



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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR B

21 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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Office Hours

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Other Contacts

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Parish School

St Joseph's Primary School
49 Brown Street, Dungog NSW 2420
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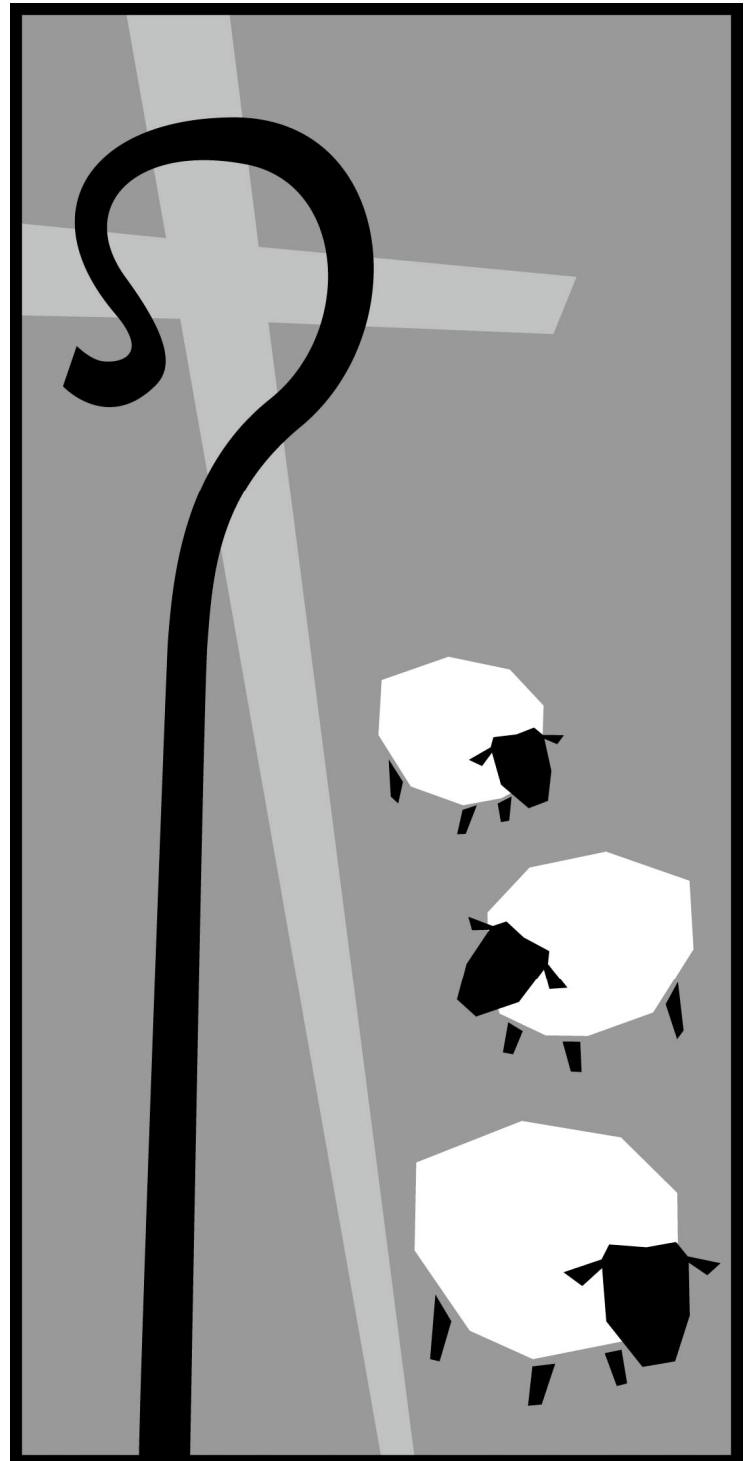
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Parish Bulletin is published each Sunday. Items for inclusion should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays. Copies of the Bulletin are available from the Parish website which is updated weekly.

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...

Have you ever stopped and reflected on the way things are, the *status quo ante* if you like? I mean, have you ever stopped and wondered just where you are in the great journey of life, and, for Christians at least, the great command to mission?

Perhaps I'm a little odd (others have certainly claimed it!) but I have been reflecting on this the last couple of weeks, largely I suspect because we are in the Easter Season and our readings from the Acts of the Apostles lend themselves to this kind of reflection.

I don't know about you but I've been wondering if there's something more I could be doing, both to live well as a human being and also, and perhaps more importantly, to be faithful to my calling as a *Christian* to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I don't have any answers or brilliant insights from this continuing reflection—perhaps that is the nature of reflection—but I share this for what it's worth, and just in case others are doing likewise and thinking they're all alone in doing so.

Have a blessed week . . .

