



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 15 JANUARY 2023

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

Parish Staff

Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)
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Presbytery & Parish Office

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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. Copies of the Bulletin are available from the Parish website and are updated weekly.

Other Contacts

Clarence Town Val Preece—0403 251 434,
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Gresford Faith Banister
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Parish School

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A Pastoral Note...

How in God's name can we be half way through January already? Didn't we just celebrate Christmas and New Year yesterday?

I don't know about you, but as my age increases my concept of time gets more compressed, and then I worry about how much I haven't done in the time that has 'flown by'. And all of that probably says more about me than anything else.

While we are still in the midst of January, the height of summer, where many things simply do not happen in Australia, our annual national 'down time' will soon come to an end and everything will start up again.

It will only be a couple of weeks before everything returns to what passes for normal at the beginning of February. Schools will return at the end of January; Lent will begin at the end of February; Easter is only a couple of months away.

And as parishes, we have all those things I've previously mentioned that need to be done as a result of my confirmation as Parish Priest.

So it's going to be a busy first half of the year!

And so...let's enjoy the remainder of our summer 'down time' while we can, spending time with family and friends and doing those things that will allow us to make a difference as we move across the remainder of the year.

Have a blessed—and restful—week.

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.

Celebrating the Liturgy of the Word in Dungog Parish

I would like to propose a small change to the way the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated, primarily in the Dungog Parish (i.e., at St Patrick's and St Mary's). The explanation, however, might be worth reading by everyone.

Everyone would be aware that our Mass—both weekdays and Sundays—contains two primary parts, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The other parts—the Introductory Rites and the Concluding Rites—are the two parts that 'bookend' the whole celebration.

Each of these two parts has a different focus of attention: the Liturgy of the Eucharist as the altar as its focus, while the Liturgy of the Word is focussed on ambo. The ambo and the altar, together with the Presider's Chair, are considered the primary liturgical focus points within a church building.

The ambo and altar are so important for their respective parts of the Mass that they are sometimes referred to as the 'two tables' that offer nourishment to those attending, the first with the Word of God, and the second with the Body and Blood of Christ.

In the same way that the altar is where the overwhelming majority of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated, the ambo is the place where the overwhelming majority of the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated.

During the Liturgy of the Word, the following actions take place (or can take place) at the ambo:

- All the readings: First Reading, Second Reading, and the Gospel;
- The Responsorial Psalm: either in song or spoken (or some mixture thereof);
- The Homily: although it is also possible for the homily to be preached at some other 'suitable place'); and
- The Universal Prayer (the current name of the 'Prayer of the Faithful').

Only the Profession of Faith is not celebrated at the ambo, largely because it is something that everyone says together.

And so, the proposed change:

I would like to request that the Universal Prayer is led from the ambo, in keeping with the significance of that 'table' from which we are nourished.

I understand the reasoning behind having the intercessions—the 'prayer of the people'—led from a place among the people, yet such a

practice forgets that the person leading the intercession is undertaking a 'ministerial' role in a similar way to the person who proclaims the readings. They are acting on our behalf during the Liturgy of the Word since it is not possible for the whole gathering to undertake these roles (though I have seen it tried in some places!).

It is only appropriate to have all those who minister to us during the Liturgy of the Word doing so from the same place, the ambo, that place where we are nourished by the Word of God proclaimed.

I recognise that while this might appear a small change in one sense, there are some parishioners who currently lead the intercessions of the Universal Prayer who will not feel comfortable doing so from the ambo. I regret that you may choose not to be involved, and I offer my heartfelt apologies—and my thanks for your past contributions.

If anyone would like to talk through these changes, I'd be more than happy to do so—especially over coffee!

Absent any vigorous objections, the new practice will commence on the first Sunday of February, i.e., at the Masses on Saturday 4 February and Sunday 5 February.

Fr Andrew

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.

Sacrament of Penance

Commencing at the beginning of February 2023, the Sacrament of Penance will be available twice each month in St Mary's Church, Dungog:

- First Saturday of each month at **10am**, and
- Third Friday of each month after the 9.30am Mass.

Each session will last for up to one hour, by which I mean that it will conclude when there is no one else waiting. Those who might wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance are encouraged to gather towards the beginning of the scheduled time.

Additionally, the Sacrament of Penance will remain available at any time 'by appointment' either at the Presbytery or in your home by contacting me.

Fr Andrew

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.

NB: If the Diocesan program is not considered appropriate once it is released, our parishes will opt for the program offered by the Diocese of Wollongong. The Wollongong program, in my experience, is generally a very good and accessible program for parish communities.

You are invited to start considering if a Lenten group is something you would like to be interested in for Lent 2023 (which commences on Wednesday 22 February).

Sign up sheets will be made available in coming weeks so resources can be purchased for those interested in participating.

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.

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.

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.

Palms Volunteer from Dungog Parish

Dungog parishioner John Bradley has answered the call to mission and is departing 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/>

If you would like to explore possibilities offered with Palms visit www.palms.org.au or phone 02 9560 5333.

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

2nd Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

Monday—16 January

Tuesday—17 January
Memorial of St Anthony

Wednesday—18 January
No Mass Fr Andrew attending meeting in Newcastle

Thursday—19 January
9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday—20 January
9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday—21 January
Memorial of St Agnes
5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday—22 January
3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
8am Mass @ Clarence Town
9:30am Mass @ Dungog



In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Janet Lambert.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In January:

Bob Copus, Josie Gibson, Bill Taylor, Donald & Hope Lord, Kevin Byron, Noreen Lucas, Joan Riches, Michael Curry, Mary Neilson, Michael Bede Holstein, Maureen Reynold, Len Trappel, Patrick Dooley, Rufie Bunt, Eileen Moore, Andrew Whelan, Merv Clayden, Norah Studdert, Jack Gehrig, George Maurer, Eileen Lane, John Smith, Fr Allan Curry, Reginald Peter Wilson, Joseph Watson, Aveen Watson, Edith Thomas, Pauline Thomas, Fr Martin Jackubas (England).

*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:

1st Reading Isaiah 49:3, 5-6

Psalm Ps 39:
Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

Acclamation John 1:14, 22
Alleluia, alleluia!
He enabled those who accepted him to become the children of God.
Alleluia!

Gospel John 1:29-34

Memorial Acclamation
Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for January:

"We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all."

GOSPEL FOCUS

Ranking

There is an odd line in today's passage. John reminds the crowd that he had said 'A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me.' In Jewish tradition, the prophets and patriarchs who came earlier in their history ranked higher than those who came later. They believed that the history of salvation was at its pinnacle with God's self-revelation to Abraham. Successive episodes and characters were regarded as lesser. But John affirms that Jesus ranks before himself because Jesus existed before John. He is saying that Jesus is more than simply the latest in a long line of prophets.

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.