



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.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD, YEAR B 24 MARCH 2024

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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...

"Why do we listen to the Passion on Palm Sunday, Father? Surely that should wait until Good Friday!"

This was a question I was asked many years ago in a parish far, far away. And it is a question that has remained with me in the years since.

There was no enmity in the question. The questioner, a man in his early eighties who was a committed parishioner, simply wanted to know the answer. It was, he told me, a question that he had been wanting to ask for years, if not decades.

I've never been sure why he believed he could ask it of me, but I have to admit to feeling more than a little humbled and honoured that he chose me to ask the question of.

The answer is in two parts. Firstly, when we celebrate the Church's liturgy in any form we are not rehearsing events. On Palm Sunday, today, we are not rehashing what Jesus did when he entered the city of Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. It has already been done.

What we are doing is 'remembering' (the technical term is "anamnesis"). In effect, we are placing ourselves at the time and place of the original event, in the same way that when we celebrate Eucharist we are not rehearsing the Last Supper in an historical sense but rather breaching the tyranny of time and space to place ourselves at the Last Supper.

This concept of "anamnesis" can be a tricky concept to grasp for many people (indeed, it took me many years to wrap my head around it) but it is at the very heart of the liturgical expression of the Church that we celebrate so regularly.

The second part of the answer to the gentleman's question is slightly more pragmatic. Our journey through Holy Week, with all its significance and

meaning for our Christian identity, takes place each year in the shadow of the Cross and what comes after it. We walk these last days with Jesus, knowing that both the Cross and the Empty Tomb await us, and it is the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus that gives ultimate meaning to every that we encounter in these coming days.

And so, we listen to the Passion account from the synoptic Gospels. We listen to that which gives this week it's fullness of meaning. We listen to what comes next as we meditate on these last days before Jesus willingly embraces the Cross, which leads inevitably to the Empty Tomb.

The Passion that we hear proclaimed today shapes the entirety of the next week, and our participation in it. It is the reason why this week bears the honorific of 'Holy'.

Have a blessed—and Holy—week...

Fr Andrew

Project Compassion Contributions

Parishioners are invited to return any Project Compassion boxes or other contributions over the period from Holy Thursday to the Second Sunday of Easter. This will allow the finalisation of the returns by the Parish Office ready to send to Caritas Australia.

Change to Weekday Mass Schedule

A reminder that the new Weekday Mass schedule will begin from Monday 1 April (no, it's not an Aprils Fool's Day trick!). From that date Mass will be celebrated as follows:

Tuesdays 8.30am St Mary's, Dungog
Thursdays 9.30am St Helen's, East Gresford

Dungog Lenten Group

The last gathering of the Dungog Lenten Group will take place this **Monday 25 March** in St Mary's Church at the usual time of 7pm—this will avoid a clash with the Chrism Mass and permit those who wish to join in celebrating the Chrism Mass to be at both occasions.

Chrism Mass 2024

Each year during Holy Week all the faithful of the Church of Maitland-Newcastle are invited to gather with Bishop Michael Kennedy for the Chrism Mass. There we bless and consecrate the Sacred Oils that will be used for ministry during the year.

Join the diocesan community in our Cathedral on Tuesday 26 March commencing at 7pm. Read more about the Chrism Mass at bit.ly/3SM7Qxu.

The Proclamation of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday

With the beginning of Holy Week today, we come to that time each year when the Passion of Our Lord is publicly proclaimed during Mass.

Today we have the traditional proclamation of the Passion in three voices—the part of Jesus being taken by the priest, one reader taking the part of the narrator, and the other reader taking the part of the other parts. This year we hear Mark's account of the Passion.

On **Good Friday** the priest will proclaim the Passion alone, proclaiming the Passion account from John's Gospel as is customary.

The often encountered practice of having the whole assembly voice the part of the crowd during the Passion is not envisaged by the official liturgical books of the Church and will not be observed in our parishes.

The proclamation of the Passion is an essential part of the liturgy of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum, and is meant to be spoken and heard by all who are participating. To that end, those who generally make use of a personal missal at Mass are invited to put aside during the Passion and listen to the Passion being proclaimed.

GOSPEL FOCUS

This man was a son of God

By the time we have stood and listened to this lengthy Passion narrative, the listener may have started to wilt by the time we get to the death of Jesus. Yet, the gospel writer keeps one of the most important messages for this moment. As Jesus dies, a centurion standing by utters the inspired words, "In truth, this man was a son of God." Famously played by John Wayne in the movie, The Greatest Story Ever Told, the centurion is the voice of the gentile – the non-Jew – representing all those throughout the world who will recognise the truth of Jesus' life and purpose.

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.

Opportunities Outside The Parish

Sing to the Lord

Sing to the Lord is a cantor training and formation opportunity for all members of the faithful. We are looking for everyone who loves to sing and would like to have a go. To find out more and express interest bit.ly/4ahroBg.

