



Immaculate Conception Omeo

THE PARISH OF BAIRNSDALE AND OMEO

East Region – Diocese of Sale

BAIRNSDALE, PAYNESVILLE, LINDENOW,

OMEO, SWIFTS CREEK AND BENAMBRA

OUR VISION

We are a welcoming community where the word of God, through the message of Jesus Christ, is made known and lived.

OUR MISSION

Live the message of Jesus Christ taking inspiration from Mary, the Mother of God.
Empower our community to activate their gifts to build a better world. To strengthen and grow our faith.

Parish Priest: Fr Michael Willemsen

Assistant Priest: Fr Mark Hughes

Presbytery: 23 Pyke Street Bairnsdale

Phone: 5152 3106

Parish Pastoral Centre: 135 Nicholson Street Bairnsdale

Phone: 5152 2942

Website: www.stmarysbairnsdale.net

Facebook: [St Mary's Church Bairnsdale](https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchBairnsdale)

Email: stmarysbairnsdale@gmail.com

Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B December 24, 2023

We acknowledge the Gunaikurnai people, the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging, and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



Christmas Message

To our St Mary's family, have a blessed, safe and joyous time with your family and friends.

Remember and pray for those less fortunate than ourselves.

If you are travelling, be safe. God bless you all.

From Fr Michael, Fr Mark, Paul, Michelle, Mark and Michael.

Thank you!
AND FAREWELL

Fr Michael celebrates his last Sunday Mass in St Mary's on January 7. There will be a Morning Tea after Mass; your opportunity to farewell Fr Michael and thank him for all he has done for our Parish. God Bless and God Speed.

Parish Office Closure

The Parish Office closed at 4.30pm on Thursday December 21.

We will reopen on Monday January 22, 2024.

WEEKDAY MASSES AT ST MARY'S

Monday: 9.30am

Christmas Day

Tuesday: 9.10am

Wednesday: 9.10am

Thursday: 9.10am

Friday: 9.10am

St Patrick's, Paynesville

Wednesday: Rosary: 10.00am

RECONCILIATION

Friday:

After 9.10am Mass

Saturday:

9.30am to 10.00am

5.30pm to 5.50pm

ROSARY

Monday: 7.00pm

via Zoom

Contact the Parish Centre for a link

WEEKEND MASS TIMES

St Mary's, Bairnsdale:

Saturday: 6.00pm

Sunday: 9.30am

St Patrick's, Paynesville:

Sunday: 8.00am

St Canice's, Lindenow:

Sunday: 11.00am

Swifts Creek, Omeo and Benambra

Masses held 4th weekend of each month.

Sacred Heart, Swifts Creek:

4th Saturday: 6.30pm

Immaculate Conception, Omeo:

4th Sunday: 9.00am

St Francis', Benambra:

4th Sunday: 11.00am

The Feast of the Holy Family Year B, December 31, 2023

MASS	WELCOMER	COMMENTATOR	READER	SPECIAL MINISTER	OFFERTORY PROCESSION
6.00pm Saturday	K Flannery	J Peachey	J De Boer	P Elliott	
9.30am Sunday	L Urban	H Sampson	D Atkins	S Dean	H Sampson, P Pruscino, J Coverdale

Cleaning: Fortnight ending: January 6 - J and D Fallon

Please find a replacement if unable to fill your spot.

Our Parish of The Immaculate Conception (also known as St Mary's) is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all people, with special concern for children, young people and adults at risk.

Our Safeguarding Officer is Kath Cassidy who can be contacted through the Parish Centre: 5152 2942.

Alternatively contact Bairnsdale Police: 5150 2600 or Towards Healing: 1800 816 030.

**Normal Sunday Masses are
at the usual times on December 24
Mass Times for
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day**

Sunday December 24

St Francis', Benambra: 6.00pm

St Mary's Family Mass, Nagle College:
7.00pm

St Mary's Midnight Mass: 12.00 midnight

Monday December 25

St Patrick's, Paynesville: 8.00am

St Mary's: 9.30am

Sacred Heart, Swifts Creek: 10.30am

WE HAVE A NEW OFFICE MANAGER!

We are VERY happy to announce that Mrs Helen Rose is our new Bookkeeper and Office Manager, having started on Tuesday December 19. Paul will continue during a transition period for a few weeks. Thanks to everyone who has been praying for this important intention. This is a blessed outcome. Fr Michael.

