



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.

CHRIST THE KING, YEAR B

24 NOVEMBER 2024

Parish Staff

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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 so we begin the last week of our liturgical year, and are on the cusp of what some refer to as the 'silly season', that time in the lead up to the great Solemnity of Christmas.

Over coming weeks there will be all sorts of end of year events. Many of these events, including our own Dungog Parish Luncheon, will take on the flavour of a "Christmas Party" (which is infinitely better than an "Xmas Party"! even though the celebration of Christmas, with its accompanying liturgical season, is yet weeks away.

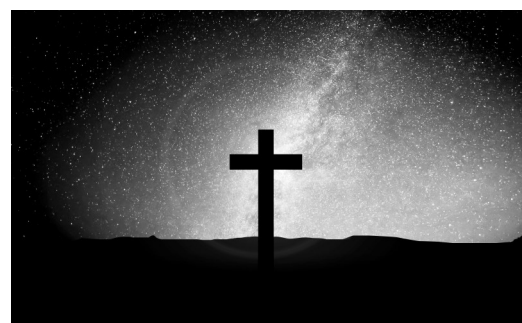
Such events are, by and large, not seen to the same degree in the northern hemisphere because Christmas 'up north' does not coincide with the end of a civil year, something that occurs in the middle of a calendar year when summer strikes.

All of which is a prelude to me inviting everyone—myself included—to not forget in and amongst all the various festivities over the coming weeks that we are preparing not for the end of another calendar year of various activities but the coming of God among us in the birth of Jesus.

So celebrate well—and safely—but still looking forward to this annual festival of the beginning of our salvation that we call Christmas.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew



Columban Calendars Available

Columban Calendars for 2025 will be available from Sunday 17 November at the cost of \$10 each. Please see Lyn Barham if you're interested.

Dungog Christmas Hamper Raffle

Contributions are invited for the prizes for the Dungog Christmas Hamper Raffle.

Contributions of non-perishable items can be left in the baskets at the back of the church in readiness for the hampers to be prepared.

Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Dungog Christmas Lunch

The Dungog Parish Christmas Lunch will take place on **Sunday 1 December** in the Parish Hall.

Please add your name to the list at the back of the church if you would like to attend. Alternatively, please contact the Parish Office and we will do it for you.

Are You Missing Some Glasses?

Some glasses were found in the Dungog Parish Hall after the Morning Tea last Sunday. If they might belong to you, or to someone you know, they can be found on the table at the back of the church.

Alleluia!

Parishes Assembly—NEXT WEEKEND!

The Parishes Assembly will take place on **Saturday 30 November**, in St Mary's Parish Hall, Dungog commencing at 9.30am and will conclude no later than 12 midday.

The 'Meeting Papers' are now available for downloading from the 'Resources' page of our website. If you are unable to download the document and would like a copy, please contact the Parish Office and we will print a copy for you.

Although many parishioners have already given thought and prayer to the issues that will be discussed on the day of the Assembly, I would strongly encourage you to read and consider the papers in advance of our gathering. This will ensure that our conversation is both effective and efficient.

I commend this process to your prayerful consideration. Please come along to the Assembly and help determine the future of our two parishes.

Fr Andrew

The Return of the Chalice—A Possibility

Bishop Michael has determined that the time is now appropriate for the current blanket restriction on the possibility of receiving Communion from the Chalice to be lifted. The current restriction will cease to be in place from the First Sunday of Advent (Sunday, 1 December 2024).

The Bishop has asked each parish to undertake a process of discernment about when and if to return to offering Communion from the Chalice in their particular circumstances.

A copy of the Bishop's letter is available on the noticeboard of our churches, while the Pastoral Guidelines it recommends can be found on the website under 'Resources'.

I would ask all parishioners to give this matter some serious thought and prayer, and, if time permits, it can be discussed at the Parishes Assembly—or at a separate meeting if time does not.

Fr Andrew

What's In A Name?

As I have previously written in the Bulletin, if a decision to merge our two parishes is taken at the pending Assembly, there will be a need to find a new patron saint by which the new entity can be called.

If you have any suggestions that might meet the need, please bring them along to the Assembly where we can begin a process of choosing a new patron (assuming, that is, we decided to merge).

It would be very advantageous, if you're proposing a name, to provide some background as to the patron you think is appropriate and to share that with other parishioners. The choice of a new patron will be made by ballot in the new year—again assuming that is the choice that is made.

Our new patron cannot be one of the existing patrons (Mary, Patrick, Helen, etc.) and, preferably, should be unique across the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle—since we already are unique in the diocese, and will continue to be so.

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford acknowledge the Worimi and Wonnarua peoples on whose traditional lands we live and work, and their continuing deep and abiding attachment to the land.

