



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.

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

## 15 MARCH 2026

### 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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Emergency contact for Fr Andrew: 0412 405 671

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

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

**Safeguarding Promotion:** For all safeguarding concerns within the parish, please contact Fr Andrew in the first instance, or the Office of Safeguarding ([www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au)).

**Social Media** Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads – all with the username dgatholic.

### Parish School

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

P: (02) 4992 1377  
E: admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au  
W: www.dungog.catholic.edu.au

### A Pastoral Note...

You may sometimes see the Fourth Sunday of Lent referred to as *Laetare Sunday*. The word, '*laetare*' translates as 'rejoice', and is drawn from the first word of the Entrance Antiphon made available in the *Roman Missal* for today's Mass.

The current edition of the *Missal* renders the Entrance Antiphon into English thus:

*Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.  
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;  
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.*

This call to 'rejoice' reminds us in the middle of our Lenten journey of penitential practice that what we are called to embrace is not meant to be sad, baleful undertaking.

Indeed, the closer we get to the great festival we are preparing for – the Resurrection – the greater our rejoice should be, since it is the Resurrection that truly gives us life and cements our identity as Christ's faithful disciples.

And the call to 'rejoice' can sometimes be seen as contrary to the penitential nature of Lent, but only, I would suggest, by those who wish to embrace penance for its own sake, rather than as a time for allowing God to move within us (again!) to prepare for something much greater.

True penance is never about metaphorically beating ourselves. Rather, true penance is about the recognition that we are not perfect and are in need of God's redemptive grace in order to take the place God has prepared for us in this world and in the world to come.

And so, rejoice!

Rejoice that we have been gifted this season of penance each year that we might be prepared to celebrate not only the great festival of Easter but that God loved us enough to gift us his Son for our redemption.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

### St Patrick's Day at Clarence Town

The Solemnity of St Patrick (17 March) is a day of particular significance for our parish, being the title of one of our churches.

To mark the occasion, Mass will be celebrated in St Patrick's Church, Clarence Town at 5.30pm on Tuesday 17 March, and will be followed by some light refreshments under the pergola.

All parishioners are invited and welcome to join in the celebrations at Clarence Town. Please bring a plate to share during refreshments.

**Please note** that because of the celebration of the title at Clarence Town, there will be no Mass at Dungog that morning.

### Morning Tea at Dungog

Morning tea at Dungog will take place TODAY (15 March) in the Parish Hall after the 9.30am Mass.

Please stay after Mass, and join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## Light of the World

The events of today's gospel passage occur within an extended passage of the gospel of John in which Jesus attends Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn 7:1 following). A feature of the feast was the illumination of the Temple. Pilgrims would cover the Temple with lights and torches so that it shone out over the entire city. It was during this feast that Jesus declared himself to be the Light of the World and, a few verses later, healed the blind man and brought light into his world.

### Reconciliation Before Easter

The Sacrament of Penance (Reconciliation) will be available in the lead up to Easter on **Saturday 28 March** in St Mary's Church from 9am for those who may wish to avail themselves of this opportunity.

As always, the Sacrament can also be availed of by contacting Fr Andrew.

### New Rector for Anglican Parish

St Francis parishioners have been invited to attend the commissioning of Rev'd Amanda Brockwell by Bishop Peter Stuart on Thursday 26 March in Christ Church, Dowling Street, Dungog commencing at 6pm.

Please RSVP to Margaret Flannery by phone (0427 921 839) or email (flannery55@bigpond.com).

### Liturgical Ministries Across Easter Triduum

Rather than put the usual 'sign up' sheet out to gather names for liturgical ministers across the Easter Triduum, this year I would like those who may be available to let me know (by email to the Parish Office, by slipping me a written note, etc) so I can publish a finalised roster on Palm Sunday.

The following ministers are required:

Holy Thursday	Readers (x2) Feet Washing (x 12) Universal Prayer (x 1) Procession of Gifts (x 2) Communion (x 3)
Good Friday	Readers (x 2) Communion (x1)
Easter Vigil	Readers (x 5) Universal Prayer (x 1) Procession of Gifts (x 2) Communion (x 3)

The two Easter Sunday morning Masses will need the usual complement of ministers for reading, the Universal Prayer, the Procession of Gifts, and for Communion.

I would be grateful if parishioners could give this some thought as a matter of urgency and let me know by close of business on Friday 27 March.

*Fr Andrew*

### International Eucharistic Congress 2028

In 2028, Australia will host a landmark moment as Sydney hosts the International Eucharistic Congress (Eucharist28).

This is more than a single event. It marks the beginning of a journey of renewal, transformation and mission, centred on an encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

A moment to believe. The journey has begun. Join us at [eucharist28.org](http://eucharist28.org).

### Electronic Banking Details

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

## The Concluding Rites – Part 2

Having looked at what the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal* has to say about the Concluding Rites in Part 1 (see n.90), it may be worthwhile to briefly cover what is foreign to this last part of our celebration of Mass.

Although it sometimes happens, this is not the place for a long address to be inserted. Such things, often associated with fundraising appeals from various bodies, more properly belong to the Liturgy of the Word – if, indeed, they ought to be inserted into the Mass at all.

Along similar lines, this is not the place to play a video (if the equipment is available in the church building). Again, depending on the subject matter, this might be better placed during the Liturgy of the Word.

It has also been known for the 'parish prayer' or a prayer for rain or such like to be inserted into the Mass at the beginning of the Concluding Rites. Such prayers, often included with the best of intentions, should never be included in the Mass, either during the Concluding Rites or anywhere else in the Mass.

