

# 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  
 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 FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, 7TH FEBRUARY- 08TH FEBRUARY 2026 Year A

Saturday 7th February	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Tony Carey RIP</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	<b>Betty &amp; Ned Charlton RIP</b>
Sunday 08 February	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
<b>The 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Greg Moorhouse RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Clare Madden Birthday Memory</b>

#### First reading: Authentic Conversion

##### Isaiah 58:6-10

Thus says the Lord: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

**Response to the Psalm: *A light rises in the darkness for the upright.***

#### Second Reading: The Secret of Paul's Success

##### 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

I, when I came to you, brothers and sisters, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

**Gospel Acclamation: : Alleluia, alleluia. I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia**

#### The Gospel: Salt and Light

##### Matthew 5:13-16

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.'

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 9th February 2026 (\* Streamed Mass)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 9th February	St Bede	10am	<b>Vocations to the Priesthood</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>Priest's Intention</b>
Tuesday 10th February <b>St Scholastica</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Kathleen Monaghan (RIP Anniversary)</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Joe Lawton RIP</b>
Wednesday 11th February <b>Our Lady of Lourdes</b>	St Bede	10am	<b>In Honour of Our Blessed Lady</b>
	St John Boste	7pm	<b>Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes</b>
Thursday 12th February	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Lisa Taylor 15th Anniversary RIP</b>
	St Joseph	12 Noon	<b>Marlene Tindale (Nee Ford) RIP</b>
Friday 13th February	St John Boste	10am*	<b>Sarah &amp; Raymond &amp; Cornelius Bartley</b>
	St Joseph (St Benet's)	9.15am	<b>Priest's Intention</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	1pm	<b>Mary Pickles Requiem</b>
Saturday 14th February <b>Ss Cyril &amp; Methodius</b>  <b>Vigil</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>David &amp; Elizabeth McCourt &amp; Deceased Family RIP</b>
	St Joseph	5pm	<b>George Smith RIP</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>In Thanksgiving for the dedicated service of our priests Fr Martin M, Fr Luke W and Fr Martin W</b>
Sunday 15th February <b>The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Jenna Freeman</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	<b>Edward Stephenson</b>

### God's Covenant of Salt

When we hear Jesus tell his apostles they are the salt of the world in this week's gospel (Matthew 5:13-16), we should realise he's not using cooking metaphors or being poetic. As we shall see, he is using salt as a symbol for the truth.

In the ancient world salt was life, as important as water to the people of that time. As it does today, salt flavours food, it makes it taste nice, but this was not its true value to the people of Jesus' time. Salt was the fridge and deep freezer of the ancient world. That is, it was first and foremost a preservative. It allowed the people to keep food from the past usable for times in the future when their contemporary food supplies had run out. It was to them therefore a lifesaving substance.

It's for this reason that salt would take on a profound spiritual role in the relationship between God and his people. So important that all sacrificial offerings to God were to be first sprinkled in salt, "You must not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offering. add salt to all your offerings." (Leviticus 2:13). Salt took on a near sacramental role as it came to represent the covenant. The image of salt was also used politically. In Chronicles when Jeroboam rose up against king Abijah, we see Abijah standing on the slope of Mount Zemaraim, preaching, "Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel for ever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?" (Chronicles 13:5)

God's Covenant of Salt with David represents his enduring promise to him and his descendants, a promise that in time God would send the messiah, the messiah for all nations, through the Davidic family. Then Israel would be transformed into the New Jerusalem. Jerusalem would no longer be important as a portion of land, a place, rather it would be transformed into a spiritual reality, The New Jerusalem. This new Jerusalem would be a transcendent nation, a spiritual reality, not a physical place. It would be founded on love and truth, and it would be bought with the sacrifice of the lamb, first covered in salt. It was to be a visible community representing the eternal covenant and calling all peoples to itself. Today we call this New Jerusalem the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.

Now we know the true meaning of salt we can understand what Jesus is telling his Apostles. When he is telling them to be the salt of the world, he is really telling them, and their successors, the bishops of today, to remember that they must teach the truth. They must remain loyal and committed to the covenant they have with him, and with God the father, in the Spirit - The Covenant of Salt .