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 Richard Leonard

Pope Pius XI established the feast of Christ the King in the Holy Year of 1925. It appears to have its roots in the 1880s when many European bishops were worried with what they saw as the rise of secularisation. I'm pleased they're not around today! These bishops were concerned at how governments were increasingly asserting more power over and against the church. Especially in France and Italy Bishops started to venerate Jesus as the Universal King. This devotion took off. By 1922, at the Eucharistic Congress in Rome, sixty-nine cardinals petitioned the Pope to establish this feast. Within three years the Vatican had been inundated with requests, and so the solemnity was established.

It's clear from today's Gospel, and the New Testament in general, that while Jesus frequently spoke of his Kingdom, is hailed like a king on Palm Sunday and is facetiously given the title of king by Pilate, his kingship is vastly different from those of Caesar, Herod and even David and the other Kings of Israel.

The earliest Christians seem to have understood this very well. We find very little writing or artistic representation of Jesus as a king before 324 AD. In that year Emperor Constantine becomes a catechumen and Christianity becomes the religion of the Roman Empire. After this time Jesus starts to appear wearing a crown and holding an orb. Mary is styled as the Queen of Heaven and begins to be pictured as such. This is all understandable as the previously persecuted Christian sect now emerges to become the most powerful unifying force in the Roman Empire. It was a sweet victory, but it meant that whatever was said of the Roman Emperor, even more must be true of Christ the Universal King and Lord.

As centuries passed and the Roman Empire passed away, the Church maintained many of its now long-standing royal prerogatives and language. Just as an example, to this day the Pope and some bishops live in places called palaces. They wear jewels and rings and have feudal coats of arms. Worse still by far, however, is the mentality and behaviour of a very few Bishops, who seem to think that the church is above the scrutiny of the faithful, and the law of the land.

The problem with all these historical accretions is that they directly contradict the way in which Jesus spoke about himself as a King. Almost all references to Jesus' kingship occur within the passion narratives. Today's extract from John's gospel is among the most famous of them all. 'You say I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

There are not too many Kings or Queens today who would love their people so much that they would be prepared to die for them. We know from history that when the going gets tough many monarchs get going. But what we get in Jesus as King is one who did not compromise his humanity, who would not yield from his preaching and does not abandon us in our desolation. Jesus' kingship is revealed in his utter fidelity to us – even to the end.

So let's not be seduced by the power, pride, riches and greed which worldly rulers so crave. Let's keep our own eyes on Christ our King who loved people more than things, who spoke the truth with love, and who died that we might live. And let's not shrink from challenging the entire Church to do the same.

© 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.

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Dungog: 100 005 170

Gresford 100 005 173

Christmas Masses

With Christmas Day falling on a Wednesday in 2024, our parishes will celebrate the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (to give the day its official liturgical title) as follows:

Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24 December
6pm Mass @ Dungog

Christmas Day, Wednesday 25 December
8am Mass @ Clarence Town
10am Mass @ East Gresford

Please pass these times to anyone who might like to know about them.

Today's Liturgy:

Scripture Readings: 1st Deuteronomy 7:13-14; 2nd Revelation 1:5-8; **Gospel** John 18:33-37.

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed is he who inherits the kingdom of David our Father; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Alleluia!

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

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead...)

34th Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 25 November

Tuesday 26 November

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 27 November

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 28 November

NO MASS Fr Andrew attending the Bishop's
Clergy Reflection Day in Newcastle

Friday 29 November

9.30am Mass @ Dungog (with Kinder, Years
1 & 2 from St Joseph's).

Saturday 30 November

Feast of St Andrew

9.30am Parishes Assembly @ Dungog Hall

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 1 December

1st Sunday of Advent, Year c

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

12pm Dungog Parish Luncheon @
Dungog Parish Hall

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The next morning tea at Clarence Town will be held after the 8am Mass next Sunday (1 December) under the pergola beside the church. This will be the last morning tea for 2024.

Please bring a plate to share and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is important.

Our Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford are committed to fostering communities of safety and care.

We acknowledge our legal, moral, and spiritual responsibilities to care for and uphold the dignity and rights of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In November: Irma Iacono, Jean Harrison, Francis Kealy, Terry Amos, Raymond Dillon, Lee Murphy, Jenny Taylor, Norma Kingston, Alfred Bridger.

Those Who Are Sick: Maryann Smith, Daphne Bond, 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, Neville Barry, Susan Barlow, Allwyn Gippel, Christine Elliott, Jean Robertson, Lorraine Rooke, Jessica Byron.

GOSPEL FOCUS

Truth

Jesus says to Pilate that he came into the world 'to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.' That is where today's gospel passage finishes but as the gospel continues on, Pilate famously asks Jesus 'What is truth?' and the question is left dangling; unanswered. The truth Jesus has borne witness to is the truth of his whole life - the revelation of God's love for humanity. It is for proclaiming this truth that Jesus is placed on trial and is brought before Pilate.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for November:

Together with Pope Francis, this month we pray:

"Let us pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community, and may receive peace of heart from the Spirit of Consolation."