Such prayers, which are more devotional than liturgical, could be prayed before or after Mass, but not during the Mass. Something like a 'parish prayer' might be better distributed in such a way to encourage its use as part of the devotional life of parishioners rather than attempting to add it to the formal liturgical prayer of the parish.

Something like a prayer for rain might be better acknowledged as one of the petitions of the Universal Prayer, which is the place where the parish community prays for the needs of the local community and the world.

In essence, and as we saw during Part 1 of this series, paragraph 90 of the *GIRM* is very clear about what is part of the Concluding Rites. Anything else should generally be avoided, or placed in a more suitable place within the overall structure of the Mass.

As we have already discussed briefly, the very nature of Concluding Rites is meant to be simple and focussed on the impetus of the community to go out into the world to be about the work of the Gospel. Anything that gets in the way of that simply does not belong as part of the Concluding Rites.

Having looked at some of the miscellaneous things are sometimes inserted into the Concluding Rites, we can now turn our attention to what properly belongs to this part of the Mass... but that can wait until next week when Part 3 of the series comes along.

*To be continued...*

## Parish Pilgrimage to Ireland

The Parish pilgrimage to Ireland will depart Sydney on Monday 21 September and returns into Sydney on Friday 9 October, although individuals may wish to extend their time in Ireland and surrounds as part of their plans.

The itinerary document, which can be found on the 'Resources' page of the parish website, contains the details of the places the pilgrimage will visit. The document also contains a link to the company, Harvest Journeys, that has made the arrangements if you would like to make a booking, seek further information, or discuss options.

***If you're interested in participating in the journey, please make your booking and pay your deposit (\$800) as soon as you can.***

## Chrism Mass 2026

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated in Sacred Heart Cathedral on Tuesday 31 March (the Tuesday of Holy Week) beginning at 7pm.

Bishop Michael invites you to join him, alongside the clergy and people of the diocese to celebrate this special occasion in the annual calendar of our Church life.

The Mass will be followed by refreshments in the Southern Cross Hall.

## Sacraments of Initiation in 2026

Confirmation in 2026 will be celebrated on Tuesday 15 September, at 6.30pm. Bishop Michael will be coming to our parish this year.

It should also be noted that following a request from Bishop Michael, future celebrations will take place every second year, i.e., 2028, 2030, etc.

Information and details about the process for celebrating Confirmation and first Communion this year can be found on the parish website by going to [t.ly/1X-lb](https://t.ly/1X-lb). Please pass this information to anyone who may be interested.

For any enquiries, please contact Fr Andrew.

## Safeguarding in our Parishes means ...

St Francis of Assis Parish holds 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 parish has zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and is committed to safeguarding all who interact with the parish through our activities, ministries and services, especially children and adults at risk.

## Today's Liturgy

### Scripture Readings:

First: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13  
Second: Ephesians 5:8-14  
Gospel: John 9:1-41

### Responsorial Psalm:

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

### Gospel Acclamation:

Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!  
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;  
whoever follows me will have the light of life  
Glory to you, Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

### Memorial Acclamation:

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

*"One thing I do know,  
that though I was blind,  
now I see."*

John 9:25 (NRSV)

## In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

**Those Who Have Died:** Kathy Loudon.

### 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, Philip Gippel, Sr Patricia McGinty RSM, Gloria Curry.

**Those Who Are Sick and Unwell:** Warren Wade, Kevin Ward, Keith Edwards, Susan Barlow, Jean Robertson, Jessica Byron, Gwen Trappel, Eileen Chalenor, Joyce Byron, Kay Hackney, Graham McCarthy, Lyn Heaney, Paul Hardy, Joy Cavanough, Monique Jones, Joshua Kealy, John Newton.

**Papal Prayer Intention for March:** *"Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence."*

St Francis of Assis Parish acknowledges the people of the Worrimi 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.

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

Fourth Week of Lent, Year A

Monday 16 March

Tuesday 17 March

*Solemnity of St Patrick*

5.30pm Mass @ Clarence Town (followed by refreshments under the pergola)

Wednesday 18 March

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 19 March

*Solemnity of St Joseph, Spouse of Mary*

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

1pm Liturgy of the Word @ Dungog (with students of St Joseph's Primary)

Friday 20 March

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 21 March

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 22 March

*Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A*

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

## Sacred Triduum Timetable 2026

The timetable for the *liturgical* celebrations across the Holy Three Days in 2026 is:

### Holy Thursday, 2 April 2026

7pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper  
St Mary's, Dungog

### Good Friday, 3 April 2026

8.30am Office of Readings & Morning Prayer  
St Mary's, Dungog  
3pm Celebration of the Passion of the Lord  
St Mary's, Dungog

### Holy Saturday, 4 April 2026

8.30am Office of Readings & Morning Prayer  
St Mary's, Dungog  
7.30pm The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night  
St Mary's, Dungog

### Easter Sunday, 5 April 2026

8am Easter Mass of the Resurrection  
St Patrick's, Clarence Town  
10am Easter Mass of the Resurrection  
St Helen's, East Gresford  
5pm Evening Prayer  
St Mary's, Dungog

The *Stations of the Cross*, while not part of the official liturgy of the Church, will be prayed publicly at 10am on Good Friday in St Mary's, Dungog, St Patrick's, Clarence Town, and St Helen's, Dungog.

**Please note:** Daylight saving time finishes at 3am on Easter Sunday (5 April).