

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>
 Parish Secretary: Anne Ridley 0191 4163583
 Office Hours: Tuesday 9am - 2:30pm (Penshaw),
 Wednesday & Thursday 9am - 2:30pm (Washington Village)



In the Partnership of Benedict

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

THE THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, 24TH – 25TH OCTOBER 2026 Year A

Saturday 24th Oct	St Joseph	5pm	Pat Stobbert (RIP)
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Joy Wood (RIP) - Family Home Anniversary
Sunday 25th Oct	St John Boste	9:30am	Margaret Hodgson & Hodgson & Stephenson Families
30th Sunday in Ordinary Time	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Andrew Bell (RIP)
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	People of the Parish

First reading: Commandments about the Vulnerable and the Poor

Exodus 22:21-27

Thus says the Lord: 'You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless. If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a money-lender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him. If ever you take your neighbour's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.'

Response to the Psalm: : I love you, Lord, my strength.

Second Reading: Servants of the Living God

1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10

Brothers and Sisters: You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Gospel Acclamation: : : Alleluia, alleluia. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him. Alleluia.

The Gospel: The Greatest Commandment

Matthew 22:34-40

At that time: When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'

Fr. Martin Morris	0191 416 3583	Fr Andrew Shaw	0739 983 6695
Fr. Martin Morris	0754 470 9356	Deacon Frank O'Neill	0779 115 5845
Fr Martin Wheaton	0770 996 1040	Deacon Tony Joy	0779 989 3419
Fr Andrew Shaw	0191 649 8257		

Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 26th October 2026 (Streamed Mass *)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 26th October Ss Chad & Cedd	St Bede	10am	Fr John Coyle (RIP)
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	Brendan & Terry Ford & Jim McDevitte (RIP)
Tuesday 27th October	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	John Barker 4th Anniversry RIP
	St Joseph	7pm	Nora Stout (RIP)
Wednesday 28th October Ss Simon & Jude	St Bede	10am	Stuart Clark
	St John Boste	7pm	Fr. John Coyle
Thursday 29th October	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Pat Graham
	St Joseph	Noon	Thanksgiving (JP)
Friday 30th October	St Joseph	10am	Kate Flood (RIP)
	St John Boste	10am*	Gerard Dent (RIP)
Saturday 31st October	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Joyce O'Brien
Vigil	St Joseph	5pm	All Souls/ All Saints
	St Bede	5pm	Angela Robinson & daughter Emma Carr (RIP)
Sunday 1st November All Saints Day	St John Boste	9:30am	People of the Parish
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Linda Harrigan (RIP)
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	George & Mary Bland Golden Wedding Anniversary

Recently Deceased Fr. John Coyle, Stuart Clark,

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

The context of today's short Gospel is important. It forms part of the fateful unfurling of the events in Holy Week. Early on in the preaching of Jesus in Jerusalem, the crowds that are drawn to him, inevitably include the elite of Jewish scholars who are attempting to ensnare him. One false word and the cry of blasphemy will follow. The Sadducees have admitted defeat but the Pharisees put forward a lawyer to attempt a derailment with the simple question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus' response is straight from the Book of Deuteronomy (6: 4-5), known as the Shema, the central declaration of faith in Judaism. "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Who more than Jesus understood the significance of every syllable of this ancient text, as the days drew inexorably closer to Good Friday?

Jesus is quick to follow up with the corollary: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

These words, again, echo what was central to Jewish law. There is no further challenge just the growing determination to cast Jesus into the hands of the occupying Roman power.

We need to consider what form of love Jesus is talking about here. His listeners would see it as an active sentiment, not emotional. It requires something of us. Jesus is connecting us to God in every sense. We are God's creation, and, in recognising that same act of divine creation in others, we are commanded to love it. We are, in the most literal sense, all God's family.

As Christians, we must rise to that challenge with open hearts and minds.

"It is love alone that gives worth to all things." St Teresa of Avila

Angela Nichols

We aim to live-stream Mass daily at 10am every day, except Monday, streamed at 7pm, and alternate Sundays when Mass is live-streamed at either 10am or 11am. Please refer to the * on the Mass table which 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 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.

OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's club), Please note, the club meets on Tuesday at 1pm in [the Lindisfarne Room at St Bede's](#). All most welcome!

Parish 'LIFE' Group. - We are hoping to begin a 'LIFE' Group in the parish soon. The group will work closely with the project of The Guild of Our Lady of Good Counsel network, in supporting Mothers and Expectant Mothers with housing, feeding, and other practical difficulties. They will also promote the Annual day for Life, and the January 'white flower appeal'. All welcome.

Special Collection This Week: Clergy Training Fund

This weekend we will have a retiring collection for the annual Clergy training fund. The fund remains open until 15th November for any private donations. Thankyou for your generosity. Copies of a letter form Fr. John Bagnall, (Diocesan Vocations director) are at the back of each Church which gives further details of this fund.

Annual Mass for the faithful departed .

Our Mass for the Holy Souls will take place on Saturday 7th November at 10am at **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**. In this Mass we remember and pray for all our departed loved ones, during which the names of all those who have died in our parish this last year will be read out. All present will be invited to come forward to the altar and light a candle in their memory. All welcome.

Remembrance Sunday - On Sunday 8th November there will be silent Eucharistic Exposition at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church, 4-5pm. We will conclude with Evening Prayer of the dead and Benediction. All welcome.

Next Sunday is the Feast of All Saints. We celebrate the lives of our Brothers and Sisters who have gone before us marked with the sign of Faith and now share in the glory of Heaven. During the 11am Mass we also celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for Julia Ions, John James McCourt and Anabella Pope. As we receive them into full Communion with the Church we wish them every Blessing, and congratulations. We also congratulate Israel who will make his First Holy Communion on that day too.

CONFESSIONS	
Church	Time
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Thursday after 10am Mass
St Joseph	Thursday after Noon Mass
St John Boste	Friday after 10am Mass
Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	Saturday after 10am Mass
St Bede	Saturday after 5pm Mass

Congratulations to Elliott Dickman who has been received into full Communion with the Church. We wish Elliott every blessing for the future as he receives the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion.

Holy Souls day - 2nd November. In addition to our normal Mass times on Monday 2nd November, there will be Mass at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate at 12 noon to pray for all our departed loved ones. Our Lady's Church will remain open until 6.30pm that day for private prayer for the Holy souls. "A plenary Indulgence applicable to the Holy Souls may be gained from midday of the eve to midnight of All souls on the following conditions; A prayerful visit to a Church or chapel during which the Our Father and the Apostles creed are said, to which are added sacramental confession (Within the month) and prayer for the Pope's intentions. "(Diocesan Ordo.)

Other News

Remembrance Mass – Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage

A Remembrance Mass has been organised by the Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage for Friday 20th November 7.00pm at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington. This is open to everyone, not just those who have been to Lourdes. There are special candles that can be purchased to be burned at the Mass in memory of loved ones. These are £3.00 each and available by contacting the Lourdes office – lourdes@diocesehn.org.uk

Italian Medical Charity

We have inherited the work of the former Italian Hospital in London. After it was sold to the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, the proceeds are being used to help those of Italian origin who are in need of funds for medical treatment that the NHS has difficulty in providing or for their carers. If you would like to receive information about this please visit our website at italianmedicalcharity.co.uk or write to us at IMC, Kings Lodge, Kingsway, N12 0EW.

Little Sisters of the Poor - Christmas Fayre

The Little Sisters of the Poor will be holding a Christmas Fayre on **Saturday 21st November 2026** at St Joseph's Home, Westmorland Road, Newcastle.

The Fayre is on from 12pm until 3pm. There will be a raffle, tombola, bottle stall, arts and crafts and other stalls. They will have a children's stall where everyone is a winner. Refreshments will be available. All are welcome.

