



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.

**28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)**

**11 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](mailto:office@dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au)

W: [www.dungoggresfordcatholic.org.au](http://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](mailto:admin@dungog.catholic.edu.au)

W: [www.dungog.catholic.edu.au](http://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](http://www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au)).

**Social Media** Find us on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads – all with the username dgcatholic.

### A Pastoral Note . . .

And just like that, I'm back from pilgrimage to Ireland and back into 'the swing of things'. It's odd really – the pilgrimage had been in planning for so long, and now it's completed and 'behind' me – or at least as far as the physical journey and travel is concerned.

The reality, of course, is that a pilgrimage only truly ends once the process of reflection is embraced and allowed to run its course. And that course will take as long as it takes; there can be no fixed period given to such an experience.

And so, for myself and other pilgrims, the work of reflection begins now so that the full value of what we have experienced can be appreciated. And in between that time of reflection, the 'regular' schedule of things picks up as if I've never been away.

My thanks to Fr Dennis Rochford for once again visiting the parish to celebrate the Parish Masses for the community, and my thanks to all those who helped in any number of ways, small and large, to keep things happening during my absence.

Elsewhere in this week's bulletin, there's a reminder of the upcoming changes to our Sunday Mass

schedule, which will take effect from the first Sunday in November. Although the weekly Mass schedule will feature in the bulletin each week, please take the opportunity to update your diaries accordingly.

Fr Andrew



### 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 <b>10am</b> | St Mary's, Dungog           |

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

|                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sat 5.30pm         | <b>St Mary's</b> , Dungog   |
| Sun 8am            | St Patrick's, Clarence Town |
| Sun <b>10.30am</b> | Sacred Heart, Summer Hill   |

### 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.

### Annual Clergy Retreat

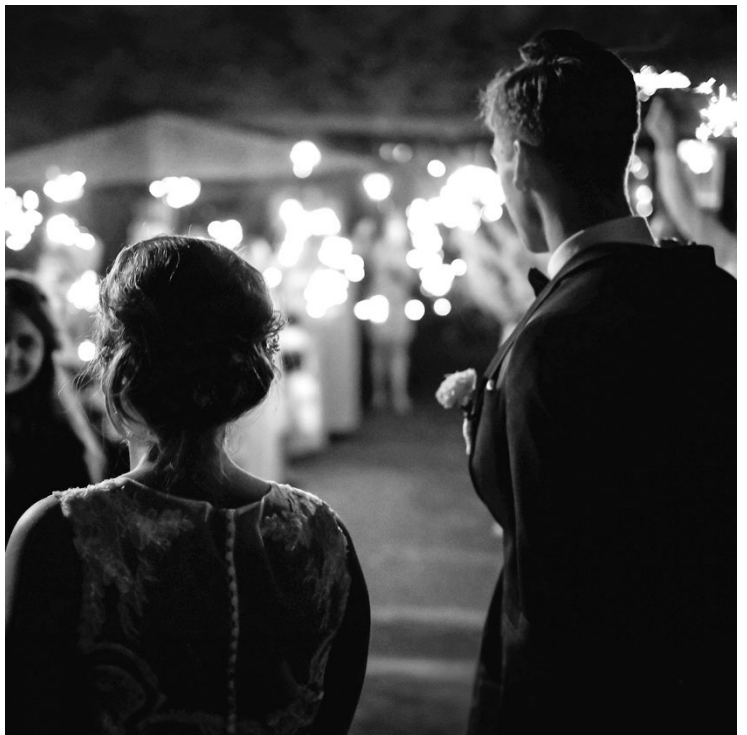
The clergy of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will gather for their annual retreat from Sunday evening until Friday lunchtime. They would be most grateful for your prayers during the coming days/

Please note: As Fr Andrew has just returned from a pilgrimage, he will not be attending this year's retreat.

## gospel focus

### 'How did you get in here?'

*In light of the inclusive kingdom metaphor in this passage, the final portion of the gospel may be a bit troubling to readers. When a guest is not wearing a wedding garment he is cast out of the banquet. We might say that being invited at the last minute the guest was unable to find suitable clothing. It is a sign that although he has been an unlikely inclusion in the banquet, he has not made any effort to respond to the generosity of the king and take up one of the cloaks that would have been provided and thus give due honour to his host. This is symbolic of those who refuse to change their ways and do not live as followers of Jesus even when they have been included in the kingdom.*



### 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.

### 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](https://t.ly/dZOuO).

## **Homily** by Richard Leonard

There are people inside and outside the Church who think that Christ did not give the Church a mandate to speak about political matters. They regularly quote the Gospel we have just heard to support their case. But if one knows and understands the context and meaning within which this text was written it provides no ammunition for those who want the Church to stay indoors, reflect on things 'spiritual', preach the eternal verities, and sing hymns more ancient than modern.

In Jesus' day, we know that some people thought he was a Zealot. Zealots were a well-organised group who agitated for the end of the Roman occupation of Israel. One of the things Zealots did was withhold paying the Roman taxes. We can see why some people thought Jesus may have been a Zealot. He took the part of the poor, the sick, women and those who lived on the fringes of society. He attacked the religious authorities of his day and certainly stirred up trouble in many places he went.

On the other hand he rejected violence, taught his followers to pray for their enemies and to return good for evil. Jesus showed us that the justice and equality God longs to see in the world comes from a community which is converted by love, not by weapons, fear or revenge. Jesus was no Zealot.

Rather than undermine civil authority, however, Jesus, in this passage, supports it. But he does more. 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's' is followed by 'And give to God, what is God's', which encompasses all the Caesars of this world, all civil authorities and states. The sense that we as the People of God can split off our obligations to the Gospel from the State is as false as it's dangerous.

We only have to think of some of the darkest chapters last century to see what happens when good, church-going people, like us, do not put their Sunday devotion in touch with their Monday politics. Evil can reign.

Christian leaders, who are charged to proclaim and defend the Gospel, are obliged to use whatever forum necessary to declare that God's personal love encompasses everyone and everything under heaven. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us today, God calls each one of us by name.

At times we may not agree with our religious leaders; we may think them ill informed; we may even think they have overstepped the mark. If this is the case we should tell them, enable them to consider other perspectives and to broaden the basis upon which they make their judgments. But we should never be seduced by those who want the Church sidelined from the mainstream of the debates that shape the way we live, the values we share, the

laws we draft and the priorities we draw up for our human community.

If the Church shows disinterest in any of this, it is untrue to the very things for which Jesus lived, died, and was raised from the dead. By all means we should give to Caesar all that Caesar is justly entitled to have for the sake of the common good. A higher allegiance, however, goes to God, who will call all Caesars to account for what they have done and what they failed to do. And we might be asked to explain how we let them get away with it in the first place.

© 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.

## **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.

## **Historical Context**

*This gospel parable is a reflection of the way in which the message of God has been extended to people through time. The first invitation was extended to the Israelites who initially accepted the message of God but in time lost the focus. Jesus further extended the invitation to the Gentiles, viewed by the Jews as unworthy of such a relationship with God. Finally, within the early Christian communities there were some who, despite belonging to the community, failed to live appropriately and demonstrate their acceptance of the message of God.*

## Today's Liturgy

### Scripture Readings:

First: Isaiah 25:6-10  
Second: Philippians 4:12-4, 19-20  
Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

### Responsorial Psalm:

I shall live in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life.

### Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!  
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
enlighten the eyes of our heart  
that we might see how great is the hope  
to which we are called.  
Alleluia!

### Memorial Acclamation:

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

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

28th Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

Monday 12 October

Tuesday 13 October

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 14 October

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 15 October

Memorial of St Theresa of Avila

9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 16 October

8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 17 October

Memorial of St Ignatius of Antioch

5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 18 October

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

8am Mass @ Clarence Town

9.30am Mass @ Dungog

## 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

## Morning Tea at Dungog

The next morning tea at St Mary's, Dungog will take place in the Parish Hall after the 9.30am Mass next Sunday (18 October).

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

## 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 & Phyliss 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.

**October Papal Prayer Intention:** "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."