



# ST FRANCIS XAVIER CONNECT

December 2025

ALL ARE WELCOME ALL BELONG

Issue No.5



## ADVENT 2025

Come along to the  
**Parish Advent  
Reflection morning** on  
Saturday, December 13  
commencing at 9am.  
Join us for:

- Reflections
- Scripture Rosary
- Reconciliation
- Benediction
- Adoration
- Morning Tea

## CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve 24th Dec  
SFX Church Ballina  
**5.30pm and 7.30pm**  
Christmas Day 25th Dec  
HF Lennox Head **7.30am**  
SFX Ballina **9am & 11am**

## FROM OUR PARISH PRIESTS:

Dear Parishioners,

As we draw near to the manger in Bethlehem, the light of Christ's birth illuminates our hearts and homes during this sacred season of Advent and Christmas. This time of year calls us to reflect on the profound humility of God becoming man, a gift that invites us to embrace hope, peace, and joy in our daily lives.

In the warmth of our parish family, we celebrate not only the Saviour's arrival but also the ways in which each of you has made our community a true reflection of His love. Our parish thrives because of your love and dedication, whether through your participation in Mass, involvement in ministries, or contributions to the various projects we undertake as a community.

Thank you to all who have given their time, prayer, and generosity throughout the year: our volunteers, ministers, musicians, cleaners, gardeners, catechists, sacristians, acolytes, and altar servers. Our Hospitality and Faith Formation Teams, Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council and those who support our youth ministry, our parish staff and so many who serve silently and faithfully behind the scenes. Your dedication is a gift to our whole community and we are deeply grateful for your presence, your talents, and your steadfast commitment to our shared mission.

May the newborn King fill your homes and hearts with His grace and Peace this Christmas. Let us carry the joy of the Incarnation into the New Year, renewing our resolve to live as disciples of mercy and compassion. As St. Paul reminds us, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

With heartfelt thanks and prayers for a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with God's blessings, grace, and joy.

With gratitude,  
Fr Peter and Fr Erick

Merry Christmas

# FROM THE HOLY FAMILY LENNOX HEAD COMMITTEE

SUE HETHERINGTON, CHAIR HFLHC

A simple, dark, vintage church, stripped bare of excess furniture, flowers, hymn books, Bulletins, notice boards covered in fine fabric, surprised those entering candle lit Holy Family church for Taize in August and October. As full moon shone and surf roared, eyes saw the San Damiano Cross icon, mounted on red velvet, at the altar and lit by searchlights.

This backdrop evoked the Taize tenets of kindness, simplicity and reconciliation of heart. Silence followed by Taize bells ringing from history, welcomed many parishioners, visitors, other faith members, people of different nationalities, and children.

Bernadette McQuillan invited us to listen “with the ear of the heart” and invoke the Holy Spirit. Thank you Bernadette for sharing your talent, bringing Taize to Holy Family church and accepting requests to return and facilitate Taize Beachside Meditation twice in winter 2026.

October's banner proclaiming Rosary in the Public Square unfurled at Lennox's main intersection and was obvious to all. Large numbers of parishioners, visitors from other localities, including children holding candles, gathered. Under the trees, beside the ocean, Marie led us in a moving recitation of the Rosary. We thank Marie and also Phil Chapman who provided the sound system.

Holy Family church now has the NBN installed, with the internet to follow, ultimately leading to installing security cameras. Once cameras are in place, our church will be open during school terms, for prayer and contemplation, as is St Francis Xavier church.



It takes more than offering a Bulletin with a smile to make all who enter our church feel welcome. The Mass is pivotal to our faith. Some parishioners find sitting in silence a welcome relief from a busy life. Some find sitting in silence takes effort, whether adult or child. Provided at Holy Family church are cushions, children's Bulletins, colouring in sheets, packets of coloured and lead pencils, and colourful children's books. The Committee is mindful that we live in a Ballina community that experienced the trauma of flood, and we have in our community first responders, those working with vulnerable people, care givers and neurodiverse adults and children, who may benefit from having sensory items available in the church to calm. These items are now mainstream in schools and workplaces. In 2026 a container of assorted sensory items will be placed on the table inside the main entrance for the use of those coming to Mass.

