



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.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

22 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).

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
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A Pastoral Note...

One of the unfortunate consequences that came about during the COVID times (remember that?) was the falling away of physical acts during the sharing of the Sign of Peace.

Deemed necessary at the time, for all sorts of valid reasons, we simply stopped shaking each other's hand while wishing them the peace of Christ. In its place we developed the habit of waving to each other – or even using the peace gesture involving two fingers – during this part of Mass, and this habit has endured as part of our practice ever since.

And I think it's time we stopped.

Not stop giving each other the Sign of Peace but stopped minimising it in the way we did during the height of COVID.

To that end, I'd like to invite everyone to once again reach out and give those around them the Sign of Peace by actually extending a hand to each other, and taking someone else's hand in

yours as we say, "Peace be with you".

As an aside, the Sign of Peace was never meant to be offered to everyone else in the church; it is to be given to those immediately around you – in the same pew, the pew behind, the pew in front, for example. This may or may not have implications for how and where we sit in church when we come together to celebrate the Church's liturgy, but that is for another time.

The other thing to briefly mention is that there's no need to offer me the Sign of Peace – I've just done that with the formal "The peace of the Lord be with you always" before inviting the sharing of the Sign of Peace.

So, once again, I invite you to return to the practice of the Sign of Peace that was in place pre-COVID and give this element of our Mass the meaning it was perhaps meant to have.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

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.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

Jesus wept

"Jesus wept" is the shortest verse in the New Testament. Just two little words carry a world of emotion and speak volumes about Jesus. Pope Leo I used this verse to highlight the two natures of Jesus, pointing out that in his humanity, Jesus wept for the death of his friend, but in his divinity Jesus raised Lazarus to life. Lazarus and his sisters were close friends of Jesus and Jesus is clearly emotional about the death and its effect on Martha and Mary. That Jesus is about to restore Lazarus to life does not deny the grief and mourning at Lazarus' death.

*"I am the resurrection and the life.
Those who believe in me,
even though they die, will live,
and anyone who lives and believes in me
will never die.
Do you believe this?"*

John 11:25-26 (NRSV)

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. Please pass this information to anyone who may be interested.

For any enquiries, please contact 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

We are still in need of various liturgical ministers for the parish's celebration of the Paschal Triduum. If you are able and willing to undertake these roles on behalf of the parish community, please let me know *in writing* (email, drop me a note, etc.) as soon as practicable.

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.

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 3

In Part 2 of this series we looked, very briefly, at some of the items that are commonly though inaccurately inserted into the Concluding Rites. Having done so, let us begin to once again look at what the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* actually includes in this last major division of the Mass.

The first element mentioned as belonging here is “brief announcements, should they be necessary” (*GIRM*, n.90).

There are two aspects of this inclusion that are worthy of note and commentary.

Firstly, any such announcements are meant to be *brief*. This is not the place for long-winded items; the descriptor ‘brief’ should be understood in its usual meaning, referring to something that is short and succinct.

It might be a means of highlighting something from the parish bulletin that is particularly worthy of some attention, or it might be the place to mention something that didn’t make the bulletin but is time sensitive.

Judgement should be exercised by those who are responsible, predominantly the Parish Priest and the Presider (if they are, in fact, different) as to how and what is briefly mentioned here. If something cannot be reasonably mentioned in a brief manner, then this is not the place for it.

The second aspect is the phrase “should they be necessary”, which implies that care should be taken to avoid including anything here that might detract from the overarching nature of this part of the Mass.

This is not the place for reading out every notice that is contained in the parish bulletin (why have a bulletin if it’s read out?), although a brief mention of the general thrust of a bulletin notice might be appropriate. I have sometimes heard this practice referred to as the ‘liturgy of the bulletin’, with the entire Assembly being invited to sit down while the Presider – or someone else – reads aloud every item found in the bulletin.

As a general rule of thumb, I would argue that if something is recorded in the parish bulletin, then it is generally not necessary for it to be mentioned during the Concluding Rites.

Any announcements should not require those who have gathered to take a seat. They are standing because the whole point of the Concluding Rites is to prepare them to be sent out into the world on mission. Anything that gets in the way of that – and that includes unnecessary announcements – must surely be avoided as much as is possible in order to keep the Concluding Rites focussed.

A well-constructed parish bulletin available to everyone, alongside other means more in keeping with modern technology, would surely mitigate against the need for announcements to be made at this point of the Mass. If as a result there are the occasional “brief announcements”, then they will be heard more closely if only because they are rare.

And that is the first of the elements that properly belong to the Concluding Rites. We will continue our exploration next week when Part 4 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.

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: Ezekiel 37:12-14
Second: Romans 8:8-11
Gospel: John 11:1-45

Responsorial Psalm:

With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!
I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;
whoever believes in me will not die for ever.
Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Memorial Acclamation:

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

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Those Who Have Died:

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 23 March

Tuesday 24 March

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 25 March

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 26 March

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

6pm Installation of Rector of Anglican Parish @ Dungog Anglican Church

Friday 27 March

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 28 March

9am Reconciliation @ Dungog

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 29 March

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

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 concludes at 3am on Easter Sunday (5 April).