



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.

2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

19 JANUARY 2025

Parish Staff

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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.

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

A Pastoral Note...

The scourge of good planning is often the unforeseen or unintended consequence, something that was never planned for or envisaged when setting out on a course of action.

I have, in recent times, encountered such a development with the planned and hoped for coming together of our two parishes—and it does raise some interesting possibilities or challenges.

Having submitted the petition to Bishop Michael to merge the two parishes, I was having some conversation with the 'powers that be' about various bits and pieces associated with that process, when someone asked me "What about Paterson?".

Yes, Paterson, with it's Church of St Columba, and it's 9.30am Mass on Sunday. That Paterson.

It would appear that, although it shows on the diocesan website as being part of the Maitland parish, it is canonically still part of Gresford parish (as is the area all the way down to just south of Tocal!).

I am reliably informed that there was an intention to adjust the boundary between Maitland and Gresford parishes, in anticipation of which, the community at Paterson moved to being cared for as part of the Maitland parish. But...the paperwork was never done!

As I said at the beginning, an unforeseen set of circumstances with unforeseen consequences.

What does this mean for us, and for the process we're in the middle of? That remains a bit of an unknown at this point.

I've embarked on a process of conversation with my counterpart in the Maitland region, and, I suspect, will also need to be involved in a

consultation with the good people of Paterson to try to come to some form of resolution. It is imperative that whatever decision that might need to be made is made before the formal merger of our two parishes takes effect (hopefully on 1 July 2025).

If a boundary adjustment is not formally and canonically enacted, there's a chance that the Dungog Gresford parish will need to take on an additional Sunday Mass, and the timing of this would need to be negotiated with the Paterson parishioners so it does not impact on the current Weekend Mass schedule that is in place.

Alternatively, a decision might be made to make a formal and canonical adjustment between the two parishes (Maitland and Gresford) which would effectively mean that things continue as they presently are for everyone concerned.

As this issue of our bulletin goes to press, I don't know what is going to happen and there are too many variations at play to write more about them at this particular point in time.

Rest assured, however, that there will be further communication once things are clearer, and especially if there needs to be a formal process undertaken to make changes to the current boundaries of what will be our new parish.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

Rejoice!!

Finding A New Patronal Name

Although we have already received a number of suggestions, the search for a new patron for a new parish continues.

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.

Please give this some thought and prayer and make a contribution to the future of our parish.

Diocesan Launch of the Jubilee Year

On Sunday 2 March, Bishop Michael will officially launch the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle's celebration of the Jubilee Year.

This will be marked by a Diocesan pilgrimage from Nobby's Beach (8am) to Sacred Heart Cathedral, culminating in Mass (10am) and a Festival (11am) in the Cathedral precinct grounds. The Festival will feature an official launch of *Project Compassion 2025* and the distribution of some resources.

All corners of the Diocese are encouraged to have representation and involvement as we mark Pope Francis' theme for the Jubilee—*Pilgrims of Hope*. Please email mission@mn.catholic.org.au for more information.

From Fr Andrew:

It would be wonderful if some of our parishioners might be able to be present at this event to 'represent' us, but also to participate themselves. Regrettably, I will be unable to attend because of the need for Masses here in the parish, but it would be good to have some representation.

Please let me know if you would like assistance in attending this event, and I will do what I can to ease the process.

Fr Andrew

Australia Day 2025

Next Sunday is Australia Day, our nation's national holiday. Although the occasion falls on a Sunday this year, we are still able to use the Mass Proper and Readings set by the Australian Catholic Bishops for this celebration rather than those for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The liturgical celebration of Australia Day is not an occasion for jingoism or overtly patriotic displays. Rather, it is a time for us, as people of faith, to pray for our nation, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Lenten Program 2025

As previously advised, it's time now to think about whether you would like to be participate in a Lenten Group during 2025 or, alternatively, you would like to undertake the Lenten journey of reflection by yourself.

'Sign up' sheets are available in our churches this weekend on which you can indicate your wishes for either approach so the Parish can ensure it orders enough resources for everyone who wishes to join in.

An initial order has been made, which should be sufficient, but if we need to order more that would be best done by the middle of February at the latest.

Homily by Richard Leonard

Church architecture often tells in stone the story of theology. By the ninth century as Christian Churches in Europe became longer and higher, a shift was occurring in theology as well. Coinciding with the engineering abilities of the builders, theologians reinstated a more severe and distant theology about God. God was 'immortal, invisible, in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes'. Jesus had ascended his regal home in the tabernacle which over the centuries got further and further away from where the people stood or sat.

One of the extraordinary things that occurs in the layout of Churches of this time is that as the tabernacle goes back, the Marian altar comes forward, often half way down the church where people could have easy access to it.

Today's Gospel was used as the justification for this theological and architectural movement. Mary is seen to intercede on behalf of the bride and groom and ask Jesus to do what he can. This is the first sign in the Gospel of John and Jesus is reluctant to perform it, but because his mother asks, he does it.

The changing of the water into wine is not just a sign that Mary and Jesus like a good party! It is a sign of the Kingdom of God where joy and life are in abundance, where shame ends and all tears are wiped away. It is no accident that in John's gospel the mother of Jesus is present at this first sign and remains faithful until the end, right up to the culmination of all the signs: his being lifted up on the cross. Mary not only asks for a sign, she understands that it will cost something for Jesus to give it and for her to witness it.

So for us, the wedding feast at Cana is a taste of the fullness of life we celebrate here every Sunday. The Eucharist is always and everywhere a first course in the eternal banquet of heaven. But it is also an invitation to see beyond the signs, to the faithful relationships that require sacrificial love and years of fidelity.

All parents who sacrifice so much for their children, all spouses who remain faithful and good to their wife or husband, all friends who attend to their companions with devotion and care, share in the Kingdom of God and are the signs of Christ's presence in our world. Every time we are kind, Cana occurs again.

Sometimes these actions can be very lonely and the cost can be high. Today's Gospel, and the traditions of the Church that flow from it, tell us we are not alone, especially when the going gets tough.

What I like best about our belief in intercessory prayer, in the healthiest devotions in honour of the

Mother of Jesus and in our belief in the martyrs and the saints is that they take seriously the companionship of God's family that transcends time and space.

Through our common Christian faith we are connected to millions of believers who have battled with similar, and sometimes greater, struggles than we endure and yet remained faithful to the end. Led by Mary, who never wants us to feel ashamed or embarrassed, they are our cheer squad in the stands of heaven willing us on in the race of life, giving us a few pointers on the best preparation, the pitfalls on the way and how to maximise our performance as we strive to do our best and be our best.

Welcome to Cana where one course is richer than the last. And the wine only gets better with age.

© 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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Today's Liturgy:

Scripture Readings: **1st** Isaiah 62:1-5; **2nd** 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; **Gospel** John 2:1-11.

Responsorial Psalm: Proclaim his marvellous deeds to all the nations.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! God has called us with the gospel to share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 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...)

2nd Week in Ordinary Time, Year I

Monday 20 January

Tuesday 21 January

Memorial of St Agnes

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 22 January

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 23 January

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 24 January

Memorial of St Frances de Sales

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 25 January

Feast of the Conversion of St Paul

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 26 January

Australia Day

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

In Your Charity, Please Pray for:

Those Who Have Died: Margaret Gippel, Aldo Rufo.

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 Gippel, Christine Elliott, Jean Robertson, Jessica Byron, George Bainou, Gwen Trappel, Chantal Sneddan.



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.

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."

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.