



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.

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR B

7 APRIL 2024

Parish Staff

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

Presbytery & Parish Office

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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...

I'm going to begin with some news that I've been aware of for several months but which I was asked by Bishop Michael to not make public until it became a reality.

During the week, Bishop Michael has appointed me to the Parishes of Gloucester and Krumbach as Administrator. The appointment took effect on 1 April 2024.

The appointment was precipitated by the need of the Lay Leader of Gloucester, Paul Sheridan, to retire because of his health situation.

How this new responsibility will manifest is a 'work in progress' and will only be truly known as the I and the communities of Gloucester and Krumbach work together over the coming months.

The two parishes have the services of Fr Terry Horne, one of our semi-retired priests, along with Deacons Vincent Ryan and John Pelletier, who will maintain the normal sacramental and liturgical services in the parishes. I am most grateful that they are willing to do that, and look forward to working with them.

Their willingness to maintain this commitment means that my role in Gloucester and Krumbach will primarily be administrative in nature—at least for the time being—and this, too, will unfold its meaning in the coming months.

What it does mean is that I will occasionally need to travel north for meetings or specific occasions to fulfil my responsibilities to the new parishes. I hope to minimise the impact on Dungog & Gresford parishes, but there will naturally be some.

If you have any questions about the new reality, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Have a blessed week . . .

Fr Andrew

Renewing the Dungog Rosters

It's time for a renewal of our liturgical rosters in Dungog!

If you feel called to proclaim the Word of God during our Sunday Masses, or to lead the petitions of the worshipping community during the Universal Prayer, you are invited to participate in a workshop on **Saturday 27 April**.

The workshop will start at 9.30am and last for approximately an hour. It will cover some minor changes to how the Liturgy of the Word will be celebrated, and be an opportunity for any questions to be asked.

We are also looking for more members for our collection and counting team—if this is something you feel able to contribute to, please let Fr Andrew know by the end of April so that you can be included on the roster.

Please note: new volunteers will need to undertake the necessary and appropriate diocesan volunteer process. Fr Andrew will assist you in completing this process as needed.

Is It Time To Reintroduce Collections?

The advent of COVID way back when brought a number of changes when we were eventually able to reopen our churches.

One of those was not passing the collection plates from hand to hand, and instead leaving them somewhere convenient for people to place their donations in.

It's been suggested that it might be time to bring back the former practice—and so your feedback on whether we should or shouldn't would be very much appreciated by the end of April.

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.

The celebration of Confirmation is an important occasion in the life of the entire parish community, not just for the candidates and their families.

Please consider coming along to be part of this event in the life of the Parish.

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.

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. There'll be an opportunity to share a 'cuppa' with Bishop Michael after each of our Sunday Masses:

East Gresford: after Mass, we will adjourn to the Gresford Bowls Sport & Recreation Club, where you can join Bishop Michael for a drink or a meal in the bistro.

Clarence Town: we'll share a 'cuppa' in the usual manner after Mass—this will be in place of the usual morning tea on 5 May.

Dungog: we'll share a 'cuppa' in the usual manner after Mass—this will be place of the usual morning tea on 21 April.

Celebrating the Annunciation

With the Solemnity of the Annunciation falling on a Monday this year, Masses will be available at **Dungog** (8.30am) and **East Gresford** (5.30pm). While this day is certainly is an important day in our liturgical calendar, it is not a Day of Obligation.

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 on **Friday 25 October 2024** at 6.30pm.

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

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).

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.

Homily by Fr Richard Leonard SJ

The earliest Christian community focused strongly on the wounds of the Risen Lord for two reasons: to affirm the fact that Christ, now raised from the dead was the same person who had lived with them; and to make sense of the physical wounds being inflicted on them for Christ's sake.

The story of Thomas, even with its mystical details, counters a magical notion of what the resurrection is about. Jesus bears the marks of his torture and death. His glorified body, though different, is connected to how the disciples knew and loved him. They can recognise him through his words and his wounds.

We know the community of Ephesus, for which this Gospel is written, was experiencing great persecution. Is it any wonder, one generation after the earliest disciples, that the sign of Christ's Risen presence are his marks of suffering?