Celebrating the Annunciation

This year, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is transferred to Monday 8 April because of the clash with the Monday of Holy Week (which ranks higher in the table of liturgical days).

A timetable of Masses for the Annunciation will be made available in our bulletin in the coming weeks.

Celebration of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation for 2024 will be celebrated on **Thursday, 18 April** starting at 6.30pm in St Mary's, Dungog.

This celebration is not just for the candidates and their families but is one for all the parish community. It would be wonderful to have the church full as we celebrate this significant moment in the life of the children of our parish.

Children's Sacramental Initiation 2024

Children wishing to complete their journey to full Christian Initiation are now able to begin that journey for 2024. All the information required—including the online enrolment form—can be found on our website at bit.ly/3NuMAv7.

The celebration of Confirmation for this cohort will take place during October 2024, with the precise date to be communicated once available.

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

The Bishop Is Coming!

Bishop Michael will be visiting our two parishes across the weekend of 27 & 28 April. Bishop Michael will be celebrating the three parish Masses as an opportunity to 'meet & greet' parishioners.

We'll organise an opportunity for a 'cuppa' or similar informal gathering after each of the Masses so Bishop Michael has a chance to get to know us.

Holy Land Collection on Good Friday

The annual collection for the support of the Church in the Holy Land will take place again on Good Friday, 29 March.

This collection promotes the missionary work of the Church in the Holy Land by providing welfare assistance to local Christians in areas such as health, education, employment, housing, parishes and orphanages. It is also used to maintain over 70 churches and shrines associated with the life of Jesus.

Due to the ongoing war, the Church and people of the Holy Land are still struggling with reduced income due to fewer pilgrims and lower church attendance around the world. In 2023 Australian Catholics were once again extremely generous and were able to send nearly \$1.4 million to the Holy Land.

The reality for the Holy Land mission is that they will continue to face challenges financial and spiritual and so we again ask Catholics around the world again to be as generous as possible, with their financial support as well as their spiritual support.

Please remember the Christians of the Holy Land on Good Friday.

The Holy Land collection on Good Friday will take the form of a 'retiring collection' with baskets available as people leave the church.



Palm Sunday 23 & 24 March



As Project Compassion 2024 comes to an end, we want to thank you for your incredibly generous support throughout Lent.

This year, we shared with you the story of three inspiring women from across the globe, who overcame challenges to complete their education, access water and find secure employment. With the support of compassionate people like you, they are now forging a path to a better future for their families and their communities.

Please donate to Project Compassion.

There is still time to donate! Together we can help vulnerable communities face their challenges today and build a better tomorrow *for all future generations*.

You can donate through Project Compassion donation boxes and envelopes available from your parish, by visiting caritas.org.au/project-compassion or by calling 1800 024 413.

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)

Holy Week

Monday 25 March

Tuesday 26 March

7pm Chrism Mass @ Sacred Heart Cathedral

Wednesday 27 March

5.30pm Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 28 March

Thursday of the Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday)

7pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper @ Dungog

Friday 29 March

Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)

10am Stations of the Cross @ Dungog

10am Stations of the Cross @ East Gresford

10am Stations of the Cross @ Clarence Town

3pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion @ Dungog

Saturday 30 March

Holy Saturday

8pm The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night @ Dungog

Sunday 31 March

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

10am Mass @ East Gresford

Today's Liturgy:

First Gospel Mark 11:1-10

1st Reading Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm Psalm 21

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

2nd Reading Philippians 2:6-11

Acclamation Philippians 2:8-9

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Christ became obedient for us even to death, dying on the cross.

Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Gospel Mark 14:1—15:47

Memorial Acclamation

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Before the cock crows

Peter is an interesting character in the gospels. He is one of the first of the disciples to be called; Jesus changes his name and places great trust in him; he is witness to the most significant moments of Jesus' life; he is able to profess his faith in Jesus as the Christ and yet it is he who denies even knowing Jesus. We might have thought that Peter was Jesus' most loyal and faithful follower, yet it is he who can't stand up and claim that he was a follower of Jesus. Is it any wonder that it is difficult for us today sometimes?

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for March:

"Let us pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive."

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In March:

Gordon Smith, Dan Harrison, Linda Gleeson, Vincent Smith, Gwen Richards, Alexander Loudon, Claude McGinty, Herb Trappel, Allan Turner, Arthur Preece, Thelma Lowe, Joyce Copus, Leo Maher, Matthew Harding, Vincent Lane, Vince Banister, Gerry Gehrig, Terry Johnson.

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, Anne Newman, Graham McCarthy, Keith Edwards, Otilie Sheens, Anton Banister, Lyn Kerr.

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.

Visit the Office of Safeguarding website for further information www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au.