Columban Art Calendars

Now available. See Kath Cassidy, or Michael at the Parish Centre.
Only \$10.00

CONGRATULATIONS TO MADELAINE

Our Parish Pastoral Council member, Madelaine Schumann, has been appointed by Bishop Greg to his new Diocesan Mission Council. The 15 member Council chosen from 30 expressions of interest across the Diocese was commissioned by Bishop Greg at the Cathedral during Mass on December 17. Congratulations Madelaine, we know you'll make an enthusiastic and willing contribution to the cause at the Diocesan level, as you continue to do here at Parish level.

Worksheets Available for Collection

Dear Parent/Carer,
Please collect a worksheet for your child to help them deepen their understanding of the Word during celebration of the Mass. A beginning point for discussion of this week's Gospel with children:



- ♦ **Mary was a young woman when she was asked to be the mother of Jesus; do you think it was easy for her to say yes?**
- ♦ **What do think the angel looked like? Do angels look like Christmas decorations, people or something else?**
- ♦ **The angel Gabriel came to Mary with a message from God. How do we know what God wants us to do?**
- ♦ **Mary said yes to God when she was asked to be the mother of Jesus. What are some of the things we can do when we say yes to God?**

READINGS:

December 30-31, 2023

**The Holy Family of Jesus,
Mary and Joseph**

1st Reading:

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14-16

Responsorial Psalm:

Ps 88:2-5, 22-29

2nd Reading: Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

COLLECTIONS:

December 16-17, 2023

Envelopes \$ 1141.00

DD & Cards \$ 590.00

1st Collection \$ 723.50

2nd Collection \$ 859.55

Pay Wave \$ 100.00

The volunteers at the Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance Assistance Centres of St Vincent De Paul wish to express our gratitude to the wonderful church community, including St Mary's Primary School and Nagle College, for the generous support received to assist those in need, especially during this Christmas Season. The call on our resources has grown a great deal due to present economic and homelessness difficulties in our area. Along with greater demand for our help has come a greater response from our community. This is very heart-warming to see.



All those who donated can be assured that their donations are distributed directly to those who seek our support. We hope for your continued assistance in the future.



**May each and every one of you experience
a Christmas filled with Peace, Joy and every
blessing. Giving Tree donations: \$2300.00**

St Mary's Social Justice Group

Annually the Parish puts aside 2.5% of Planned Giving receipts for local, national and international needs.

Thank you to those who made submissions regarding the disbursement of accumulated funds during 2022-2023. The following recommendations have been approved.



\$500 Headspace (Youth Mental Health).

Headspace helps young people access vital support, through their centres, online and phone counselling services.

\$1000 St Vincent de Paul Welfare – Bairnsdale

\$500 Brigidine Asylum Seeker Program

BASP is at the stage when the level of support they have been giving, and that is needed, is unsustainable. They currently support about 270 people with rent and the payment of utility bills. They give some emergency relief money on a regular basis to 60 people and food to many more. To continue to give this assistance they need to get about \$120,000 a month from donations.

\$500 Sacred Heart Mission St Kilda

Sacred Heart Mission assists hundreds of people who are experiencing homelessness or disadvantage to find shelter, food, care, and support.

\$500 The Isabel Beardmore Home for the Aged in Woodlands, Pietermaritzburg, SA

The Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Social Development fails to pay subsidies to NPO (Non-Profit Organisations) on time. This creates severe cash flows constraints on access to basic care of their residents.

\$500 St Elizabeth Hospital Hyderabad Pakistan – Humidity cribs - Fr Rob McCulloch

\$500 Samuel Lockhart – a former Lindenow resident working and assisting with the resourcing of medical supplies in Ukraine.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER INTENTIONS

DECEMBER — For persons with disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.



Thank you
from Catholic Mission

Catholic Mission thanks the
Parish of St Mary's for your
support of this year's World
Mission Day Appeal.

Your generosity has empowered Church workers across
1047 mission dioceses, allowing them to spread the
message of hope and love within their local communities.
Your contribution of \$1,583.75 has been most gratefully
received. Through your partnership with Catholic Mission,
Sr. Carolina in Timor-Leste can continue providing life-
saving treatment and essential resources for health,
education and well-being. Your gift not only transforms
individual lives but also fuels mission programs globally,
reaching out to those in dire need. Many thanks!

