

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
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



In the Partnership of Benedict

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

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT, 28 FEBRUARY - 1 MARCH 2026 Year A

Saturday 28 February Vigil	St Joseph	5pm	Pat McAdam RIP
	St Bede	5pm	Anthony John Thompson
Sunday 1 March The Second Sunday of Lent	St John Boste	9:30am	Margaret Hodgson & Deceased Hodgson & Stephenson Families
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Vera & Tony Gosgrove RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Mrs Eileen Shannon

First reading: The Call of Abraham.

Genesis 12:1-4a

In those days: The Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went, as the Lord had told him.

Response to the Psalm: *May your merciful love be upon us, as we hope in you, O Lord.*

Second Reading: The Response to God's Love.

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

Beloved: We share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ, Wisdom of God the Father. From a bright cloud, the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my beloved Son, listen to him'. Glory to you, O Christ, Wisdom of God the Father.

The Gospel: The Transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1-9

At that time: Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.' When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Rise, and have no fear.' And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one, but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, 'Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.'

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 2 March 2026 (Streamed Mass *)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 2 March	St Bede	10am	Betty Cosgrove
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	SVP
Tuesday 3 March	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Sophia Willey RIP
	St Joseph	7pm	Deceased members of the Hattam Family
Wednesday 4 March St Casimir	St Bede	10am	Betty Walker & Adam and Harry Ray RIP
	St John Boste	7pm	Louise Tobin Davies
Thursday 5 March	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Michael Walker & deceased Walker Family
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Elaine Hannon RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	12:30pm	Funeral Mass Catherine Linklater
Friday 6 March	St Joseph at St Benet's	9:15am	Priest's Intention
	St John Boste	10am*	Peter and Peter David Jessop
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	12:45pm	Funeral Service Terry Bewick
Saturday 7 March Ss Perpetua & Felicity	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Lawrence Railton RIP
	Vigil		
	St Joseph	5pm	Pat & Bill Stobbart RIP
	St Bede	5pm	Phyllis Kilburn & William
Sunday 8 March Third Sunday of Lent	St John Boste	9:30am	Jane & Tom Rutter & deceased members of Rutter Family
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Kenneth Connolly RIP

Describing Our Mission in Washington, Penshaw and Birtley.

The Bishop has laid out a Pastoral strategy for the next ten years. Implementing this strategy will need every Parish and partnership of Parishes in the Diocese to reflect on their mission and to form a realistic, clear and honest appraisal of where we are, and what we need to do. The Bishop has clearly stated that our priority has to be, 'Mission, Mission, Mission' and that we must act now to strengthen our Mission and purpose, support clergy and lay leaders, and steward our resources wisely so that now, and for future generations, we have a Church that is vibrant, sustainable and faithful.

We have been provided with a template to help us discern and reflect locally on our Mission, community life, ministries and physical resources (including buildings.) Following the Bishop's pastoral letter last weekend ([here](#)) in which he describes what he wishes us to do, we have this template which will ask us all to engage with four questions prompting us to clearly describe our Mission and purpose in Washington, Penshaw and Birtley.

As a partnership, we are asked to complete the local phase of this discernment by 23 April 2026, and it will then pass on to the Deanery for consideration and consolidation into the Diocesan wide plan. To do this we will need to involve every part of the community in our parishes and help them understand and express their local Mission, purpose, strengths and challenges, and to do this honestly and with a view to the future.

The Bishop is very clear that the principle behind this discernment is **Mission First, Structures Second**. That, is our first task, to look at Mission in our communities, and then to consider the resources we will need to fulfil that Mission. The template is structured in exactly this way. We are asked to begin with four questions, in terms of how we worship, how we teach the Faith, how we serve, and how we build the family of faith. Then, and only then, we will look at how our resources serve our Mission. This will include, finances, buildings, people, and sustainability. Our task then will be to summarise in a single document for the Bishop the key issues:

In light of the fact of the challenging situation we face in regards to parish finance, (a significant overspend) for Washington and Penshaw, I will be speaking more in coming weeks on our own particular situation and the scale of the challenge we now face.

To help us begin this Pastoral strategy and address the four questions, I invite parishioners of Washington and Penshaw Parish, to a discernment evening at St Bede's Hall on Thursday 19 March, 6.30pm - 8pm. In a prayerful atmosphere we will reflect on the questions the Bishop would like us to consider. Thank you.

Fr Martin Francis Morris (Parish Priest)

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 www.diocesehn.org.uk 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 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/Confession 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 – Saturday after Vigil Mass.

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

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](#).

Family Fast Day is Friday 27 February, offering envelopes are at the back of each church. There will be a special collection at all Masses this weekend..

We Dare to Ask - This year's Lenten resource 'We Dare to Ask' is inviting parishioners to prepare their hearts and minds to renew their Baptismal promises during the Easter celebrations. Through Baptism, we are united with Christ and given our mission to image him in our homes and communities. This resource aims to contextualise our vocation within God's plan of Salvation, Christ's self-gift and the Sacramental Life of the Church. The world tempts us in all manner of ways yet by God's grace, we can turn back to him with contrite hearts to ask his mercy and forgiveness. We stand to renew our Baptismal promises: to ask for his life, his grace and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to renew and restore our covenant relationship with Jesus, that we may live in an ever-deepening union with him as his baptised son or daughter. A Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle booklet, with a forward by Bishop Stephen, is available to view or download by [clicking here](#). It provides a resource for small group faith-sharing and for individual meditation, with five sessions on the theme of our Baptismal Vocation. Alternatively you can access each session's materials individually by [clicking here](#).

