



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, Summerhill via Vacy.

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR C

23 MARCH 2025

Parish Staff

Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)
Kerry Copus (*Parish Secretary*)

Presbytery & Parish Office

55 Brown Street, Dungog
PO Box 24, Dungog NSW 2420

P: (02) 4992 1477

E: dungog.parish@mn.catholic.org.au

Emergency contact for Fr Andrew: 0412 405 671

Office Hours

Tuesdays & Fridays, 10am – 1pm

Other Contacts

Clarence Town

Val Preece (0403 252 434, 4996 4474, or email
vpreece15@gmail.com)

Gresford

Faith Banister (0427 536 248)

Parish School

St Joseph's Primary School
49 Brown Street, Dungog NSW 2420
Mrs Lisa McNeilly (*Principal*)

P: (02) 4992 1377

E: admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au

W: www.dungog.catholic.edu.au

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.

Discerning Our Future ...

Today is the day on which we discern the name by which our new parish will be known, and, perhaps more importantly, the 'hook' on which our future as a merged parish will hang.

As I have written previously in the bulletin, today's step is so significant that we should do so with great care and with much prayer.

The **primary** determining factor as to which of our proposed patrons we should vote for should not be about personal taste or preference, but whether the new patron can assist us, as a new community built on solid foundations, to move forward as one for the sake of embracing this new way of being about God's mission in this place.

There are several options available for you to cast your well-considered and prayerful vote today:

1. Take a paper ballot and indicate your preferences in order from (at least) 1 to 10 and then place the completed ballot paper in the box provided.
2. Download the ballot paper from 'Resources' page of the website, complete it, and then return it electronically by email to my personal address (andrew.doohan@mn.catholic.org.au) by 5pm on Monday 24 March.
3. Complete the online form available by clicking the button on the 'Resources' page of the website by no later than 5pm on Monday 24 March.
4. Send me an email listing your preferences (again, at least 1 to 10) by 5pm on Monday 24 March. The email address is as above.

The count of the votes, which will follow the same processes used during our civil elections for preferential voting, will begin after 5pm on Monday 24 March. The announcement of the

successful nominee will be made in next week's bulletin (so please don't ask me before then!). In addition to preparing the announcement for next week's bulletin, I will write this coming week to Bishop Michael to advise him of the new patron that has been chosen so that it can be included in his decree establishing the new parish.

By way of conclusion, I would add one thing... Many parishioners have asked me which of the suggestions I would like to have. My answer is "I don't mind, although hopefully one that we can use to grow together in the future".

I have not suggested a name for inclusion among the list of saints nominated, and I will not be casting a vote in the discernment process. I have done so deliberately. I can see advantages to some of the suggestions made (don't ask me which ones!) in terms of how they could be used as a 'hook' as previously mentioned, the choice of a new patron is one that belongs to the community of the soon-to-be parish. Whatever the outcome we will work together to embrace and be worthy of the new name.

Have a blessed week... *Fr Andrew*

Ordination of Anton Perera

Anton Perera will be ordained as deacon by Bishop Michael on Friday 4 April in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West.

The liturgy will begin at 7pm. Everyone is welcome to join in celebrating this significant event in the life of our diocese.

Ecumenical Service

An ecumenical church service will take place on Sunday 30 March in Christ Church Anglican Church, Dowling Street, Dungog, commencing at 6.30pm. All are welcome.

Reintroduction of the Chalice

The reintroduction of Communion from the Chalice will take effect on the weekend of **5 & 6 April**.

In preparation for this date, formation sessions for those who will exercise this ministry will take place at

Clarence Town	26 March	6pm
East Gresford	27 March	10am
Dungog	29 March	11.30am

Each session will cover the same content so you are free to attend whichever session might be convenient to your diary.

If none of those sessions fit your diary, please speak with Fr Andrew so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Parish Office Closure

Please be aware that the Parish Office will be closed on Tuesday 25 March to permit Kerry and Fr Andrew to attend a mandatory training course in Newcastle.

Chrism Mass

This year's Chrism Mass will be celebrated in the evening of Tuesday 15 April at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West commencing at 7pm.

This Mass is a significant annual liturgical event for our Diocese, and all parishioners are welcome to join together to celebrate with Bishop Michael, his clergy, and others from across the diocese.

Meditation Retreat Morning

You are invited to come along to the Diocesan Resource Centre, cnr Tudor and Parry Streets, Newcastle (just near the Cathedral) from 9.30am to 12pm on Saturday 29 March for a Meditation Retreat Morning. The cost is \$10, and morning tea will be provided.

Email annecuskelly@hotmail.com for more information.

Way of the Cross 2025

This year's Way of the Cross will continue the diocese's pilgrimage experience that began with the Jubilee Launch. Come and walk with fellow pilgrims and build relationships as we share our responses to the Pope Francis' invitation to become agents of hope within our own communities,

Join everyone at 3pm on Sunday 6 April (you're able to gather from 2pm) at St Joseph's Church, 140 Wangi Road, Toronto.

For enquiries, email mission@mn.catholic.org.au. To register go to www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-way-of-the-cross-a-pilgrimage-of-hope-tickets-1250877762059.

Confirmation in 2025

We have been advised that our parish celebration of Confirmation will take place on Friday 14 November at St Mary's, Dungog. Bishop Michael will be attending to celebrate with us.

