

Parishes of St John XXIII & St Joseph's, Birtley

Incorporating: Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington; Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw; St Bede's, Usworth; St John Boste, Oxclose; St Joseph's, Birtley

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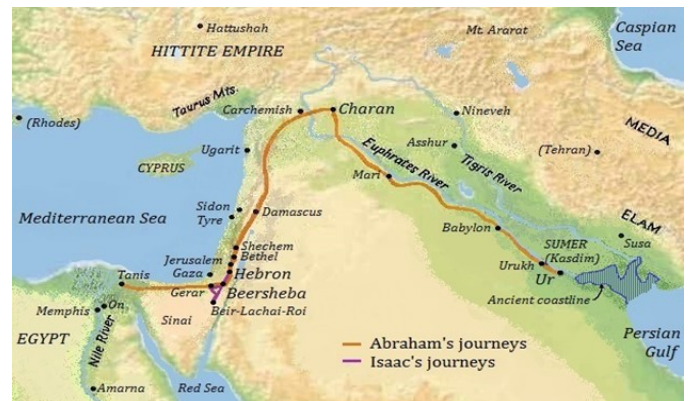
In the Partnership of Benedict

Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Penshaw, Sacriston, Washington



The 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 7th August 2022, Year C

Let's be honest – Abraham is just amazing. You don't have to be a great historian to know that the stories about him are from about 4 thousand years ago! . I invite you to consider walking 2000 miles from the town of Ur, way over there in Iraq to Egypt, then a wee bit back to the land we now call Israel! This is the journey he took. He had no idea where he was going when he set off, the only map he had was his faith in God. We hear his name so often, but we basically don't have a clue what his journey was like. He wasn't a Christian! Jesus was born 2000 years later. He wasn't a Jew! The idea of being Jewish didn't emerge for more than a thousand years after that, He wasn't a follower of Islam, that didn't happen for another 1500 years after that! So why is Abraham regarded as the 'Father' of all three major faith communities – Judaism, Christianity and Islam? Quite simply – because he believed in God! God invited him to change his way of life. God invites us to do the same! I suspect we don't listen quite as attentively as Abraham did.



In our second reading today, Abraham is described as a man 'already as good as dead'. He was an old man, his wife, Sarah, way past child-bearing years. They were two wandering very elderly pensioners. **But their faith enabled them to believe in what they couldn't see.** They had a vision of a different future. A very different future. They are rewarded with a son. Utterly unimaginable.

We are emerging – very slowly – from a time dominated by the COVID virus. I wonder if we're missing the chance to imagine a 'different future'? I wonder if we just want to get back to doing things 'the way we did'? The same services, the same coffee gatherings the same rituals and so on. The real question is whether we are really deepening our relationship with Jesus and becoming more loving people. I doubt that we'll ever get back to the number of 'worshipping' Catholics in our parish that we had over 2 years ago. Numbers don't really matter, love does!

Having said that – we are people of faith. Abraham looked out of his tent and way into the future. Our numbers will decrease, but we will still witness to the person and life of Jesus. Abraham spent his life taking risks – moving from one country to another, becoming, with Sarah his wife, a parent at a huge age. I wonder if we're willing to take risks? I wonder how we become more welcoming, far less judgemental (tough for us Catholics). In today's Gospel we're asked to wonder where our 'treasure' really is. If it lies in the way we always did things, we may well be running out of currency. Abraham invites us to take the risk to explore something different...

Jim O'Keefe

Fr Jim O'Keefe 0191 416 3805

Deacon Frank O'Neill 0779 115 5845

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Deacon Peter Lavery 0730 505 9297

Fr Martin Wheaton 0737 736 7189

Deacon Tony Joy 0779 989 3419

Fr Vincent Waiga 0191 416 3583

Mass times for the fortnight beginning Saturday 6th August 2022

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Saturday 6th August	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	The sick of the Parish
The Transfiguration of the Lord	St Joseph's	5pm	Peter Leeder
	St Bede's	5pm	Teresa Laidler (deceased anniversary)
Sunday 7th August	St John Boste	9.30am	Mass of Thanksgiving
19th Sunday in Ordinary	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	The recently deceased.
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Michael Lawton
Monday 8th August	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Nancy White
St Dominic			
Tuesday 9th August	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	The sick of the Parish
St Teresa Benedicta	St Joseph's	7pm	Sr Sophie Taylor
Wednesday 10th August	St Bede's	10am	Peggy Glendining
St Lawrence	St John Boste	7pm	The sick of the Parish
Thursday 11th August	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Philippa Smith
St Clare	St Joseph's	12 noon	Brian Lee and Isabella Bryden
Friday 12th August	St John Boste	10am	Peter McElhenny
St Jane Frances de Chantal	St Joseph's	10am	Margaret Hay
Saturday 13th August	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Mr Richardson
Ss Pontian and Hippolytus	St Joseph's	5pm	Fr Tony Duffy
	St Bede's	5pm	Joan Barrett (Deceased)
Sunday 14th August	St John Boste	9.30am	Veronica Birrell, in celebration of 80 precious years.
The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	George O'Hare R.I.P.
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Harry Casey
Monday 15th August	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	For the Intention of MG
Tuesday 16th August	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Edward and Margaret Clark
St Stephen of Hungary	St Joseph's	7pm	Michael Chapman
Wednesday 17th August	St Bede's	10am	JW (Special Intention)
	St John Boste	7pm	The sick of the Parish
Thursday 18th August	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Vincent Kelly
	St Joseph's	12 noon	Cathy Lawton
Friday 19th August	St John Boste	10am	Living and deceased members of the Roberts, Readman & Bell Families.
St Oswin & John Eudes	St Joseph's	10am	Harriet and John Hogan
Saturday 20th August	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	The People of the Parish
St Bernard	St Joseph's	5pm	Terry Cantwell
	St Bede's	5pm	The People of the Parish
Sunday 21st August	St John Boste	9.30am	Paul Iley
21st Sunday in Ordinary	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	The People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	4th Anniversary of Ken Richardson