



# Dungog & Gresford Parishes

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

Including **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.

## 3RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B 21 JANUARY 2024

### 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

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W: [www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au)

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### A Pastoral Note...

I would like to express my thanks to you all for the graciousness with which you welcomed my news last weekend that I would be away for a couple of days of retreat this past week.

The time away with the small group who gathered was refreshing and insightful—the times of prayer were wonderful, the camaraderie was enjoyable, and some of the subjects that came up during discussion provided food for thought. In fact, some of those subjects might resurface in the life of the parishes going forward.

Don't panic, though, no changes are coming immediately and, certainly, not without good conversation and consultation with everyone.

With end of January rapidly approaching, there are many things that will start to return to 'normal' (and yes, that does beg the question about what is 'normal' these days).

The most important 'return', of course, will be the life of our school in Dungog. Our teachers and other staff officially return on Tuesday 30 January, while the students begin their return in the days following.

The start of the school year will be marked with Mass on Friday 9 February commencing at 9.30am. Everyone is welcome to attend to come and mark the occasion.

As previously mentioned, the transition to the Season of Lent happens not that long after things get back to 'normal'. The requested Lenten program resources have been and should be available for distribution next weekend, well in time for those wishing to participate to do so. I ordered a few more than strictly needed so if anyone is still wanting a booklet, there may be a small number of extra booklets available—let me know.

I met with Deacon Solomon on Friday about his pending start of ministry across the parishes of the Chisholm Pastoral Region (including Dungog & Gresford). More details about what that might look like in next week's bulletin.

And on that note, back to 'normal'.

Have a blessed week...

*Fr Andrew*

### **Rite of Election of Catechumens**

The 2024 Rite of Election of Catechumens will be celebrated on Sunday 18 February in Sacred Heart Cathedral commencing at 2.30pm.

As a Church community we welcome those people who have been journeying towards faith via the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is important that the whole Church gathers to support and pray for our catechumens.

Everyone is invited to attend this important celebration in the life of our Church.

More information—including RSVP details for afternoon tea—can be found on the flyers on the notice boards of our church buildings.

### **Position Vacant—Hospital Chaplain**

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is looking to appoint a Chaplain to the John Hunter Hospital. More information can be found by clicking on [bit.ly/3vDfQsW](https://bit.ly/3vDfQsW).

Further information can be sought by contacting the Director, Pastoral Ministries, Teresa Brierley via email to [teresa.brierley@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:teresa.brierley@mn.catholic.org.au).

Applications for the position close 11:59pm on Monday 5 February 2024 and should be submitted using the link above.

### **Baptisms This Week**

We welcome **Iluca Reid** and **Keegan Reid**, together with their family and friends, as we celebrate their Baptisms after the 9.30am Mass at St Mary's on Sunday.

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.

### **Morning Tea at Dungog**

The next morning tea at Dungog will be held after the 9.30am next Sunday (21 January) inside the school grounds (undercover); entry via the gates that will be open after Mass. Please bring a plate of 'goodies' to share, and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

### **2024 Lenten Program—Last Chance**

With Lent starting so early this year, it's now time to order resources for those who might wish to undertake a Lenten reflection journey, either individually or as part of a group. Once again, the Diocese of Wollongong program will be the program of choice.

Sign up sheets are available in our churches this weekend—please add your name (and number of copies if you're representing a group) today so that an order can be placed during the week beginning Monday 15 January.

### **Dungog Lenten Group**

Mark Wilson has generously offered to facilitate a Lenten Group gathering on the Tuesdays of Lent, starting at 7pm and concluding with the Stations of the Cross.

If you would like to participate in this group, please make sure you've ordered a copy of the resource (see above), and speak to Mark about your intention.

### **Music at Dungog**

From the first Sunday of March, we'll be adding another (and the last) Eucharistic acclamation to our regular Sunday Masses.

In addition to the 'Holy, Holy, Holy' and the 'Great Amen', we will start singing the 'Memorial Acclamation, thus completing the 'Singing the Mass' that we have previously begun.



## Homily by Fr Richard Leonard SJ

Seeing today's Gospel is set by the water's edge, this story seems appropriate.

One day, three men were hiking and unexpectedly came upon a large raging river. They needed to get to the other side, but had no idea of how to do so. The first man prayed to God, 'Please God, give me the strength to cross this river.' In an instant God gave him big arms and strong legs, and he was able to swim across the river in about two hours, after almost drowning a couple of times.

