



# 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.

## THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, YEAR C

### 5 JANUARY 2025

#### Parish Staff

Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)  
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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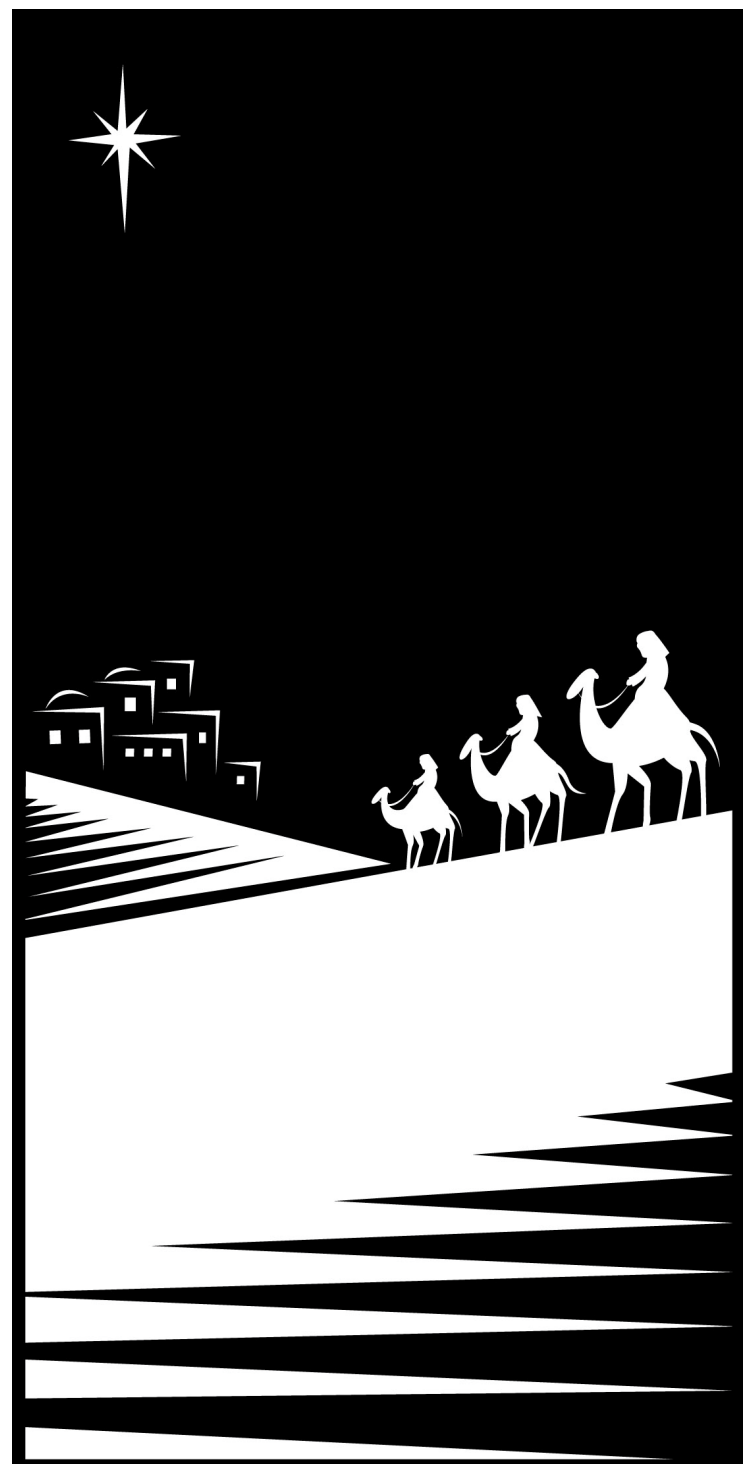
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**Parish Bulletin:** published each Sunday. Items for inclusion should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays. Copies of the Bulletin are available from the Parish website which is updated weekly.

**Parish Website:** updated regularly with copies of the bulletin and other information, and is found at [www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au](http://www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au).

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



## Homily by Richard Leonard

Recently some Christian scientists got to work trying to explain the star that led the wise men to Bethlehem. They came up with a complicated, and no doubt plausible, astronomical theory about how a certain brilliant star may have appeared around the time of the birth of Jesus. Though I was intrigued by their methods, I wondered why they bothered. Matthew's wandering star is not about astronomy. It's religious shorthand for describing how the heavens preside over and guide the events of the world. The image of a star is used in similar ways in the Books of Deuteronomy, Numbers, Isaiah and the Psalms. This entire feast is all about symbols, not science. Reported by Hippolytus as early as the third century, it is celebrated twelve days after Christmas, the number itself echoing God's goodness in creating and recreating us.

The wise men's star is on a par with the other images Matthew uses. At the centre of each of the first three chapters of his Gospel there is an extraordinary event. In chapter one Joseph hears the message of an angel in a dream. In chapter two the wise men find Jesus by following a star. And by chapter three the heavens open and God speaks at the baptism of the Lord. By any standards that's quite an opening to a biography! It's all about the manifestation, or epiphany, of God's glory in the world.

And let's look carefully at where and for whom this glory is revealed. The first instance is to Joseph while he's in bed asleep. The second is to gentile astrologers who, by reporting their news to Herod, set up an immediate threat to Jesus. The third instance is to all those Jews who were coming to hear John the Baptist. Within three chapters of Matthew's Gospel the circles of God's glory revealed in Jesus become more public and change lives. The lives of Joseph, the star gazers, John the Baptist and those who heard Jesus preach will never be the same again.

