

St. Joseph's Catholic Parish of Benalla



The Carpenter

Building our Parish Community

No. 5 May - June 2026

Opening Mass for the 150th Jubilee Celebration & St Joseph's Patronal Day

Sunday 22nd March marked the Opening Mass for the 150th Anniversary of the Benalla Catholic Parish & the celebration of St. Joseph's Feast Day. Mass was celebrated by Fr. Vijay with children from St. Joseph's Primary School participating; the St Joseph's school choir joined with our Parish choir to provide the music, and the children did the readings and Prayers of the Faithful.



Left: A group from the St Joseph's school choir sing a song about St Joseph.

The children participating in the Sacramental program this year received their workbooks at Mass also.

Below: The RCIA candidates receive the Our Father, the Presentation of the Lord's Prayer.



Quite a crowd enjoyed a cuppa and morning tea after Mass; it was a festive and happy occasion.



Thanks to Cath Duncombe for photos and captions.



ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH BENALLA

Parish Priest:

Fr Vijay Bandanadam

Email - frbasuoss@gmail.com

Mobile - 0435 006 171

Parish House & Office:

42 Arundel Street , Benalla 3672

Phone 03 5762 2060

benalla@sandhurst.catholic.org.au

Office Hours

Tuesday to Friday 10am to 4 pm

Office Staff

Secretary - Michelle Cooke

Admin Officer - Cath Donehue

FCJ Sister

Sr. Liz

Mobile 0448 933 581

Child Safe Officers

Xavier O'Kane

Cath Duncombe

Parish Pastoral Council

Chair - Cath Duncombe

Parish Finance Committee

Chair - James Flynn

Mass Times

Benalla

Saturday 6 pm, Sunday 9.30 am.

Week days Tuesday - Friday 9.15 am

Thoona

3rd Sunday of each month at 12 noon

Cooinda 3rd Wednesday of month

Estia 2nd Wednesday of month

Morrie Evans 2nd Tuesday of month

Reconciliation by appointment

Baptism Preparation dates

Contact Michelle at the Parish Office

What's Coming Up in May & June

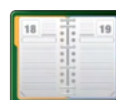
In this section we hope to give you all the important dates for the following two months, with details as they become available.

MAY

Friday 1st	Rosary & Benediction
Friday 1st	Victorian Heritage Trust Open Days at St. Joseph's 1-4pm
Saturday 2nd	Second Open Day 1-4 pm – see details on page 3
Saturday 9th	Cuppa after Mass
Sunday 10th	Cuppa after Mass- Mothers Day morning tea
Sunday 17th	Ascension of the Lord. Thoona Mass
Sunday 24th	Pentecost
Sunday 31st	The Most Holy Trinity

JUNE

Monday 1st	Fr. Vijay on Sabbatical Leave
Friday 5th	The Rosary
Sunday 7th	Corpus Christi - The Most Holy Body & Blood of Christ
Sunday 14th	Cuppa after Mass in the Parish House
Tuesday 16th	'The Carpenter' out
Sunday 21st	Mass at Thoona [To Be Confirmed]



We, the Parish of St. Joseph's are working towards being a welcoming, supportive community, which encourages active participation in our life.

Victorian Heritage Festival Open Days

- the St. Joseph's Precinct

As part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations of the Catholic Parish of Benalla, the St. Joseph's precinct is being included in the Heritage Victoria Festival Open Days.

On Friday 1st & Saturday 2nd May we will have St. Joseph's Church, the Parish House and the old 31 building open to view from 1 to 4 pm. Guided and self-guided tours available.

St. Joseph's Primary School will be open for a guided tour on Saturday 2nd. at 2-4 pm, booking necessary.

Entry is by gold coin donation and afternoon tea will be available in the 31 building.



Have you missed the Buy & Sell Board in front of the old Piety Stall lately?

We are looking for one volunteer for Saturday evening & another for Sunday morning, to take care of the board.

A good way to meet people too!

Speak to Oliver or Fr. Vijay.



Benediction & Rosary
on Friday 1st May at
6 pm.

Friday 5th June at 6 pm
the Rosary only

Save the Date



Jubilee Concelebrated Mass

Sunday 25th October

at 2 pm

**Followed by afternoon tea
& refreshments**



The 'Cuppa'

On the 2nd week-end of the month.

From June, after the Sunday Mass
only due to the cold weather. The
Cuppa will be in the Parish House

and all are welcome.



