



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

St Francis' Parish

Catholic Parish of Dungog Gresford

Incorporating **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.

20TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, C

17 AUGUST 2025

Presbytery & Parish Office

55 Brown Street, Dungog
PO Box 24, Dungog NSW 2420
Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)
Mrs Kerry Copus (*Parish Secretary*)

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Office Hours The Parish Office is staffed on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am to 1pm.

Parish Bulletin is published each Sunday. Items for inclusion should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays.

Other Contacts - Clarence Town - Val Preece (0403 251 434, 4996 4474, or email vpreece15@gmail.com
Gresford - Faith Banister (0427 536 248)

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

Connect with us via social media Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads – all with the same username (dgcatholic).

Parish School

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

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E: admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au
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A Pastoral Note...

One of the challenges that can face Christians in the contemporary context is a belief that by being interested or involved in 'social justice' issues we are doing that which Jesus asks of us.

Unfortunately, some of the 'social justice' issues that are promoted in our contemporary society are, in fact, not in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we, as faithful Christians, are called to adopt a different position on some issues.

Now don't get me wrong: advocating for certain social issues from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching is not only right but a duty for the faithful Christian.

The difficulty comes when what society claims to be a matter of justice conflicts with what the Gospel and the long tradition of Catholic Social

Teaching teaches us is a matter of justice. That is where the rubber hits the road in what we are called to do and how we are called to act.

At the heart of living the Christian life with integrity is making sure that what we do is thoroughly defensible in terms of the Christian faith we profess and that our actions in acting in seeking justice do not detract from what we are seeking.

In other words, our work for justice must be in the cause of true justice as the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching requires and not simply going running with the crowd, not matter how well meaning they think they are.

Should we act? Yes. Should we be cautious about how we act? Also, yes.

Have a wonderful week...

Fr Andrew

Patronal Feast for St Helen's, East Gresford

Monday 18 August is the Feast of St Helen, the feast of title for St Helen's Church, East Gresford. We will mark the occasion with Mass in St Helen's at 5.30pm. Please come along to celebrate this very significant date in the life of our parish.

The Sisters of Mercy Celebrate 150 Years in the Diocese

Congratulations to the Sisters of Mercy whose founding Sisters arrived in Singleton from Ireland on 31 August 1875 to begin the long years of ministry of the Sisters in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

A Mass, prepared by St Catherine's College, Singleton, which also marks 150 years, will be celebrated at 10am in St Patrick's Church, Singleton on Sunday 31 August and will be followed by a cuppa.

Following the cuppa, you are invited to share a Ritual of Remembrance in the Convent Chapel and Cemetery to honour the women who gave their lives in service within the Diocese.



Winter Is With Us...

With the arrival of colder weather, the possibility of developing colds and flu increases.

A quick reminder to all parishioners that when you are unwell it may be a wise and generous move to not attend Mass, at least not without taking some precautions to ensure you don't share your cold and flu with other parishioners.

A reminder, as well, that if you are unwell, we ask you to refrain from receiving Communion from the Chalice while you remain unwell.

Electronic Banking Details

BSB: 066 739
A/c Name: Catholic Development Fund
A/c No: 100 005 170
Reference: Your Surname or other reference

Graced Encounters in the Community of Creation: Cultivating Hope in Action

Join presenter, Dr Ann-Maree O'Beirne rsm, for a Season of Creation Workshop.

With a focus on the Ignatian motif of 'finding God in all things', this workshop will explore the wisdom of living our lives through a lens of grace that generates hope for all in our community of creation.

Choose from one of two sessions as we take time to discover how God is present in all of creation as experienced in our everyday lives.

For more information and to register for your preferred session, visit t.ly/UUKwR.

LIVING THE GOSPEL

Speaking a hard message

Today's gospel reminds us that the message of Christianity is not always a popular one. Sometimes we are called upon to speak a hard message; a challenging message; a confronting message. The message of the gospel frequently confronts our popular culture and accepted social practice. It often contradicts the expedient decisions of our political leaders. There is a responsibility on us to speak the hard message of the gospel even at the risk of unpopularity and even in the face of threat. The Christian heroes of our time are those who call leaders to measure up to the demands of the gospel.

Australian Catholic Youth Festival

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF), a national gathering of Catholic youth from Year 10 to 25 years old, will be held in Melbourne from 20 November to 3 December this year.

Expressions of interest have now opened for 100 young people from across the diocese to join Bishop Michael this year.

ACYF provides young people an opportunity to come together and connect whilst deepening their faith and relationship with Jesus. It's *not* a conference; it's a Catholic festival.

For more information and to register, please visit the diocesan website via the link t.ly/GbwXC.

