



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.

27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)

4 OCTOBER 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 . . .

As you read this particular little column, the pilgrims and I are drawing closer to the end of our journey around Ireland, moving from the Republic (down south) into Northern Ireland, which remains part of the United Kingdom.

Like any undertaking of the complexity of such travel, we have encountered the occasional hiccup and challenge, but I have always embraced a philosophy when on pilgrimage that such developments are as much a part of the journey as the other experiences encountered along the way.

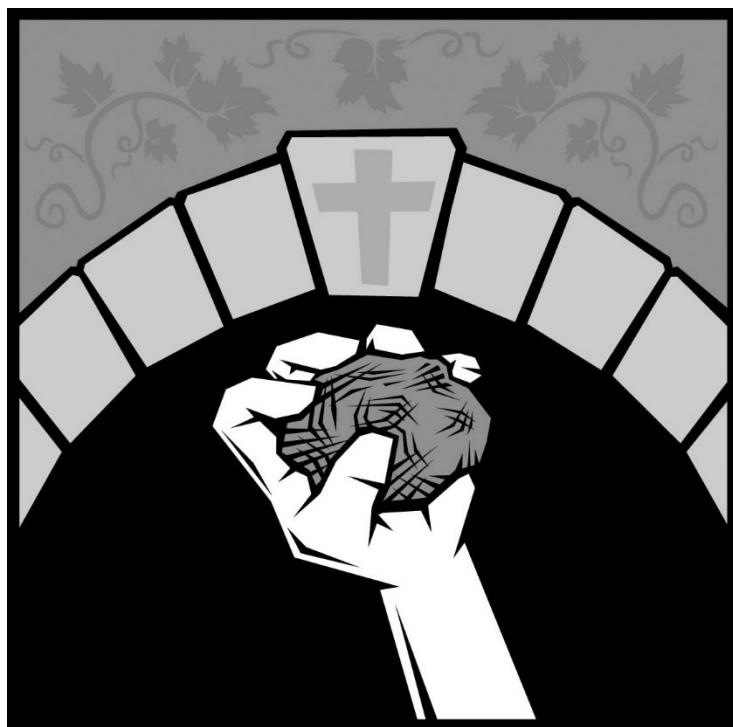
All of that said, however, much of the value of the undertaking of a pilgrimage will be discovered only once pilgrims, including yours truly, have returned home and can reflect on the whole experience without having the more immediate demands of the journey itself.

I look forward, therefore, to being back in familiar settings of home, and to have the chance to 'unpack' the experience of pilgrimage, and everything that I will come to understand because of both the journey and the reflection.

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.



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

World Youth Day 2027

World Youth Day is an international gathering of young people (aged 16-35) held every three years with the Pope.

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is leading a pilgrimage in July 2027 to the next one in South Korea with an extended retreat in Japan following.

Serious expressions of interest have now opened and can be logged on our webpage. We expect bookings to open in November with an \$800 deposit. Learn more at t.ly/dZOuO.

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

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.

Farewell to Fr Thomas Chirackal

The Parishes of Singleton and Branxton are preparing to farewell Fr Thomas Chirackal, with celebration of Mass on Sunday 25 October in St Patrick's Church, Singleton commencing at 10am.

The Mass will be followed by lunch in St Catherine's Catholic College Hall, with those attending asked to 'bring a dish' to share. Those attending will also need to supply their own drinks.

Please RSVP by contacting the Singleton Parish Office on 5507 4048 by 18 October.

Laughter Love and Loyalty Book Now on Sale

The book "*Laughter Love and Loyalty*" celebrating 100 years of Mercy Education at St Catherine's College, Singleton (1875 – 1975) is now available for purchase at the College or by calling 6578 9600 for details.

LIVING gospel

Different View – Using scripture to justify hatred

This text is one that has been used by some Christians to justify their hatred and persecution of Jews. They point to the parable Jesus told as evidence that Jesus blamed the Jewish people for his death. It is a strange fact that some people believe that the only way to justify their own beliefs is to try to destroy the beliefs (and believers) of other faiths. For hundreds of years Christians abused and tormented Jews, driving them out of cities and even countries. The terrible treatment of Jews in World War II was drawing on a long history of Christians persecuting Jews.

Homily by Richard Leonard

Canadian theologian Bernard Lonergan had a major impact on philosophy and theology last century. Sometimes his language was so complex we had to buy a companion book to help us read the original work! Surprisingly, however, his most important insights were very simple and expressed in very simple language. One of them was that we regularly have 'ah-ha' moments, where we get an insight into God, the world or ourselves. These moments make sense of things we have previously only seen as problems.

Matthew's Gospel is filled with 'ah-ha' moments. Written for a generally Jewish audience it reflects on Jesus in light of the history of Israel, the Hebrew Scriptures and the expectations of the Messiah. Jesus was for Matthew's community, and is for us, the 'ah-ha' in world history. By Matthew reflecting on his life, death and resurrection, things he had previously only wondered about now made sense.

The phrase 'the stone rejected by the builders' originally referred to Israel. In Psalm 118 and, more generally, in the Book of Psalms, the trials and defeats of Israel are seen to be tests of strength, love and endurance. Despite everything Israel has gone through, the people continue to sing of God's fidelity to them and what marvels God has done before their eyes, making them into a more faith-filled people.