Low Impact Tai Chi Exercises

Every Wednesday at 9 am in the
31 building

Do you love to sing? We are looking for singers for special occasions, especially the Jubilee Mass on 25th October. Not a choir but people to sing, lead and encourage the congregation to sing too. Let's fill the church with joyful sounds!

Do you have old photos showing the inside of the church?

For the 150th Jubilee celebrations the committee is looking for photos, especially ones that show the inside of St. Joseph's prior to the 2004-2006 circular refurbishment and also pre fire in 1989. Wedding and baptism photos are very welcome, as well as any other photos showing parish life in years gone by.

You can scan your photos and email to benalla@sandhurst.catholic.org.au, along with details of the occasion, date and the owner of the photos.

Alternately you can put the photos in an envelope with your name and all the details of the photo and take them to the Parish Office. Once scanned they will be returned to you.

A third option is to talk to Sherileigh Dowell on Sunday morning or email Sherileigh.Dowell@outlook.com



Lynne & Gerard Putt 1993

The Past Two Months...



Left: Imposition of Ashes with **Fr. Joe Taylor** on **Ash Wednesday**.

During **Lent** we prayed the **Stations of the Cross** every week.



R: **Palm Sunday** with Fr. Vijay and his brother Fr. Sleevea.

L: Altar servers Karlo, Lucas & Archie.



Tuesday of Holy Week

Chrism Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral Bendigo

The principal celebrant at the Chrism Mass was the Apostolic Nuncio in Australia His Excellency Most Rev. Charles Balvo. Archbishop Balvo is the current Apostolic Nuncio (Vatican ambassador) to Australia, appointed by Pope Francis in January 2022. He acts as the Pope's representative to both the Church in Australia and the Australian Government.



L: The Apostolic Nuncio, & Fr. Vijay in the sanctuary at the Cathedral.

R: Representing Benalla Parish & collecting the new Holy Oils were Eleanor Macnamara, Michelle Cooke, Sr. Liz & Una Harrington.



Holy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper & the beginning of the Paschal Triduum (the three days between Holy Thursday evening and the evening of Easter Day.)



The Mass of the Lord's Supper commemorates the Washing of the Feet and the Last Supper, it celebrates the institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood & concludes with Adoration at the Altar of Repose.

Good Friday - Stations of the Cross & hot cross buns.

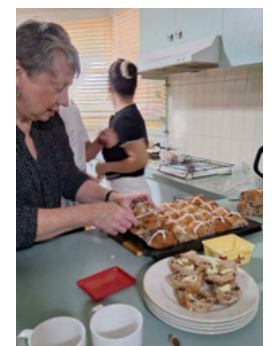


Above left: Fr. Vijay washing the feet of twelve parishioners, a sign of service.



Brendan Rettke carrying the cross, walking the Station of the Cross & Denise O'Brien with hot cross buns.

At 3 pm a large crowd attended The Solemn Liturgy of the Passion of the Lord.



The Past two Months continues RCIA from Rite of Election to Baptism, Confirmation & First Communion

Rite of Election – by Sister Liz Brown fcJ - On Sunday, 22nd March, all the Parishes in our Sandhurst Diocese who have people preparing to become Catholics through the RCIA process, were invited to The Rite of Election at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo.

The main presider was Fr Brian Boyle who spoke about the changes occurring within the global Catholic Church. Many people are turning to God and are desiring to become Catholics. Our Diocese had 7 Parishes represented on the day. Fr Brian Boyle commented "The increasing number of adults presenting is a good indication of the power of the Spirit in our local church".

St Joseph's had one Catechumen and 4 Candidates (previously baptised) who were presented to Fr Brian Boyle during the Rite of Election. Our Candidates are **Peter Holmes, Julieann Richardson, Kirsty Renkin & Renae Hughes**. We have a student from FCJ College who is our Catechumen for this year in **Jayhe-Lee Quattrocchi**. Each have their own sponsor. All of this process has been made possible by our dedicated team: Cathie Duncombe, Jane Branigan and Clare O'Brien.

For our people the Rite of Election marked the beginning of the final phase of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) - a process that is intentional and demanding. Over many months, they have been formed through prayer, the Word of God and parish life, learning not only the beliefs of the Church but its rhythms and responsibilities.

During the Rite of Election, the Church formally affirmed their readiness to continue. Our Catechumen inscribed her name in the Book of the Elect and is now known as the Elect. The Candidates, already baptised, signed their parish Book of Welcome as they will continue their conversion towards full communion. The next stage will be the Scrutinies where the Elect will make a deeper commitment to God.