The Holy Family Lennox Head Committee comprising Cheryl and Peter Bowen, Genevieve Starr and Marie and Kevin Sullivan held our final meeting last Friday. The role of the Committee is to care for the church and its people. The numbers are growing, welcoming initiatives are supported and the church site steadily is improving to welcome all. I thank each of the Committee members for demonstrating how to live a purposeful existence, through displays of radical kindness and compassion in the collection that is our community, our Parish. I thank them because their involvement makes our community vital; they keep turning up, once a month, serving all. May God bless you richly.

We thank Courtney Hyde and Annette and Julian White who have been part of the Sacristan team who weekly prepare so we can have Mass in our town. There are many Baptisms at Lennox Head and the Sacristans are often the first point of call for new parents, some stepping into a church for the first time. Thank you for your gift of service to Holy Family Church community.

Looking forward to 2026, I invite you to take note and talk with your family about a captivating opportunity held annually at Lennox Head. At Easter, in 2025, strangers walking by and café visitors were taking selfies with the large cross, draped in white, with the sun shining behind on the ocean. Easter is the most important feast of the year which we celebrate with Mass.

Also on Easter Sunday, before Mass, the Catholic and Anglican communities unite to stage a communal Easter prayer at Ross Park as the sun rises, to encourage all to celebrate with us in a public space. In 2026 Father Erick will prepare the service.

We thank Father Peter and Father Erick for their enthusiasm and support with Holy Family initiatives. We thank Bernadette at the Parish Office for helping to put our plans into action. It has been a year of joyful growth and we look forward to continuing to implement our strategic plan as we care for our Church and its people.



# FROM THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

MURRAY DEEPS, CHAIRPERSON OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

As we approach the conclusion of another year, we pause to give heartfelt thanks for the many blessings that continue to enrich our parish community. It has been a year marked by faith, generosity, and a renewed sense of shared purpose.

First and foremost, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all members of our Parish Pastoral Council for their dedication, wisdom, and prayerful discernment throughout 2025. Their willingness to listen, to plan thoughtfully, and to serve with love has guided our community with vision and hope. In particular, I acknowledge their significant contributions to the development of our Two-Year Strategic Plan, which is set to be shared with the wider parish community in the coming year. This plan reflects not only practical goals but also the spiritual aspirations of a parish that seeks to grow ever more faithful, inclusive, and mission-focused.

I also take this opportunity to thank the many groups, ministries, and volunteers who are the heartbeat of our parish life. From the liturgical and music ministries, catechists, and sacramental preparation teams, to those involved in social outreach, youth ministry, parish schools, prayer groups, and hospitality teams, each of you plays a vital role in bringing the Gospel to life in our midst. I especially acknowledge the tireless efforts of those who quietly serve behind the scenes, our cleaners, gardeners, maintenance teams, and those who prepare the church environment so beautifully for our celebrations.

Your generosity, creativity, and commitment to service continue to inspire. Together, you embody the mission of the Church: to be a welcoming, compassionate, and Christ-centred community. You remind us that the parish is not merely a collection of buildings, but a living family of faith, strengthened by the Spirit and united in love.

***"His coming into the world brings light to our darkness, hope to our struggles, and peace to our hearts."***

As we enter this sacred season of Christmas, may we once again open our hearts to the wonder and mystery of the Incarnation—the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. His coming into the world brings light to our darkness, hope to our struggles, and peace to our hearts. In these challenging and often uncertain times, the message of Christmas calls us to rekindle our faith, to cherish one another, and to renew our commitment to living out Christ's love in all we do.

May this holy season be a time of deep joy, reflection, and gratitude within every household of our parish. May we find strength in community, comfort in prayer, and inspiration in the simple beauty of the manger, the place where God's love first touched the earth.

On behalf of all members of the Parish Pastoral Council, I extend to each of you our warmest wishes for a happy, holy, and healthy Christmas. May the peace of the newborn Christ dwell richly in your hearts and homes throughout the coming New Year.

With every blessing,  
Murray Deeps  
Chairperson, Parish Pastoral Council

## CROWLEY CARE

Crowley Care is proud to introduce their latest independent living development in Ballina – the Assisi Apartments.