Matthew, however, reflects on what happened to Jesus at the hands of the Chief Priests, Scribes and Romans. In a great 'ah-ha' moment he sees that it is Jesus, not Israel, who is the stone rejected by the builders which has now become the key building block of a new edifice.

Doing exactly the same as Matthew does with this passage, we can apply it to our own lives as well. There are often facets of our personality or character of which we are ashamed or about which we despair. From gossip to greed, past hurts to anger, sexuality to broken relationships, we can often get discouraged at how un-together our Christian life is.

Even though we have worked hard to overcome our worst traits, we often think nothing good will ever come of them. In such a context we need to hear today's Gospel, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes.'

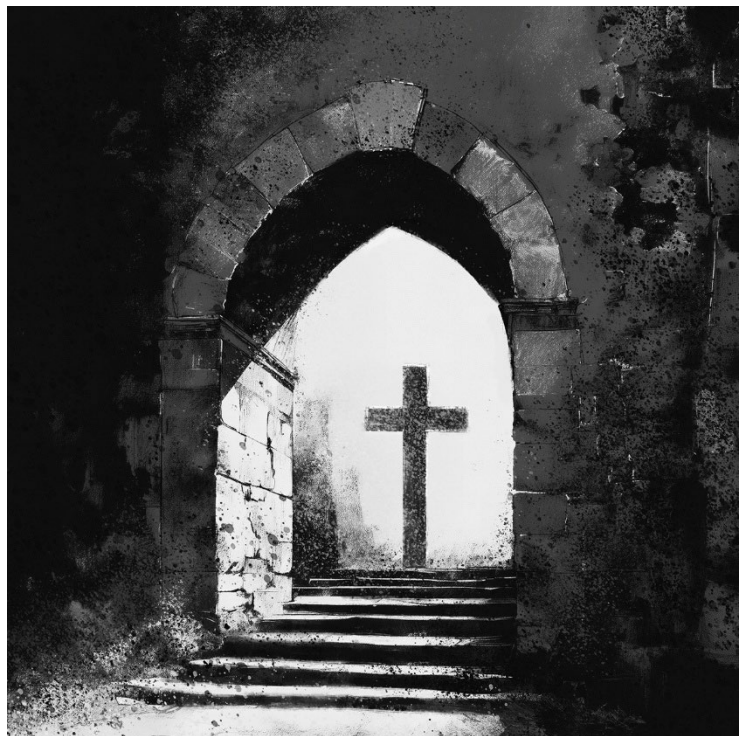
The parts of our character we most despise could be the most marvellous moments of amazing grace. Nothing is irredeemable to God; nothing has gone too far or become too entrenched. In the Christian life there is no room for shame, only for repentance and starting over. Looking at things we have thought of as only being problems

provides us with the greatest potential for 'ah-ha' moments, where the healing and love of Christ enables us to turn our lives around, to demolish all the negative and defeatist self-talk in which we can indulge and rebuild ourselves with Christ, the master builder.

Once we get into the habit of doing this, it's amazing how many 'ah-ha' moments we have as our history ceases to be a problem to be overcome but turns into a challenge to be harnessed for the building up of the Kingdom of God on earth.

© 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.



St Francis of Assisi Parish acknowledges that we gather, live, and work upon the traditional lands of the Worrimi 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.

Today's Liturgy

Scripture Readings:

First: Isaiah 5:1-7
Second: Philippians 4:6-9
Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

Responsorial Psalm:

The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!

I call you friends, says the Lord,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
Alleluia!

Memorial Acclamation:

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

The Parish Diary (for the week ahead...)

27th Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

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

Monday 5 October

Tuesday 6 October

Wednesday 7 October

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Thursday 8 October

Friday 9 October

Saturday 10 October

2pm Wedding @ Dungog

Sunday 11 October

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

11.30am Mass @ Summer Hill

Scriptural Context

Fulfilling prophecy

Matthew's whole recount of this parable is dependant upon the reader/listener's familiarity with earlier writings within the Old Testament. We are fortunate that the designers of the lectionary have included the relevant passages as the first reading and psalm for this Sunday's readings. The original audience would have drawn on their own familiarity with the texts and recognised Jesus' words as echoing those of Isaiah and the psalmist. Matthew's gospel was particularly keen to cast Jesus in the image of fulfilling the prophecies of the Jewish tradition. Throughout Matthew's gospel we see the author placing the words of prophecy in Jesus' mouth or using the narration to confirm that Jesus performed actions to fulfil the words of the prophets.

Safeguarding in our Parish 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.

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 (4 October).

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Recently Deceased: Paul Richardson.

October Anniversaries of Death: Bert Clark, Jaimie Richardon, Bonnie Hulbert, Bruce Everding, Ned Garland, Mark Bannister, Michael Wills, Fred Dickerson, Scott Bowman, Paul Brockwell, Brian Doyle, Maria Kealy, Raymond & Phyllis MacKay, Peter James McMullen, Mary Isabelle Preece, Margaret Banister, Paul Bryon, Doris Murray, Carl Nolan, Michael Kennedy, Thomas Lonigan, Michael Scanlan, Thelma Moroney, Peter Rooke, Aileen Gornall, Garry Browning, Maree McCulloch.

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 October: "Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses."

Electronic Banking Details

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