



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 EASTER (A)

26 APRIL 2026

Presbytery & Parish Office

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

P: (02) 4992 1477
E: office@dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au
W: www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au

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 *dgcatholic*.

A Pastoral Note...

I begin this week with some personal news: I'm taking some of my annual leave in a few weeks.

From Monday 11 May to Friday 22 May inclusive, I will be 'on leave', and although I have no plans to be absent from the parish for all of that time, I will be 'unavailable' for all of that time.

Fr Dennis Rochford MSC has agreed to celebrate the Parish Masses on the weekend of 16/17 May, but there will be no weekday Masses during the two weeks of my leave. More on Fr Dennis as the time draws closer.

Like most undertakings involving human labour, all priests are encouraged – dare I say obliged – to take time for rest and relaxation. Not only does this mean taking annual leave, but also ensuring – as far as possible – that there is at least one day a week taken for rest. I am grateful that more often than not I have that opportunity.

In other news of a less personal nature, we are now moving into the cooler months of the year, which brings with the inevitable arrival of colds and flu. To that end, a gentle reminder is perhaps appropriate that if you are unwell, it would be appreciated if you

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

could be generous enough to keep it to yourself.

One of the enduring lessons of the COVID event, I hope, is a recognition that sometimes staying away is actually an act of kindness towards our fellow citizens – or, in this case, our fellow believers, those we regularly gather with to celebrate the Church's liturgy.

It should go without saying – but I will say it anyway: if you are unwell, please refrain from consuming the Precious Blood from the chalice if this is your usual practice. Doing so is not only common sense but a recognition of being part of a community, and we should be aware of our actions on other members of the community.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the health and safety of others.

And lastly...can you believe we're at the end of April already? I know I have been saying it a lot so far in 2026, but it seems to me that time is flying a lot faster than at present than I feel entirely at ease with.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

Ordination of a Deacon

Bishop Michael will ordain Christopher Voigt to the Diaconate on Saturday, 23 May in Sacred Heart Cathedral, with the Mass beginning at 10am.

Christopher will be ordained as a Permanent Deacon and will continue to work in and around the Maitland Parishes where he lives with his family.

Such occasions are always significant for the life of our diocesan community, and all parishioners from across the Diocese are warmly invited and most welcome to be present to witness and celebrate the occasion.

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.

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.

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.

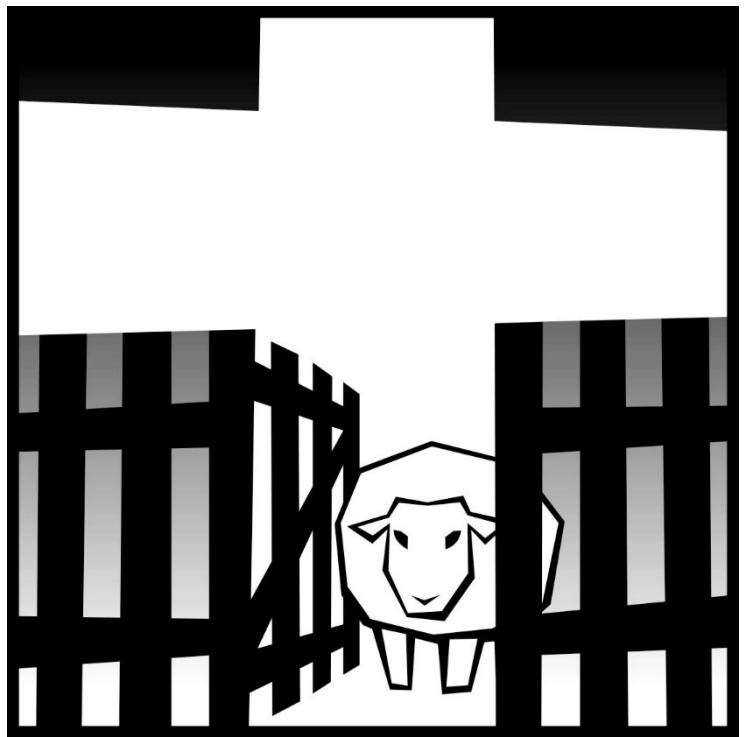
Farewell to Liz Doyle

After 33 years of service to the Chancery and to the people of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, Elizabeth Doyle (Liz), the Executive Assistant to Bishop Michael, is bringing her remarkable tenure to a close.

You are warmly invited to celebrate with Liz on **Friday 1 May** with a Mass beginning at 9.30am in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West.

Mass will be followed by a celebration in the Southern Cross Hall honouring Liz's 33 years of service, and will conclude with a morning tea.

Please RSVP by going to: <http://mn.shor.tn/lizdoyle>.



Day of Prayer for Vocations

The Fourth Sunday of Easter each year is a day set aside by the Church to pray for vocations, and especially vocations to the ordained and religious life. Please remember this intention in your prayers both today and across the coming weeks.

Pope Leo has written a powerful message for this year's occasion, and it can be found on our parish website via the 'Resources' page (which can be accessed via t.ly/CVRn).

National Mass Attendance Count Is Coming

The 2026 National Count of Attendance (Mass Count) will take place over the first four weekends of May. This information is important to helping to accurately plan for the future, at national, diocesan, and parish levels.