Currently under construction, the Assisi Apartments at Crowley feature 26 unique residences designed with care and built with purpose for independent retirees. This new two-storey development located in Florence Price Place in Ballina is an exciting chapter for Crowley, and will bring the total number of residences in the independent living village to 164. After 45 years of providing quality retirement living and care in Ballina, Crowley continues to celebrate independence, providing an inspirational living experience with the reassurance of a caring community and the warmth of genuine connection.

Each of Assisi's 26 residences is individually designed and thoughtfully crafted to include spacious and luxurious open-plan interiors with modern kitchens and private balconies or patios along with secure undercover parking and smart access systems. With multiple floor plans to choose from, the waiting list is growing for these self-contained residences on one level with 1 and 2 bedroom configurations with 1 or 2 bathrooms.

Expected to be completed by February 2026, Crowley Care invites you to learn more about the Assisi Apartments at [www.living.crowley.org.au](http://www.living.crowley.org.au) or ph 1300 139 099 for more information.







# PARISH MINISTRIES

## PARISH RENEWAL: FAITH FORMATION GROUP

The Faith Formation Team has been busy over the last few months running the Catholic Alpha Australia Program, preparing RCIA Candidates to be

welcomed into the full faith of the Catholic Church, organising the Parish Pilgrimage, A Symphony of Prayer, presentations on Voluntary Assisted Dying and A Walk through the Gospel of Matthew, Journey through the Bible and the Advent Relection Day.

### YEAR OF HOPE PARISH PILGRIMAGE

Pilgrimage from St Francis Xavier Parish to St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore.

We gathered in joy and reverence, united as one faithful community on a sacred journey. After entering the cathedral through the Holy Door, we began with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by praying the Holy Rosary and the opportunity for reconciliation. We concluded with the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament.

Our pilgrimage was part of our celebration of the 2025 Holy Year of Jubilee, whose theme is "Pilgrims of Hope." As faithful believers, we are invited to embrace this Holy Year through pilgrimages, prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, acts of repentance, and charity—all pathways to receiving the Jubilee indulgence.

An indulgence is a beautiful sign of God's abundant mercy, extended through the Church to free us from the lingering effects of sin. As the late Pope Francis reminded us, "The Jubilee indulgence is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God's mercy" (Spes non confundit). Through this grace, we draw nearer to God and share more deeply in His divine love.

A warm thank you to Fr Bing, our gracious cathedral administrator, and to Bishop Greg, for their generous welcome and spiritual guidance. Thank you also to Fr Peter and Fr Erick for joining us and being available for reconciliation.

### ALPHA

Lively conversations filled the room as up to 25 people joined our Alpha program in October/November. Each evening began with a shared meal, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere before we moved into a 30-minute video and then a group discussion. Weekly topics ranged from Who Is Jesus? to How Does God Guide Us?

A heartfelt thank-you goes to our wonderful hospitality team—Pauline, Amy, and Cheryl—who prepared both the main meal & dessert each week. We also extend our gratitude to our facilitating team—Peter, Richard, Maxine, John, and Leanne—for warmly welcoming participants and guiding the discussions.





# PARISH MINISTRIES

## PARISH RENEWAL: FAITH FORMATION GROUP

### RCIA - WELCOME TO OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

The parish joyfully welcomed eight new parishioners into the Catholic Faith at the 9:00 am Mass on Sunday, December 7, followed by a warm and celebratory morning tea. Their journey toward full initiation began in August, supported every step of the way by the dedicated RCIA Team (Maxine, Pauline, Leanne, Peter and John) and their sponsors.

Throughout the three months of preparation, a beautiful sense of connection grew within the group, and many wonderful relationships were formed. The RCIA team felt truly blessed to accompany such remarkable people on their path of faith.

Fr Peter, Fr Erick, Deacon Anthony and Sr Anne also played an important role, offering guidance and presenting sessions on topics such as the Sacraments, Sin and Forgiveness, the Bible and the Mass, alongside presentations prepared by the RCIA team.

The weekly Wednesday evening meetings helped foster a deep bond among the group. So much so that they have decided to continue meeting next year to keep sharing and growing together in faith.

We wish them every blessing as they continue on their journey of faith.



### COMING IN FEBRUARY 2026

Join us for a video series presented by Jeff Cavins plus time for questions and discussion as we Journey through the Gospel of Matthew. Keep an eye out for details in the Parish Bulletin.



