

# 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: 01916498257  
Administrator: Audrey Huntley 0191 4163583  
(Tuesday & Wednesday 8am-1pm, Thursday 11am-4pm & Friday 12-5pm)  
Email: [StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk)  
Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



**In the Partnership of Benedict**  
Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Penshaw, Sacriston, Washington

## The 4th Sunday of Advent, 20th - 21st December 2025

## The Holy Family, 27th - 28th December 2025, Year A

Saturday 20th December	St Joseph	5pm	Patricia Stobbart (nee Ford) RIP
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 21st December	St John Boste	9.30am	George & Elizabeth Donkin RIP
<b>4th Sunday of Advent</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Jim McDevite & Terry & Brendan Ford RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Dave Ranaghan RIP

### Readings for 4th Sunday of Advent

#### First reading: The Virgin is with Child

Isaiah 7:10-14

In those days: The Lord spoke to Ahaz: 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.' But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.' And Isaiah said, 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.'

**Response to the Psalm: Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.**

#### Second Reading: The Son of God in Power

Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel — which means, God with us. Alleluia.**

#### The Gospel: Emmanuel

Matthew 1:18-24

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel' — which means, God with us. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife.

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 22nd December 2025

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 22nd December	St Bede	10am	<b>William &amp; Eileen Harland and deceased family</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>Carl Poulter RIP</b>
Tuesday 23rd December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Teresa, Tony &amp; Clare Madden RIP</b>
	<b>St John of Kanty</b> St Joseph	7pm	<b>Christine Bradley RIP</b>
Wednesday 24th December <b>Christmas Eve</b>	St Bede	5pm	<b>Ann &amp; Jack Smith &amp; Deceased Family</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	6pm	<b>Jim Walker RIP</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7.30pm	<b>Jim McDevitte, Terry &amp; Brendan Ford RIP</b>
	St John Boste	8pm	<b>Living &amp; Deceased members of Bell , Readman &amp; Roberts Families</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11.30pm*	<b>Margaret Hodgson &amp; Deceased Family</b>
Thursday 25th December <b>Christmas Day</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Deceased Hall &amp; Lyons Family</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	<b>Jim Walker RIP</b>
	St Joseph	10am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
Friday 26th December <b>St Stephen</b>	St John Boste	10am*	<b>Norman Potter RIP</b>
	St Joseph	10am	<b>Our Altar Servers</b>
Saturday 27th December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>John Barker RIP</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Joseph	5pm	<b>John &amp; Joan Taylor + Bob &amp; Cath McLeman RIP</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>William &amp; Eileen Harland and deceased family</b>
Sunday 28th December <b>The Holy Family</b>	St John Boste	9.30am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Eddie Ashburner RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>3rd Anniversary David Barry RIP</b>

### St. Joseph's Quiet Life

Prophecy, mysticism, and cold reality come crashing together in our gospel this week, the 4th Sunday of Advent (Matthew 1:23). There is no logic or reason in dreams, this is why if we become semi lucid in a dream we can't read any writing we see in the dream. And this is why we know that although this took place when Joseph was asleep, the clear and direct message from the angel makes it more of a vision than a dream, or perhaps a vision within a dream.

It's difficult for us living today to grasp the magnitude of what the angel asked Joseph to do, it meant going against everything Joseph was brought up to believe. But such was the power and clarity of the vision Joseph does not question its veracity. It must have greatly helped that Joseph, as a devout Jew, was undoubtedly aware of the prophecy of Issiah concerning the birth of the messiah, and after the vision he seems to understand what his role will be too. God offered Joseph a vision of grace and he accepted.

The qualities of holiness include prudence and a quiet confidence in God's will. Joseph was gifted with both.

In a spiritually intuitive way he knew his role was to be the earthly guardian of the messiah. To care for him when he was at his most vulnerable. To guard him, along with Mary, until he was able to present himself to his people and complete his mission as the messiah. Our Gospel also points to the coming divine presence of God among his people by fulfilling the prophecy of Issiah. It promises forgiveness, redemption, and a road to salvation. But at its heart is St Joseph. He can sometimes be overlooked or not receive the admiration he is due. But in his quiet yet resolute faith, working quietly in the background, he is a model for us to follow this coming Christmas time. So, like Joseph, let us stand back and place Jesus at the centre of all we say and do, so that through us the people we come close to have the opportunity to grasp the real meaning and power of Christmas.

Fr Martin Wheaton

## Readings for the Holy Family:

### First reading: Honour Your Father and Your Mother

**Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14**

The Lord honoured the father above the children, and he confirmed the judgement of the mother over her sons. Whoever honours his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honours his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother. O son, help your father in his old age and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show indulgence; in all your strength do not despise him. For kindness to a father will not be forgotten, and against your sins it will be credited to you.

