

Parishes of St John XXIII & St Joseph, Birtley



Incorporating: **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**, Washington;
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw; **St Bede**, Usworth;
St John Boste, Oxclose; **St Joseph**, Birtley
 Fr Martin Morris, Parish Priest, Tel: 0191 4163583
 Administrator: Audrey Huntley tel: 0191 4163583
 (Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12– 5pm)
 Email: StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



In the Partnership of Benedict

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

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - 29TH - 30TH MARCH 2025, Year C

Saturday 29th March	St Joseph	5pm*	Jim Lamb RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Charlotte, Alex, Thomas & Peter Ryan
Sunday 30th March	St John Boste	9:30am	Linda Banks RIP
The Fourth Sunday of Lent	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Dave Ranaghan (3rd Anniversary)
Laetare Sunday	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Christopher Gonzales RIP

First Reading: Passover in the Plains of Jerico

Joshua 5:9a, 10-12

In those days: The Lord said to Joshua, 'Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.' While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Response to the Psalm: Taste and See that the Lord is Good.

Second Reading: Reconciled in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Brothers and Sisters: If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Gospel Acclamation: Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus. I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you'. Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

The Gospel: The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

At that time: The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable: 'There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me." And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.' " 'And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to celebrate. 'Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound." But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, "Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!" And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.' "

Fr Martin Morris 0191 416 3583

Deacon Frank O'Neill 0779 115 5845

Fr Martin Wheaton 0770 996 1040

Deacon Tony Joy 0779 989 3419

Fr Luke Wilkinson 0191 649 8257

Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 31st March 2025 (Streamed Mass *)

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 31st March	St Bede	10am	Veronica Grainger (RIP)
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	Carl Poulter (RIP)
Tuesday 1st April	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am *	Janet O'Neil (RIP Anniversary)
	St Joseph	7pm	Lawrence & Margaret Reed RIP
Wednesday 2nd April St Francis of Paola	St Bede	10am *	Adam & Harry Reay (RIP)
	St John Boste	7pm	Priest's Intention
Thursday 3rd April	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am *	Elizabeth & George Faghy
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Norman Harris RIP
Friday 4th April St Isidore	St John Boste	10am *	Private Intention (MFM)
	St Joseph (St. Benet's school)	9.15am	Michael Caulfield (St Benet's)
	St. Bede	7pm	First Friday Mass
Saturday 5th April St Vincent Ferrer Vigil	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am *	In Memory of Tony Feeley
	St Joseph	5pm*	People of the Parish
	St Bede	5pm	Billy Craggs (RIP)
Sunday 6th April The Fifth Sunday of Lent -	St John Boste	9:30am	Holy Souls
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	In Thanksgiving to St Jude for Prayers answered

'Mothering Sunday'

Today is Mothering Sunday. A Happy and Blessed day to all our Mams!

Mothers day owes its origin to Mother Church. On this fourth Sunday of Lent, every year, on what we call 'Laetare or rejoicing Sunday,' the Church celebrates her Motherhood, as Mother of many peoples and nations. This is the time of year when Catechumens, (i.e.) those preparing for Baptism at the Easter Vigil, will come to new birth in the womb of the Church. The Church is not an impersonal institution, she's a universal Mother. So like any good Mother she serves her children with life, with truth, with faith, with love and forgiveness. The Church is such a good Mother that in English tradition from earliest times this day became known as 'Mothering Sunday' in dedication to those who would soon receive Baptism at Easter. So what can Holy Mother Church say to us on this fourth Sunday of Lent? The Gospel says, "While he was still a long way off, his Father saw him. (Luke: 15 – 20). Still a long way off! A dot on the horizon. Doesn't that mean he was on the lookout for him? From the day he left, watching, waiting, praying, like many a Father or Mother? Doesn't it illustrate how God the Father feels about each one of us, how much every one of us matters to him? How anxious he is that we all come back to him? He didn't just wait for the Son, he ran to him, and clasped him in his arms. A sheer explosion of generosity and joy. Like the love of a good Mother or Father. As St. Paul says in today's second reading to the Ephesians, "At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as Children of the light." May that light of Christ shine upon all Mothers today, and bless them in a special way.

Pray especially today for all Mothers and Fathers who act as foster parents, or who have adopted children. They are reflections of the love of God.

Fr. Martin Morris

Masses are generally live-streamed daily at 10am every day, except Monday, streamed at 7pm, and alternate Sundays when Mass is live-streamed at either 10am or 11am. An * on the Mass table indicates streamed Masses.

Please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/penshaw> to view from one of our Churches.

In addition, we live-stream Mass from St Joseph's, Birtley on: Saturday at 5pm.

To access live streaming from St Joseph's Birtley, please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/birtley>.

What's On in the Parish

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Our Lady Queen of Peace each Friday 2-3pm.

St. Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm, held in the church immediately after Stations of the Cross. I do encourage as many of you as possible to spend some time in quiet prayer with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning after Mass and Saturday morning from 10am-11am

St Joseph - Thursday after Mass

St John Boste - Friday morning after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning after Mass.

