



Dungog & Gresford Parishes

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Incorporating worshipping communities at **St Mary's Church**, Brown Street, Dungog, **St Patrick's Church**, Rifle Street, Clarence Town, **St Helen's Church**, Park Street, East Gresford, **Sacred Heart Church**, Summerhill Road, Summer Hill via Vacy, and serving the surrounding districts.

SUNDAY 25 DECEMBER 2022

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

Parish Staff

Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)
Kerry Copus (*Parish Secretary*)

Presbytery & Parish Office

55 Brown Street, Dungog
PO Box 24, Dungog NSW 2420

P: (02) 4992 1477

E: dungog.parish@mn.catholic.org.au

W: www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au

Office Hours

The Parish Office is staffed on Tuesdays from 10am until 2pm & Fridays from 10am until 1pm.

Parish Bulletin

Items for inclusion in the Parish Bulletin should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays.

Bulletins can be downloaded from the website.

Other Contacts

Clarence Town Val Preece—0403 251 434,
 (02) 4996 4474, or email
 vip_1@bigpond.com

Gresford Faith Banister
 0427 536 248

Parish School

St Joseph's Primary School
49 Brown Street, Dungog NSW 2420
Mrs Lisa McNeilly (*Principal*)

P: (02) 4992 1377

E: admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au

W: www.dungog.catholic.edu.au

A Pastoral Note...

And so we come to the great festival of the Incarnation, that occurrence when God came to dwell with us as one like us (in all things but sin).

I can be tempted at times to get caught up in the beauty of this day—well, this Season—and pay attention to the image of a helpless babe in a manger in Bethlehem. And when I do that, I can also miss the much grander beauty that is the profound truth that God is with us.

Christmas Day is about thanksgiving and family, of spending time with loved ones, and celebrating what lies at the heart of the day.

But it's not just about that.

Christmas Day prompts me every year to look at how I honour the gift of God dwelling with us, and what God's gift calls me to be and to do. If I am being true to what I profess Christmas Day means to me, then it must also require me to embrace the consequences of acknowledging that significance.

While Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God in human form, it also marks the beginning of something much grander.

Because Jesus didn't stay that small helpless child in a manger in Bethlehem. And my recognizing that is when I am called to both a way of being and a way of acting that demands more of me.

May your celebration of Christmas be a time of joy and peace with your families and loved ones. A happy and holy Christmas to all.

Fr Andrew

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford recognize that they sit upon the traditional country of the Worimi people. We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with this land. We pay our respects to their Elders—past, present, and emerging—and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

Confirmation as Parish Priest

During the week I received confirmation that I have been appointed as Parish Priest of the two parishes of Dungog & Gresford. The appointment is dated 14 November 2022, and my first term is for six years.

As I have previously mentioned in this bulletin, the confirmation will bring certain requirements into play—the establishment of a Pastoral Council and a Finance Committee, for example—all of which can wait until the New Year!

I'm afraid you're stuck with me for a while now.

Fr Andrew

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Nativity scene

St Francis of Assisi is credited with setting up the first nativity scene and thus establishing a tradition that is carried on today in homes, churches and public spaces in Christian communities everywhere. In 1223, in the town of Greccio he created a life size tableau of the nativity scene to heighten the awareness of the celebration of the birth of Christ. It included statues of the holy family and a live ox and donkey. The inclusion of the livestock has no scriptural support and it is to Francis that we owe the array of sheep, oxen and donkeys that have become standard inclusions in our nativity scenes.

Prayer for the Appointment of our New Bishop

Shepherding God
you reveal your way of unfailing love
in the image of the Good Shepherd
who seeks the lost,
shows compassion
knows and is known by the sheep
and lays down his life for them.

We your people of Maitland-Newcastle
are without a bishop to shepherd us.

We ask that your Holy Spirit
who moves through this great south land
inspire the choice of our new Bishop,
empower his 'yes'
and open our hearts in hospitality and love.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for us.
Mary MacKillop of the Cross, pray for us.

Parish Office Closure

The Parish Office will close for the week between Christmas and New Year.

Messages left on the answering machine and emails sent to the Parish email address will be checked regularly during the week.

Fr Andrew

Sending Ceremony for John Bradley

As parishioners would be well aware, one of our own—John Bradley—will be embarking as a PALMS volunteer in early January (see the article on the opposite page).

As a parish community, we will celebrate a 'Sending Ceremony' with John during the 9.30am Mass on Sunday, 1 January 2023. It is important for us, as a parish, to support John in this way as he starts his experience.

Hopefully we will be able to sharing a morning tea after Mass. All welcome.

Baptisms This Week

We welcome **Sebastian Wall**, together with his family and friends, as we celebrate his Baptism at St Mary's this Tuesday.

Dungog Christmas Hamper Raffle—RESULTS

Congratulations to the winners of hampers from this year's Christmas Raffle: L. Potter, J. Byron, C. Atkins, E. Tiernan, Max Martin, Mary Flanagan, S. Kelman, H. Edwards, St Vinnies, J. Loudon & Leila Townsend.

Having eleven hamper prizes this year was an amazing result.

The proceeds from this year's Christmas Raffle will be used to support John Bradley's PALMS project.

2023 Columban Art Calendar

Lyn Barham has ordered some copies of the 2023 Columban Art Calendar. If you would like to purchase a copy (\$10), please contact Lyn.

Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is important.

Our Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford are committed to fostering communities of safety and care.

We acknowledge our legal, moral, and spiritual responsibilities to care for and uphold the dignity and rights of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Opportunities Outside The Parish

Become An SRE Volunteer

Did you know that some 50% of Catholic children are in state schools? Have you ever thought of spreading the good news of the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ with children? Have you ever thought about becoming a Special Religious Educator?