Stations of the Cross During Lent

Our Lady Queen of Peace, Wednesday Noon, tea/ coffee afterwards
St John Boste, Wednesday 6.30pm
St Joseph, Thursday 11.30am before Mass
St Bede, Friday 6pm
Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Sunday 4pm

This Lent Children at St Bede's Catholic Primary School are supporting CAFOD and joining other schools around the country to help fight poverty around the world. To raise money, they are going to complete a Big Lent 'Walk-a-thon' where they spend a whole day, Tuesday 31 March, taking turns walking around the school fields. From the start of the day until the end there will always be a member of St Bede's walking, come rain or shine! We would love you to sponsor us. You can do so by dropping a donation off at the school office, passing on a donation to a member of school staff at Wednesday morning Mass or scanning the QR code/visiting our JustGiving page [here](#).



Scan to donate

Please put yourself forward. If you would like to participate in taking the offerings to the altar during Mass at any church, please speak to one of the helpers who are at the church door before and after Mass.

Group 735 HCPT The Pilgrimage Trust are holding a fundraising Ceilidh on Friday 13 March 7pm to 11 pm at North Biddick Club, Fatfield. Music by *The Whole Shebang*. Our Group Target is £1390 to sponsor a Special Needs Child for a life changing Pilgrimage/Holiday in Lourdes at Easter. Price, which includes a finger buffet, is £8. Under 16s free if accompanied by a ticket bearing parent or guardian. Tickets available after each Mass at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate. Donations of raffle prizes will be much appreciated. Do please join us for this joyful event.

Songs of Peace and Praise 9 July at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church. "Peace begins with a Smile" (St Teresa of Calcutta). Can you help put a smile on the faces of others and spread a little peace? This invitation is for everyone! Members of our Parish, our schools and other denominations or faiths, our local communities. Peace was given by Christ for everyone! We are looking for people, any age, to help lead our Parish in an evening of song and praise. You can sing solo or be part of a duet or larger group or choir. You may play an instrument, be a member of a band or orchestra, any number or size. School, college and community groups are most welcome. We are also looking for anyone who might like to create poetry or read on the evening, scriptures, prayers, poetry or prose. Please do not hide your talents! Share them and help us all to spread Christ's Peace. If you would like to participate, choose your piece of music, hymn or song about peace or praise and then start practicing. Contact details will be given at a later date. Many thanks.

Cafod Big Lent Walk. Please collect a leaflet after Mass and see how you can support CAFOD'S work by walking or praying this Lent. This Lent, CAFOD is telling the stories of how we accompany communities who are striving to grow food and care for their families in the face of increasingly severe droughts and floods in South Sudan, in Bangladesh and in Zimbabwe. You can donate [here](#).

Pastoral Strategy. In Bishop Stephen's Pastoral Letter, read at all this weekend's Masses, we hear about God's calling for our Diocese. The hopes and challenges we all face in the coming years. All parishes are asked to reflect and discern on their mission as we continue our journey to live as a flourishing Diocese alive in the Holy Spirit. More information is available [here](#) including details of an online session on Tuesday 3 March at 7pm.

Other News

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - 31 July – 7 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 July and return on Friday 7 August. 2026 is the 100th anniversary of the first Diocesan Pilgrimage. To book, or for further information, please contact Tangney Tours on their website [here](#) or by calling 01732 886 666.

“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](#)

A Day of Renewal from Emmanuel Charismatic Community - 28 March 2026. St Mary's Catholic School, Newcastle. The Emmanuel Charismatic Community in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle invite you to a day of renewal, with guest speaker Michelle Moran titled 'Holiness in today's world: Life does not have a mission – but is a mission.' Michelle Moran is an internationally renowned speaker, who was personally appointed by Pope Francis in 2016 to help establish CHARIS, and she was President of International Charismatic Renewal Services in the Vatican from 2006 – 2017. During the day of renewal, there will be a celebration of the Vigil Mass of Sunday and will have prayers for healing. We ask that you bring a packed lunch with you to this day, and there is no charge for attending, but a collection will be taken on the day. To book your place, please contact the Emmanuel Team by [clicking here](#) or call/text 07546 302832.

Mass for the Holy Land – Saturday 25 April at 11am St Joseph's Church, Birtley

All are warmly invited to attend Mass for the Holy Land on Saturday 25 April at 11am 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.

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 in the church and operates a zero-tolerance approach. The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the heart of the Church's mission. 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. Details of our Diocesan policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network - Each month the Holy Father will have a main prayer intention for people to use as part of their daily prayer, and he will also announce an "urgent intention" for people's prayer. A short video based on the main intention published each month and known as 'The Pope Video'. These videos can be viewed through the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#) visit now and watch this month's intention.

Diocesan Vacancy.

Role: Parish Finance Officer. Salary Scale: £43,000 to £45,000

Location: St Vincent's Diocesan Offices, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 7PY

Applicant Pack from Annie Leaver, Head of HR [here](#)

Closing Date Wednesday 4 March 2026 (we reserve the right to close the post early)

Shortlisting Wednesday 11 March 2026. Interviews scheduled Tuesday 17 March 2026.

The full advert can be viewed [here](#).

Irish Night. The Little Sisters of the Poor (St Joseph's Home, Westmorland Road, NE4 7QA) are hosting an Irish Night on Saturday 21 March. There will be a Ceilidh band, dancing, food and a raffle. Tickets, priced £10 each, are available by phone on 0191 2731279.

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.



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