At the **Easter Vigil**, the Elect will receive Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, while Candidates will receive Confirmation and Eucharist. Let us continue to pray for them.

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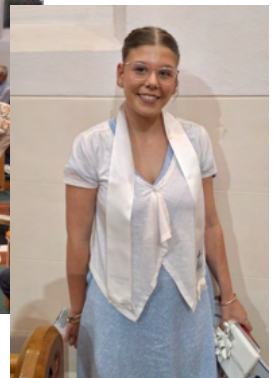
Easter Vigil Mass



Blessing of the New Light and the Paschal Candle



The Baptism of Jayhe-Lee Quattrocchi



The anointing and laying on of hands for our five new members of the Catholic Church.

Welcome to Julieann, Kirsty, Peter, Renae & Jayhe-Lee.



Cutting the celebratory cake.



The newly confirmed with Fr. Vijay, sponsors Sr. Liz & Donna and RCIA leaders Cath Duncombe, Jane Branigan & Clare O'Brien. Congratulations all.

St. Joseph's Villas Celebrate 20 Years

On 13th February the residents of St. Joseph's Villas celebrated the twentieth year of the complex being opened. It was officially opened by Bishop J. Grech D.D. on 12th February 2006.

At our morning tea we acknowledged that our parish priest of that time, Fr. Denis Crameri, and his planning groups would have spent many hours on the development of ten delightfully individual homes in such a beautiful garden setting, and we sincerely thank them for that foresight.

Our only original resident, Anne Gilbert, cut the cake that had been baked by Jill James. We are proud to be the present custodians of St. Joseph's Villas.

[With thanks to Shirley Kearney for the article and Anne Gilbert for the photos]



Cath Donehue, Wendy Rettke, Dave Donehue, Brendan Rettke & Harry Barber gather for the morning tea celebration.



Anne Gilbert blowing out the candles on the lovely cake made by Jill.



Anne cutting the cake to celebrate 20 years of St. Joseph's Villas.

Fr. Vijay at the Provincial Chapter of the Holy Spirit Fathers in Hyderabad, India

In March Fr. Vijay returned to India to participate in the Provincial Chapter of the Holy Spirit Fathers gathering in Hyderabad. He sent these photos.



Top - There were more than fifty priests in attendance

Left - Fr. reports: 'We are all from the same batch. Attending the Provincial Council'.

A quote, paraphrased, from Fr. Joe Taylor

The sound of babies and young children in church is the sound of angels.



Our Lady Help of Christians; Pray for Us

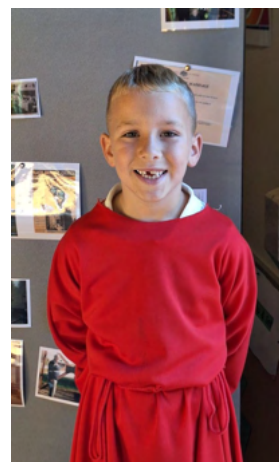
On 24th May 1814 Pope Pius VII decreed the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians. In the early days of Australia's settlement Our Lady Help of Christians became a cornerstone of Catholic religious practice through the Rosary. In 1844 Our Lady Help of Christians became the Principal Patroness of Australia and in 1852 she was approved by the Holy See.



Fr. Vijay has reintroduced the practice of receiving Communion in both kinds, that is, receiving the host and then the chalice.

It is preferred that communicants receive the chalice by hand ['in keeping with Christ's command to take and drink, and consistent with the Church's tradition'] but to self- intinct or dip the host in the chalice is permitted.

Welcome to Archie who has joined the altar serving team



World Day of Prayer 2026 focusing on, and praying for, the people of Nigeria.

It was a lovely prayerful service held in the Uniting church Swanpool. Joan Warnock, Terry & Sue O'Brien were among the 15 who attended.

Sue writes: After the service we enjoyed an opportunity to chat while enjoying a delicious morning tea.



Unfortunately we Catholics are no longer able to take our turn organizing the event in Swanpool.

I would like to thank Joan for the amazing job she has done over a number of years.

[Thanks to Sue O'Brien]

Fr. Vijay and his brother Fr. Sleevea SVD.



The Ascension of the Lord - 17th May

The 40th day after Easter.

'Know that I am with you always: yes, to the end of time'
Matthew 16:20

Earthcare Laudato Si - Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si (Praise be to You) in 2015 urged humanity to care for the Earth as a common home by fighting climate change, biodiversity loss and a 'throw away' culture. The impacts, especially for the poor, were highlighted.



