



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.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

29 MARCH 2026

Presbytery & Parish Office

55 Brown Street, Dungog
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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 [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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A Pastoral Note...

Today we embark on our annual journey with Jesus across the terrible and confronting events of his Passion, the necessary forerunner to the great event of the Resurrection. This is the Paschal Mystery at its rawest.

The whole week that stretches before us, which is rightly called Holy Week, is at the very centre of everything we claim and proclaim to be true and essential.

From his glorious entry into the city of Jerusalem, through his betrayal, condemnation, execution, and burial, to the revelation of the Empty Tomb, we walk this week in the footsteps of Jesus.

In doing so we identify ourselves with Jesus, bearing the name of Christian that has been ours since we entered into his Death and Resurrection in the waters of baptism.

It is all too easy to fall into being so caught up in the preparations for our Easter celebrations that

we are in danger of missing their true importance, not just 'this time round' but in general. I know that this is a real danger for me given my responsibilities.

And so, an invitation...

In the hustle and bustle of life, both generally and in light of what we are preparing for, take a moment – every day, if possible – to remember what it is that we are preparing for.

And having remembered, take another moment to give thanks and praise to our God, who loved us enough that he sent his Son into the world, "so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16).

May the week ahead, and the great festival of the Resurrection, be a source of both comfort and joy as we revel in the great gift that God's love for us has given us.

Have a blessed – and Holy – week...

Fr Andrew

Liturgical Ministries Across Easter Triduum

Thank you to all those who have indicated their availability for the various liturgical ministries across the major celebrations of the Easter Triduum.

There remain some vacancies, which can be seen on the roster that is travelling with me this weekend. If you are able to 'fill the vacancy', please write your name in the relevant slot.

The completed final roster of liturgical ministers will be in St Mary's at the beginning of the Triduum.

Fr Andrew

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

Passion narratives

Towards the end of the 19th Century, the German scholar, Martin Kähler, described the gospels as 'passion narratives with lengthy introductions'. Over time, this description was more commonly applied to the gospel of Mark, but it is quite true of all four gospels. The passion elements are the climax of each gospel narrative and were probably written first to establish the unique interpretation of each of the gospel communities. The remainder of the gospel was written to 'set the scene' for the culmination of the message in the passion. Reading the four accounts of the passion reveal the unique styles and themes of the different gospel writers.

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.

April Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The April Morning Tea at Clarence Town would ordinarily take place next Sunday (5 April).

Given that next Sunday is Easter Sunday, it has been decided to cancel the April Morning Tea at Clarence Town.

The next Morning Tea at Clarence Town will take place on Sunday 3 May.

Mass at Lara Aged Care

The next Mass at Lara Aged Care will **not** take place this coming Friday as it is not possible to do so on Good Friday.

The Mass has been transferred to Friday 10 April at the usual time of 11am.

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.

Welcome Rev'd Amanda Brockwell

A warm welcome to Rev'd Amanda Brockwell, who has commenced her role of Rector of the Anglican Parish of Dungog just in time for the great celebration of Easter.

We look forward to working alongside Rev'd Amanda in the areas where our two parishes overlap.

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 4

In Part 3 of this series we looked at the first of the list of items – necessary brief announcements – that rightly belong to the Concluding Rites. This week we will move on to the next item that features in the list found within the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*.

The second element mentioned as belonging here is described thus:

“the [Presider]'s Greeting and Blessing, which on certain days and occasions is expanded by the Prayer over the People or another more solemn formula;” (*GIRM*, n.90).

There are several elements within this paragraph that should be unpacked and commented upon.

The 'Greeting' is the standard greeting used by the Presider on several occasions during the liturgy, including at the very beginning. The dialogue is well known:

P: The Lord be with you.

A: And with your spirit.

The only real change in this greeting in English took place almost 15 years ago, when the current translation of the *Roman Missal* came into force. That translation changed the response given to the Presider's greeting from “And also with you” to “And with your spirit”.

Although many people struggle with that change when it was first introduced, most people no longer struggle with the response.

The second element is the 'Blessing', which in its simplest form goes:

P: May almighty God bless you
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

A: Amen.

During the invocation of the Trinity, the Presider “makes the Sign of the Cross over the people” (*GIRM*, n.167).

It should be noted that this action is different to that which takes place at the beginning of Mass when the Presider, “together with the whole gathering, signs himself with the Sign of Cross” (*GIRM*, n.50). At the beginning of Mass everyone signs themselves with the Cross as both a profound surrender to Christ and a reminder that we, all of us, have been claimed by Christ.

At the end of Mass, however, the Presider is invoking God's blessing on us and makes the Sign of the Cross over the entire assembly (*GIRM*, n.167) as they prepare to leave the liturgical gathering and venture out into the world to be about God's work in the world. The blessing, God's blessing, is about strengthening us for what we are about to

embark on as soon as we depart the church building.

Going further along this same track, the fact the Presider is invoking God's blessing means that we respond differently.

Rather than signing ourselves with the Sign of the Cross as we do at the beginning of Mass, at the end we do nothing. We await the ministerial action of the Presider, who makes the Sign of the Cross over us, rather than doing it ourselves.

We are not blessing ourselves; God is blessing us.

While some scholars have suggested we make the Sign of the Cross ourselves to 'receive' God's blessing, I think this is a little bit of a stretch, and may have more to do with piety than liturgy. The liturgical action, however, is very clear – at the end of Mass, God's blessing is invoked on us in word and action by the Presider.

And that is where we'll leave our exploration of the 'Blessing' at the end of Mass. Next week, when Part 5 of the series comes along, we will look at those times when the 'Blessing' is expanded with other things.

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.

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:

Entrance: Matthew 21:1-11
First: Isaiah 50:4-7
Second: Philippians 2:6-11
Gospel: Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

Responsorial Psalm:

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Gospel Acclamation:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
Christ became obedient for us even to death, dying on a cross. Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Memorial Acclamation:

Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

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, Philip Clements.

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...)

Fifth Week of Lent, Year A

Monday 30 March

Tuesday 31 March

8.30am Mass @ Dungog
7pm Chrism Mass @ Cathedral

Wednesday 1 April

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 2 April

Holy Thursday

7pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper @ Dungog

Friday 3 April

Good Friday

8.30am Office of Readings & Morning Prayer @ Dungog

10am Stations of the Cross @ Dungog
Stations of the Cross @ East Gresford
Stations of the Cross @ Clarence Town

3pm Celebration of the Passion of the Lord @ Dungog

Saturday 4 April

Holy Saturday

8.30am Office of Readings & Morning Prayer @ Dungog

7.30pm The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night @ Dungog

Sunday 5 April

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection

8am Easter Mass of the Resurrection @ Clarence Town

10am Easter Mass of the Resurrection @ East Gresford

5pm Evening Prayer @ Dungog

