



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.

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION

20 APRIL 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 ...

As Bishop Michael mentions in his Easter Message for 2025, the Church "exists to hear witness to the most decisive moment in history, the resurrection of Jesus".

That reality which gives us our identity, our reason for existence is what we celebrate, commemorate and honour today on this Easter Sunday of the Resurrection. It is why we are who we are; it is why we do what we do.

And dare I mention it in this Jubilee Year, it is the reason we have hope and are called to live as Pilgrims of Hope each and every day of our lives.

This day, this Easter Sunday, is of course not just about today. The joy of the Resurrection of Jesus permeates every day of our lives, every day of the Church's existence, and compels the way we look to the future.

We are an Easter people.

Which is not a trite statement, but rather a statement of intent, a statement about how we will live out our faith and belief in the Resurrection today and every day until Christ's promised return.

Let's celebrate this Easter Sunday of the Resurrection; let's celebrate our identity as Easter people; and let's celebrate the hope that we have because Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead.

Χριστός Ανέστη!

Fr Andrew



The Significance of the Paschal Candle

Each and every year at the Easter Vigil, we prepare, bless and light a new Paschal Candle to serve across the coming year.

The Paschal Candle, and the way it burns down, is a rich and fitting symbol of the way in which the Risen Christ provides light for the Church and the world by giving his self-giving Death and Resurrection. The Paschal Candle diminishes itself in order to give light; the Risen Christ went to his Passion and Death in order to offer to us the Resurrection.

For that reason, on those occasions when the Paschal Candle is alight during the Church's liturgy, it should be the first candle that is lit and then used to light all the other candles used at that liturgy. It should also be the very last candle that is extinguished after that liturgy is concluded (and preferably once everyone has left the church building!).

This small practice should especially be observed during the Easter Season, but at other times as well when the Paschal Candle is alight during our liturgical celebrations.

I hope we might be able to observe this small practice in our churches this Easter Season, and across the year ahead when we use the Paschal Candle as a wonderfully powerful symbol of Christ's presence among us.

Fr Andrew

The Easter Sequence

During our Masses on Easter Sunday, we will be reciting the Easter Sequence just before the Gospel Acclamation.

There are a number of such sequences to be found in the Lectionary across the year, but there are only two occasions when they are obligatory, Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday.

Please remain seated while we recite the Easter Sequence together before standing as the Gospel Acclamation begins.

Acknowledging ANZAC Day in 2025

The vagaries of our liturgical and civil calendars in 2025 toss up one of those difficulties that come up from time to time.

With Easter Sunday being about as late as it can be this year, the civil occasion of ANZAC Day falls within the Octave of Easter. The Octave of Easter ranks exceptionally high in the ranking of liturgical days and, regretfully, requires that we are not able to celebrate ANZAC Day with the Proper of that day.

On the positive side, however, is that the imagery and themes that are found in the Proper for ANZAC Day are very similar that we find during the Octave of Easter. So, while we will not be using the ANZAC Day Proper, we will be able to acknowledge the occasion of ANZAC Day on the Friday in the Octave of Easter.

Mass on Friday, 25 April, will be celebrated in St Mary's, Dungog at **8.30am**.

GOSPEL FOCUS

The disciple Jesus loved

In this week's gospel we see reference to a disciple as 'the one Jesus loved'. It is generally agreed that this disciple is John. There is some suggestion that the disciple, John, is in fact the John ascribed as the author of this gospel. If this is so, to describe himself as the disciple Jesus loved is merely a means of avoiding using a personal pronoun – I or me. Just as Jesus described himself as 'the Son of God' or 'the Son of Man' rather than say 'I', John uses the same convention to avoid naming himself. It is not to suggest that Jesus didn't love his other disciples.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for April:

Together with Pope Francis, this month we pray:
"Let us pray that the use of new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times."

Dungog Shire Palliative Care Volunteers

The Dungog Shire Palliative Care Volunteers are celebrating their 30th anniversary...and you're invited!

A morning tea will take place on Wednesday 14 May from 9.30am to 11.30am at the Anglican Church Hall, Dowling Street, Dungog.

Please RSVP by Thursday 1 May to 0457 846 806.