Earthcare is a Catholic agency, in conjunction with Caritas, which promotes ecological education within parishes and schools, it aims to raise awareness of our Christian responsibility to care for our planet. We are encouraged to live more sustainably in our households and to work towards sustainable parishes.

17th - 24th May is Laudato Si Week and our Parish Pastoral Council wishes to re-visit our Earthcare Policy, which is part of the 4 stage assessment for our Diocese.

Our Earthcare policy needs to be reviewed and updated. Does this sound like something that you would be interested in working on, in a group or individually? If so, please contact Cath Duncombe, chairperson of the PPC (0423 203 154) or speak to Fr. Vijay.

Pentecost Sunday 24th May - the liturgical colour for Pentecost is red. Red is a symbol of the flames of the Holy Spirit descending upon the heads of the Apostles. Wearing something red on Pentecost Sunday is a small tribute to this amazing gift we received at our Baptism.



From the Bishop's Review of our Parish it became obvious that the [music](#), and specifically the [hymns](#), were a cause of major concern for parishioners. The Parish Pastoral Council has tried several options but now plans to do a survey of what [hymns](#) or type of [hymns / songs](#) you wish to see in our services. Please give this some thought so that you can give constructive & useful responses when the survey is available.

Eleanor Macnamara began the Caritas Project Compassion 'Long Walk for Water' fundraiser on Ash Wednesday, aiming to raise funds by sponsorship donations for walking for 40 minutes every day during Lent. Over that time she exceeded her target, walking 166 kms in 37 hours and raised \$733 for those who do not have easy access to clean water.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA PROJECT COMPASSION

The donations received were greatly appreciated by Eleanor, and more importantly, by Caritas Australia and those who will get a clean water supply to their villages and schools as a result of this national fundraiser.

Thank you for your support.

NEW BISHOP ANNOUNCED

On 11th April Pope Leo XIV appointed Bishop Rene Ramirez RCJ to be the ninth Bishop of Sandhurst.

Bishop Ramirez was born in the Philippines and came to Australia in 2015.

Let's Meet the Piety Stall Ladies

The Piety Stall is staffed by volunteers Louise Beling and Maureen Murphy.

The Piety Stall is now situated in the church, enter through the door immediately left when you come into the church. It is usually open after Mass every week, and you can ask at the Parish Office (Tues to Fri.) if you wish to buy something during the week.

The stall has a collection of rosaries and religious jewellery, cards, books and gifts suitable for baptisms and confirmations and items suitable for children.

The ladies invite you to come and see what they have available.



Louise Beling

The Most Holy Trinity 31st May



The Holy Trinity is central to our Christian & Catholic belief, the doctrine that there is one God who exists as three distinct, co-eternal, and consubstantial Persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.

This icon by Andrei Rublev, a Russian painter from the early 15th century is considered to be the most famous Russian icon and the most famous interpretation of the Holy Trinity. Icons are 'written' not painted, and you 'read' an icon from left to right. Therefore the angel on the left represents the Father, the one in the middle the Son and on the right, the Holy Spirit.

For a closer look at this icon and a detailed explanation of reading it, you could cut and paste the link here: <https://www.stthomasderry.org/rublevs-trinity-explained>

Ecumenical Easter Service at sunrise by Lake Benalla



People from local churches came together at dawn on Easter Sunday to sing, pray and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Alleluia!

Fr. Vijay participated & photos by Cath Duncombe.

St Joseph's Parish is a Child Safe Parish. 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.

SR SHIRLEY KIMBALL FCJ 4 October 1928 – 3 March 2026

The FCJ Sisters wish to share with you about the life of Sr Shirley Kimball fcJ, whom God called home to Himself in the early hours of Monday morning, March 2nd, at St Catherine's Nursing Home, North Balwyn.

As a second child of Roy Kimball and Florence Griffiths, Shirley was born in Prahran in 1928 and baptised at St Mary's, East St Kilda, in 1931. She was educated locally for four years at Our Lady of Lourdes School in Armadale, before the family moved to Warragul and then Benalla. It was there, at St Joseph's School, and then the FCJ Convent that Shirley first encountered the FCJ Sisters.

Although Shirley enjoyed school and did well, her parents decided she would leave at the end of Year 11 to work in her aunt and uncle's small drapery shop in Benalla. With her gregarious personality, it is little wonder that Shirley spent 12 very happy years working in their drapery shop.

