



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 5 MARCH 2023

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

Parish Staff

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

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

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Parish School

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A Homily

Richard Leonard SJ

Three key people of the Old Testament are given to us in today's readings: Abram, Moses and Elijah. Unfortunately most of what we know about these men is fairly sketchy. Who can blame the young children, then, who wrote down the following answers in an exam on the Old Testament?

'Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. The Egyptians were all drowned in the desert. Afterwards, Moses went up Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Amendments. The First was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple. The Fifth was to always humour thy father and mother.'

The Jews of Matthew's community, however, would have been able to remember by heart every detail about Abram, Moses and Elijah. These men remain the Jews' greatest heroes. The first hearers of the Transfiguration story would have immediately made all the connections between Jesus' story and Abram, Moses and Elijah's experience of God on a mountaintop, where each has a life-changing encounter with the presence of God and is illuminated in every way. Each of them is called by God to fulfil a special task and so descend from the mountain with the strength to see it through.

Matthew is especially interested in the story of Moses. One of the refrains of the entire Gospel is that Jesus is the New Moses, the fulfilment of the

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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.

law and the light that illuminates the darkest night. As interesting as the similarities are between Moses on Sinai and Jesus on Tabor, the differences are even more revealing for us on our Lenten journey.

Moses goes up the mountain alone, Jesus takes companions with him who share in the experience and witness to it. The face of God is hidden from Moses whereas on Tabor Jesus is given to us as the face of God for the world. On Sinai Moses receives a code of law and is told to make sure the people obey it. On Tabor Jesus receives a proclamation of God's love and we're told to listen to him. While Moses' face shines, Jesus' whole body is transfigured with light. Moses descends to enforce the law; Jesus comes down to die that we might live.

Just when some of us think Lent is a grim season of self-denial, the Church gives us the story of Jesus' Transfiguration to put our sacrifices in context. The only reason we deny ourselves anything or commit ourselves to actions of service for these 40 days is to grow more deeply in love with the God who loves us into life. Penance is not meant to attack our self-esteem, it's intended to help us sort out what really matters, to cast some light in the darkness of our lives and to focus on the relationship which gives meaning and purpose for this world and the next.

The God of Mount Tabor is not interested in each of us feeling isolated as we fulfil the letter of a legal code. He wants all of us to have hearts that listen to the Gospel of love so that we can gain the power to transform the world through the sacrifices of our daily lives.

On a much gentler scale, Sunday Mass is meant to be a weekly mountaintop experience for us where we hear God call us by name and confess his love for us; where we feel re-energised for the commission we have to bear his light to the world. In this context anything we can do this Lent that helps remove the blocks in our full response to his love, must be worth effort.

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Richard Leonard SJ is the Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting, is a member of the Australian Catholic Media Council and a film critic for all the major Australian Catholic newspapers. He completed a PhD in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne. He lectures in cinema and theology at the Jesuit College of Spirituality and has been a visiting lecturer in Australian cinema at the University of Melbourne, a visiting scholar within the School of Theatre, Film and Television at UCLA and is visiting professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University, has lectured widely and is the author of numerous books.

Sacraments of Initiation for Children

The finishing touches are being applied to the first online module for parents and children interested in completing their Christian Initiation within the Parishes of Dungog & Gresford.

The first module—'Preparing for First Reconciliation'—will soon be ready for enrolment, while the remaining two—'The Sacrament of Confirmation' and 'Preparing for First Communion'—are not that far away.

More information can be found on the website under the CELEBRATIONS tab on the top menu. Please pass this information on to anyone who might find it helpful.

Lenten Program Resources

Copies of the book for the 2023 Lenten Program from the Diocese of Wollongong (*Triumph*) are now available to those who indicated they would like to be part of a Lenten Group. They are currently being distributed. There are a small number of 'spares' for those who might like them—strictly on a first come, first served basis. Contact Fr Andrew to acquire the 'spares'.

The recordings that accompany the program are also available from Fr Andrew.

Tuesday Nights of Lent in Dungog

In Lent 2023, Mark Wilson has once again offered to coordinate a Tuesday night program of reflection and prayer.

Each week will begin at 7pm with the Lenten reflection using the Diocese of Wollongong's 2023 Lenten Program (*Triumph*) and will be followed by the Stations of the Cross for those who wish to remain.

Everyone is welcome to participate in this Lenten exercise. Copies of the Lenten Program booklets will be provided to participants.

If you would like further information, please speak with Mark after Mass.