Seeing this, the second man prayed to God, 'Please God, give me the strength and the resources to cross this river.' In an instant God gave him a rowboat and he was able to row across the river in about an hour, after almost capsizing the boat a couple of times.

The third man had seen how this worked out for the other two, so he also prayed to God saying, 'Please God, give me the strength and the resources ... and the intelligence ... to cross this river.' In an instant God turned him into a woman. She looked at the map, went upstream a couple of hundred metres, then walked across the bridge!

The three men's prayers were all about gaining something: strength, resources and intelligence. Today's readings are about gaining things too. Unlike the instant answer to the hikers' prayers, Jonah, Paul and Mark know real gain usually comes less dramatically and quickly, and involves letting go of something as much as it involves taking it on. In the Christian life this is called conversion, and it's at the centre of our life of faith.

Christian conversion is not a once-in-a-lifetime moment. It can happen every day in a rich variety of ways. It involves a change in attitude as much as a change in lifestyle.

All three readings show a different facet of conversion. Jonah calls the Ninevites to social conversion. St Paul, who reveals a very strong expectation that the end of time is near, calls the people of Corinth to a conversion of mind. And through relating the call of Simon, Andrew, James and John, St Mark tells us about personal conversion.

These days we regularly hear God's call in personal terms. It's sometimes called 'me and God' theology. Modern hymns reflect it best. We regularly sing about how Jesus died 'for me', or that 'here I am Lord' or that 'I will follow you'. Individually these lines are all true, the problem is that they tend to play down the more ancient

and biblical social dimensions of our call to conversion. In the Bible even though God and Jesus call people to conversion through personal relationships, there is no hint that this is where it stops. Every call leads to the wider community, to the people of Israel in the Old Testament, and out to the entire world in the New Testament.

Today's readings provide a litmus test for our conversion. If our faith has become a self-help club, where we talk about 'my' God, 'my' prayers, 'my' Church, 'my' Mass, we are in need of conversion. We don't need to leave God's personal love for us behind, we just need to see it as a necessary preparation for belonging to the people of God as we engage with the world at every level. We are challenged to reject the idea that it's me-and-God-against-the-world, and welcome in the idea that it's us-and-God-in-the-world.

May this Eucharist give us the strength, resources and intelligence we need to be converted personally and socially again this Sunday.

© 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.

## LIVING THE GOSPEL

### The Good News is here

*This week's gospel marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in the Gospel of Mark. The gospel writer has Jesus clearly announcing his message in plain, simple language: "The kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News." That message is as true for us today as it was when those words were first spoken. The kingdom is still close at hand if we would only recognise it in our midst rather than pinning our hopes on some future reward. The call to repent and believe the Good News is as relevant for us as it was for the first believers.*

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

3rd Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 22 January

Tuesday 23 January

Wednesday 24 January

Memorial of St Francis de Sales

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 25 January

Feast of the Conversion of St Paul

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 26 January

Australia Day

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 27 January

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 28 January

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

**Today's Liturgy:****1st Reading** Jonah 3:1-5, 10**Psalm** Psalm 24  
Teach me your ways, O Lord.**2nd Reading** 1 Corinthians 7:29-31**Acclamation** Mark 1:15

Alleluia, alleluia!

The kingdom of God is near:

believe the Good News!

Alleluia!

**Gospel** Mark 1:14-20**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 January:**

*"Let us pray that the Spirit help us recognise the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church."*

**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 by emailing [childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au).

Visit the Office of Safeguarding website for further information [www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au)

**SCRIPTURAL!****CONTEXT****The Gospel in a hurry**

*One of the features of this week's gospel is the immediate response that Jesus inspires from the fishermen as they give up all that they previously knew to follow him. We will see throughout this year of readings that this is characteristic of the Gospel of Mark. This gospel is sometimes referred to as the gospel in a hurry as the writer uses a lot of language that implies haste – "straight away"; "immediately"; "that day"; "at once". Such language is used to describe the movement of Jesus around Galilee but it is also used to describe the powerful reactions people have to him.*

**In Your Charity, Please Pray for:****Those Who Have Died:**

**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, Marea Cox, Janet Lambert.

**Those Who Are Sick:** Maryann Smith, Daphne Bond, Maree McCulloch, Leonie Young, Lisa Reid, Bev Herbert, Denise Wenden, Warren Wade, Irene Robinson, Luke Barry, Kathie Maynard, Kevin Ward, David Loudon, Michaela Brown, Phillip Hartup, Ella Rusak, Anne Newman, Graham McCarthy, Pam Edwards, Keith Edwards, Otilie Sheens.