Morning Tea after 9.30am Mass on Christmas Day.



Come and join us
for a cup of
tea or coffee.



Advent Appeal for Ukraine: The Bishops' Conference has asked all Australian dioceses to support the mission of the Church in Ukraine through the work of *Mudra Sprava* (Wise Action), a Patriarchal Charitable Foundation.

Option 1: Bank deposit A/C Name: Trustees of UCC in Australia BSB: 704-235 | A/C Number: 0000 7183

Option 2: Cheque made out to the Trustees of UCC in Australia can be sent to
Bishop's Chancery, 35 Canning Street, North Melbourne, VIC 3051.



ART SHOW 'ART FROM THE HEART' BY MADELAINE SCHUMANN Art to touch your heart with a message of hope and joy St Mary's Parish Hall

Pyke St Bairnsdale
(McDonald's Car Park Entrance)

\$5.00 Entry (Tea, Coffee Included)

Friday January 19-Tuesday January 23, 2024

Open daily 10.00am – 4.00 pm

Painting demonstration by artist Madelaine on
Saturday January 20: 1.00-3.00pm



Will be back in 2024!

A Prayer for the Holy Land

Lord, be our peace and break down
the walls of partition dividing the Holy
Land. Lord, help us to be lights to the
Holy Land. Lord, fulfill this promise
now in the Holy Land. Lord, help the
people of the Holy Land follow the
example of Jacob and Esau and recon-
cile themselves to each other. Amen.



PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED: Richard Rijs, Peter Capes, Rebecca Bedggood, victims of natural disasters, COVID-19, terrorism, war, conflict, poverty, Asylum Seekers and those with Family Violence or Mental Health issues.

ALL WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME: Albert Nelson, Eileen Dean, John Kolar, Leonie Bennett, Theresa Brown, Sheila Collins, Jean McCulloch, Marion Hall, Shirley McKenna, Harold Batty, Jim Bennett, Barbara Grimsted, John Morris, Monica Smith, Desmond Hickling, Peter Brown, Max Kelsey, Maureen Connolly, Gerardine Keyte, Dan Phelan, Maureen Cerini, Terry Flannery, Judy Ward, Cherie Morgan, Joe Pruscino, Bev Seehusen, Ellen Mason, Clem Rooks, and Priests who have worked in the Diocese.

"Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace."

PLEASE REMEMBER THE SICK: Mary Herro (Larry Klobukowski's sister), Shane Hayles, Pat Coloe, Bill Tilley, Kieran Hayles, Elizabeth Steere, Sandra Brooks, Bev Broome, Michael Crane, Robert McMahon, Dennis Collins, Alepaka Tyrell, Bob Marshall, Sue Minchin, Fran Adamson, Elaine Cook, Peter Hayden, John Hayles, Maree Cowell, Hudson Schwab, Adrian Coulter, baby Ethan, Deidree Tickner, Kathleen Robertson, Robyn Finlay, Rick Harney, Margaret O'Reilly, Arthur Elbourne.

Please remember all Parishioners who are unwell or recovering from illness or surgery.

Those on the "sick list" will remain on it for one month. Please contact the Parish Centre to extend this time.

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24, 2023

Entrance Antiphon

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

Opening Prayer

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A reading from the second book of Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12,14-16

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.' But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."'

Responsorial Psalm

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. **R.**

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.' **R.**

He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.' I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure. **R.**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 16:25-27

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done. **Alleluia!**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

Jerusalem Bible ©Liturgy Brisbane

Scripture Notes

Joseph, as Jesus' legal father, connects Jesus to David's line or descendant. So not only is Jesus the son of David but He is also the Son of God, and thus able to save us. Christmas as we celebrate it today, has several layers. Firstly, the consumer Christmas. Secondly, the Charles Dickens Christmas depicting families together. The third is that of the crib, depicting what Christmas is all about. The fourth, and deepest, is the spiritual level. Jesus coming to remind us that we are all God's children and have a divine destiny. All these levels are so interwoven that they cannot be separated. Our challenge is to find a connection between the secular marketplace and the spiritual content of the feast. The Nativity scene is set in a crowded Bethlehem, reminding secularists among us that God cannot be kept out; and equally we cannot confine God to within our institutions either.

Flor McCarthy New Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies