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.

30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A) — 25 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)*

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Mrs Lisa McNeilly *(Principal)*
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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 . . .

As we rapidly approach the end of October, it can be hard to recognise that there are but two months left in the year that is 2026.

So much has happened during this year. We have celebrated the first anniversary of our new identity as St Francis of Assisi Parish; we have held the first in a yearly series of Pastoral Assemblies; we have begun to put into place the kind of governance structures that will guide our future together.

Above all, we have continued to worship God each and every Sunday, and witnessed to the simple and profound importance of doing so to the broader community of the region and towns in which we live and work.

While all the good things of our parish community should be celebrated, we would be wrong to simply rest on our laurels. The task of being Church within the territory of the Parish is never complete and there remains much work to do as part of our commitment to the Mission.

Some of that is internal. For example, by the time this edition of the Parish bulletin goes to print, it is hoped that the Statutes for a Parish Pastoral Assembly and Parish Finance Council will have been submitted to the Office of the Bishop for approval so that those structures can be properly established.

Some of that is external. Elsewhere in the parish bulletin you will find a note about our participation in the 2026 National Church Life Survey which, when combined with data from this year's National Census, will help us to be better positioned for deciding on pastoral priorities that we might enact as part of being the Church on Mission.

All of which is to say, that while 2026 is starting to come to a close, our task of being Church in this part of the world never does. We are always 'on Mission', living and witnessing to the Good News of the Gospel in a multitude of ways as we continue to live and work in this region and these towns.

So as we look back across 2026 and all that we have undertaken, we also look forward to what is yet to be, what is yet to take place, and what opportunities are yet to present themselves. It is to be hoped that in twelve months' time the list of things worthy of being celebrated will be longer.

Have a blessed week . . .

Fr Andrew

Changes to Sunday Mass Times

A reminder that changes to our Sunday Mass Times will take effect from **next weekend**, the weekend of Sunday 1 November. 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

Dungog Liturgical Ministries Roster

For a variety of reasons it is timely for the current liturgical ministries roster for St Mary's, Dungog to be updated.

If anyone is interested in being added to the roster as Readers or Ministers of Communion, or as Greeters, Sacristans, for the Presentation of the Gifts, etc., please let Fr Andrew know (in writing or by email) by the end of November.

Training and formation opportunities for all ministers will be organised prior to the new roster beginning.

Nourishment Day for Sacristans and Servers

Mission & Evangelisation is offering a Nourishment Day for Sacristans and Servers on Saturday 14 November in the Toohey Room, 841 Hunter Street, Newcastle West. The day will run from 10am to 3pm.

The day is designed for parish sacristans, altar servers, senior servers, and those involved in liturgical ministry. The day will feature a formation session, practical workshops, fellowship & sharing, and lunch and refreshments.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is essential (visit t.ly/8N_kl) by 6 November.

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.

World Mission Day Appeal

This year marks 100 years of "World Mission Day", and we are reminded by Pope Leo that we are 'One in Christ, United in Mission'.

The annual World Mission Day Appeal invites us to partner with Catholic Mission and the Church in Malawi in supporting families rebuilding after devastating floods and helping children access education close to home.

Through projects like St Peter's Nyamikuta Primary School, the Church is creating a place where children can learn, be nourished, and grow with dignity, regardless of their background or beliefs.

Donations can be made via the appeal envelopes available in our churches or by going to catholicmission.org.au/united. If you have not as yet returned an appeal envelope, please do so by next weekend.

Life and Work of Fr Julian Tenison Woods

The Diocesan Resource Centre invites you to a special exhibition celebrating the life and work of Fr Julian Tenison Woods.

The exhibition is inspired by Sr Jan Tranter's recently published book, *Julian Tenison Woods: The Human Journey – Priest, Founder, Friend*, and offers a unique insight into Fr Woods' life through geological specimens, photographs, books, a looping presentation and other historical materials.

The exhibition is available now until the end of the year. The Diocesan Resource Centre is open on Mondays (10am-5pm), Fridays (10am-5pm), and the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month (10am-2pm).

2026 National Church Life Survey

The 2026 National Church Life Survey (NCLS) is designed to listen to Australian churches – leadership, parishioners, and the broader community – to develop a picture of the church's health and vitality.

Our Parish will complete the NCLS survey next weekend – the weekend of Sunday, 1 November – with survey forms being available at each of the Masses for people to complete before departure.

Online versions of the survey forms are also available for those who may wish to participate in that format and details of how to do so will be included in next week's edition of the bulletin.

While participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, doing so will help our parish community in the ongoing task of identifying areas of priority for us to consider as part of our continuing pastoral planning process (as mentioned at this year's Parish Pastoral Assembly).

Homily by Richard Leonard

Nguyen Van Mah is one of eight sons. In 1978 his poor farming parents had to decide which one of their twelve children would be sent on a boat from Vietnam. They knew there was a great risk that they would be sending their son to his death on the South China Sea.

At 4.00 am, a knock on the door of the family home came and Mah said his goodbyes. He has not seen his parents since. Mah was blindfolded and travelled in the back of a truck for eight hours. He was led through the jungle to a beach where the blindfold was removed. Mah told me that sometimes at this moment people are shot by evil traders who collect the money without any intention of dispatching a boat. That families never hear from their children is no surprise.

Mah told me, 'We were lucky, we made it off the beach.' There were 29 adults in a boat built for ten. Inadequately prepared for the two-week trip, all the boat people were sick, hungry and exposed. Thai pirates attacked their boat, executed three men and raped all the women on board. They were to bury another six people at sea who died from the effects of the journey.

On sighting land, the remaining twenty people in Mah's boat thought hope had arrived. But the Malaysian Navy, under orders to fire on all Vietnamese boats, forced it to return to international waters. Mah told me, 'At this point I almost lost my faith in God and human beings. I was going to die.'

The boat began to take water and was noticed by a Dutch trading ship which rescued them and deposited them in the Philippines. Mah migrated to Australia twelve months later and is now the local doctor in an outback community that could not get a doctor for two years.

Isaiah tells us today 'You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.' Jesus tells us in the Gospel that the love of God is fulfilled precisely in as much as we love our neighbour.

No pressing issue in the Western World, it seems to me, invites such hysteria as does immigration. Until recently, most western countries have been good in offering hospitality to people who have chosen to leave or have had to flee their country of birth. Given our comparative wealth this hospitality is entirely appropriate. And it is also appropriate for our countries to have a threshold number for the sake of the common good.

In today's Gospel, however, Jesus does not promise us that the love of God and neighbour is going to cost us nothing. Jesus' law of love involves sacrifice for us individually and as a nation. Through the acceptance of this teaching we are committing ourselves to being our neighbour's keeper. In another part of the same Gospel, Jesus tells us that 'those to whom much has been given, much will be required.' Sadly, many of us want the good life for ourselves, while doing very little to help other countries become more liveable, and then we can reject people who want to share in the blessings we have worked for and inherited.

The Gospel of Matthew gives us the story of Mary, Joseph and Jesus being forced to flee Israel for Egypt as refugees. If the Holy Family were coming our way these days, they might be sent back to King Herod. May this Eucharist see in us a change of heart that enables our faith to act justly toward all people everywhere. May our goodness and hospitality mirror on earth the welcome we hope to enjoy from Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the kingdom which is promised to all, irrespective of where any of us has been born.

© 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.

World Day of Prayer for Peace Anniversary

Tuesday 27 October marks the 40th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi.

In 1986, Pope John Paul II invited world religious leaders to Assisi to fast and pray for peace. This was a milestone in interreligious dialogue that communicated a powerful symbolic message to the world – the spirit of prayer and non-violence.

Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Zoroastrians, leaders of African and American Traditional Religions and of Shinto took part in this event.

The Prefect for the Dicastery for Inter-religious Dialogue, Cardinal George Koovakad, remarked that the 1986 was a turning point in the history of interreligious dialogue, becoming as lasting symbol of the Church's commitment to promoting social justice, moral well-being, peace and freedom for the benefit of all.

Our Parish Mass on Tuesday 27 October in St Mary's, Dungog will both commemorate and celebrate this significant anniversary as we continue to pray together for peace, a peace that the world still desperately needs.

Today's Liturgy

Scripture Readings:
First: Exodus 22:20-26
Second: 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10
Gospel: Matthew 22:34-40

Responsorial Psalm:
I love you, Lord, my strength.

Gospel Acclamation:
Alleluia, alleluia!
All who love me will keep my words, and my Father will love them and we will come to them.
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 next Sunday (1 November).

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

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.

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.

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…)*

30th Week in Ordinary Time, Year A

Monday 26 October

Tuesday 27 October
40th World Day of Prayer for Peace
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Wednesday 28 October
Feast of Sts Simon and Jude
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Thursday 29 October
9.30am Mass @ East Gresford

Friday 30 October
8.30am Mass @ Dungog

Saturday 31 October
5.30pm Mass @ East Gresford

Sunday 1 November
Solemnity of All Saints
8am Mass @ Clarence Town
10am Mass @ Dungog

Laughter Love and Loyalty Book Now on Sale

For those who have a connection with St Catherine's College, Singleton, and the Sisters of Mercy in Singleton, a new book celebrating 100 years (1875-1975) of Mercy Education in the College is now available.

The book, entitled *Laughter Love and Loyalty* is now available for purchase at the College or by calling 6578 9600 for details.

In Your Charity, Please Pray For:

Recently Deceased: Francis Byron.

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, Monique Jones, Bernadette Richardson, Joyce Byron, Dori & Nick Nezval, Joshua Kealy, Ken Meyn, Denise Jordan, Walter Chapman

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."