*Matthew: The King and His Kingdom* shows how Jesus fulfills God's promises to Israel and establishes his kingdom on earth. Through references to the Old Testament promises of God to his people and the messages God sent them through the prophets, this Bible study provides the key to understanding the rest of the New Testament and Christ as the fulfillment of God's plan.

Welcome to our Parish family Zach, Simone, Donna, Norm, Sandi, Michael, Sandra and Mark.







# PARISH MINISTRIES

## ST VINCENT DE PAUL



A big thank you to you, our ever-generous parish. The parishioners from our parish donated \$14,500 to the Winter Appeal. This has been one of our most successful appeals, a lot of credit goes to the work of Ted Hogben.

Through your generosity the Conference has been able to assist a large amount of people seeking assistance and provided them with essential living needs beyond providing food vouchers. The donations also allowed the Conference to purchase tents, ground mats and sleeping bags which were distributed to the homeless through Mary's Place and the Conference. We thank you for making this possible.

On Friday 28 November, Conference Members will be participating as a group in the Domestic & Family Violence Awareness Walk in Ballina to show our support to a concerning social issue.

Now we find ourselves nearly at Christmas. This Christmas we are appealing to your generosity once again for the people in our community in need at this time of year. No doubt you well know the hardships placed on individuals and families with the current rise in living costs, and the extra burden on families to provide their families with a joyous Christmas. This is your opportunity to help spread the joy with your kind donations.

This year we join the Jesse Tree and Christmas Appeal together as one. From the beginning of Advent the students of Xavier College will kindly assemble the Christmas Tree in St Francis Xavier Church where envelopes will be placed for parishioners to make donations. A Jesse Tree will also be at Holy Family Church.

As we appeal to your generosity of heart in a financial way, we also appeal to your generosity of heart, in a time giving way. At the Ballina Conference we see our members making extraordinary differences to the people we assist in the local community. We ask you to consider joining us as a volunteer to help us to do Christ's work in helping the poor. It can be a very rewarding experience helping those in need, the power to change lives is available to everyone. Volunteering at Vinnies can be one of the best ways of showing your love for your neighbor and we can assure you, your experiences will be very rewarding.

On Sunday 7 December after 9 am Mass the Conference will be hosting the morning tea, this is a good opportunity to have a chat and learn how we help the poor.

The Ballina Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, wishes the parish community a safe and blessed Christmas. We look forward to strengthening our connection with each other and sincerely hope that in 2026 the Lord brings many blessings your way. We leave you a quote from Vincent de Paul ....

*"We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people, and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God." ~ Vincent de Paul*

## HOSPITALITY GROUP

### Parish Morning Tea

Weather permitting parishioners have gathered under the trees outside the church for a cuppa and delicious goodies baked by the ladies of the parish after 9am & 11am mass on 1st Sunday of the month.



We recently welcomed the current group of RCIA candidates who are on their journey in faith to receive the Sacraments.

The **Tuesday Morning Coffee Group** keeps growing and the ladies enjoy coffee and a chat, it's a wonderful opportunity to meet new friends and share a laugh and sometimes the odd family picture. Tuesday mornings from 10 am at the Cherry St Sports Club.

### Parish Luncheon

Parishioners enjoyed good food and great company at the annual parish lunch on the first Sunday of Advent. This was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet new ones as we connect with fellow parishioners from across the various Masses.



Parishioners enjoying lunch at Cherry Street Sports Club





# PARISH MINISTRIES

## UPPER ROOM YOUTH GROUP



The Upper Room Youth Group occurs Sunday afternoons 6:00-8:00pm during school term in the Parish Upper Room. We are a warm and welcoming group, who aim to provide a sense of community, culture and belonging to the youth of the Ballina Parish through the development of their social and spiritual needs.

Members of our youth group have been very busy over the past few months, representing us in August at the Diocesan Gatherings SHINE and GOAT, and in September at the National Ignite Conference, and are looking forward to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Melbourne later this month.

One of the our biggest highlights of the year was our combined Youth Night with the Lismore youth group. It was amazing to connect with other young people from the region and realise how big, and alive, our wider faith community is. We began the night with a Youth Mass where members of the RCIYP Program made their Sacraments, before we headed upstairs for dinner. The night was packed with games, praise and worship, small group chats, and a powerful message that really resonated with everyone. We're already looking forward to the next one!

This year All Saints' Day fell on a Saturday, therefore it was only fitting that we have a big celebration the following Sunday. Youth group members came dressed as their chosen Catholic Saint, some chose their favourite, some chose their Confirmation Saint, others the Saint they were named for. Everyone was then given the opportunity to present to the group a brief history on who they had chosen and why they were so important to them. We finished the year with an early Christmas Party, where everyone dressed in their Christmas finery to share a meal, play some games, grab a gift, and pray together as we looked back to the year we had.

Thank you to the Parish, parents, youth leaders, and youth group members who help us make Youth Group a reality, we appreciate and value your continued support. We will return next year on Sunday 8th February at 6:00pm. New faces are always welcome! Come along, bring a friend, and be part of something real.

For more information and regular updates, we have a social media presence on Instagram and Facebook under the handle @ballina.youth, as well as a quarterly magazine, which can be found on the Parish website under the name Neotēs.



### Youth Masses

On the second Sunday of the month (during term time) we held Youth Masses at 5:00pm. Many members of our Youth Group stepped up offering to read, altar serve, welcome parishioners, and helping with the offertory. It was awesome to see so many young faces taking an active role in the liturgy. A big thank you to everyone who volunteered, you're a vital part of the Church, and your service makes a real impact! An especially big thank you to Father Erick for supporting us this year.

Our Youth Masses are in recess until school returns in the new year. Please keep an eye out for the announcements regarding this.





# PARISH SCHOOLS

## ST FRANCIS XAVIER PRIMARY SCHOOL



### ★ Mission News

#### **Year of Jubilee - Pilgrimage**

On Friday 24 October, the staff and students shared in activities and a Pilgrimage in recognition of the Year of Jubilee. The Year of Jubilee is a special time of forgiveness and celebration and occurs every 50 years. The Jubilee Year of 2025, called "Pilgrims of Hope," is a special Holy Year that began in December 2024 and will conclude in October 2025. Staff and students participated in activities at school where they created 'Pilgrim Footprints', 'Pilgrim necklaces' made of shells, 'Hope Chains' and participated in 'Contemplative Prayer' in the Parish Gardens. Staff and students also went on a 'pilgrimage' to Fawcett Park where they reflected and meditated whilst overlooking the Richmond River. This was a wonderful day of reflection, learning and fun in recognition of the Year of Jubilee.

#### **Class Retreats**

During Term 4, each class will be participating in class retreats based on a Scripture passage they are learning about during Religious Education lessons. Here are some of the retreats we have had so far...

Year 2 shared in a retreat based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The students participated in activities which focused on the theme 'We show love for God by loving and helping everyone, even people we don't know or who are different from us. A 'neighbour' is anyone we meet who needs our help'. The Year 2 students received a small gift to remind them that they are "Super Samaritans" and that they should always stop and help others who are hurting, just like the man in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Year 6 students shared in a retreat based around the theme 'hope' from the scripture Genesis 12:1-9. The scripture focused on the story of Abram & Sarai. The Year 6 students participated in a range of activities including 'Taking a leap of Faith' and "Hope: God is Faithful to His Promise." Our Year 4 students joined in the Accendere retreat. This retreat is based on the Scripture of John 13: 34-35 - 'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.' During the retreat, the students looked at 'what makes a good friend?', 'how did Jesus treat his friends?' and 'how to be a good friend?'

#### **Year 6 Excursion - Sydney and Canberra**

Our Year 6 excursion to Sydney and Canberra was an unforgettable week filled with learning, discovery, and experiences that brought classroom learning to life in exciting and meaningful ways. The students embraced every opportunity with enthusiasm and represented St Francis Xavier with pride.

The journey began in Sydney with a guided tour of the Sydney Opera House, where students were fascinated by the stories behind one of the world's most iconic architectural landmarks. A visit to Mary MacKillop Place offered a moment of reflection as students learned about Australia's first saint and her lasting legacy of service and compassion.

Canberra provided a rich tapestry of educational experiences. At Parliament House, students explored the chambers and developed a deeper understanding of Australia's democratic processes. The beauty and scale of the National Arboretum and the charming miniature worlds of Cockington Green captivated students as they explored these unique spaces.