Further information about the 2025 journey for completing Christian Initiation can be found by heading to our website and navigating to dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au/celebrations/christian-initiation/completing-christian-initiation-for-children/.

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

HOMILY by Richard Leonard

The resource I use to help couples prepare for marriage has questions for them to think about and discuss in between sessions. One of the questions at the end of one of the chapters is, 'What effect would adultery have on your marriage?'

In one sense this hypothetical question is absurd. Dealing with the consequences of any sin requires time and place, context and contrition. It is even tougher to imagine the effect of any destructive behaviour in one's marriage even before the marriage has begun. Still, it never ceases to amaze me how this question usually leads the couple to have a very fruitful and frank discussion, not about adultery, but about their values, family history, commitment, fidelity and growing old together.

Sometimes, however, I cringe when the prospective bride or groom seems to give the green light to their future spouse by saying, 'Well I guess if he or she went looking elsewhere it would be my fault' or 'I love him or her so much that I know we could go on regardless'. Others say very clearly that it would alter the trust and respect of the relationship, but they hope they could look at the circumstances and rebuild the relationship.

The most mature couples do not wipe over the seriousness of the sinful action, but want to hold on to compassion, forgiveness and a commitment that it will not happen again.

Couples like these have clearly understood the power of today's readings. The third Sunday of Lent is all about second chances. In Exodus we have a bush that is alight but does not burn and in Luke we have a fig tree that does not bear fruit, is earmarked for the chop and saved by the gardener. In both cases where we would expect to find destruction we find new opportunities for growth, nurturance and flowering.

Over the centuries the goodness of God that always gives us another chance has not been proclaimed as vigorously as it should have been. We have focused on God's justice as though it was a once and for all, shape up or ship out sort of message. These ideas can be deduced from today's second reading where Paul seems to argue that God killed the chosen people for their complaining and infidelity.

Paul was a tough man and for him Christian commitment was no picnic. He was aware of how people were suffering and dying for the Gospel, so he was at pains to teach the people of Corinth that the commitment demanded from the Gospel could entail everything they had. His reading of why the Israelites died in the desert, however, needs to be read against the second chances of the other readings, especially the Gospel.

We believe in Lent that we enter a holy time in our year and visit a holy place in ourselves where the fire of God's love should burn brightly within us. We are offered these weeks to re-examine our values, family history, commitment, fidelity and growth so as to chart how best we can grow old with God. To do this sometimes requires facing up to our sinful behaviour and making choices to change our lives. We can only do this when we trust that the fire of God's love is not about destruction, but compassion, forgiveness and a second chance.

May this Eucharist be nurturance for the foundations of our lives and a moment to take stock and to assess with honesty the fruitfulness of how, as a sign of Christ's light within us, we live out our faith in our marriage, at home, at work and in the world.

© 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.



And The Nominees Are ...

The nominees for our new parish patron are...

St Aidan of Lindisfarne	St Bartholomew
St Elizabeth Seton	St Francis of Assisi
St Gregory the Great	St Isidore the Farmer
St John Bosco	St John Paul II
St Jude Thaddeus	St Lazarus (of Bethany)
St Marcellin Champagnat	St Mark (the Evangelist)
St Maximilian Kolbe	St Oliver Plunkett
St Peter Chanel	St Rita of Cascia
St Thomas Aquinas	

Today's Liturgy:

Scripture Readings:

1st Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15
2nd 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Gospel Luke 13:1-9

Responsorial Psalm:

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!
Repent, says the Lord;
the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Memorial Acclamation:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection,
until you come again.

Baptisms Next Week

We look forward to welcoming **Penelope Dean**, together with her family and friends, as we celebrate her Baptism at 10.30am next Saturday in St Mary's, Dungog.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for March:

Together with Pope Francis, this month we pray:
"Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their difference."

Repent!

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Those Who Have Died: Gloria Curry.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In March:

Gordon Smith, Dan Harrison, Linda Gleeson, Vincent Smith, Marie Williams, Gwen Richards, Alexander Loudon, Claude McGinty, Herb Trappel, Allan Turner, Arthur Preece, Thelma Lowe, Joyce Copus, Leo Maher, Matthew Harding, Vincent Lane, Vince Banister, Gerry Gehrig, Terry Johnson, Phillip Gippel, Sr Patricia McGinty RSM.

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, Tom Redgrove, John Newton.

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

3rd Week of Lent

Monday 24 March

Tuesday 25 March

The Annunciation of the Lord
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 26 March

NO MASS Fr Andrew attending Lenten Clergy Reflection Day
6pm Formation for Communion Ministers @ Clarence Town

Thursday 27 March

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford
10am Formation for Communion Ministers @ East Gresford

Friday 28 March

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

Saturday 29 March

10.30am Baptism @ Dungog
11.30am Formation for Communion Ministers @ Dungog
5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 30 March

4th Sunday of Lent, Year C

8am Mass @ Clarence Town
9.30am Mass @ Dungog
6pm Ecumenical Service @ Dungog Anglican Church

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: either by phoning 4979 1390 or sending an email to childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au. Visit the website of the Office of Safeguarding for resources and further information. The website can be found at www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au.

The Catholic Parishes of Dungog and Gresford acknowledge the people of the Worimi and Wonnarua nations, 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.