During this time, Shirley felt a strong pull towards becoming a teacher. After two years of study, Shirley completed her Teaching Training in 1960. For sixteen years, Shirley taught Religion, Mathematics and English at FCJ College, Benalla.

God intervened in a mysterious way, during her life, through a young lad who was in her class. The lad asked her, "Why didn't you ever become a nun?" Up to this point she hadn't given much thought to it, but it was to repeat in her consciousness throughout 1976. At the age of 48 Shirley was accepted as a Postulant and entered the FCJ Sisters.

In 1978, Shirley began her novitiate in England. She engaged in apostolic work in Ireland and pilgrimages connected to Marie Madeleine's story in France (Foundress of the Order). She made her 30-day retreat to prepare for her first commitment at Stella Maris, Broadstairs, England, on 16th September 1979. Returning to Australia, Shirley made her final profession at Genazzano, Kew, on 12th September 1982.

Shirley's empathy and wisdom ensured her talents were greatly valued by the Society. In 1981 she was appointed Principal of St Jude's School in Langwarrin, while in 1983 she was appointed Principal of St Ignatius' School, Richmond. In 1994 she was missioned to St Mary's in Broome where she tutored Aboriginal children and assisted the St Vincent de Paul Organisation. Shirley returned to Melbourne in 1996 to lead the Richmond Vacluse Community and the Frankston Community.

Shirley's managerial and interpersonal skills were evident in these roles and in 1999 she was appointed as Provincial Bursar. This complex, responsible position also extended to the new province of Asia. Seven years later she was missioned to Shepparton and in 2017 realised her health was failing her. She was delighted to become a resident of St Catherine's Aged Care, in North Balwyn where she remained until God called her home on Monday 2nd March 2026.

Despite being a late vocation, she gave herself unreservedly to whatever God asked of her. She suffered much during the last three years of her life, especially when her sight failed her. She never stopped showing an interest in her Companions. Being the person she was, Shirley offered all her days to God. The Area of Australia is all the richer for the imprint Shirley has left behind, over forty years of faith filled service to her beloved faithful companion, Jesus. May she rest in peace.

Shirley's Mass of Christian Burial was held on Tuesday 17th March at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene followed by burial at Melbourne General Cemetery.

Excerpts taken from FCJ Society Newsletters.

Sr. Liz Brown fcJ





Congratulations to **Una & Brian Harrington** who celebrated 50 years of marriage in early April. This Golden occasion will be further celebrated with a cruise.

* * *

Let the editor know if you or a family member is celebrating a special birthday, wedding anniversary or other celebratory occasion.

Email to thecarpenter3672@gmail.com or speak to Eleanor or Cath D (either one!)

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ - Corpus Christ - 7th June.

This Solemnity celebrates the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist - the Body of Christ. It is a joyous occasion, as distinct from the sombre celebration of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

Throughout the Catholic world, especially in Italy, this day is a major celebration with the streets adorned with flowers in decorative designs, brass bands, singing and chanting, the procession of the Blessed Sacrament and concluding with the Benediction.

These photos were taken in the small Italian town of Pienza in 2008.



Have you collected your book mark / prayer card Celebrating 150 Years of the Benalla Catholic Parish 1876 - 2026?

You will find them in the narthex, on the shelf between the two front doors.

On-line Seminars in May Parishioners are invited to join online evening seminars offered in the month of May. The seminars are provided by the Catholic Theological College and cover a wide range of topics, eg. Can a Scientist Believe in God? Old Testament Law: Is It Still Relevant? The Gospel According to Matthew: A Tapestry; Religion and Ethics: Exploring Some Connections; After Death - What? An Introduction to AI and Transhumanism ... for Christians; Interculturality and Its Relevance for the Church Today.

If these topics or others appeal to you (see <https://ctc.edu.au/news-and-events/engaging-your-faith/>) let the Parish secretary know and we may be able to form small groups to attend online.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

Christine Mary (Ryan) Smith

28 April 1951 - 16 February 2026 - aged 74 years

Jean Isabel McKellar

4 September 1926 - 26 February 2026 - aged 99 years

Colleen Mary Young

2 February 1944 - 6 March 2026 - 82 years

Suzanne Ivy Winifred Cane

3 May 1952 - 24 March 2026 - 73 years

From 1st June Fr. Vijay will be taking Sabbatical Leave.

Fr Vijay writes: - 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 Vijay.



We acknowledge the custodians of the land of the Yorta Yorta Nation and the Taungurung clan of the Kulin Nation whose lands are within our parish. We remember their ancestors with respect.