Throughout the week, students visited a wide range of national institutions including the Film and Sound Archives, Australian Institute of Sport, National Museum of Australia, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, the Australian Botanic Gardens, and the always engaging Questacon. Each venue offered hands-on learning, inspiring curiosity in science, history, culture, art, and sport.

A particularly moving highlight was the moment our School Captains, Evie and Reef, were invited to lay a wreath during the Closing Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial—a proud and solemn occasion for our school community. The final day began bright and early as the group travelled back to Sydney to explore Taronga Zoo, where students delighted in close encounters with native and exotic animals. The journey home turned into an unexpected adventure when severe storms prevented our plane from landing in Ballina, resulting in a diversion to the Gold Coast. A quick bus trip returned the group safely to Ballina, where very relieved parents welcomed their tired travellers—three hours later than planned, but full of stories to tell. Throughout the excursion, our students were continually praised by members of the public for their respectful behaviour and positive attitude.

We extend our sincere thanks to Mrs Danielle Niland, Mr Chris Hosie, Mrs Laurel Newton, Mrs Kealey Bertram and Mr Tony Hunter for accompanying the students. This memorable trip marks a special chapter in the Year 6 students' final year of primary school.



# ST FRANCIS XAVIER PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Francis Xavier Primary: Learning and Teaching News

## *A Wonderful Welcome: Kindergarten 2026 Transition Program Concludes*

It's been an incredibly exciting term watching our future 2026 Kindergarten students participate in the Transition to School Program! On Monday, November 10th, they marked their sixth and final visit before they officially join us next year, and we couldn't be prouder of how quickly and confidently they have settled in. Their final session was a truly special milestone designed to make the final step into 'big school' as smooth and enjoyable as possible. The children spent quality time with their assigned Year 5 Buddies, marking the formation of a crucial, supportive relationship that will continue when they start school in 2026.

### *Lunch, Laughter, and Learning the Layout*

A highlight of their Monday visits is enjoying lunch together in the primary school setting, followed by dedicated playtime. Sharing this important routine helps the students feel comfortable in the busy school environment. The children, guided by their teachers, embarked on a comprehensive school tour. Getting to know the lay of the land is essential for building confidence. Their tour included all the key locations they will be visiting often:

- The Canteen, where they'll order their lunch.
- The School Office, the hub for all important administrative tasks.
- The Principal's Office, a friendly place to visit. Couldn't believe we fitted two classes of Kinders into Mr Hunter's Office.
- The Library, where a whole world of stories awaits them.
- The K-6 classrooms and the surrounding playground areas.

### *The Benefits of a Strong Transition*

The success of these transition visits is clear. Each session is carefully designed to address the common anxieties associated with starting school and maximise preparedness. The children are already reaping the benefits of this program:

- Meeting Key Staff: They've had the chance to meet and interact not only with their future Kindergarten teachers but also other staff members, like our Principal and the office team. This familiarity transforms strangers into friendly faces.
- Getting to Know Their Surroundings: By visiting their classrooms, bathrooms, and play areas multiple times, the school no longer feels overwhelming or unfamiliar. It's already becoming their space.
- Understanding Routines: They've practiced important 'big school' routines, such as lining up, packing their bags, following playground rules, and sitting patiently for story time.
- Learning Expected Behaviours: Through games and interaction, they are being introduced to the behavioural expectations for primary school, which helps ensure a positive and focused learning environment from Day One.
- Building Friendships: The ongoing interaction with their peers and their Buddies establishes social connections that ease the feeling of being alone in a new environment.

### *A Heartfelt Welcome Awaits*

We want to sincerely thank the parents for supporting their children through this program. The 2026 Kindergarten cohort has settled in exceptionally well. They are happy, confident, and almost ready for the next big adventure! We look forward to officially welcoming our new students and families into the school community next year.