**Response to the Psalm: *Blessed are all who fear the Lord, and walk in his ways.***

### Second Reading: The Overcoat of Love

**Colossians 3:12-21**

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts; let the message of Christ find a home with you. Alleluia.**

### The Gospel: The Flight to Egypt

**Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23**

When the Magi had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.' But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.' And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

## Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 29th December 2025

Monday 29th December	St Bede	10am	<b>Josie Hunter</b>
<b>St Thomas a Becket</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>Joseph &amp; Henrietta Anderson RIP</b>
Tuesday 30th December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>John Barker RIP</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Paddy Brady RIP</b>
Wednesday 31st December	St Bede	10am	<b>Margaret Hodgson &amp; Deceased Hodgson &amp; Stephenson Families</b>
<b>St Sylvester I</b>	St John Boste	7pm	<b>Cornelius &amp; Sarah Bartley &amp; Terence McGee</b>
Thursday 1st January	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>John &amp; Theresa McIntrye RIP</b>
<b>Mary, Mother of God</b>	St Joseph	12 noon	<b>Ron Fryer RIP</b>
Friday 2nd January	St John Boste	10am*	<b>Intentions of McClurey Family</b>
<b>Ss Basil the Great &amp; Gregory Nazianzen</b>	St Joseph	10am	<b>Zillah Richardson RIP</b>
Saturday 3rd January	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Vocations to the Priesthood</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Joseph	5pm	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>People of the Parish</b>
Sunday 4th January	St John Boste	9.30am	<b>Syd McElhenny</b>
<b>2nd Sunday after Christmas</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Margaret Logan RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	<b>Gerard Fagan &amp; Deceased Family Members</b>



## Christmas Wishes

*The Priests and Deacons wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and every Blessing for the New Year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all parishioners for their dedication and support for our parishes, thank you for all you do. May God Bless you all, and your loved ones too. May God Bless you all.*



**We would like to say a special thank you to Audrey Huntley**, our Parish Secretary and administrator, who will be leaving the post in January. Audrey has been with the parish for the last seven years and has been an invaluable help to the effective running of our two Parishes. We would like to thank her for all her hard work and commitment shown to the life of our communities and wish her all the very best for the future. Thankyou Audrey. Fr. Martin and fellow Clergy.

**Parish Newsletter - This will be the last edition until Sunday 4th January 2026.**

**Welcome David** - David Pinder is a fourth year Seminarian for our Diocese and is studying at Oscott College in Birmingham. David will be doing his parish placement here in St. John 23rd Parish, for the month of January. I know you will all give him a very warm welcome and offer him your support and encouragement. Thankyou.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

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

St. Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm. (Not Christmas Day) 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/Confessions:

**Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Christmas Eve, 10am-11am**, with Eucharistic Adoration.

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning, after Mass (Not Christmas Day) .

St Joseph -Thursday after noon Mass (Not Christmas Day).

St John Boste - Friday morning, after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning, after Mass.

St Bede's – Saturday after Vigil Mass.

**Advent Spiritual devotions.** Sunday 21 December 4pm, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Advent Eucharistic Adoration and Rosary.

**St Bede's, remember a loved one at Christmas.** Tags for our Christmas tree will be available in the church porch. All donations welcome.

**A Biblical Walk Through the Mass.** Fr Luke will be leading a short video study course on the Mass beginning on 9 January 2026 at 7pm at OLQP and running for five weeks, each session will last about an hour. If you have any questions please email Fr Luke at [luke.wilkinson@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:luke.wilkinson@diocesehn.org.uk)

**Blue Christmas.** Christmas can be a difficult time for many people for various reasons. A [Blue Christmas Liturgy](#) looks to acknowledge this while offering hope and support for the season ahead.

**Pilgrimage to Medjugorje, 7 - 14 June 2026.** Flying from Newcastle to Dubrovnik. Further info at '[Medjugorje North East](#)'. Led by Fr Martin Morris.

**Penshaw Catholic Women's Guild** – A special thankyou to all who contributed to the Christmas Toy Appeal. The result was amazing and all gifts very much appreciated. Thank you. Members of the P.C.W.G.

**Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - 31<sup>st</sup> July – 7<sup>th</sup> August 2026.** Celebrating 100 years since the First Diocesan Pilgrimage. Bookings are now open for the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. We travel on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July and return on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2026 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first Diocesan Pilgrimage took place led by Bishop Joseph Thorman. If you would like to book, or for further information, please contact Tangney Tours, our Tour Operator by [clicking here](#) or by calling 01732 886 666.

**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 here](#) to view from one of our Churches

## Reflections

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

**Examen** - Please follow the links to go to [Pray as You Go](#)

## 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

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

**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.

**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](#)

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