Fr Andrew

Change to Parish Office Hours

At the request of our Parish Secretary, Kerry Copus, please note that there will be a change in the Parish Office staffing hours from the beginning of May 2024.

From 1 May 2024, the Parish Office will be staffed on **Tuesdays** (from 10am to 1pm) and **Fridays** (from 10am to 1pm).

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.

There are other additional options for contributing to the financial support of the Parish—via the Mass App on the phone or direct debit, for example. If you would like to explore these options, please contact the Parish Office.

The Bishop Is Coming!

Bishop Michael will be visiting our two parishes next weekend 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.

Congratulations!!

Congratulations to the children who celebrated their Confirmation last Thursday evening in Dungog. It was a wonderful and prayerful occasion.

We now look forward to celebrating their First Communion, the completion of their journey of Christian Initiation, over the coming months.

Alleluia!!

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 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

Sometimes a piece of theatre can be so powerful it stays with you for your whole life. Many years ago I saw Jesuit dramatist Michael Moynahan perform his mime entitled 'Come-Passion'. It starts with a clown happily doing tricks and juggling for the audience. Soon, Jesus is led in by the soldiers and is crucified. The clown watches on in horror. When Jesus dies and the soldiers go home the clown remains at the foot of the cross. He removes the nails from the hands and feet of Jesus and cradles the corpse in his lap, as in Michelangelo's Pieta. He weeps for the evil that saw a just man crucified. Just then, the soldiers return and find the clown grieving over the body of Jesus. They crucify the clown. The clown suffers and dies on the cross. As they leave Jesus is raised to life, he sees the suffering clown, removes the nails, cradles him in his arms and holds him for what feels like an eternity.

When I saw this mime you could have heard a pin drop, and there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

The word compassion comes from the Latin word *compati* meaning to bear or suffer with. It's not pity, sympathy or commiseration. Those words imply that we stand outside an experience and feelingly look in on it. Compassion is about 'fellow-feeling'. It's what the Good Shepherd embodies, and what Easter is all about. If we are worthy followers of Jesus we will all have our fair share of Good Fridays, but Easter Sunday tells us that just as the Father remained faithful to Jesus, so Jesus will remain faithful to us, as one with us.

In recent years the bishops, who are often called shepherds of the local Church, have come under extraordinary scrutiny. And rightly so. All of us who are living the Christian life are accountable for what we have done and have failed to do, and the bishops are no exception. It's a tough time to be the local shepherd. The flock is highly educated and we no longer follow anyone's lead with a herd mentality. We want to know our shepherd, hear his compassionate voice call for justice for victims everywhere, but especially ones who have been injured in any way by the Church. We want to be confident that what our local shepherd says and does is what Christ the Good Shepherd would say and do. Over these past years our sense of dismay has come from a very few bishops who have chosen the so-called good name of the church, its social status and power, their public profile and even the threat of moral and financial liability over the voices of the most vulnerable members of our flock.

Today's Gospel reminds us what Christian leadership should look like. Jesus didn't liken it to princes in palaces or governors of provinces. His

metaphor was of a compassionate shepherd who sleeps in the field with his flock, one who knows them so well and loves them so dearly that he lays down his own life for them.

Let's pray at this Eucharist that we always have the leaders we deserve, ones whose compassion is so transparent that it inspires us to be the same, even towards them.

© 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.

Rejoice!!

Diocesan Library Hours

The Diocesan Library is open for patrons at 12 Tudor St, Newcastle West on Mondays and Fridays (10am-6pm) and Saturdays (10am-2pm).

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.

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead)

Fourth Week of Easter

Monday 22 April

Tuesday 23 April

NO MASS Fr Andrew is delivering a formation retreat on Christian Initiation at Wangi Wangi.

Wednesday 24 April

Thursday 25 April

ANZAC Day

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Friday 26 April

Feast of St Mark

Saturday 27 April

9.30am Rosters Workshop @ Dungog

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 28 April

Fifth Sunday of Easter

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Today's Liturgy:

1st Reading Acts 4:8-12

Psalm Psalm 117

The stone rejected by the builders has become the corner stone.

2nd Reading 1 John 3:1-2

Acclamation John 10:14

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;

I know my sheep, and mine know me.

Alleluia!

Gospel John 10:11-18

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 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."

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.

Different View

The Modern-Day Shepherd

Today's audiences can tend to struggle a bit with the image of Jesus as the good shepherd. In countries like Australia and the United States, the image of sheep is one of huge flocks of sheep that number in their hundreds and thousands and roam freely over enormous open plains. I guess we also tend to look on sheep as pretty stupid animals that will follow anything anywhere. It doesn't seem to work to put Jesus into this image of vast sheep stations. The idea of a shepherd knowing his sheep individually seems a bit ridiculous in this context.

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, Otilie Sheens, Lyn Kerr, Neville Barry, Susan Barlow.