



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.

4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B

28 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

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



Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The next morning tea at Clarence Town will be held after the 8am Mass next week (5 January). Please bring a plate to share, join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

Dungog Lenten Group

Mark Wilson will facilitate a Lenten Group gathering in Dungog during Lent. We extend our thanks to Mark for his generosity in coordinating and facilitating this opportunity.

The group will meet on the **Tuesdays of Lent** (from 20 February) in St Mary's, Dungog. Each meeting will commence at **7pm** and will conclude with the Stations of the Cross.

2024 Lenten Program Resources

I mentioned in last week's bulletin that the resources from the Diocese of Wollongong for Lent 2024 should be available this weekend.

I was optimistic—they are only now ready for shipping from Wollongong!

So watch this space for when they'll be available for collection.

Petition to Support Palliative Care Funding

With the introduction of "Voluntary Assisted Dying" in NSW, the funding for palliative care from the State Government has been cut by \$150 million in the last State budget.

The Hon Susan Carter MLC has started a petition to draw the Parliament of NSW's attention to this issue, and to lobby for a return of this funding to support the dying in NSW. Bishop Michael has asked that this petition be made available to parishioners, something I enthusiastically endorse.

You can access and sign by going to the relevant page on the Parliament's website: bit.ly/428D6LC.

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.

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.

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.

Further information can be sought by contacting the Director, Pastoral Ministries, Teresa Brierley via email to 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.

Celebrating Ash Wednesday

The Season of Lent begins on Wednesday 14 February, with the celebration of Ash Wednesday. While Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, it does mark a suitable means of beginning our marking of the Season of Lent.

So that you are able to plan ahead, we will mark Ash Wednesday this year as follows:

- 8am Mass @ Clarence Town
- 9.30am Mass @ Dungog
- 5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

The students from St Joseph's School may join us for the 9.30am Mass but this will not be confirmed until School returns—so watch this space!

Please be aware that the imposition of ashes can only take place during the celebration of Mass or during a full Liturgy of the Word.



The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford acknowledge the Gringai clan of the Worimi people and their deep and abiding attachment to the land on which we live and work.

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

It's Time For A Change...Maybe

Now that I've been here for eighteen months, I would like to raise with you the possibility of changing our weekday Mass schedule, with a focus particularly on Dungog.

There are a number of reasons for making this request—and I must emphasise that it is only a request—but the primary motivation is so that I can meet the full range of obligations I have beyond the parish. And, I willingly admit, that the other part of that request is so that I can meet those obligations without impacting on my health.

For **Dungog** weekday Mass-going parishioners, what I would like everyone to consider is reducing the weekday Masses from two to one.

There are a number of options that could meet this request:

- a) Keep the Wednesday evening Mass, and delete the Friday morning Mass.

In this scenario, Friday mornings would be 'free' for both the monthly Anointing Mass at Lara, and for Masses with our school students from time to time.

- b) Keep the Friday morning Mass and delete the Wednesday evening Mass.

Since many of my extra-parish commitments take place on a Wednesday, particularly in the afternoon and evening, this option would mean less 'cancelled' Masses on a Wednesday.

- c) Delete the Friday morning Mass and move the Wednesday evening Mass to the morning.

This option would bring both lots of 'benefits' outlined in a) and b) above.

- d) Delete both Friday morning and Wednesday evening Masses and have a Tuesday morning Mass.

Again, this option would bring both lots of 'benefits' outlined in a) and b) above.

And they are just the options I have already considered as possibilities—there may be more that I haven't considered, and I am open to any and all suggestions.

I should also raise the option that a morning Mass could be at a different time other than 9.30am—by which I mean earlier—if that was something that was preferable to our regular attendees.

For **Gresford** weekday Mass-going parishioners, I can confirm that there will be no change to the Thursday morning Mass unless you would like to adjust the time that Mass commences—that's up to you.

For **Clarence Town** parishioners, who don't currently have a weekday Mass...if you would like to have one introduced into the schedule please let me know and we can discuss possibilities once the other arrangements are in place.

Again, I want to stress that this is only a request, though one that I feel passionately about. There is no need to rush to an outcome, and there is no need to let me know your thoughts individually.

What I would invite us all to do is take some time to pray and think about this and then meet together to discern the most appropriate way forward.

To that end, I think a meeting for any interested parties could take place on **Saturday 24 February** in St Mary's, commencing at **9.30am**. Any and all parishioners are invited to come along. If any changes need to take place—and I am not assuming there will be—they can take effect after Easter. As I said, there's no rush.

My thanks in anticipation for your readiness to engage in this process of discernment.

Fr Andrew

The Sacraments of Penance & Anointing

For parishioners who might wish to celebrate the Sacraments of Penance (Reconciliation) and the Anointing of the Sick please contact Fr Andrew either at the Presbytery or by mobile (if the situation is more urgent).

gospel focus

Exorcisms

This week's gospel features an exorcism by Jesus – driving an unclean spirit out of a possessed man. Some people read these acts of exorcism as being literally true. Others are keen to demonstrate that these 'possessions' described in the gospels are able to be explained by various manifestations of mental illness. The thrashing fits described in the gospels have been likened to epileptic seizures and episodes of paranoia and schizophrenia might explain the first century understanding of possession. Rather than trying to justify or explain away these events, we must seek to understand the gospel writer's purpose in including such episodes.

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)

4th Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 29 January

Tuesday 30 January

Wednesday 31 January

Memorial of St John Bosco

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 1 February

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 2 February

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11am Anointing Mass @ Lara Aged Care

Saturday 3 February

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 4 February

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm Psalm 94

If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Acclamation Matthew 4:16

Alleluia, alleluia!

A people in darkness have seen a great light: a radiant dawn shines on those lost in death.

Alleluia!

Gospel Mark 1:21-28

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 Parishes of Dungog & Gresford hold that children, young people and vulnerable adults are a gift from God with an intrinsic right to dignity of life, respect and security from physical and emotional harm. They are to be treasured, nurtured and safeguarded.

In line with the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, our parishes have zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and are committed to safeguarding all who interact with the parishes through our activities, ministries and services, especially children and adults at risk.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

The Messianic Secret

A feature of the Gospel of Mark is an element of secrecy and confusion that surrounds Jesus' identity. He silences demons who would announce his identity and warns those he heals to be quiet about what has occurred. There is a real lack of understanding displayed by the disciples about who Jesus is. At one point, Jesus asks the disciples, "who do you think I am?" They identify him as the Messiah but immediately demonstrate that they don't really understand what that means. The theme that runs through the gospel is a developing understanding of what it means that Jesus is the Messiah.

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, 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.