St Bede's - Saturday after Vigil Mass.

Stations of the Cross during Lent

Every Wednesday **OLQP** 12 Noon and **SJB** 6.30pm;

Every Thursday **St Joseph's** at 6pm;

Every Friday **St Bede's** at 6pm.

This Sunday afternoon at 4pm at **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**.

Stations of the Cross at OLQP will be followed by a simple lunch of soup and bread. All donations gratefully accepted and will be sent to St Benedict's Hospice. All welcome.

First Friday devotions - The First Friday Mass is at **St. Bede's** at 7pm, on the 4th April, following the **Stations of the Cross** at 6pm.

OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's Club) - Tuesday at 1pm in the Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

Let us keep in our prayers all those preparing for reception into the Church this Easter. Nineteen people from our two parishes are currently on the Journey in Faith programme, preparing for the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil.

The children of St Bede's are doing the CAFOD Big Lent Walk. If you would like to help them fundraise, please follow this link <https://schools.walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/st-bedes-big-lent-walk2025>

Second Collection Next Week - Sick and Retired Priests - At the present moment there are 67 active priests in our diocese - and just over 48 have retired. When we began Forward Together In Hope in 2014 we had 110 active priests in the Diocese. It is quite likely that by 2030 we will have much less than 50 active priests and far more who will need specialist care. These priests have spent their lives serving us in our diocese. We now have 86....and many will want to continue to serve without having the responsibilities of being a parish priest. Our collection goes to enabling them to live as full a life as they possibly can.

St John XXIII YouTube Channel - Our parish now has a YouTube channel which will allow us to record more of our parish services, events and information. Our Lenten Parish Mission services are all available there as well as the weekly Gospel and Homily videos. You can find all these videos on our channel by [clicking here](#). Please subscribe to the channel and if you have ideas for

developing it please send them via email to Lisa or Winifred by [clicking here](#).

Medjugorje Pilgrimage - Thank you to all those parishioners who have booked on the pilgrimage for this June. Please note there will be a pre-pilgrimage meeting with film show on Sunday 18th May, 6pm in the Emmaus Room at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - In recent weeks Bishop Stephen made an appeal for adult helpers for this year's Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Can I make a further appeal for registered Nurses and Health Care Assistants. The Pilgrimage is very often the only way that those requiring care can travel, but this requires us to provide that care. All helpers are required to register their interest before 31st March. The Pilgrimage does have a nurse's fund which can offer some help with funding if required. For further information please contact the Pilgrimage Senior Nurse Liz Joy on: 07917322890 or [click here](#).

THE MISSION: I would like to thank all Parishioners who attended last week's **Parish Mission**, and all those who worked so hard to make the Mission possible. Thank you to all of you who gave Sr. Briege and Fr. Pablo such a warm welcome, they were truly touched by the friendliness of our Parishes, and the hospitality extended to them. Whilst the Mission was only three days, it took many weeks of preparation by so many individuals in each Church, and I am really grateful for all the volunteer help. **Thank you.** Especially noticeable was the silence and attentiveness in Church during the Mission talks, I thought this was very striking at both morning and evening sessions. I'm sure the Mission will bear great fruits in the weeks and months ahead, and was a great opportunity for Faith Renewal during this Lenten Season. For anyone who would like to further their experience of the Mission, and any thoughts that may be helpful for the renewal of Parish life, Fr. Martin is offering a "Listening time." on Thursday 3rd April, 7pm in the Emmaus room at **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**. An opportunity to Listen and Reflect on the themes of the Mission in the light of Fr. Pablo & Sr. Briege's talks. All welcome.

Looking for an Adventure? The Guides and Scouts of Europe, a Catholic scouting movement with 73,000 members across 27 countries, offers exciting opportunities for boys and girls aged 6-17. Our Gateshead group is growing, with spaces available for Beavers (boys and girls), Wolf Cubs, Scouts, and soon Wolves and Guides for girls. Join us on this adventure! Contact Paul Hammond by [clicking here](#) or 07973 192324 or speak to Fr Luke, who is our religious adviser or collect a flyer from the back of church. Please [click here](#) for further information.

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Washington have a vacancy for a Lunchtime Supervisory Assistant, the hours are 11.30am to 1 pm each day. If you, or someone you know is interested, please call the school office for further details the number is 0191 917 2484.

The Eucharist: A Gift to be Nurtured - As part of our aim to promote growth and knowledge of the Eucharist, the Association of the Eucharist offer [The Eucharist: A Gift to be Nurtured](#), which gives us words from Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis to guide time before the Blessed Sacrament. This resource can be used by both individuals and groups.

Contactless Donations

We are trialling at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church a contactless donation plate. It will be situated at the back of church, if proved successful we will install in all 4 churches. Further details to follow.

Other News

National Catholic Leadership Programme - This programme is for serving Deputy Headteachers in Catholic Primary and Secondary schools who are considering the role of headteacher in the next two years. It is fantastic training for the role of Catholic Headteacher, delivered by inspirational leaders across our Diocese. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Holy Week Reflections – The Diocese will not be producing a series of Diocesan Lenten Reflections in its usual format this year, instead they will produce a shorter booklet which will offer a daily reflection on the readings from Palm Sunday and throughout Holy Week. This is because the Year of Jubilee is making space for a different reflection writing opportunity entitled 'Scripture of Hope' in celebration of the Jubilee Year. Our Diocesan Writing Team look forward to sharing these resources with you in the coming weeks. Further information about accessing the Holy Week Reflection Booklet and the 'Scripture of Hope' reflections will be available next month. Please visit CAFOD's website by [clicking here](#) for prayer resources for Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost.

Marriage Preparation Days - . Saturday 26 April, St Hilda, Sunderland SR5 2JD. Engaged couples can find **more information** [by clicking here](#). To find and **book on a course**, [please click here](#).

This month's tip for sustainable living: Carbon Footprint Calculator - Faced with record global temperatures, extreme weather events with millions of people around the world suffering the impact of climate breakdown, it can be difficult to know how to respond. One positive action we can all take is to estimate our own carbon footprint and understand how to lessen our environmental impact. Hope comes through action, however small. This month you are invited to access the [WWF carbon footprint calculator](#), which will give a concise analysis of your carbon footprint along with some ideas for reducing it.

Old Postage Stamps, Jewellery, Medals - David & Theresa O'Neill have been raising funds to assist the nuns of Little Sisters of the Poor carry on their wonderful work caring for elderly people including retired clergy & religious. They are not asking for financial help but rather by your donations of used postage stamps (any country or period), foreign currency (notes & coins from any country), broken or unwanted pieces of gold/silver jewellery & military medals from any conflict. If you have any old stamp albums or other items let David & Theresa know. Their contact details are: David & Theresa O'Neill, Tel: 0191 264 5771

Answer the Call: Teach in a Catholic School - Are you a Catholic teacher currently working outside Catholic education? Have you considered bringing your skills, experience, and faith into a Catholic school setting? Now is the time to explore how you can make a real difference in a values-driven, faith-filled learning environment. The Diocesan Department for Education are hosting an information session, for those interested in exploring teaching opportunities in our Catholic Education Trusts and schools. **Date:** Wednesday 2 April 2025 between 4.30pm - 5.30pm **Location:** The Durham Centre, Belmont DH1 1TN **Register your place by** [clicking here](#).

St Vincent de Paul Society and CAFOD are working together to offer a week of free residential work experience for 20 young adults in England and Wales. The experience will run from 22nd - 27th June in London. Candidates must have completed their first or second year at university and have a passion for social justice. Applications close on the 20th April. For any queries, please [click here](#)

The Joy of the Gospel "Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey." Evangelii Gaudium, the Joy of the Gospel, looks at the new evangelisation for the transmission of the faith and has chapters on the following subjects: The Church's Missionary Transformation; The Crisis of Communal Commitment; The Proclamation of the Gospel; The Social Dimension of Evangelization; Spirit-Filled Evangelizers. The full text of Evangelii Gaudium can be downloaded [here](#).

Adventurous Accompaniment - As we journey through this year of Jubilee, we are called to be Pilgrims of Hope. As Catholics our hope is in the Lord who is always at work in our lives. One of the keys to our faith journey is being able to recognize God's daily call and to discern God's will when we are making decisions. Our new formation programme **Adventurous Accompaniment** is designed to help us become better at walking with others, supporting them to see God at work. Find out more and book on Adventurous Accompaniment [here](#).

Reflections

Diocesan Weekly reflections can be found by [clicking here](#).

Examen -Please follow the links to go to Pray as You Go

[Saturday Examen](#) [Laetare Sunday](#)

Catholic Social Teaching

For the Newsletter, [click here](#).

Prayers - If you would like to request prayers from the parish community for someone who is sick, or recently deceased, please click on the links below and complete the necessary forms. This will enable their names to be included in private prayer and during various Masses.

[For Prayers for the Sick](#)

[For Prayers for the Deceased](#)

or ring 0191 4163583

Finance - Standing Order forms and Gift Aid forms are available by clicking on the following links:

[For St John XXIII](#) [For St Joseph's](#)

or ring 0191 4163583.

Sick and Recently Deceased -

To view the sick and recently deceased list [please click here](#). To amend the information on the list [click here](#).

Parish Newsletter If you have any comments you wish to make about the Parish Newsletter, [please click here](#).

For the latest information, please go to any of the following Websites:

[Parish of St John XXIII](#)

[Parish of St Joseph's](#)

[Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle](#)

All the Links you will ever need!



Please [click here](#) or Scan the QR Code with your mobile phone to go to a site containing All the Links You'll Ever Need.

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