

Updating the Dungog Liturgical Rosters

The liturgical ministry roster (readers, procession of gifts, communion ministers, etc.) currently being followed at St Mary's, Dungog, is about to be updated.

If you are currently on the roster, please let us know if you are happy to continue or you would like to be removed from the next version. If you are not currently on the liturgical ministry roster but would like to be, this is your opportunity to let us know.

Please speak with Lyn Barham or contact the Parish Office.

Welcome Back St Joseph's School

The students of St Joseph's School will return to the school this week—and it will be wonderful to have them back! Years 1-6 will return on Tuesday 31 January, while the new Kindergarten class will start on Thursday 2 February.

We hope your year will be enjoyable and full of learning opportunities, and we look forward to celebrating with you across 2023.

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.

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

There will be a morning tea after the 8am Mass at Clarence next Sunday (5 February). Please bring a plate to share, and stay to enjoy the company.

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.

Sign Up for Lenten Groups 2023

A decision has been made to proceed with using the Wollongong Diocesan Lenten program for our own Lenten Groups this year.

To assist in arranging resources, and assisting parishioners find groups, 'Sign up' sheets are available in each of our churches—please add your name to one of the lists if you would like to be, or already are, part of a Lenten group this year.

If people have self-organised their own groups, it would be good for a contact person from that group to let the Parish Office know so resources can be forwarded via that person.

If parishioners are interested in coordinating or hosting a group, again please let the Parish Office know.

If individual parishioners are not yet part of a group, but would like to be, please tick the appropriate column, and the Parish Office will do its best to assist you.

Sacrament of Penance—BEGINS NEXT WEEKEND!

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

Celebrating the Liturgy of the Word in Dungog Parish—STARTS NEXT WEEKEND!

Beginning the weekend of Saturday 4 February and Sunday 5 February, the Universal Prayer will be led from the ambo, in keeping with the significance of that 'table' from which we are nourished.

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

Fr Andrew

Homily by Michael Tate

In the tradition of Moses on Mt Sinai, Jesus goes up a mountain, a traditional Jewish sacred site. As we might expect, we receive a revelation as to how God intends that human beings should live together.

Jesus doesn't start in a fantasy dream world of perfection. Jesus looks at the world as it often is for many people, perhaps for most people around the world.

First, 'the poor in spirit': those suffering grinding poverty, a destitution which can crush their spirits, a lacking of the necessities of life such that their whole personality, bodymindspirit, is impoverished.

Then 'those who mourn': perhaps especially those whose grieving comes from the too early death of those crushed by the society in which they live.

Then 'those who are gentle': so often denied a fair share of the earth's resources which are taken by the strong and belligerent.

Then 'those who hunger and thirst for justice,' for individuals and even for whole societies.

Jesus astonishes the crowd by saying that such people are 'Blessed'. How can this be? It sounds callous, nonsensical or sarcastic. Is this the 'opium of the masses' about which Karl Marx had spoken? Certainly, it is paradoxical.

The answer lies in our Lord's emphasis on the community, the new society, the new people he is establishing under the reign of God: what he calls 'the Kingdom of God'.

Those in such wretched circumstances *will* have things set right, *will* experience a great reversal of their situation, but only if *other* people in this new group of the followers of Jesus do everything possible to lift the poor out of the poverty which crushes their spirit, do everything possible to comfort those who mourn, do everything possible to make sure the gentle share the earth's resources, do everything possible to satisfy the craving for justice.

Our Lord describes the personality traits of those who will help bring about this reversal.

'The merciful.' The Hebrew word for mercy is closely allied to the word for womb and even beyond the womb. To be merciful is to be as caring as a mother would be towards the child of her womb. Our Lord is attempting to build up a community of followers as maternal as that. *How do we measure up?*

'The pure in heart.' This does not refer to ritual or sexual purity. It refers to people in whom there is no duplicity or hypocrisy. They are people of

integrity. Our Lord is attempting to build up a community of followers as whole-some as that. *How do we measure up?*

'The peace-makers.' Here, Jesus is not so much interested in the noun: 'peace'. He is interested in the verb: 'peace makers'. *How do we measure up?*

So, when we read the Beatitudes, we should not think that this is contradictory nonsense, still less a message advocating a passive 'suffer your lot because there is pie in the sky'.

The Beatitudes are a call to action, a call to the followers of Jesus to be maternal, to be comforters, to be whole-hearted, to be active in overcoming those divisions which are unjust and destroy people, whether individuals or societies.

How do we measure up?

The authentic measure of humanity is Jesus Christ. Our Lord measured up superlatively. We know He was finally measured out on the Cross.

We ask him to measure us mercifully, for we will fall short of his full stature.

But every time we say the 'Our Father' we do pledge ourselves to help construct this new society where the Beatitudes can come true:

'Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven.'

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Rev Prof Michael Tate graduated in Law from the University of Tasmania in 1968, and in Theology from Oxford University in 1971. He lectured at the University of Tasmania from 1972-78, being Dean of the Faculty of Law in 1977-78. He was a Senator for Tasmania from 1978-93, being Federal Minister for Justice from 1987-93. He served as Ambassador to The Hague and the Holy See from 1993-96. He then returned to Australia and was ordained in May 2000 and has been a parish priest in the Archdiocese of Hobart since then. He is an Honorary Professor of Law at the University of Tasmania where he lectures in International Humanitarian Law.



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

4th Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

Monday—30 January

Tuesday—31 January

Memorial of St John Bosco

Wednesday—1 February

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday—2 February

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday—3 February

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11.30am Mass @ Lara Aged Care

Saturday—4 February

10am Reconciliations @ Dungog

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday—5 February

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9:30am Mass @ Dungog

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Zephaniah 2:3, 3:12-13

Psalm Ps 145:

Happy the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Acclamation Matthew 5:12

Alleluia, alleluia!

Rejoice and be glad;

Your reward will be great in heaven.

Alleluia!

Gospel Matthew 5:1-12

Memorial Acclamation

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

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."

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Marea Cox.

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), Michael Denko.

*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, Marea 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.

GOSPEL FOCUS

Covenant

The structure of the Beatitudes can be seen as yet another attempt by God to re-establish a covenant between Godself and the people. Throughout Jewish history, God called the people back into relationship and re-established God's covenant with them. Like all the previous versions of the covenant, the Beatitudes contain both a series of demands and a series of promises. It is a two-way deal. The first part of each Beatitude is a statement of what the people are called to do and the second part is God's promise of how they will be rewarded for their right action.

Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The Parishes of Dungog & Gresford hold that children, young people and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and safeguarded.

In line with the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, our parishes have zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and are committed to safeguarding all who interact with the parishes through our activities, ministries and services, especially children and adults at risk.