## PRAYER MINISTRY

### PRAYER GROUPS

#### TAIZE

Everyone is welcome to enjoy 45 minutes of praise, meditation and music uninterrupted. Every second Monday SFX Church Ballina at 12 noon

#### MEN ALIVE

Bringing men together to share their faith journey and renew their faith in God. Groups running in Ballina (contact Richard Goss 0418 356 527) and Lennox (contact Murray Parr 0414 399 658)

#### CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Come and experience meditation in the Christian tradition. We meet every Saturday at 9.30am in the Anawim Room  
Contact John Cheadle

#### MARIAN CENACLE

Our Lady invites us into the centicle of her Immaculate Heart to pray for Priests, Bishops, Cardinals and the Pope. We would love you to join us every Monday at 11am in the Anawim Room.  
Contact the Parish Office

#### BALLINA CCR

Catholic Charismatic Renewal  
Come and PRAISE God in song. Listen to His word in SCRIPTURE Speak to Him in PRAYER. Every Monday 2.15pm in the Anawim Room  
Contact Maxine Cole 0429 669 029

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH AND ROSARY

Every Saturday 9am SFX Church Ballina  
Every Sunday 7am Holy Family Lennox

#### DEVOTION TO THE HOLY FACE OF JESUS

Every Tuesday 10am Holy Family Church Lennox Head. For more information contact Hilda Carter 0458 662828





# PARISH SCHOOLS

## XAVIER CATHOLIC COLLEGE



As the school moves into Advent and towards the end of Term 4, our community has been experiencing a busy and joy-filled term, particularly in our Mission space. Students and staff have been actively engaging in programs that deepen faith, strengthen community, and encourage service to others.

### Timor-Leste Immersion 2025

Over the holiday break, 10 Year 11 students and two staff members participated in the Timor Immersion for 2025. A highlight was spending time in the village of Turiscai, where students experienced the warmth, generosity, and faith of the local community. Our partnership with the community continues to make a meaningful impact, contributing to new classrooms, a toilet block, and resources for both a music room and a computer lab at Lady Fatima School, Turiscai. Students visited several schools, leading English conversation groups and facilitating a range of classroom activities. The immersion also nurtured deep personal and spiritual growth, particularly through Mass and the powerful beauty of Timorese singing. We are immensely proud of our students' commitment, compassion, and willingness to walk alongside another culture in humility and service.

### Senior Retreat

The Senior Retreat was held in Week Two of this term at the picturesque North Tamborine Mountains and brought the entire Year 11 cohort together in a peaceful and reflective environment. Students explored meaningful questions about direction, purpose, and the call to make a positive impact in the world. Using the compass as a guiding symbol, they considered the many paths life may offer while remembering their call to be Men and Women for Others. They reflected on the belief that God remains our True North, even when life feels uncertain or complex. Through prayer, discussion, and companionship, students deepened their understanding of their Catholic faith and Ignatian spirituality.

### Kairos Retreat

A group of Year 10 students recently participated in the Kairos Retreat at Camp Drewe, supported by student leaders from Year 11 who had previously completed the program. The retreat was also accompanied by College Youth Ministers and teachers who helped guide the experience.

Kairos is a unique peer-led retreat that encourages personal discovery, spiritual reflection, and community building. The experience was a valuable opportunity for students to encounter God in one another and recognise His presence in their daily lives.



### Australian Catholic Youth Festival

At the beginning of December, the College is sending 11 Year 9 Pilgrims to the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Melbourne. The Festival brings together young Catholics from across the nation and provides opportunities to deepen faith, celebrate community, and encounter Jesus in new and meaningful ways. Over three days, participants take part in worship, keynote sessions, music, workshops, and fellowship with thousands of other young people.



Year 9 students attending the Australian Catholic Youth Festival this month in Melbourne set up the Jesse Tree at St Francis Xavier Church Ballina marking the start of Advent





# PARISH SCHOOLS

## HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Catholic Mission's Mini Fete



Parishioners were warmly invited to join our Holy Family Mini Fete on Tuesday 3rd December. Our Mini Fete is a special event in our school calendar for children, family and friends, and parishioners to join in our fun celebration with the important focus of raising money in support of Catholic Missions and our Sister School, St John Bosco in the Solomon Islands.

Our Mini Fete followed a short liturgy in the hall.

### Year of Jubilee: Whole School Coastal Pilgrimage Walk

The theme of the 2025 Jubilee Year, 'Pilgrims of Hope', highlights the importance of faith and hope in Christ. With the purpose of deepening our relationship with God and encouraging acts of love and mercy.

An important element of the Jubilee Year is encouraging pilgrimage, and as a special way to acknowledge this call, our school community took part in a Coastal Pilgrimage Walk from our school to Holy Family Catholic Church in Lennox Head.

