



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 30 APRIL 2023

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A

Parish Staff

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

Presbytery & Parish Office

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Emergency contact for Fr Andrew: 0412 405 671.

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,
(02) 4996 4474, or email
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Gresford Faith Banister
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Parish School

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A Homily

by Richard Leonard

I have a friend who is a great lover of classical music. His knowledge of it is vast. He only needs to hear a few bars of most musical works and he confidently declares, 'Mozart's Piano Concerto in A' or 'Stravinsky's Rite of Spring'. He's always right.

Another of his superfluous, but amusing gifts is to pick the singer. He can hear a soprano and declare it to be Callas, Te Kanawa or Sutherland. He knows which of the three Tenors is belting out that particular top C. Again, he's almost always right. What intrigues me about this gift is that he remembers the timbres of each voice, not just the famous ones, but some rather obscure soloists as well. It helps that he has listened to the sound of these voices for years. It's the same with recognising the voice of Christ – it comes with practice and exposure to it.

In our world there are a multitude of voices clamouring for attention. The loudest or the longest voices we hear are not always the wisest ones. Jesus invites us to attune our listening to the sound of his voice so that even if it is faintly heard amidst the noise, we can lift our heads, turn our gaze and walk towards it.

More than ever, there are some voices which entice us away from the Gospel. We are told that it is impossible to be happy unless we are wealthy. Impossible to be fulfilled unless we are sexually active with several partners. Impossible to be free unless we answer to no one.

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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.

And in this crowded marketplace the voice of Jesus keeps saying the same thing it's been saying for two thousand years. Happiness is found in sharing what we can with the poor, in being faithful and loving in all our relationships and in surrendering our freedom to the service of His kingdom of justice and peace.

The problem is not that Jesus should yell more loudly, it is that at crucial moments in our lives when we have to make important decisions, we close our ears. We refuse to listen to any other voice except that one that reinforces the destructive decision we want to make. Jesus reminds us in today's Gospel that this choice can be a moment of death. What his call offers is life and life abundantly. But at various times we blot it out and tune our hearing elsewhere.

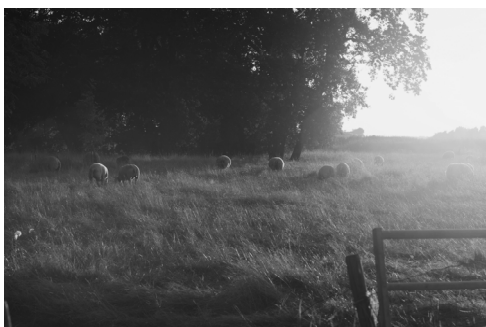
There are, however, at least two times in our lives when we respond immediately to the sound of a loving voice: as a baby and in old age. A parent's voice soothes and reassures a baby like no other. Look at how a screaming child calms down as a mother nurses it. Look at how a loved one's voice comforts and gives confidence to an older person when they are distressed or disoriented.

What wonderful images these very human moments provide in terms of hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd. At the moment of our death, in the midst of all the other sounds we hear as we leave this world we will hear Christ's voice – soothing, reassuring, comforting and confident. And at that moment we will do what we have tried to do always all our lives – we will walk straight toward it.

Now that will be life, and life abundantly.

© Richard Leonard SJ

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.



Photos from the Palms Encounter Trip

The Parishes website contains a story that features some photos taken during the recent Palms Encounter Trip to Samoa—including some of John Bradley himself at work in his classroom.

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.

Dungog's 'Women—Kind—Festival'

The Dungog & District Chamber of Commerce is introducing the 'Women—Kind—Festival' from 19 to 21 May to shine the light on women and at the same time support local business and not-for-profit organisations in the region.

The Festival commences with the Stella Bistro Fundraising High Tea at 11am on Friday 19 May. Tickets for this event are now available by going to <https://www.trybooking.com/CGSUC>.

On Saturday 20 May, there will be a Market Day in Dowling Street, with live music and street stalls lining the CBD.

Further information is available on the Chamber's website—www.ddcc.org.au

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.

MISSION: Transform Lives—theirs...and yours

Communities in Africa, Asia or the Pacific are seeking Australians from a variety of professions and trades to share their skills and knowledge with those who have few other chances for training. Build enduring global relationships while assisting sustainable, self-reliant, community development.



