dates for my sabbatical are starting from 1st June to September 10th. In Gods faith. Fr Viav.

Before the fire at St Joseph's Church...

Do you have any photos of the church from before the unfortunate fire? As part of our Jubilee celebrations, we're showcasing the evolution of our beautiful church building.

If you have photos, newspaper clippings, sketches, or anything that captures the church through the years, we would love for you to share them with the parish office.

The Divine Mercy Sunday

St Brendan's Catholic Church,
121 Knight Street, Shepparton

12th April, 2026. Come to the Feast of the Divine Mercy this Easter. Holy Mass Celebrated by Fr Jackson Saunders

2:00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Reconciliation, Time for you to reflect with God

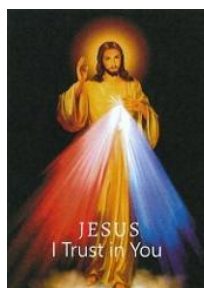
Music selected by Loretta Grace

3:00pm Divine Mercy Chaplet-In song, Benediction

3:30pm Holy Mass, Celebrated by Fr Jackson Saunders

4:30pm Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image

Enquiries: Parish Office 5821 2633 or Tom Melis 0431 706 296



Easter Calendar Dates

MARCH

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
The Passion of the Lord at 3 pm

Saturday 4th Easter Vigil Mass at 7.30 pm

Sunday 5th Easter Day Mass at 9.30 am.

MAY

Friday 1st Australian Heritage Festival at St. Joseph's Church, Parish House
Open day 1pm – 4pm

Saturday 2nd Second Open Day 1pm – 4pm
St Joseph's School Open for tour 2pm – 4pm



**PROJECT
COMPASSION**

Palm Sunday
28–29 March 2026

**UNITE
AGAINST
POVERTY**
this Lent

As Project Compassion 2026 comes to a close, we thank you for your generous support throughout Lent. This year, we shared the stories of four inspiring people whose lives are being uplifted through your compassion.

Your support is helping them overcome challenges and build stronger futures. There is still time to donate! Together, we can continue nurturing hope and empowering communities facing poverty and injustice.

Please donate today.

You can support Project Compassion 2026 through the donation boxes, envelopes or by scanning the QR code.

Or online at:

www.projectcompassion.org.au/donate

Or by calling: 1800 024 413

Thank you for standing with us, as we *Unite Against Poverty this Lent.*



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 Alana Robertson 50 Church Street Benalla 3672 Salon 5762 6006 Manor	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

FROM FELLOW TRAVELLERS

... The experience ... of Jesus himself, when the world collapsed about him, the powers of darkness closed in and he was swallowed up. His only certainty and security lay in the love of his Father, the Father who no longer showed his face. This is what faith is about. And this is what it means to seek to know the Lord. It is, as Jesus says, when the sun is darkened, and the moon eclipsed, when the very stars are falling from heaven and our world rocking on its base – our secure, safe world – that the sign of the Son of Man is ...

Ruth Burrows, To Believe in Jesus, Chapter 2 'Who is he, Lord?'

... It was to those who could stand by Jesus when humanly speaking all was lost, when God had disappeared and godlessness prevailed, that Jesus bowed his head in death and gave up the Spirit.

Ruth Burrows, To Believe in Jesus, Chapter 2 'The Narrow Gate'

Yes, dear friend, we are all called to suffer in our own ways, in our own time and places, and according to our own capacities. The loving search does indeed include the way of the cross. We are called to be one with Christ in all things – in his joy – in his labours – in his friendship – in his teachings – in his love and in his sufferings. By seeing these things through the eyes of Jesus, we can unite them to his suffering. By our

efforts to receive with love and patience the trials that are imposed on us as we take on our loving search for God, we too become witnesses to God's love ... "Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it." So, dear friend, the cry of Jesus is our cry. The suffering of Jesus is our suffering. And the hope of Jesus, which we shall soon see, is our hope. So, "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since, as members of one body, you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Col 3:15). William Meninger, *The Loving Search for God*, 44-45.

Jesus' fundamental earthly task, in which he expressed his love for his Father, was simply to be man, to accept our human lot to the full ... He had to learn, through sheer experience, how hard it is to be a man and to have to die. Through total acceptance of this human destiny Jesus was made perfect. The cost was bitter, ending in a cruel, humiliating death, but through it he is able to bring us all along with him to our fulfilment, provided we accept it as he did. For us, too, our fundamental obedience to God is to accept being human. There is only one path to glory and that is the way Christ took, accepting the pain of being human. Our task is fundamentally the same as Jesus'. We have to live out our own particular amalgam, in love of God and our neighbour, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things.

Ruth Burrows, To Believe in Jesus, Chapter 2 'The pain of being human'

The cross is my portion – it is also my sweet rest and support. I could not be happy without my cross – I could not lay it down for all the world to give. With the Cross I am happy, but without it would be lost. The only way I have of trying to show my gratitude to God is in the Cross. But I often fail in bearing it as I ought – and will do so still unless I am wonderfully aided by the due prayers of others.

Mary Mackillop quoted in Pauline Wicks RSJ, *God Will Take Care of Us All*, 107.

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

O Lord, remember

not only the men and women of good will,
but also those of ill will.

But do not remember the suffering
they have inflicted on us.

Instead, remember the fruits we
have brought because of this suffering
– our comradeship, our loyalty to one another,
our humility, our courage, our generosity,
the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this
And when they come to the judgement,
let all the fruits that we have borne
be their forgiveness. Amen.

Prayer found on the body of a dead child at Ravensbrook concentration camp Germany.
in Patrick O'Sullivan, *I Call You Friends*, 17.

PALM SUNDAY

FOR THINKING AND TALKING

- What is calling to you from this Gospel passage and these reflections?
- Early in his ministry Jesus found himself in a desert, tempted to find quick easy ways out of the pain and loneliness of it. His Father's all-encompassing love was a spring that flowed beneath all that he experienced. His own uncompromising love led inevitably to the cross. For we human beings who want to be his disciples, the cross, in whatever form it comes to us, is our way too. Take some moments to consider the deserts and the crosses of your life. How do you draw upon the spring that Jesus promised will become a never-ending source of living water for you?