Our own world continues to be intrigued by manifestations of Jesus' wounds. Over recent years films like *Stigmata*, *Dogma*, *Agnes of God* and even the appalling *Daredevil* give a hysterical and cynical prominence to the stigmata. There are regular 'believe it or not' documentaries that usually follow suit. Even some pilgrims flocked to Padre Pio's monastery in the south of Italy to see if his hands really bled, or if his wounds really wept. This desire to see outward signs of inner faith is a long way short of Jesus telling us today, 'Happy are those who believe without seeing.'

Our day-to-day lives should be the clearest manifestation of the cross and resurrection of Christ.

It seems, however, that words and wounds still make a claim on us today. You and I know that we don't have to go to a stigmatic to see Christian battle wounds. We carry within us the death of the Lord. We all have our wounds. And we also know that, for many of us, it is precisely when we are wounded most deeply by life, that our doubts in the presence of God can be greatest.

The Easter story is not that we should be ashamed of this, or pretend it doesn't happen. Today's Gospel reminds us that it is into this chaos that Christ comes with words of peace, with empathy from the one who was wounded for our sake and with the mission to forgive as we are forgiven.

Years ago I remember struggling with some personal issues during a retreat. One day, when I felt lowest about myself, the retreat director, adapting today's psalm, 117, said to me, 'you realise that the stone rejected by the builder becomes the corner stone'. By this he meant that

often God takes that part of ourselves we don't like, forgives it, heals it, and uses it most powerfully to demonstrate that the pattern of the life, death and resurrection of Christ continues in all believers who bear his name and carry his wounds.

And that's what happened to Thomas. Christ took his fears, doubts and disbelief and transformed them into a powerful Christian witness that has sustained generations of us who struggle with life and faith.

So at this Easter Eucharist we are offered the same opportunity to discover that the stone rejected within us, or among us, is the one which God wants to use as the cornerstone. When we see this happening, when we see God taking the part of us we consider most unlovable and using it for good, then we want to cry out with the psalmist, 'This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes.'

© 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.

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.



The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)
Second Week of Easter

Monday 8 April
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
8.30am Mass @ Dungog
5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Tuesday 9 April
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 10 April

Thursday 11 April
Memorial of St Stanislaus
9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 12 April

Saturday 13 April
10am Baptisms @ Dungog

Sunday 14 April
Third Sunday of Easter
8am Mass @ Clarence Town
9.30am Mass @ Dungog
11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Acts 4:32-35

Psalm Psalm 117
Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting.

2nd Reading 1 John 5:1-6

Acclamation John 20:29
Alleluia, alleluia!
You believe in me, Thomas, because you have seen me; happy those who have not seen me, but still believe!
Alleluia!

Gospel John 20:19-31

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 (7 April). Please join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

Baptisms This Week

We welcome **Sofia & Grace Fortunaso**, together with their family and friends, as we celebrate their Baptism next Saturday at 10am in St Mary's, Dungog.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for April: "Let us pray that the dignity and worth of women be recognised in every culture, and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world."

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In April:
Bede Gehrig, Ruth Jones, Lenore McDermott, Paula Murphy, Robert Holdom, Dorothy Bowtell, Rex Garland, Bruno Rocco, Herbert John Preece, Allie Allen, Peter Allen, Tom O'Driscoll, Paddy Kilpinen, Bill Tyne, Neil Faber, Lyn Barry, Michael Flanagan, Paul Cooper.

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, Ottilie Sheens, Anton Banister, Lyn Kerr, Neville Barry.

**HISTORICAL
CONTEXT**

My Lord and my God

This extraordinarily clear statement of belief about the divinity of Jesus appears nowhere else in any of the four gospels. Why does the Gospel of John make this statement and not any of the other gospels? It must be remembered that the Gospel of John was the last of the four gospels to be written – at least 20 years after the Gospel of Mark and some 60 to 70 years after the death of Jesus. The early Christians had been cast out of the Jewish tradition and were making sense of how their own beliefs could stand apart from Jewish tradition. With the break from Judaism, Christians felt able to express their developing belief that Jesus was God.

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.