Homily by Richard Leonard

In our desire to affirm that the scriptures are inspired, it can be easy to forget that they come out of the lived experience of a community of faith. Indeed, one of the things that is wonderful about our belief in God's revelation is that it occurs within human experience. Today's Gospel is an excellent example. Jesus predicts that one of the consequences of believing in him is that divisions will follow.

We can tell from the whole text of Luke's Gospel that these divisions were certainly a part of the earliest Christian community which wrote this book and that their faith in Christ led them to confront some very tough issues: how could Gentiles inherit the promises made to the Jews; why the rich members of the community had special responsibility to the poor; the centrality of forgiveness in the Christian life; and what leadership role women should have in the earliest Church. We know that fights over these issues and faith in Jesus as the Christ or the Messiah, divided families and villages, cities, nations and a religious tradition.

This gospel is both a stark reminder of the costs involved in following Jesus and a comfort to us in the church today. Sometimes we can domesticate the Christian community into a 'feel-good' society. Our religious words and actions, however, are always meant to have an edge; our faith should 'afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted'. If Christians at home, at work, in society and on the international stage just go along with what is trendy or current because we're frightened of conflict or because we want to be seen to be part of the crowd, then we are not worthy of this Gospel.

Sometimes when we hear Jesus use the metaphor of a blazing fire we can see a violent image, but I am not sure if it has to be exclusively interpreted this way. Fire is sometimes necessary and good to clear out the layers of undergrowth built up over time that smother the soil of a forest and prevent new growth. Fire is a beacon that gives guidance and attracts attention. A blazing fire can attract everyone to its light, warmth and power. So maybe this Gospel is a call to purge the weight of old growth that can stop fresh thinking. Maybe it gives guidance to us in the justice we are meant to live and the attention we must call to the needs of all God's children. And maybe it is a reminder that the life of our Christian community is meant to be attractive through its gentle power and warmth. If the price we pay for witnessing to any of these values is that we divide the crowd, so be it.

What's comforting about this gospel is that it recognises conflict as a necessary part of the Christian life. There are some who want to pretend

that the followers of Jesus should never disagree with one another or with those outside the Church. Conflict in itself, Jesus teaches us today, is an element of our commitment to the kingdom of God. What marks out the way we should disagree with one another inside and outside the Church, however, is that it is conducted with charity, dignity, careful listening and compassion. Christians always look to put the best possible interpretation on the opinions of those with whom we disagree and to be reconciled to those we have hurt, to heal divisions where we can.

May this Eucharist give us the courage to divide the crowd for the right reasons. May we be a blazing fire that casts light on darkness where people are exploited and injustice smothers the growth Christ wants to see in the human family. No one promised us that Christian faith was ever going to be a picnic!

© 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.

Historical **Context**

Family ties

In the ancient world, and particularly in Jewish culture, family meant everything. One's identity was completely tied up with family. Families absolutely depended on one another for survival and for personal identity. Young men were identified by who their father was. Women quite literally 'belonged' to their father or husband. The entire fabric of society and tradition was held together by extended families. For Jesus to say that his message would tear families apart was to say that all of society would be transformed by the message. The kingdom of God turns expectations and society on their head, breathing new life into tired, restrictive structures.

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

Twentieth Week in Ordinary Time

Monday 18 August

Solemnity of St Helen (Parish Feast Day)

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Tuesday 19 August

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 20 August

Memorial of St Bernard

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 21 August

Memorial of St Pius X

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 22 August

Memorial of the Queenship of Blessed Virgin Mary

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 23 August

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 24 August

Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Morning Tea at Dungog

There's morning tea after Mass TODAY in the Parish Hall. Please stay after Mass for good food, good company and great conversation.

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Those Who Have Died:

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In August:

Luxton Walker, Connie Gibson, Gladys Garner, Selena Smith, Mary Sonter, Margaret Muddle, Fay Farrow, Barbara King, Reg West, Harrison Walters, Jack Jordan, Jean Taylor, Jim Riches, Ron Jones, Margaret Kelly, Joan McMullen, Lou Dillon, Terry Shiel, John Rose, Norma Preece, Laurie Williams, Denis Cavanough, Margaret French, Jean Kenney, Shirley Wade, Allen Kearns, Tony Townsend, Molly Turner.

Those Who Are Sick: Maryann Smith, Daphne Bond, Leonie Young, Lisa Reid, 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, Jean Robertson, Jessica Byron, Gwen Trappel, Eileen Chalenor, Joyce Byron.

Papal Prayer Intention for August: Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons.

Today's Liturgy:

Today's Scripture Readings:

First: Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Second: Hebrews 12:1-4

Gospel: Luke 12:49-53

Responsorial Psalm:

Lord, come to my aid!

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia!

Memorial Acclamation:

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



Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is important. St Francis of Assisi Parish is 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 all children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

St Francis of Assisi Parish acknowledges 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.