



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.

23RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

6 SEPTEMBER 2026

Presbytery & Parish Office

55 Brown Street, Dungog
PO Box 24, Dungog NSW 2420
Fr Andrew Doohan (*Parish Priest*)
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Parish School

St Joseph's Primary School
49 Brown Street, Dungog NSW 2420
Mrs Lisa McNeilly (*Principal*)
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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](#).

A Pastoral Note . . .

In the lead up to any significant period of leave, like my upcoming pilgrimage to Ireland, there is always a lot of things that need to be prepared or organised before I actually physically leave the parish boundaries.

Such preparations and organisations are to be expected of course, and a goodly number can be completed well in advance of the departure date while others can only be finalised much closer to the time.

It has struck me this time, since my departure is for the specific purpose of a pilgrimage, that it would be far too easy to get caught up in the practicalities of being absent from home and forget about the spiritual preparations that go along with getting ready for a pilgrimage, which is first and foremost a religious act.

And yes, I have to confess that I have been guilty of this, and not just on parish specific things that need to be prepared for.

And as the date of departure gets closer, I grow more concerned that my spiritual preparations for this particular pilgrimage have been less than they

possibly could have been, or I would prefer them to be.

And yet I wonder if my experience in advance of the spiritual exercise of a pilgrimage is symptomatic of the preferential attention we all give to practical and mundane matters over being attentive to the spiritual aspect of life. I know for myself at least that it can be all too easy to surrender to this preference because of the priorities dictated by contemporary society.

Perhaps heading off on a deliberate pilgrimage, a spiritual exercise as I mentioned earlier, will remind me that for the believer at least of where our preferences and priorities might be best placed.

And that challenge applies not only to the deliberate act of leaving home and travelling elsewhere on a spiritual quest, but is also applicable to the 'ordinary' pilgrimage of the Christian life, the attempt to live the day-to-day Christian journey to the best of our ability with the help of God's grace.

Something else for me to ponder along the way around Ireland...and when I get back.

Have a blessed week...

Fr Andrew

Perpetual Day of Remembrance

Sunday, 13 September, will see parishes across the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle commemorate the annual Perpetual Day of Remembrance, a day set aside to remember those who were subjected to abuse at the hands of members of the Church, especially clergy and religious.

The day can be troubling for everyone, yet it is important that we do not shrink from the occasion, from remembering, and from being prepared to do those things that must be done to honour victims and survivors and changing our present to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safe in our parishes and activities.

Rewiring of St Mary's, Dungog

The necessary rewiring of St Mary's Church in Dungog will take place the week beginning Monday 21 September.

St Mary's will be entirely inaccessible for the first week as much of the more significant work is undertaken. Work in the church will continue thereafter with access slowly being restored.

Celebration of Confirmation

Bishop Michael will visit our parish on Tuesday, 15 September to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with children from our parish.

The celebration of Confirmation will take place in St Mary's Church, Dungog, beginning at 6.30pm.

This year we have some thirteen candidates for Confirmation, and it would be wonderful for parishioners to come along to support them with prayer and presence at they celebrate this significant step in the journey of Christian Initiation.

World Youth Day 2027

Bishop Michael has announced the diocesan pilgrimage to South Korea and Japan for young people aged 16-35 next year. World Youth Day with Pope Leo XIV will be an enriching experience of pilgrimage for young people which has a profound impact on their relationship with Jesus, their prayer life, their lived mission, and their relationships with others.

Join diocesan authorities for the Reception of the Relic of WYD Patron Saint Carlo Acutis on 8 September and a WYD Launch Event featuring early information about this opportunity. Learn more at WYD27Launch.eventbrite.com.au.

Virtual Pilgrimage

Follow the upcoming Pilgrimage to Ireland without leaving home by going to www.doohan.id.au, where Fr Andrew will be posting a daily travel blog of the adventures.

St Carlo Acutis Relics Mission

As the Diocese journeys towards Eucharist 28 with Pope Leo XIV it will be hosting the first-class relics of a millennial Saint – Carlo Acutis – between 8 and 14 September.

During his young life, Carlo created the Eucharistic Miracle Exhibition, which will also accompany the tour. The pilgrimage has been drawing tens of thousands from across Australia and New Zealand these past months and the Diocese is looking forward to hosting the relics.

Visit the Diocesan website (t.ly/QsvbM) to see the schedule that covers the Reception of the Relic, Upper Hunter Encounter, Northern Region Encounter and the Newcastle City Basin Encounter.

Simplicity September

This September, simplify one thing in your life and discover what truly matters.

Sponsor yourself, your family or a friend to participate and raise money for Palms International Volunteering, Australia's only Catholic lay organisation that delivers international development and formation through long term international volunteering.

Join Australians across the country supporting Palms' work in the Asia-Pacific.

For more information, call 02 9560 5333 or 0422 472 567.

Visit www.simplicityseptember.org.au; or use the QR code here.



Vocations Ministry: Turning Dreams into Action

Would you like to play a part in actively encouraging and supporting vocations to the ministerial priesthood, the permanent diaconate, and the consecrated (religious life)?

If so, you are invited to a meeting to consider establishing a Serra Club in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. This local club would be a member of Serra International, a world-wide organisation, affirmed by the Holy See, which is committed to vocations ministry. This initiative has the support of Bishop Michael.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, 24 September, at 7pm, in the Function Room of St Mary of the Cross Parish Hub, 7 Milson Street, Charlestown.

For more information and to lodge your RSVP, please contact the Diocesan Director of Vocations, Fr Anthony Potts (0466 140 066, or email to tony.potts@mn.catholic.org.au).

Homily by Richard Leonard

When couples who are going to be married in the Church come to see me for the first time, I get them to fill out a brief questionnaire. The last two questions on the form ask:

'What do you like best about your partner?'

'What do you like best about yourself?'

The first question usually presents no problems, although it can hold a few surprises and sometimes a playful punch if the right answer is not forthcoming!

The second question seems to present all sorts of difficulties, especially for prospective grooms. Some of us find it hard to name the God-given qualities we value most in our character. Some couples try to pass it off, 'That's for others to say' or, 'I don't want to blow my own trumpet.' Others try to dismiss the question as being new age or trendy.

But the question does, in fact, cut to the heart of both today's second reading and Gospel. 'You must love your neighbour as you love yourself.' We cannot say in the same breath, 'I hate myself, but I am a good Christian.'

For St Paul, love of self was not indulgent, but the cornerstone of our mission to love as Jesus loves us. Paul knew the difference between self-love and self-adoration. Our love of God is expressed in the healthy and appropriate esteem we have for ourselves. Put another way, we cannot love anyone else if we don't love ourselves. If we have poor self-esteem, then often we need others to fill up this gap in our self-love. Most relationships cannot sustain such a demand.

The Church has to take some responsibility for this state of affairs. We used to be taught that mortification and self-denial were good Christian virtues, and indeed they can be. When properly understood they are never opportunities for self-hatred. The sanest spiritual writers in our tradition saw these virtues as paths of closeness with God and service of our neighbour.

One such writer was St Ignatius of Loyola who in the Spiritual Exercises saw that it was precisely as sinners that God loves us. He saw that one of the greatest gifts the Lord can give us is when we see our sinfulness for what it is, but are not overwhelmed by it, and that we experience the power of God's love for us who calls us to walk as children of the light.

Jesus in today's Gospel attends to this destructive side of our human nature. Jesus teaches us that those who do not love their neighbour as they should are to be treated with dignity and respect and offered every opportunity to seek forgiveness until it is clear they can no longer be a part of the Christian family.

The challenge and hallmark of the Christian life is the way in which we live out God's love and forgiveness. And, although the Christian community should be the last group to exclude anyone, even we have to have our boundaries. Sometimes this involves holding others to account for what they say and do, especially if they claim to be a follower of Christ. The love and forgiveness of God does not mean that 'anything goes'. It is a love that calls for constant conversion. We can witness to it only to the degree that we have experienced it, from God, from others, and in the way we love and forgive ourselves.

And we know when these qualities are taking deep root in us because answering a question like, 'What do you really like about yourself?' is a piece of cake!

© 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.

Liturgy of the Eucharist Series

The Liturgy of the Eucharist Series is taking a short break while Fr Andrew heads to Ireland on pilgrimage, and will return in early October. Stay tuned!

Men's Rosary Crusade 2026

Men from across the Diocese and beyond are invited to gather in faith, fellowship, and prayer for Hunter Men's Rosary Crusade on Saturday 12 September at 10.30am in at the Cathedral. More information is available at t.ly/rqESQ.

Women for the World Appeal

Safe childbirth shouldn't depend on luck. But in Papua New Guinea, many women still face pregnancy and childbirth without access to the care, equipment and support they need. Health centres are often under-resourced, and distance, cost and extreme weather can make reaching care a challenge. By supporting Caritas Australia's Women for the World appeal, you can help upgrade rural health centres, giving women a safer chance to bring new life into the world.

Your gift can help support safer pregnancies, safer births and healthier futures for mothers and babies. Learn more or donate today at www.caritas.org.au/wftw.

Today's Liturgy

Scripture Readings:

First: Ezekiel 33:7-9
Second: Romans 13:8-10
Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Responsorial Psalm:

O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!
God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself; and the Good News of reconciliation he has entrusted to us.
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 at St Patrick's, Clarence Town will take place under the pergola after the 8am Mass TODAY (6 September). Please join us for good food, good company, and good conversation.

Safeguarding in our Parish means ...

St Francis of Assisi 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 Assisi Parish acknowledges that we gather, live, and work upon the traditional lands of the Worimi and Wonnarua people, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs, and deep spiritual attachment and connection to this land.

We pay our respects to their Elders – past, present, and emerging – and commit ourselves to working together for reconciliation and justice.

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 Parish Diary (for the week ahead...)

23rd Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

Monday 7 September

Tuesday 8 September

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

NO MASS Fr Andrew attending clergy training day in Newcastle

Wednesday 9 September

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 10 September

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 11 September

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 12 September

Dedication of Sacred Heart Cathedral

11am Baptism @ Dungog

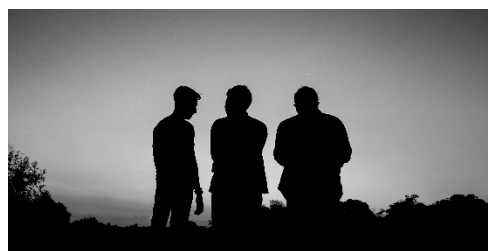
Sunday 13 September

Perpetual Day of Remembrance Sunday

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill



In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Those Who Have Died: Patricia Smith, Rina Rocco.

Those Whose Anniversary of Death Is In September:

Annie & Brian Maurer, Peggy Brennan, Godfrey Barry, Tony O'Hearn, Fr Brian Quillinan, Pat Byron, Marjory Neilson, Ivy Hinton, Arthur Sonter, Ron Neilson, Fr Peter Quirk, Tony & Mary Maurer, Kath Morrow, Frances Amy Young, Rowland Young, Dennis Melmouth, Dot Shurrey, Mary Moylan, Norm Barham, Eileen Godwin, Warren Trappel, Lachlan Tindall, Brian Byron, Margaret Moule, John Melmeth, Beryl Cooper, Paul Evans, Peter Byron, Heather Dawn Atkins, Sr Pat McGinty RSM, Hazel Bridger, John Bridger.

Those Who Are Sick and Unwell: Warren Wade, Keith Edwards, Jean Robertson, Jessica Byron, Gwen Trappel, Graham McCarthy, Paul Hardy, Monique Jones, John Newton, Francis Byron, Bernadette Richardson, Joyce Byron, Dori & Nick Nezval, Joshua Kealy.

Papal Prayer Intention for September: "Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it."