



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 1 OCTOBER 2023

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

Parish Staff

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

Presbytery & Parish Office

55 Brown Street, Dungog
PO Box 24, Dungog NSW 2420

P: (02) 4992 1477

E: dungog.parish@mn.catholic.org.au

W: www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au

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
 vip_1@bigpond.com

Gresford Faith Banister
 0427 536 248

Safeguarding Promotion

For all safeguarding concerns within the parishes, please contact Fr Andrew in the first instance at the Parish Office (or mobile in emergencies).

Parish School

St Joseph's Primary School
49 Brown Street, Dungog NSW 2420
Mrs Lisa McNeilly (*Principal*)

P: (02) 4992 1377

E: admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au

W: www.dungog.catholic.edu.au

A Pastoral Note...

Ah yes, I've come back, resisting the urge to stay in the United States. Not that such resisting was a difficult task, it is certainly a strange place.

The main reason for my visit, my nephew's wedding, was a raging success, and the happy couple have by now returned from their honeymoon in Aruba to head back to work. Sam and Alicia were a handsome couple and I am told the party lasted well into the early morning.

My thanks to Fr Anil for assisting with Masses during the first half of my leave, and my thanks to those parishioners who took responsibility for organising and leading the worship of our community during the second half. I am most grateful that your willingness to do so permitted me to take my leave and join my family in celebrating a first for the next generation.

Now that I am back in Australia, there are a few things I need to complete, things that didn't quite get across the line before I departed. In order that I can focus on some of the more immediate among those tasks, I have taken the liberty of not scheduling weekday Masses for this coming week (apart from the monthly Anointing Mass at Lara Aged Care). The regular schedule of weekday liturgies will start again from Monday 9 October.

I'd also like to let you know, in advance, that I will be absent from the Parish on Sunday 8 October. The 9.30am Mass at our Cathedral on that day will see the commissioning of four Assistant Masters of Ceremonies, and I need to be present at the Cathedral in my role of Master of Ceremonies to both assist Bishop Michael and present those to be commissioned. Fr John Lovell, Rector of the Cathedral, will travel up to celebrate the three Masses on Sunday 8 October. I am most grateful to Fr John for his willingness to make himself

available to celebrate the parish Masses.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Chief Priests & Tax Collectors

Only men of the Israelite tribe of Levi could become Priests and Levites. Men from the other eleven tribes were prohibited. It was not a religious 'call' but rather a fact of birth that led men to be priests. The chief priests and high priest performed all the rituals in the Temple in Jerusalem – it was they who performed sacrifices on behalf of others. They were very important and influential. Tax collectors were regarded poorly because they acted on behalf of the Romans – collecting revenue for an occupying and pagan force. They made their living by collecting extra amounts. They were looked down upon by most people.

Baptisms This Week

We welcome **Tadhg, Aoife & Fintan O'Kane**, together with their family and friends, as we celebrate their Baptisms at St Patrick's on Sunday.



The Synod Convenes...

On 4 October, the Universal phase of the Synod of Bishops gathering entitled "For a Synodal Church. Communion, Participation, Mission" will come together under the presidency of Pope Francis. This journey has been in process since October 2021, and this first session of the Universal phase represents the culmination of a long process of listening, consultation and conversation.

Although we won't be directly participating in the Synod session, we can be part of the process by praying with and for those gathered in Rome. The website for the Synod has resources available to help us. Visit www.synod.va for more details.

Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement

The 2023-2024 Social Justice Statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference has been released.

Entitled *Listen, Learn, Love: A New Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, the Statement calls "all the People of God to embrace a new engagement...which involves a commitment to listen to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers and to learn from them".

The Statement can be downloaded from our website by visiting bit.ly/3OMAKFn.

For those without internet access who may wish to obtain a copy, please contact the Parish Office who will happily print a copy for you.

Sacraments of Initiation for Children

All the online modules are now available any for children wishing to complete their journey to full Christian Initiation. Enrolment into the process is as simple as filling out an online form available on the Parishes' website—visit bit.ly/3NuMAv7 for all the details.

For children who might not yet be baptised, or who were baptised in other church traditions, the journey is slightly different and will require some additional steps. The best place to start a conversation about this is by contacting Fr Andrew.

Please pass this information on to anyone who might find it helpful.

Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Marriage Tribunal

Can we help you? The Church is aware of the stresses with marriage breakdown and divorce, and understands that many people have questions about the processes which might allow a divorced person to remarry in the Catholic Church. If you have any questions or would like to have a confidential chat about your situation, please contact Jane at the Tribunal on 4979 1370.

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford recognize we stand upon the traditional country of Gringai clan of the Worimi people, who have walked upon and cared for this country for thousands of years.

We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and deep spiritual attachment and relationship to this country. We pay our respects to their Elders—past, present, and emerging—and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

Homily by Richard Leonard SJ

A young priest was sent by his bishop to a parish that had a 'red light district' within its boundaries. On his first day in the parish a nun, who had worked in the area for many years, took him on a tour of her beat, the area where all the women-in-prostitution were plying their trade. As they went along Sister introduced the priest to her friends Bubbles, Ginger and Calamity Jane. 'Sister it's fantastic that you know these women so well', he said. 'Don't worry', replied Sister, 'you'll know them in no time as well, and they'll know you by name too.'