Throughout the pilgrimage journey, each year level shared in carrying our newly created Holy Family Cross for a designated part of the journey. The cross is a tangible representation of our Christian faith, reminding us of the importance of always carrying Jesus' message of love and peace.

While we journeyed along our pilgrimage walk, there were opportunities to individually pause at a series of stations to reflect in a personal Pilgrim's Passport on various topics around our personal faith and discipleship.



### Campout With Dads

Holy Family's Campout with Dads has always been a fantastic occasion for all involved. With over 600 dads or father figures and their children enjoying quality time with each other the campout is also an opportunity for dads to get to know other dads at the same time. For many, this event has been the highlight of their school year. All those who took part in our Campout With Dads enjoyed great food, entertainment and music, as well as fun and exciting games and activities over the weekend. A special highlight of the campout was a candlelit prayer reflection led by the children for their dads.



# PARISH SCHOOLS

## ST ANNES LONG DAY CARE CENTRE



St Anne's Long Day Care Centre has had a very full year of nurturing and supporting children's growth, learning and development, and working with families to ensure our work compliments the children's learning at home. As we honour this learning at home with the belief that families are children's first and most influential educators, we work in our professional capacity at St Anne's to engage children in learning in a social group learning setting using play-based pedagogies and curriculum to further children's curiosity, thinking, creativity and knowledge.

As Educators, it is at this time of the year, as we author Learning and Development Summaries for each child (a bit like a "school report"!), that we reflect on the individual growth in confidence, competence and that feeling of self, that is such an important part of life-long learning.

We reflect on:

- the growth of the "babies" (children in the age group of Birth to 2 years old) who are no longer held closely in the arms of the carers but are now toddling around their play environment connecting with each other and initiating play.
- the growth of the "toddlers" (children in the age group of 2 to 3 years old) who, now competent with their language, converse competently with their peers and teachers and articulate what they want, how they want things, and can verbally express their delight in learning experiences.
- the growth of the "Preschool" children (children who are in the age group of 3 to 5 years old), whose independence is now evident, their curiosity and motivation to seek out new experiences supporting their learning, and their interests voiced ensuring Educators can build on those interests as valuable learning experiences and opportunities.

Of the 32 Preschool children attending St Anne's who are preparing to transition to school in 2026, 27 children will transition to Parish schools (Holy Family Primary School and St Francis Xavier Primary School).

Children's health and safety is always of paramount importance in an early childhood education and care service and this year the Department of Education has put a spotlight on all children's services, ensuring children's safety is, at all times, the number one priority. From 1 September 2025 changes to the National Regulations for Early Childhood Education and Care services were introduced as part of the implementation of expedited recommendations from the Review of Child Safety Arrangements under the National Quality Framework to improve child safety. These changes included having a policy and clear procedures related to child protection, and, the safe use of digital technologies and online environments. There are now clear restrictions on the use of personal mobile phones and all personal electronic devices for those who are working at, or visiting, St Anne's, with the implementation of such policies and procedures as part of our commitment to child safety.

As we finish the year we reflect on the words of Magda Gerber (a pioneering infant specialist and Educator 1910-2007), Trust in the child as an initiator, explorer and self-learner. As we work alongside young children guiding and supporting their learning and development, we also support them to experience the sense of 'belonging, being and becoming' as unique individuals, creating and developing their own learning, their own identities and their own autonomy – this resonates with the national The Early Years Learning Framework (a framework of learning for all children from birth to 5 years of age and through the transition to school).

We now look forward to a new year of learning together in 2026.



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Mon - Fri 8.30am - 4.00pm

St Francis Xavier Catholic Church  
Cnr Crane & Cherry Streets, Ballina

Holy Family Catholic Church  
Ballina Street, Lennox Head

Administrator of Ballina Parish: Fr Peter Padsungay

Assistant Priest: Fr Erick Quinteros

Deacon: Rev Assoc. Prof Anthony Gooley

Pastoral Team: Pauline Fingleton

Youth Co-ordinator: Kailani Tiernan (ktiernan@sfxballina.org.au)

SFX Primary School: Swift Street Ballina 6686 3370

Holy Family Primary: 40 Isabella Drive Skennars Head 66875311

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