Fr M Wheaton

**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

## What's On in the Parish

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

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

St Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm

I do encourage as many of you as possible to spend some time in quiet prayer with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration. Fr Martin Morris.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confessions** - The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in all of our Churches:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning after Mass.

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.

**OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's club)** - Please note, the club is on a Tuesday at 1pm in the Lindisfarne Room, at St Bede's! All most welcome!

**Safeguarding** - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is a priority in every parish and diocesan organisation. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle is fully committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults which is at the heart of the Church's mission. The Diocese operates a zero-tolerance approach. We adopt and implement fully the policies and procedures of the Catholic Church of England and Wales, which is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. To discuss any safeguarding concerns please contact a safeguarding officer in any of our churches - their details are on the noticeboard in the porch, or follow the contact details on our Parish Website under '[Safeguarding](#)'. Details of our Diocesan policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

**Baptisms** - Please note that there is a new system for all Baptisms in the Parish. If you want to request a Baptism, please collect a form from the church where you want the Baptism to take place, complete the form and hand it in to any member of the clergy. For more information please call 07552 733540. You can also download the form by [clicking here](#).

Next Wednesday 11th February is the **Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes**. It is also world day of prayer for the sick. On Wednesday Morning we will have Mass in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes at St. Bede's, which will include the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of the sick. All welcome.

### Craft and Chat

St John Boste- Mon 7-9pm weekly.

Our Lady's- Tues 9.30-11.30am weekly.

New members always welcome

Any queries ring **Kath Bengston** 07743667823/ **Chris O'Neill** 07815162153

### Lent:

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, 18th February.

Ashes will be distributed at all Masses that day.

During the Lenten season there will be many different opportunities for our spiritual renewal, including Stations of The Cross in each church.

Friday 6pm - St. Bede's, Wednesday - St. John Boste

6.30pm, Wednesday 12 Noon - Our Lady Queen of Peace, with soup lunch, and each Sunday afternoon at 4pm at our Blessed

Lady Immaculate. Family Fast day is Friday 27th February, offering envelopes are at the back of each church.

**Let us keep in our prayers** those members of our parish who are preparing for reception into full communion with the Church at Easter. They will attend the 'rite of election' at St. Mary's Cathedral on the first Sunday of Lent, when Bishop Stephen will enrol them as Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

### 'NEW SONG'!

Come and join us for the February New Song! Come and be nourished by God's word and some great company! All are welcome! (NB. We're in the Emmaus Room - not the Parish Room over at the school!)

**Where:** Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Emmaus Room. NE38 7HS

**When:** 8 February 2026 @ 4.00 pm.

**Email:** [newsongne@gmail.com](mailto:newsongne@gmail.com)

**Instagram:** @newsongne

### St. Joseph's School Washington.

The staff and children of St Joseph's School invite St John 23rd parishioners to join them for BINGO AND BISCUITS on Monday 16th February at 10.30 am.

## Other News

### 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 going to their website <https://www.tangney-tours.com/tours-and-pilgrimages/diocese-hexham-newcastle/> or by calling 01732 886 666.

**Appeal for Lourdes Medical team, 2026.** The diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes marks its centenary in 2026. The pilgrimage relies on the generosity of nurses, student nurses, healthcare assistants, and other volunteers. If anyone would like further information on helping with the pilgrimage, please contact the lead nurse Michelle Hall via [e-mail](#).

**Celebration of Marriage & Family Life 2026** - Bishop Stephen has kindly agreed to preside at the annual Celebration of Marriage and Family Life Mass in the Cathedral on Saturday 14 February 2026 at 12:00 noon. This open invitation will focus on couples celebrating significant anniversaries in 2026; we are sure there will be couples celebrating 25 or 50 or 60+ years anniversaries but is open also to engaged couples preparing for marriage, those who have been married since our last Mass in 2025 and all married couples. We include those widowed and bereaved during this time and all who were unable, perhaps, to visit wives and husbands in hospital and homes prior to their deaths. In these unprecedented times, we remember couples in crisis and individual adults and children experiencing difficulties and abuse in their family relationships. We wish all to know that no-one is forgotten and that the Sacramental life, despite the pressures of contemporary life and their experiences throughout the past year, is very much alive and prayed for. Anyone celebrating a special anniversary can request a certificate by completing a form with their details: <https://bit.ly/MarriageMass2026> or scan the QR code using a smart phone camera; this will take you directly to the form or contact [marriage@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:marriage@diocesehn.org.uk) or ring 0191 243 3316. Such certificates will be presented to couples by Bishop Stephen within our Mass.





## Do you have some spare time on your hands and want a fulfilling volunteer role?

Our residential centre on Holy Island needs volunteers in 2026.

There are lots of roles: Working with the children on our **Vinnies Summer Camps**, during the Summer holidays as a caretaker, kitchen assistants, cooks, and volunteering to work directly with the children. It's hard work, but so much fun and very worthwhile! No cost, just your time and patience for an interesting week on this beautiful island!

Or perhaps you are retired or have flexible holidays and could give some time to help at our Term Time Camps. These Camps allow hundreds of children from the Diocese and further afield have a great residential holiday in our centre. Guaranteed hard work but fantastic memories too! To join our fabulous team or find out more information about any of the roles and to volunteer, please visit our website: **Holy Island SVP Vinnies Camp** <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp> or contact [BarbaraT@svp.org.uk](mailto:BarbaraT@svp.org.uk)

**Night Falls – a new passion play by Paul Birch** - 26 February 2026. Middlesbrough's St Mary's Cathedral to host powerful new passion play. Riding Lights Theatre Company presents 'Night Falls' – a new passion play by Paul Birch. Set over the four days leading up to the crucifixion, 'Night Falls' retells the Easter story through two strangers sheltering in Bethany, in the house of Lazarus – where hope, faith, doubt and grief collide, and where the impossible has already occurred. Blending music with powerful drama, this fresh and vivid production explores themes of courage, belief, loss, fear and hope that resonate widely. The performance is suitable for ages 12-plus, as some mature themes are explored. Cost: Tickets are £15 (concessions £10), with a 10% discount for groups of 10 or more. [Book here](#).

**Fundraising Wine Tasting Evening** - The Friends of Ushaw committee are holding a fundraising wine tasting evening at Ushaw Historic House, Durham (former RC priest training of the North), on 12th February from 7pm - in case of interest to anyone in your parishes. £28pp for members of the Friends, £38pp standard ticket. There is B & B at Ushaw too. A nice Valentine's gift! Here's the link - <https://ushaw.org/whatson/wine-tasting/> Email [meet@ushaw.org](mailto:meet@ushaw.org)

**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor".** Do you listen to the voice of truth, the voice of Jesus Christ? Maybe he is inviting you to discern a vocation to the Priesthood. For more information, speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or click [here](#)

**The Catechism in a Year** - Sign up for Ascension's [Catechism In A Year](#) podcast with Fr Mike Schmitz, and you can: Read the entire Catechism of the Catholic Church in 365 days; Understand the essentials of the Catholic Faith and why they matter; See how Church teaching is rooted in Sacred Scripture; Absorb over 2,000 years of Sacred Tradition; Encounter God's plan of sheer goodness; Transform their relationship with the Church that Christ founded.

**The Bible in a Year** - Ascension's [Bible in a Year](#) Podcast, hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz and featuring Jeff Cavins, guides Catholics through the Bible in 365 daily episodes. Each 20-25 minute episode includes: Two to three scripture readings; A reflection from Fr. Mike Schmitz; A guided prayer to help you hear God's voice in his Word

**Mass for the Holy Land – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 11.00am St Joseph's Church, Birtley**  
All are warmly invited to attend Mass for the Holy Land on Saturday 25th April at 11.00am at St Joseph's Church, Birtley, celebrated with members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Northumbrian Section.

The Order supports the Christian presence in the Holy Land, assisting local Christian communities through pastoral, educational and charitable work. At a time of great challenge and uncertainty for many in the region, this mission remains especially important. This Mass offers an opportunity for the parish to pray together for peace and to stand in solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land. Members of the Order will be present and will take part in the Mass, including a formal liturgical procession. This will also be an opportunity to find out more about the work of the Order and its mission. Parishioners, families and friends are very welcome, and all are encouraged to come along and join in prayer.

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## Reflections

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

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

**Baptism** - To request a Baptism, you can download the form by [clicking here](#) or ring 07552 733540.

**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.



[To post a notice on this Newsletter, please click stjoh23bulletin@gmail.com](#)