Seized by panic, the young priest had visions of the bishop, the parish priest or, worse still, his mother coming to visit and walking with him down the street as Bubbles, Ginger and Calamity Jane all wave and call out across the road, 'Hello Father'. Who would ever believe he only knew them pastorally?

'Truly I tell you that prostitutes and tax collectors are going ahead of you into the kingdom of God.'

The preaching of Jesus attracted all sorts of people who lived at the fringes of, or were oppressed by, Palestinian society. Jesus' message was especially attractive to them. Tensions among the huge variety of Jesus' disciples, between the rich and the poor, men and women, the Jews and Gentiles, the socially respectable and those with outrageous backgrounds continued after his death throughout the next decades, during which the Gospels were written.

It's hard for us to imagine what a diverse and scandalous group, in many respects, the first fathers and mothers of our faith were seen to be. Imagine, if you will, the fuss that would still be created if the local bishop was seen constantly dining with women in prostitution, drug dealers or known terrorists. People would be outraged, but the bishop would be doing nothing short of following Jesus' example. This situation gives us a little insight into how affronted the Chief Priests and Pharisees were by Jesus and, in turn, by his disciples' behaviour.

For Jesus there was never a lost case, or a person beyond help. He didn't just spend time with the poor and broken of his society, but offered them a new way of life, an opportunity to start again and redemption from their destructive behaviour. He went to where they were, as they were. And we do the same because this is precisely what God has done for us. God didn't wait for us to 'talk the talk' before we could 'walk his walk'. Jesus came to us when we were religiously dumb and immobile and showed us how to speak, what to say and where to walk.

The Christian walk and talk is meant to have a profound impact on our daily lives, our concerns, our priorities and compassion. So much so that if, over a period of time, what we celebrate here each Sunday makes no inroads into our family life and workplace, our professional life, our business practices and our relationships, then we should ask ourselves what we are doing here.

And, what's worse, we could even miss the ongoing revelation of Christ's presence in the poor, weak and vulnerable of our own society. We constantly look for Christ in the spectacular and the wonderful and he comes to us in the least of our brother and sisters.

May this Eucharist give us the strength to not only 'look good', but to 'be good', to start over if we need to, and do our best to live out the faith we profess. May it strengthen us to find the Lord where he is, and not keep looking in the places where we would prefer him to be.

© 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.

Engaging Your Faith Online Lecture Series

The Catholic Theological College (located in Melbourne) is once again offering a series of online lectures across October and November.

These lectures are ideal for anyone wishing to explore the offerings of CTC for personal, theological and spiritual development. Each lecture stands alone, so you can attend one or more as you feel the need.

The cost for each lecture is \$25, and further information can be found by visiting CTC's website at bit.ly/451aeEU. Booking and payment, can be made by visiting bit.ly/3tb1YF5.

Service NSW Mobile Service Centre Visiting Clarence Town

The Service NSW Mobile Service Centre will once again be visiting Clarence Town on **Wednesday 11 October** between 10am and 3pm.

The MSC will be parked at the School of Arts, 48 Grey Street.

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)

26th Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 2 October

Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

Tuesday 3 October

Wednesday 4 October

Memorial of St Francis of Assisi

Thursday 5 October

10am Funeral for Peter Byron @ Dungog

Friday 6 October

11am Anointing Mass @ Lara Aged Care

Saturday 7 October

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Sunday 8 October

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Ezekiel 18:25-28

Psalm Psalm 24
Remember your mercies, O Lord.

2nd Reading Philippians 2:1-11

Acclamation John 10:27

Alleluia, alleluia!

My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me.
Alleluia!

Gospel Matthew 21:28-32

Memorial Acclamation

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

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The next morning tea at Clarence Town will be held after the 8am Mass today (1 October). Please join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Saying "Yes!"

In many ways, it is easy to say 'Yes' and not really mean it. Some people do it all the time in their lives. They say 'Yes' when they have no intention at all of following through on their commitment. It's easy to say 'Yes' and not mean it when it comes to faith as well. It's pretty easy to turn up at Church on a Sunday and be seen to be doing the 'right' thing. But if our faith doesn't change the way we live, then maybe we're really saying 'No' to God.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for October:

"We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a lifestyle at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world."

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

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Peter Byron.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In October: Bert Clark, Jaimie Richardon, Bonnie Hulbert, Bruce Everding, Ned Garland, Mark Bannister, Michael Wills, Fred Dickerson, Scott Bowman, Irma Iacono, Paul Brockwell, Brian Doyle, Maria Kealy, Raymond & Phyllis MacKay, Peter James McMullen, Mary Isabelle Preece, Margaret Banister, Paul Bryon, Doris Murray, Carl Nolan, Michael Kennedy, Thomas Lonigan, Michael Scanlan, Thelma Moroney

Those Who Are Sick: Maryann Smith, 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 Rooke, Graham McCarthy, Matthew Kerr.