



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 21 MAY 2023

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD, YEAR A

Parish Staff

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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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A Pastoral Note...

One of the beautiful things I have rediscovered since arriving here is the glorious autumnal colours that are currently decorating trees all across the parishes.

No doubt those colours existed in my previous posting, but they didn't jump out at me like they have here in recent weeks. They are eye-catching to say the least, and a very palpable symbol of the turning of the seasons across the year. Not only do we feel the cooling weather in our bones, but our eyes are greeted by the feast of colour that accompanies that cooling weather.

Winter may be coming, but there is still something to be enjoyed while we await its arrival.

This weekend we come closer to another 'turning point' in our liturgical seasons, celebrating the great Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, the last great festival before we mark the end of the Easter Season at Pentecost.

We know Pentecost is coming, we are anticipating the end of the Easter Season, yet there is still so much to feast upon as we wait for those occasions to come. It can be easy to miss if our attention is drawn elsewhere, but the benefits of being aware of what's going on right in front of us.

Χριστός Ανέστη! Αληθώς Ανέστη!

Christ is risen! He is truly risen!

Have a blessed 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.



Fr Andrew Away

Please be aware that I will be absent from the Parish on Monday and Tuesday this week as I travel to Casino for a family funeral.

As I am away, the Dungog church will not be open on those days.

Dungog Shire Palliative Care Volunteers Inc

The annual Church Service to remember our palliative care clients, and all who have died in 2022-2023 in our community, along with their families and friends, will take place on 6.30pm tonight (21 May) in the Anglican Church at Dungog.

All are welcome to the Service, and to the supper which will follow.

Liturgical (& Other) Conversations

In attempting to determine when during a week might be timely for the much-vaunted conversation series to take place, I have identified several possibilities:

- A. Wednesday evenings after the 5.30pm Mass (except the Wednesdays I'm in Newcastle for Ethics Committee meetings)
- B. Thursday afternoon/evening (except the Thursdays I attend Liturgy Council meetings in Newcastle)
- C. Saturday mornings (except the Saturday when confessions are available)

As the meetings won't be every week, we can work around my other commitments. I would appreciate hearing about preferred options from those who indicated an interest—then we can proceed.

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.

ACBC Statement Regarding an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have lived in this land for many thousands of years. Their custodianship, however, is not recognised in the Australian Constitution. This is an omission which needs to be rectified. A constitutionally enshrined Indigenous Voice to Parliament is proposed as a way to achieve this.

We acknowledge that a Voice is not the only possible way of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in our Constitution, but it is the way requested by those who gathered at the historic meeting at Uluru. This could be a significant step towards a more just and equitable Australia.

The wording to change the Constitution and establish the Voice is currently being discussed. We will soon have the opportunity to examine the precise wording and we will be asked to vote on the proposal towards the end of the year. We want to encourage all Australians to educate themselves as well as possible concerning the proposal to establish the Voice.

This is an important moment in the history of the nation, and it can help us to move towards a deep and just reconciliation. It also offers a mechanism to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We urge all Australians to engage in the debate productively, respecting each other and accepting that people may, in good faith, have differing concerns and perspectives. We are an open democracy, and this is a moment to use our democratic institutions to produce a high-quality debate shaped by a genuine concern to do justice and bring healing to First Nations Peoples. We ask those drafting the changes to the Constitution to work together in a spirit of cooperation, so that the proposal presented to the Australian people will appeal to a wide range of the population.

To guide all Australians at this important time, we encourage everyone to read and discuss the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which we endorsed in 2021 and the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia endorsed in 2022.

In particular, we recommend that Catholic parishes, schools and agencies arrange opportunities for people to come together to read and discuss the Uluru Statement.

The Uluru Statement can be accessed by going to www.ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement.

The Liturgy of the Word—Part 3

At the end of Part 2, we had just concluded the First Reading with a moment of silence and were about to move towards the next part of the Liturgy of the Word.

When it comes to the **Responsorial Psalm**, a number of observations can be made, each of which is important given that the Responsorial Psalm “has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God” (*GIRM*, n.61).

The first observation has to do with the very nature of the Responsorial Psalm itself. Coming from the Hebrew Scriptures, it is of the genre of psalmody or song, and thus, as the *GIRM* reminds us, “It is preferable for the Responsorial Psalm to be sung, at least as far as the people’s response is concerned” (n.61). Only when it is not possible for any part of the Responsorial Psalm should it be spoken in its entirety.

When the Psalm is being sung in part or in whole, the cantor or psalmist introduces the response by singing it. There is no need to announce “The Responsorial Psalm”; it simply emerges from the silence that preceded it.

The whole assembly then repeats the sung response as it will do after each verse sung by the cantor or spoken by the reader (depending on the circumstances). And the whole of the Responsorial Psalm set down for that day is thus proclaimed and meditated upon.

On those occasions when the Responsorial Psalm is being entirely spoken, the *GIRM* reminds us “that it should be recited in a way that is particularly suited to fostering meditation on the Word of God” (n.61).

There are several things that can be observed in this light. Firstly, the reader again does not need to say “The Responsorial Psalm”. Nor is there a need to say something like “The response is ...”. If there has been a short period of silence before the Responsorial Psalm begins, everyone will know that the first words spoken (or sung) are going to be the response that the assembly will take up.

Secondly, when we proclaim a psalm in any context, we are proclaiming poetry. Proclaiming a psalm, including the Responsorial Psalm, is different to reading one of Paul’s letters, one of the Prophets, or, indeed, one of the Gospels. Even when not being sung, we need to honour the nature of what we are proclaiming and, in so doing, honour the Word of God that is being proclaimed.

Lastly and perhaps most controversially, we need to remember the *responsorial* nature of this part of

the Liturgy of the Word: the reader who proclaims the verses of the Responsorial Psalm should not speak the response of the assembly. The nature of the Responsorial Psalm, particularly when spoken, is that of a dialogue, one against many, that needs to be honoured. It can be tempting to want to ensure the assembly says their part by saying it with (or for) them; a better option is to use pace and tone of voice to signal when it is time for the assembly to respond.

And that is the Responsorial Psalm. At the end of the Psalm, whether it has been sung or said, the reader returns to their seat—but only after the Psalm is concluded, not during the last response of the assembly. We have plenty of time, and one of the ways of avoiding undue haste during the Liturgy Word (see *GIRM*, n.56) is for the reader who leads the Psalm to stay in place until the Psalm is entirely finished before leaving the Ambo.

Only when the person who led the Responsorial Psalm has returned to the seat does the second reader move from their seat towards the Ambo, ready to proclaim the **Second Reading**, which customarily is taken from the non-Gospel New Testament. There is no need to hurry, and there is no need to coordinate the movements of the two readers so that meet at the foot of the sanctuary; one departs, and then the other arrives.

As intimated in our discussion on the First Reading last week, the Second Reading begins with a ritual introduction, i.e., “A reading from ...”. We do not say, “The second reading is a reading from ...” or announce “Second Reading” and then make the introduction. We simply and confidently say, “A reading from ...”; any other addition remains unnecessary and superfluous.

Again, we do not proclaim the Heading of the reading, that part just under the introduction that is in italics. And, at the end of the reading, we announce “The word of the Lord”, avoiding what currently appears in our Lectionary until we get new ones.

And, in a similar manner to what happened after the First Reading, we then observe another short pause as an opportunity for meditation and reflection on what has been spoken to us and what we have heard.

And once again, depending on how the next element is going to be proclaimed, the second reader might be free to leave the Ambo or simply step back from the microphone and wait. It all depends on whether the Gospel Acclamation is going to be musically proclaimed or not.

But that can wait until Part 4!

To be continued...

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)

7th Week of Easter

Monday 22 May

Tuesday 23 May

Wednesday 24 May

Solemnity of Our Lady, Help of Christians

National Feast of Australia

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 25 May

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 26 May

Memorial of St Philip Neri

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

Saturday 27 May

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 28 May

Solemnity of Pentecost Sunday

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Acts 1:1-11

Psalm Ps 46:

God mounts his throne to shouts of joy; a blare of trumpets for the Lord

2nd Reading Ephesians 1:17-23

Acclamation Matthew 28:19, 20

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go and teach all people my gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world

Alleluia!

Gospel John 28:16-20

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 May:

"We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelisation each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world."

Morning Tea at Dungog

The next morning tea in Dungog will take place today (21 May) after the 9.30am Mass. Please stay and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In May: Ray Johnson, Danny Robertson, Eileen Moylan, Nita Ford, Mary Kealy, Ted McFadyen, Evelyn Martin, Clarke Deards, Don Trow, Margaret Smith, Alvin Robertson, Carmel Hudson, Steve Bartlett, Fr Peter Williams, Ian Tope, Dulcie Hepworth, Jenny Szymec, Catherine Atkins, Irene Byron, Bill & Hannah Byron, Helen Cooper, Rodney Ryan, Gordon Ryan, Joyce Little, Jan Graboski, Betty Vell, Cecilia Catherine Wilson.

*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

To the ends of the earth

In both the gospel passage from Matthew and the passage from the Book of Acts, Jesus commissioned his disciples to go out to the whole world. In Matthew, it is to 'all the nations' and in Acts it is 'to the ends of the earth'. Both writers make it abundantly clear that the message of Jesus is not exclusively for the people of Israel but for all people everywhere. Within only a very few years, early Christian communities had sprung up all around the Mediterranean. Once Christianity became the religion of Rome it spread to all the corners of the Roman Empire.

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.