The Feast of the Epiphany is not an ancient version of Halley's comet. It is about how God's glory changes human hearts. T.S. Eliot got this point in his poem 'The journey of the Magi'.

'Birth or death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen  
birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth  
was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our  
death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old  
dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.

I should be glad of another death.'

And so may this feast change our hearts and enable us to die to self so as to be born to God's glory that can and does shine through us. And may we remember that this epiphany is not meant for us alone, but that we are called to go public with it and demonstrate our belief in today's feast by the way we live, the world we help create, and the one we strive to recreate.

© 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.



## Have YOU thought? Epiphany

The feast of the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus to humankind. The wise men are the representatives of humanity bearing witness to this revelation. However, the Epiphany celebrates the revelation of Jesus as not only the Messiah of Israel but the Saviour of the whole world. Interestingly, in this gospel that emphasises the 'Jewishness' of Jesus, the witnesses to the birth are gentiles from a foreign land. Their inclusion is a powerful declaration that the revelation of Jesus is for all people. Regardless of the liturgical year, this reading is always used on the feast of the Epiphany to celebrate this pivotal moment.

## Lenten Program 2025—WATCH THIS SPACE!

Ash Wednesday in 2025 falls on Wednesday 5 March, which may seem like a long way away.

But it's not in terms of the preparation and production of resources to accompany a Lenten Program—the Parish Office is already starting to receive advertising from the usual bunch of providers!

Just after Christmas calls will go out for numbers for participants so orders can be made in good time for availability at the beginning of March.

Please give some thought in and around the Christmas celebrations about your involvement in a Lenten Program in 2025, and watch the bulletin for when numbers are called for.

### **The Return of the Chalice—Q&A**

This week's question has a particularly practical theme to it:

#### **Do we have enough Ministers of Communion to allow this?**

The short answer is, I think so.

The longer answer is that we would need to do some work to gauge the number of Communion Ministers that are required to facilitate the easy and manageable. From what I have been told, the past practice was to have two such Ministers at Dungog, and one each at Gresford and Clarence Town.

The more difficult part of the task, like in many parishes, will be determining whether those who previously exercised this ministry are still willing to do so. It's been a number of years since we needed their ministry, and we cannot presume that they still wish to undertake the ministry.

The next question would be whether we are able to recruit additional ministers if we need to do so. We have to face the reality that our Mass-going population is growing smaller and older (and I include myself in that last one!). Perhaps we may not be able to gather enough former and new participants in this ministry; perhaps we may.

And lastly, we would need to organise a fresh round of formation and training for both existing and new ministers, again largely because it's been a while. This is not in and of itself too difficult to organise; it's just another step in the process.

So again, yes, I think we have enough, but we will need to be certain about this before we could reintroduce Communion from the Chalice.

If you have any questions around the possibility of restoring the ability to receive Communion from the Chalice, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'd be only too happy to discuss your questions and concerns.

*Fr Andrew*

### **Finding A New Patronal Name**

The search for a new patron for a new parish has begun!

If you would like to suggest the name of a saint to potentially become the patron of the 'Catholic Parish of Dungog Gresford', please do so in writing. It would be helpful to provide a little bit of information about your proposed saint and tell us why you think your saint is a good choice.

A list of the current patronal names used across the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, which you may like to avoid, can be found on our website under the 'Resources' tab of the main menu.

A reminder that the patronal names already in use within the two parishes are not available.

Please lodge your submission to Fr Andrew by the end of February 2025.

### **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.

### **Parish Office Reopening**

The Parish Office will reopen this Tuesday 7 January 2025, with the full range of 'regular' opportunities once again available.

### **Embracing the Jubilee Year 2025**

The Jubilee Year of 2025 calls for us to set out on a journey and to cross boundaries. It is a special and profound year of grace, mercy and conversion, involving prayer, pilgrimage, and sacramental repentance.

There will be a number of special events across the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, and these will be advertised in good time in the bulletin.

In addition, there are a number of churches across the diocese that have been officially designated as 'pilgrimage sites':

- Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West
- St Mary, Star of the Sea, Newcastle
- St John the Baptist Shrine, Maitland
- St Joseph's Church, East Maitland
- St Joseph's Church, Murrurundi
- Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace Church, Scone
- Sts Patrick and Brigid Church, Cooranbong

These locations will be prepared to welcome groups and individuals on pilgrimage over the coming weeks and months—so perhaps if you'd like to make a pilgrimage, don't do it tomorrow but give it a bit of time.



## Today's Liturgy:

**Scripture Readings:** 1st Isaiah 60:1-6; 2nd Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6; **Gospel** Matthew 2:1-12.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! We have seen his star in the East; and have come to adore the Lord. Alleluia!

**Memorial Acclamation** When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

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

Christmas Season

Monday 6 January

Tuesday 7 January

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 8 January

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 9 January

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 10 January

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 11 January

Sunday 12 January

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill

## In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

**Those Who Have Died:** Jay Dillon.

### 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, Michael Denko, Marea Cox, Janet Lambert.

**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, Neville Barry, Susan Barlow, Allwyn & Margaret Gippel, Christine Elliott, Jean Robertson, Jessica Byron, George Bainou, Gwen Trappel, Chantal Sneddan.

### Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for January:

Together with Pope Francis, this month we pray:

*"Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected."*

### Baptisms This Week

We welcome **Peyton Merrick**, together with her family and friends, as we celebrate her Baptism at 11am TODAY at St Patrick's, Clarence Town.

## 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.

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog & Gresford acknowledge the people of the Worimi and Wonnarua, on whose traditional lands we gather, live and work. We acknowledge 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.