RETREAT: BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

20th–23rd November 2026

Step away from the noise and rediscover the stillness in which we become attentive to God. Led by Fr Roger Dawson SJ, Liz Lord and Steve Noone, this residential retreat explores mindfulness, psychology and the Christian spiritual life. The weekend includes talks, contemplative prayer, Mass, Adoration and time to walk, rest and reflect in the peaceful surroundings of the Stonyhurst estate. Find out more and book:

<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/be-still-and-know-that-i-am-god/>

Minsteracres Retreats - We offer a varied programme of day, weekend and week-long events throughout the year. Please see the programme details by [clicking here](#).

Marriage Preparation Days - Engaged couples can find **more information** [here](#). To find and **book on a course**, please visit our [website](#) or call the phone booking service on 0800 389 3801. (In person and online courses are available.)



The Parish of St John XXIII has a dedicated YouTube channel. Here you can watch live streams of Masses. These are indicated by an asterisk next to the Mass times on pages one and two. You can also see recordings of past Masses and Gospel Homilies. The channel can be accessed [here](#).

SCHOOL APPEAL PANEL MEMBER RECRUITMENT

The Diocesan Department for Education are seeking volunteers to become School Appeal Panel Members.

School appeal panel members play an important role in ensuring appeals are considered fairly, independently, and objectively. This rewarding opportunity allows you to support children, young people, and families within our local community. Full training will be provided. As a school appeal panel member, you will:

Listen carefully to information presented

Consider cases fairly and impartially

Contribute to independent decision-making

Help ensure a fair and credible process for all

If you have good listening skills, sound judgement, and a commitment to fairness, we would love to hear from you. For more information, please contact: education@diocesehn.org.uk

MARRIAGE PREPARATION WEEKEND

8th–10th January 2027

Our residential Marriage Preparation Weekend offers engaged couples time and space to explore the beauty of the Church's teaching of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Led by Stefan and Eleonora Kaminski, it combines a Scripture-based theological reflection with prayer, thoughtful conversation and practical exercises for couples. Find out more and book:

<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/marriage-preparation/>

Other News

Life in the Spirit Seminar Series: Harlow Green - 24th September 2026—12th November 2026. Join us for this opportunity to experience the new life we are promised through baptism in the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit seminars are being run by the Diocesan CHARIS group and you will be very welcome to attend. Many who have attended previous seminars have spoken of how it has given their faith a real boost and helped them experience God's love in tangible ways. Venue: St Anne, Rokeby View, Harlow Green, Gateshead, NE9 7UD. Cost: Free. Time: 7pm to 8.30pm. Dates and Titles of Sessions: The New Life – Christine Dixon, 29th October 2026: Receiving God's Gifts – Fr Chris Warren, 5th November 2026: Baptism in the Holy Spirit – Fr Shaun O'Neill, 12th November 2026: Growth – Nikki Dickenson, 19th November 2026: Transformation in Christ – John Wheeler. Please book your place [here](#).

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi - Bishop Stephen will lead a Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome and the centre of the Eternal City before then moving onto Assisi in Umbria, the 'green heart' of Italy, and the centre of St Francis and St Clare's ministry. The Pilgrimage will take place **22nd – 29th October 2027** at a cost of £1,725 per person. Places are limited to 50 pilgrims and places are allocated on a first come first served basis with payment of the deposit securing your place. For information and how to book please [click here](#) or type in the link. <https://diocesehn.org.uk/news/diocesan-pilgrimage-to-rome-assisi/>

Bereavement Support - Whilst bereavement is extremely hard at any time, the time spent in lockdown when funerals had to take place in very restricted circumstances have taken their toll on so many. Whilst family and friends can be immensely supportive, sometimes a bereaved person wants to talk to someone outside of their immediate circle. The Emmaus Bereavement Support Team, trained in the Ministry of Consolation, is available to support those who wish to talk about their loss. Due to current restrictions, such conversations will most likely take place on the phone, but we hope as restrictions ease, it may be possible for people to meet face-to-face again. Since the launch of this service, there have been a number of requests for support, and several of our listeners have been able to accompany others on their journey of loss and bereavement. The **Emmaus Bereavement Support Service** number is **07732 980740** a member of the team will contact you promptly. [Read More](#) Quick Link: [Accompaniment in Difficult Times](#).

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 wish to request an electronic version of 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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