Explore 35 positions by scanning the QR code in this notice. On Palms website you can also see news including stories from those currently supported in Timor Leste, Samoa, American Samoa, and Thailand.

Please enquire further about potential assignments for you or someone you know.

Phone 02 9560 5333 or 0422 472 567. Visit Palms' website at www.palms.org.au.



SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

Psalm 22

Today's responsorial psalm uses Psalm 22 (sometimes referenced as Psalm 23), 'the Lord is my shepherd'. It is a very popular psalm and is often reproduced on Christian posters and other artworks. It was also a popular psalm and image at the time of Jesus. For Jesus to describe himself as the good shepherd caused great distress among the Jewish officials. They saw Jesus as being blasphemous for the psalm makes clear that the Lord is the shepherd. Jesus quite deliberately makes clear that he and the Father are one: the Lord is the shepherd and Jesus is the good shepherd.

Service NSW Returning to Clarence Town

The Service NSW Mobile Service Centre is coming again to Clarence Town on **Wednesday 17 May** between 10am and 3pm.

The Mobile Service Centre offers a range of services right on your doorstep—rather than having to travel out of town.

The Mobile Service Centre will be located outside the School of Arts, 48 Grey Street.

Please remember that the Mobile Service Centre is a cashless facility—payments can be made via credit/debit cards or cheques.

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.

Engaging Your Faith Online Lectures

Catholic Theological College will be offering a series of 18 online sessions across May 2023 in their *Engaging Your Faith* series.

This set of sessions is entitled 'Theology, Vatican II, Scripture, Spirituality, Science & Faith'.

Attend all of them, or only those that pique your interest. Each session is available at a cost of \$25.

For more information and to register, visit CTC's website—ctc.edu.au/engaging-your-faith/.

Dare to Dream!

"We have had dreams and there is no one to interpret them..." and Joseph said to them, "do not interpretations belong to God?" (Gen 40:8)

Join Heart of Life's director, Clare Shearman, and guests in their 'dream lab', available via Zoom each Wednesday of May between 5pm and 6.30pm.

Based on the Dreams session previously offered as part of the Siloam program, this five-week program will explore the significance of our dreams, include the practice of dream circles, provide guidance and practice for working with dreams—our own and others', consider the potential of our dreams to personally and collectively shape the future.

As Parish Bulletins are now being posted on the website, those who sign up will receive an email letting you know when this takes place—so sign up to stay in touch!

The program is offered by Heart of Life Centre for Spiritual & Pastoral Formation. The cost is \$130. Book and pay via the website www.heartoflife.melbourne. For more information email info@heartoflife.melbourne or call 9890 1101.

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)

4th Week of Easter

Monday 1 May

Tuesday 2 May

Memorial of St Athanasius

Wednesday 3 May

Feast of Sts Philip and James

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 4 May

No Mass @ East Gresford because...

10.30am Funeral Mass for Michael Flanagan
@ Clarence Town

Friday 5 May

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11am Anointing Mass @ Lara Aged Care

Saturday 6 May

Memorial of St Catherine of Siena

10am Confessions @ Dungog

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 7 May

5th Sunday of Easter

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Acts 2:14, 36-41

Psalm Ps 22:

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

2nd Reading 1 Peter 2:20-25

Acclamation John 10:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;

I know my sheep, and mine know me.

Alleluia!

Gospel John 10:1-10

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 April:

"We pray for the spread and non violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens."

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The next morning tea in Clarence Town will take place next Sunday (7 May) after the 8am Mass. Please bring a plate to share, and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Lynette Barry, Michael Flanagan, Paul Cooper.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In April:

Bede Gehrig, Ruth Jones, Lenore McDermott, Paula Murphy, Robert Holdom, Dorothy Bowtell, Rex Garland, Bruno Rocco, Herbert John Preece, Allie Allen, Peter Allen, Tom O'Driscoll, Paddy Kilpinen, Bill Tyne, Neil 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, 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, Michael Primrose, Peter Rooke, Graham McCarthy.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A line of shepherds

When Jesus used the image of himself as a shepherd, he named himself as belonging to a Jewish ancestry that associated itself with shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses were all shepherds. David, the second King of Israel, was regarded as the greatest king in Jewish history. His humble beginning, captured magnificently in the sculpture by Michelangelo, was as a shepherd boy guarding his flock with a slingshot. The kings of Israel were charged to 'shepherd' their people rather than to lord it over them as the pagan kings did.

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.