New Liturgical Rosters for Dungog

The new Liturgy Roster for Dungog takes effect this weekend. A copy of the Roster is available on the bulletin board at the back of the Church, and some printed copies are also available for those on the Roster to take home.

Availability of Sacrament of Penance

The Sacrament of Penance is celebrated regularly. More details can be found on the Parish website under the 'Mass Times' tab at the top.

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 our 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: Rose McAllister, Manager Formation & Education (0414 962 922) or Nicki Graham, Officer Formation & Education (0417 773 444)

Update from John Bradley

The latest update from John Bradley (including some wonderful photos) is available on the Parishes' website or by going to bit.ly/3EmyG9c.

Please don't forget to keep John and his mission in your prayers—and the possibility of supporting John's placement by going to bit.ly/3RnsTpb. The Parish is able to forward contributions on your behalf you prefer; contact the Parish Office for more information.

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

Palms Encounter Trip

Ever been curious about what Palms does out in the field? Would you like to catch up with John Bradley in Samoa?

Palms is organising an encounter trip to Samoa and American Samoa from 10 to 22 April 2023, which will include a visit to the school where John is working while a Palms participant.

The Palms encounter trips are ethically run small group tours that provide curious travellers with authentic, hard to come by travel experiences.

An indicative cost is \$3,500 plus airfares.

If you would like further information about this encounter trip, you can visit [Samoa & American Samoa \(10th – 22nd April 2023\)](http://Samoa & American Samoa (10th – 22nd April 2023)). Alternatively, Fr Andrew has electronic copies of the Information Pack that can be forwarded by email or printed for interested parishioners.

Middle East Emergency Appeal

Caritas Turkey and other Caritas agencies are responding to the needs of people of Turkiye and Syria effected by recent earthquakes. Your generous support can help provide emergency relief to help families recover and rebuild from disaster.

Visit the Caritas website www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/turkey-and-syria-earthquake/ or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support to the Middle East by donating to our Middle East Emergency Appeal.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

'Listen to him!'

God's voice from the cloud claims Jesus as his Son, the Chosen One and then goes on to instruct those present – and we, the readers – to 'Listen to him!' For the disciples, this was a message not to get carried away with their own ideas about the Messiah but to listen to what Jesus was saying about the suffering he must endure and to what he was saying about true discipleship. Jesus tells us that to be a follower of his involves sacrifice, hardship and often unpopularity. It is this message we must listen to as much as the promise of salvation.

Expressions of Interest—Christian Formation Course 2023/24

Are you wanting to know more about Christianity and develop a deeper understanding of the Catholic Church?

The Christian Formation Course (CFC) is a learning experience that allows participants to explore the foundational elements of the Catholic Faith Tradition. This one-year course introduces participants to scripture, theology, church history, sacramental life and liturgy.

Commencing on Tuesday 2 May 2023, no prerequisite formation or qualification is required to enrol.

To find out more about the Christian Formation Course, visit: www.mn.catholic.org.au/church-mission/catholic-life/faith-formation/christian-formation-course/.

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

2nd Week of Lent, Year A

Monday—6 March

Tuesday—7 March

Wednesday—8 March

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday—9 March

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday—10 March

9.30am Mass @ Dungog (joined by Years 5 & 6 from St Joseph's).

Saturday—11 March

Sunday—12 March

3rd Sunday of Lent

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

There will be a morning tea after the 8am Mass at Dungog today, 5 March. Please stay to enjoy the company.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for March:

"We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering."

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Terry Johnson.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In March:

Gordon Smith, Dan Harrison, Linda Gleeson, Vincent Smith, Eileen Lane, Marie Williams, Gwen Richards, Alexander Loudon, Claude McGinty, Herb Trappel, Allan Turner, Arthur Preece, Thelma Lowe, Joyce Copus, Leo Maher, Matthew Harding, Vincent Lane, Vince Banister, Gerry Gehrig.

*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, Bert Preece, Naida McCarthy.

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Genesis 12:1-4

Psalm Ps 32:

Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you.

2nd Reading 2 Timothy 1:8-10

Acclamation Matthew 17:5

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

From the shining cloud the Father's voice is heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him.

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel Matthew 17:1-9

Memorial Acclamation

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

Project Compassion 2023

For those who may wish to have them, a supply of Project Compassion boxes or Weekly Envelopes are available from the churches this weekend. Please take a box or set of envelopes if you wish to.

This year there is also the option of donating via our Project Compassion fundraising page. This page can be found by using the following link bit.ly/3lvYYPE or via your



Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult please contact the Office of Safeguarding: by phoning 4979 1390 or emailing childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au.

Visit the Office of Safeguarding website for further information www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au