Your assistance in undertaking the count over the four weeks is appreciated, and there may be a need to insert a small delay into the Masses to enable accurate reporting.

The Concluding Rites – Part 6

In Part 5 of our series we looked at the first of the expanded forms of the blessing that can take place at the end of Mass, the Prayer over the People. We can now move on to look at the second form, the Solemn Blessing.

The Solemn Blessing involves adding a number of elements to this part of the liturgy. The first is similar to the Prayer over the People: the instruction to “Bow down for the blessing”.

Again, this is a simple instruction, given by the Deacon (or the Presider if there is no Deacon), and, similarly to its use in a Prayer over the People, highlights for members of the Assembly that something ‘different’ is taking place.

Again, after the instruction is given, the Presider extends his hands over all of the Assembly as a sign of calling down God’s blessing on them.

What is different in a Solemn Blessing from a Prayer over the People, however, is what comes next.

Instead of the quite compact text used in a Prayer over the People, the Solemn Blessing uses a three-part text, with each part inviting the Assembly’s response of “Amen”.

There can be a practical difficulty here in eliciting the Assembly’s response, since there is no verbal cue (such as “Through Christ our Lord”) to prompt the response, at least initially. Presider’s need to be attentive to this, and speak in such a way during each of the three parts of the Solemn Blessing in such a way that the Assembly has some clue as to when to say “Amen”. This, however, is more art than science.

Each part of the three-fold Solemn Blessing speaks of the occasion for which it has been crafted, and often speaks beautifully and poetically about what God has already done and will continue to do for humankind’s benefit.

After the three-fold invocation, the Presider concludes the blessing using the same words used in a Prayer over the People:

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you forever.

These words, of course, are accompanied by the Presider making the sign of the cross over the Assembly, and the Assembly responding in the usual way (see Part 4).

The texts for a wide range of Solemn Blessings can be found in *The Roman Missal* on pages 709-721, and cover a very broad range of possibilities in terms of occasions and seasons. In a manner similar to Prayers over the People, some Solemn Blessings are associated with particular feasts in the

liturgical calendar and are thus found on the relevant page of the *Missal* associated with that feast. The recent celebration of the Easter Vigil provides a good example of this, as would the celebration of Christmas or Pentecost.

Again, in a similar manner to Prayers over the People, sometimes the use of a Solemn Blessing is compulsory and sometimes optional. The nature of the occasion is the determining factor, and the *Missal* will usually provide guidance on the status.

And that is the second form of the expanded Greeting and Blessing that is sometimes encountered at the end of Mass.

As an aside, the *Missal* indicates that the use of either a Solemn Blessing or a Prayer over the People is not limited to Mass. The rubric found in the *Missal* on page 709 and 722 indicates that they can be used

...at the discretion of the [Presider], at the end of the celebration of Mass, or of a Liturgy of the Word, or of the Office, or of the Sacraments.

The option of including these beautiful prayers of blessing at the end of other liturgical celebrations brings with it the possibility of adding solemnity to an occasion via the simple inclusion of one of them. Imagine the possibilities for all sorts of liturgical occasions that could open up if such options were used more often.

And having looked at all three of the forms of the Greeting & Blessing, we can now move on to the next of the four elements of the Concluding Rites, the Dismissal of the People. But that can wait until Part 7.

To be continued...

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Spirituality and the Significance of Country

The *Listen to the Heart: Moving Forward* Team will host Fr Darryl Mackie and Aunty Wanda Smith as they discuss and answer questions about the connection to Country of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and its relationship with the Christian faith.

The event will take place on **Saturday 2 May 2026** in the Therry Centre, cnr New England Hwy and King St, East Maitland from 8.30am – 12.30pm.

Morning Tea will be provided, but please bring your own lunch.

Donations towards the hosting of the event would be welcome on the day.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP via t.ly/3cEV by Wednesday 29 April.

Today's Liturgy

Scripture Readings:

First: Acts 2:14, 36-41
Second: 1 Peter 2:20-25
Gospel: John 10:1-10

Responsorial Psalm:

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

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;
I know my sheep, and mine know me.
Alleluia!

Memorial Acclamation:

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

Morning Tea at Clarence Town

The next morning tea in Clarence Town will take place next Sunday (3 May) under the pergola after the 8am Mass.

Please bring a plate to share, and join us for good company, good food, and good conversation.

Diocesan 'Come and See' Retreat Day

The Diocese is holding a vocations retreat day on Saturday 16 May at the Hunter Wetlands Centre in Shortland. More details can be found on the flyer on the church bulletin boards.

RSVP to mn.short.tn/comeandseeday.

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.

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 Easter, Year A

Monday 27 April

Tuesday 28 April

Memorial of St Peter Chanel
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 29 April

Memorial of St Catherine of Siena
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 30 April

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 1 May

NO MASS Fr Andrew in Newcastle for Farewell to Liz Doyle

Saturday 2 May

Memorial of St Athanasius
5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 3 May

Fifth Sunday of Easter

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

Alleluia!!

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Those Who Have Died: Margaret Clune.

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

Papal Prayer Intention for April: "Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer."

Electronic Banking Details

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