This could be an opportunity for you to meet new people, discover new friendships and build quality relationships whilst mastering skills and confidence in Catechetics.

You can make a difference in the schools within your parish! For people of faith, knowing you are participating in Christ's call to share the Good News to all is a great source of joy and meaning.

If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please contact the Pastoral Ministries team on 4979 1200.

Announcing the Damascus Spiritual Leaders Program!

Part-time in Feb-Nov 2023 - either in person or online - through Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation. This program is designed for people in various positions of leadership, spiritual formation and parish or outreach ministries.

The program will equip individuals to lead with integrity, vulnerability and resilience, and will focus on the inner spiritual journey in order to create fully-formed leaders who listen, learn and accompany others with strength and sensitivity.

'Damascus' can be studied as a Graduate Certificate in Divinity through the University of Divinity (Yarra Theological Union/Catholic Theological College), or as an audit student to receive a Certificate in Spiritual Leadership from Heart of Life.

Attendance on Monday mornings and some Saturdays. Read more about the program on the [Heart of Life website](#) or contact us on (03) 9890 1101. Applications close on 6/1/23.

SRE Teachers for Gresford & Vacy

Gresford parishioners currently attend Gresford and Vacy Primary Schools to offer Special Religious Education using the Sydney Diocesan program "Christ is Our Light and Life".

A additional teacher for either or both of these two schools—and especially for Vacy Primary School—would be very welcome. Training and support are offered for any one interested in taking up this role. Please contact the Parish Office in the first instance.

Diocesan Lenten Program Is Coming

Although it seems a little 'odd' to be speaking of Lent even before we begin celebrating Christmas, the following information may be of interest to parishioners as they look forward to 2023:

Pastoral Ministries has prepared a Lenten resource for our diocese, Finding Light within the Darkness. Every Lent there is a fresh invitation to retreat from the noise and busyness of daily life. To listen with our heart, to contemplate our humanness so we can actively focus on humanity. We are invited to turn to God dwelling within us and consider how we can find light in the darkness and how we can be light to others. This resource provides opportunities for prayer, faith-sharing, and outreach in our local community.

This resource will be available at the end of January.



Palms Volunteer from Dungog Parish

You will have seen regular notices in the weekly parish bulletin concerning volunteering opportunities overseas with Palms Australia, which enables skill sharing, vocational mentoring and the enhancement of local capacity in overseas communities which have requested assistance.

Dungog parishioner John Bradley has answered the call and will depart in January 2023 to take up a placement at Don Bosco High School and Vocational Training Centre in Saloleloga, Samoa as a Science & Maths Teacher. John is an experienced Science teacher in Catholic high schools and previously volunteered with Palms in Kiribati from 2001 to 2003.

Members of Dungog Parish are invited to support John in his placement by making his mission a prayer intention. Parishioners can also support John's placement financially, either with regular support or a one-off donation, by visiting <https://palms.org.au/project/physics-science-teacher-mentor-in-savaii-samoa/>

John's placement support team includes several members of the Dungog Parish community. Fr Andrew and Esma Tiernan (who was herself a Palms volunteer in Kiribati) are part of that team, and will receive regular updates from John about his work in Samoa and how the support of parish members is assisting.

To enquire about opportunities with Palms, visit www.palms.org.au or phone 02 9560 5333.

The Parish Diary...(for the week ahead)

The Octave of Christmas

Monday—26 December

Feast of St Stephen

Tuesday—27 December

Feast of St John

Wednesday—28 December

Feast of the Holy Innocents

Thursday—29 December

Friday—30 December

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

Saturday—31 December

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday—1 January

Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9:30am Mass @ Dungog



In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In December: Katie Rumbel, Elizabeth Holstein, Keith Schumaker, Margaret Egan, Ella Maher, Alan Robertson, Christine Knight, Margaret Miners, Mollie Smith, George Maurer, Mervyn Trappel, Paul Murphy, Rowland Young, Catherine Reid, Brian Smith, Thora Tindall, Margaret Egan, Valma Osmond, Nancy Dickson, Narelle Ritte, Anne Faber.

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

Those Who Are Sick: Maryann Smith, Tracy Copus, Daphne Bond, Maree McCulloch, Leonie Young, Lisa Reid, Lyn Barry, Bev Herbert, Denise Wenden, Warren Wade, Irene Robinson, Ray Tonkin (Qld), Luke Barry, Kathie Maynard, Kevin Ward, Brian Holstein, David Loudon, Michaela Brown, Phillip Hartup, Bella Duggan, Ella Rusak, Peter Byron, Colleen Primrose, Bert Preece.

Today's Liturgy:

MASS AT EAST GRESFORD

1st Reading Isaiah 9:1-7

Psalm Ps 95:

Resp: Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

2nd Reading Titus 2:11-14

Acclamation Luke 2:10-11

Alleluia, alleluia!

Good News and great joy to all the world:
today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 2:1-14

MASS AT CLARENCE TOWN

1st Reading Isaiah 62:11-12

Psalm Ps 96:

Resp: A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.

2nd Reading Titus 3:4-7

Acclamation Luke 2:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory to God in the highest,
peace to his people on earth.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 2:15-20

MASS AT DUNGOG

1st Reading Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm Ps 97:

Resp: All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

2nd Reading Hebrews 1:1-6

Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us.

Come you nations and adore the Lord.

Today a great light has come upon the earth

Alleluia!

Gospel John 1:1-18

AT ALL MASSES

Memorial Acclamation

Save us, Saviour of the world,

for by your Cross and Resurrection

you have set us free.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for December:

"We pray for volunteer non-profit organisations committed to human development; may they find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation."