



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.

26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

27 SEPTEMBER 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

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

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 . . .

Greetings from Ireland, where this weekend will have seen our pilgrimage group in the beautiful and spiritual location of Glendalough yesterday and moving through Waterford to the City of Cork today.

One of the highlights of my journey to Ireland back in 2018 was the short visit to Glendalough, which name springs from the location itself, the valley of the two lakes. This time around we will spend the whole day exploring and experiencing the beauty and power of the old monastic settlement and the surrounding landscape.

The Irish people often speak of "thin places", those places where the presence of the Divine, however that is understood, becomes remarkably and immediately present. For me, Glendalough is one of those places, and being able to simply soak in that reality is a precious gift.

Be assured that in my time in Glendalough you were remembered in my prayers alongside all those who specifically asked me to pray for them during the pilgrimage.

Fr Andrew

Virtual Pilgrimage

Follow the upcoming Pilgrimage to Ireland from the comfort of your own home by heading to www.doohan.id.au, where Fr Andrew will be posting a daily travel blog of the adventures.



Arrangements During Fr Andrew's Leave

During my pending time of leave while on pilgrimage to Ireland, Fr Dennis Rochford msc will be joining the parish community for the celebration of the usual schedule of weekend Masses. Fr Dennis is no stranger to the community, and I am grateful that he has once agreed to assist during my absence.

Please note that there will be no weekday Masses during the time I am away.

Fr Peter Street, currently stationed at Singleton, has generously offered to cover the celebration of any funerals during the time I am away, and again I am most grateful for Fr Peter's offer of assistance. The local funeral directors have been advised of this coverage.

The Parish Office will continue to function 'as usual' under the watchful eye of Kerry Copus and, while not always immediately contactable, I will be checking emails as time and internet access permit, though I cannot guarantee a response to anything that isn't urgent or absolutely necessary.

I will see you all when I return!

Fr Andrew

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 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.

It's not too late to support Simplicity September!

1. Go to the website above (or use the QR Code).
2. Click on "Support a Friend".
3. Enter "dun" in the search box; Dungog Gresford Parish will pop up; click on it.
4. Make a one-off donation in support of Simplicity September; or opt for a monthly donation to support the continuing work of Palms International Volunteering.

Palms is grateful to those who have or will support their important work in being a Catholic presence in the international development space!



Retreat Morning Opportunity

Dr Dan White retired from the role of Executive Director of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Sydney in 2019 after ten years of leadership and service.

Dan is offering a *Retreat Morning for Modern Day Emmaus Travellers* on Friday 23 October at St Stephen's Parish Hall, Witt Street, Tea Gardens, beginning at 9.15am and concluding at 1pm.

If attending you are asked to bring a notepad and pen, and a plate to share.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Chief Priests & Tax Collectors

Only men of the Israelite tribe of Levi could become Priests and Levites. Men from the other eleven tribes were prohibited. It was not a religious 'call' but rather a fact of birth that led men to be priests. The chief priests and high priest performed all the rituals in the Temple in Jerusalem – it was they who performed sacrifices on behalf of others. They were very important and influential. Tax collectors were regarded poorly because they acted on behalf of the Romans – collecting revenue for an occupying and pagan force. They made their living by collecting extra amounts. They were looked down upon by most people.

Upcoming Changes to Sunday Mass Times

A reminder that from the first weekend of November, that is, the weekend of Sunday 1 November, our Sunday Mass Times schedule will change. This follows the decision taken by the Parish Assembly back in July.

From that weekend, our Sunday Mass Times on most weekends will be as follows:

Sat 5.30pm	St Helen's East Gresford
Sun 8am	St Patrick's, Clarence Town
Sun 10am	St Mary's, Dungog

On the **second** Sunday of each month, the Mass Times will be as follows:

Sat 5.30pm	St Mary's , Dungog
Sun 8am	St Patrick's, Clarence Town
Sun 10.30am	Sacred Heart, Summer Hill

Homily by Richard Leonard

A young priest was sent by his bishop to a parish that had a 'red light district' within its boundaries. On his first day in the parish a nun, who had worked in the area for many years, took him on a tour of her beat, the area where all the women-in-prostitution were plying their trade. As they went along Sister introduced the priest to her friends Bubbles, Ginger and Calamity Jane. 'Sister it's fantastic that you know these women so well', he said. 'Don't worry', replied Sister, 'you'll know them in no time as well, and they'll know you by name too.'

Seized by panic, the young priest had visions of the bishop, the parish priest or, worse still, his mother coming to visit and walking with him down the street as Bubbles, Ginger and Calamity Jane all wave and call out across the road, 'Hello Father'. Who would ever believe he only knew them pastorally?

'Truly I tell you that prostitutes and tax collectors are going ahead of you into the kingdom of God.' The preaching of Jesus attracted all sorts of people who lived at the fringes of, or were oppressed by, Palestinian society. Jesus' message was especially attractive to them. Tensions among the huge variety of Jesus' disciples, between the rich and the poor, men and women, the Jews and Gentiles, the socially respectable and those with outrageous backgrounds continued after his death throughout the next decades, during which the Gospels were written.

It's hard for us to imagine what a diverse and scandalous group, in many respects, the first fathers and mothers of our faith were seen to be. Imagine, if you will, the fuss that would still be created if the local bishop was seen constantly dining with women in prostitution, drug dealers or known terrorists. People would be outraged, but the bishop would be doing nothing short of following Jesus' example. This situation gives us a little insight into how affronted the Chief Priests and Pharisees were by Jesus and, in turn, by his disciples' behaviour.

For Jesus there was never a lost case, or a person beyond help. He didn't just spend time with the poor and broken of his society, but offered them a new way of life, an opportunity to start again and redemption from their destructive behaviour. He went to where they were, as they were. And we do the same because this is precisely what God has done for us. God didn't wait for us to 'talk the talk' before we could 'walk his walk'. Jesus came to us when we were religiously dumb and immobile and showed us how to speak, what to say and where to walk.

The Christian walk and talk is meant to have a profound impact on our daily lives, our concerns, our priorities and compassion. So much so that if, over

a period of time, what we celebrate here each Sunday makes no inroads into our family life and workplace, our professional life, our business practices and our relationships, then we should ask ourselves what we are doing here.

And, what's worse, we could even miss the ongoing revelation of Christ's presence in the poor, weak and vulnerable of our own society. We constantly look for Christ in the spectacular and the wonderful and he comes to us in the least of our brother and sisters.

May this Eucharist give us the strength to not only 'look good', but to 'be good', to start over if we need to, and do our best to live out the faith we profess. May it strengthen us to find the Lord where he is, and not keep looking in the places where we would prefer him to be.

© 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.

Living gospel

Saying "Yes!"

In many ways, it is easy to say 'Yes' and not really mean it. Some people do it all the time in their lives. They say 'Yes' when they have no intention at all of following through on their commitment. It's easy to say 'Yes' and not mean it when it comes to faith as well. It's pretty easy to turn up at Church on a Sunday and be seen to be doing the 'right' thing. But if our faith doesn't change the way we live, then maybe we're really saying 'No' to God.

Today's Liturgy

Scripture Readings:

First: Ezekiel 18:25-28
Second: Philippians 2:1-11
Gospel: Matthew 21:28-32

Responsorial Psalm:

Remember your mercies, O Lord.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!
My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord;
I know them, and they follow me.
Alleluia!

Memorial Acclamation:

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

Daylight Saving Time Is Approaching

Daylight Saving Time will begin in NSW at 2pm on NEXT Sunday 4 October, with clocks jumping forward one hour at that time.

Daylight Saving Time extends through until Sunday 4 April 2027.

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...)

26th Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

NB: There are no weekday Masses in the Parish while Fr Andrew is on leave.

Monday 28 September

Tuesday 29 September

Feast of Sts Michael, Gabriel, & Raphael

Wednesday 30 September

Memorial of St Jerome

Thursday 1 October

Memorial of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus

Friday 2 October

Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels

Saturday 3 October

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 4 October

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

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 next Sunday (4 October).

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

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Those Who Have Died:

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, Francis Byron, Bernadette Richardson, Joyce Byron, Dori & Nick Nezval, Joshua Kealy, Ken Meyn, Denise Jordan.

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."