



Dungog & Gresford Parishes

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

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.

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR B 4 FEBRUARY 2024

Parish Staff

Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)
Deacon Solomon Okovido (*In Residence*)
Kerry Copus (*Parish Secretary*)

Presbytery & Parish Office

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Other Contacts

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Parish School

St Joseph's Primary School
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Parish Bulletin is published each Sunday. Items for inclusion should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays. Copies of the Bulletin are available from the Parish website which is updated weekly.

Parish Website is updated regularly with copies of the bulletin and other information, and is found at www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au.

Safeguarding Promotion For all safeguarding concerns within the parishes, please contact Fr Andrew.

A Pastoral Note...

And yes, it's now February! The downtime of January is concluded, schools are going back, and 'life' is returning to whatever passes for normal. And surely it was only yesterday that we were celebrating the great festival of Christmas.

Oh, how time flies...

In other news, Deacon Solomon Okovido has taken up residence in the Dungog Presbytery, and will be joining us and preaching at the Sunday Masses this weekend.

As I may have mentioned in the past, the primary purpose for Solomon's appointment to the Chisholm region is to help him discern and prepare for ordination as a priest. There will be a few tasks that Solomon will need to undertake as part of that journey, tasks that Bishop Michael has asked me to assist Solomon with.

As part of his journey of discernment and preparation, Solomon will be engaged in ministerial undertakings, mostly focussed in the in ministry in the six parishes in and around Maitland, though he may make occasional appearances in Dungog and Gresford. We offer him our prayerful support in his endeavours.

In other news, some Parish Social Profiles were released by the National Centre for Pastoral Research, part of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. They draw on information from the 2021 Census.

They certainly make for interesting reading. A brief summary of information is below:

	Dungog	Gresford
Total population	7,047	3,834
Catholic population	1,174	751
Percentage	16.7	19.6
Total Catholic families	560	319

I have uploaded the profiles for both Dungog and Gresford parishes to the 'Resources' page of our

website for those who might be interested in reading for all the details. If you are unable to access the files on the website, please let me know and a printed copy can be arranged.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

2024 Lenten Program Resources

The resources for the 2024 Lenten Program have now arrived from the Diocese of Wollongong and are available for collection at the back of the churches this weekend.

Please mark your name as you take your copy of the resource booklet so we can be sure no one who asked for one misses out.

If you would like a copy of the booklet, and didn't order one, please contact Fr Andrew.

Music at Dungog

From today we add the 'Memorial Acclamation' to our singing of the Mass, join the 'Holy, Holy, Holy' and the 'Great Amen' during the Eucharistic Prayer.

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.

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.



Advance Notice

Please remember the parish meeting to discuss changes to the weekday Mass schedule will take place on **Saturday 24 February** commencing at **9.30am** at St Mary's.

A copy of the bulletin column can be found on the website on the 'Resources' page.

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.

Homily by Fr Richard Leonard SJ

In the time of Jesus almost everything they couldn't understand was put down to a demon or an evil spirit. In the Talmud, (a large book dating from around the time of Jesus that contains the collected teachings of the Rabbis), several pages are devoted to the healing of 'fevers'. Even though we have become more advanced in our medical knowledge, it's surprising how this thinking still persists. While most people don't blame evil for their ailments, they can think God has a direct hand in sending an illness or an injury. Such faulty theology cannot be reconciled with the New Testament.

There is not a single instance where Jesus inflicts pain and suffering on others. He regularly tells us we have to carry our cross and bear our burdens, but this is vastly different from personally laying a cross on our shoulders or giving us the burdens in the first place. By contrast, every time that Jesus encounters suffering and pain he works to heal it and restore the person to new life.

The differences between the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and the other healing stories in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel are striking. Rather than in a public space and in front of crowds this personal healing occurs in the privacy of Peter's house. By contrast to the command for the demons to be gone, in his bedside ministry Jesus never mentions a demon and uses no words. Instead he gently takes her by the hand and helps her to her feet. Unlike the others Jesus heals, of whom we never hear about their response, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law leads her to an act of service. Given all the details Mark gives us of this encounter it's a pity he never tells us her name.

Sometimes we can think of Jesus' miracles, then and now, as acts of dazzling power. The problem with this idea is that if we see Jesus as going around 'zapping' people it's hard to figure out why there were times when he could not perform any miracles at all, or that they happened in stages. Whatever else miracles are, they are deeply personal encounters of faith.

As Catholics we believe in the power of miracles and that the source of them is always the grace of God. But we do not have to see them as something done to us from without. Rather, we can see them as unlocking something from within. For some people Jesus' word or touch set free the healing power God had placed in them. For others it came through another person's intercession. The same holds true for us today.

Furthermore, being anointed, celebrating Reconciliation or Eucharist, going to a place of pilgrimage, fasting, being prayed over or

meditating can have a similar effect. Looked at in this way we can see why some people are healed and others are not. If a personal encounter with Jesus did not always lead to healing, then why should it surprise us that some other encounters these days do not always unlock God's healing within us.

Small and large-scale miracles are happening every day. Today's Gospel reminds us that they do not happen for show or for the sake of the crowd. They are realisations of faith. Taking Peter's mother-in-law as our model we are healed and strengthened so that we can witness to God's saving power, serve the Kingdom of God in any way we can, and continue to wait on the Lord.

© 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.



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.

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)
5th Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 5 February
Memorial of St Agatha

Tuesday 6 February
Memorial of St Paul Miki and companions

Wednesday 7 February
5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 8 February
9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 9 February
12 noon Mass for Start of School Year @
Dungog

Saturday 10 February
Memorial of St Scholastica

Sunday 11 February
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time
8am Mass @ Clarence Town
9.30am Mass @ Dungog
11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Psalm Psalm 146
Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.

2nd Reading 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Acclamation Matthew 8:17

Alleluia, alleluia!
He bore our sickness,
and endured our suffering.
Alleluia!

Gospel Mark 1:29-39

Memorial Acclamation

Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for February:

"Let us pray that the sick who are in the final stages of life, and their families, receive the necessary medical and human care and accompaniment."

Baptisms This Week

We welcome **Lewis Coleman**, together with his family and friends, as we celebrate his Baptism at 10am next Saturday at St Patricks's.

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, Anton Banister.

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The next morning tea at Clarence Town will be held after the 8am Mass today (4 February). Please stay and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Prayer

In the midst of an extremely hectic 24 hours where Jesus effectively launches his public ministry, Jesus takes time to go aside to a lonely place and pray. The passage tells us that it was 'long before dawn' that he did this. It may have been his usual practice to pray early in the morning or he may have been restless after the events of the previous day and the thought of what lay ahead. Nevertheless, Jesus provides us with a model of using prayer to reflect on events and to prepare ourselves for the day ahead.

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.