ACBC Election Statement

The Election Statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops is now available and can be found on the 'Resources' page of our website.

Homily by Richard Leonard

A man was driving along the road when he saw the Easter Bunny hop into his lane. He swerved to avoid hitting the bunny, but couldn't do so. The basket of eggs went everywhere. The driver felt guilty and began to cry. A woman saw the man and pulled over. 'What's wrong?' she asked. 'I accidentally killed the Easter Bunny', he explained.

The woman knew exactly what to do. She went to her car, pulled out a spray can, walked over to the bunny, and sprayed the entire contents over the little furry animal. Miraculously the Easter Bunny came back to life, jumped up, picked up his eggs, waved at them and hopped on down the road. Not far away the Easter Bunny stopped, turned around and waved again. He kept doing this for as far as they could see.

The man was astonished. 'What in heaven's name is in that can you sprayed on the Easter Bunny?' The woman showed the man the label. It said: 'Hair spray. Restores life to dead hair. Adds permanent wave.'

For many of our children the bunny and its eggs are the most important thing about Easter. Over the millennia, Christianity has had a gift for domesticating local traditions and festivals, bringing them on board and making them our own. The name Easter comes from the Anglo Saxon spring festival in honour of the goddess Eostre. Her symbol was the rabbit and the giving of eggs were signs of new life bursting forth as winter withdrew. These associations only make sense in the northern hemisphere, but we can see why the early Christians could be so adaptable and inculturated with this local festival.

In both hemispheres Christians today celebrate Jesus being raised from the dead. In the New Testament there are two traditions about how the disciples come to know about Jesus' resurrection: the empty tomb and the apparitions of Christ.

Today's Gospel belongs to the empty tomb tradition. On Magdalene's urging, Peter and John run to the tomb, find it empty and come to at least an initial belief about the resurrection of Jesus.

We do not believe that God simply revived Jesus' corpse in the tomb, as our driver resuscitated the bunny in today's story. Easter Sunday does not celebrate the resuscitation of Jesus, but his Resurrection. We know his 'glorified body' was not the same as his human body because Jesus' presence could be encountered in several places simultaneously and he is reported to walk through walls and to vanish. The link between both resurrection traditions is the importance of Jesus' death. In the empty tomb accounts, as in today's gospel, the writers give us extraordinary details

about the grave clothes. In the apparition narratives there are usually references to Jesus' wounds.

Whatever way they came to experience the Resurrection of Christ, the disciples knew that this was Jesus who actually died and was buried and that their personal encounter was with the one who was crucified.

What God did through the death and resurrection of Jesus is what Christians have done with local customs and festivals ever since: he entered into it, understood it, took it on board, domesticated it and vanquished its power. As a result we believe that God empathises with the full limitations of our human mortality and promises to remain faithful to us in death as he remained utterly faithful to Jesus. That is why on this day 1,600 years ago St John Chrysostom could say on behalf of us all:

'Hell took a body, and discovered God. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it could not see. O death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is Risen, and you, O death, are destroyed! Christ is Risen, and evil is cast down! Christ is Risen, and angels rejoice! Christ is Risen, and new life is set free! Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead; for Christ having risen from the dead, becomes the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!'

© 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: (for Sunday Masses)

Scripture Readings:

1st Acts 10:34, 37-43

2nd Colossians 3:1-4

Gospel John 20:1-9

Responsorial Psalm:

This is the day the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad.

Easter Sequence:

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with life contended: combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.

Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way.

The tomb the Living did enclose;

I saw Christ's glory as he rose!

The angels there attesting;

shroud with grave-clothes resting.

Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know.

Victorious king, thy mercy show!

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ has become our paschal sacrifice;
let us feast with joy in the Lord.

Alleluia!

Memorial Acclamation:

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

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, 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, Gwen Trappel, Tom Redgrove, John Newton.

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

The Easter Octave

Monday 21 April

Tuesday 22 April

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 23 April

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 24 April

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 25 April

(ANZAC Day)

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 26 April

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 27 April

Second Sunday of Easter

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Baptisms Next Week

We look forward to welcoming Lane Cox, along with her family and friends, as we celebrate her Baptism next Saturday at 10am in St Mary's Church, Dungog.

Alleluia!

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.

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.