

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 sj23office01@gmail.com

In the Partnership of Benedict

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

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 2 - 3 DECEMBER 2023, Year B

Saturday 2 December	St Joseph	5pm	Patrick Riordan
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Kieran Cushlow (deceased anniversary)
Sunday 3 December	St John Boste	9:30am	Paul Iley and deceased members of the Crombie family
1st Sunday of Advent	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Jim Walker

COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS!

Today we begin the Season of Advent with a loud call to **Stay awake!**

This wonderful season calls us to a much-needed time of preparation:

To celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he became man to live amongst us, to suffer and to die for us and to lead us home to God our Father.

To repent and always stand ready for Christ's second coming, as St Paul calls it "*the last day, the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Both St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians and Jesus, in the Gospel according to Mark, urges us "*to be on our guard, to be vigilant, to stay awake and to*

be prepared, while we are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed,

because we do not know when the master of the house is coming and, if he does come unexpectedly, he must not find us asleep."

The prophet Isaiah captures, in such poetic language, our fragile human condition. We dare to believe that we are God's people and that we are a chosen race, but we are also painfully aware that "*we have strayed from your ways, we have hardened our hearts against fearing you, we are sinners and we have rebelled against you.*" As a result, we experience an overwhelming sense of helplessness and desolation. In the language of our Winter season – "*We have all withered like leaves and our sins blew us away like the wind!*"

We must therefore recognise our urgent need for repentance, conversion and for renewal. We long for God's help because we are unable to save ourselves. We cannot restore the harmony of our relationship with God unless God intervenes to help us. We cry out "*Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down – at your Presence the mountains would melt. Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.*"

So, let us begin this wonderful Season of Advent, fully aware of our faults and failings and our need to turn back to our loving Father from wherever we have wandered, but also full of trust and confidence that he is waiting with arms outstretched to welcome us home.

Psalm 79:

"God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved."

Deacon Peter

Fr Martin Morris	0191 649 8257	Deacon Frank O'Neill	0779 115 5845
Fr Martin Wheaton	0770 996 1040	Deacon Peter Lavery	0730 505 9297
Fr Luke Wilkinson	0191 649 8257	Deacon Tony Joy	0779 989 3419

Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 4 December 2023

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 4 December	St Bede	10am	Priest's Intention
St John Damascene	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Bernie Temple RIP
Tuesday 5 December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Thomas Robinson & Deceased Clark Family
	St Joseph	7pm	Proctor & Fitzgerald families
Wednesday 6 December	St Bede	10am	The Holy Souls
St Nicholas	St John Boste	7pm	The Sick of the Parish
Thursday 7 December	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Cynthia & Hilda
St Ambrose	St Joseph	12 noon	My sister Mary
Friday 8 December	St John Boste	10am	Sheila & William Pattison
The Immaculate Conception	St Joseph	10am	McCluskey & Stafford families
Saturday 9 December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	The People of the Parish
St Juan Diego	St Joseph	5pm	Dennis Duffy
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Maggie Tullis & Edward Conley (deceased anniversaries)
Sunday 10 December	St John Boste	9:30am	Louise Tobin Davies
2nd Sunday of Advent	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Gerard McCabe
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Joseph, Ellen & Mary Jordon

First Reading: A Thrill of Hope

Isaiah 63:16-7,64:1,3-8

You, Lord, yourself are our Father, 'Our Redeemer' is your ancient name. Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance. Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down! – at your Presence the mountains would melt. No ear has heard, no eye has seen any god but you act like this for those who trust him. You guide those who act with integrity and keep your ways in mind. You were angry when we were sinners; we had long been rebels against you. We were all like men unclean, all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing. We have all withered like leaves and our sins blew us away like the wind. No one invoked your name or roused himself to catch hold of you. For you hid your face from us and gave us up to the power of our sins. And yet, Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.

Response to the Psalm: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved

Second reading: Waiting for the Lord

Jesus 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace. I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help. Alleluia!

**The Gospel: The Watcher at the Door
Mark 13:33-37**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

The Watcher at the Door

This brief parable of the master returning unexpectedly is typical of Jesus' vivid way of speaking. The message is typical, too, because Jesus was constantly stressing that there is no time to lose. When he came in his earthly ministry he again and again challenged his hearers to make up their minds NOW, to change their ways NOW. He challenges us to do the same. We can hear the rattle of the returning Master's key in the lock. There is no time to hide the contraband, to pull our uniforms straight before greeting the Master at his entry. Even if we do not think that the world's end is imminent, even if death is not threatening, every moment counts, every decision is for or against Jesus. Saints are rumoured to have said that, if they received the news that they were to die that night, they would carry on doing what they were doing anyway. Saints can do this, because they are ready for the coming of the Lord. But what about us? If we need to put things a bit more in order to prepare for the Lord's coming, is there any valid reason to delay? The four weeks of Advent are a good time to clean things up for the Lord's coming. What would you like to change about your life in preparation for the coming of the Lord?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

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Masses are live-streamed daily at 10am everyday, except Monday when Mass is live-streamed at 7pm

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: Tuesday at 7pm; Thursday at 12 Noon; 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 Church is open on Friday afternoons from 2pm - 3pm for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. All are welcome.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in all of our Churches after Mass as follows:

Our Lady Queen of Peace on Thursday morning.

St John Boste on Friday morning.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate on Saturday morning.

St Bede's on Saturday evening.

Christmas Midnight Mass

If any singers in the parish would like to meet before Christmas to prepare music for the service please contact Michael Leckenby at mvleckenby@yahoo.com or 07981396544.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.'

Is the Lord awakening you to consider a vocation to the priesthood? Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or vocationspromoter@diocesahn.org.uk

St Robert's Christmas Coffee Morning

The student leadership team from St Robert's would like to invite parishioners to come and join them for a Christmas Coffee Morning on Wednesday 20 December from 9.30am - 11am. Students will provide a warm space, live festive music, seasonal treats and there will be a raffle and a game of bingo. There is no charge for the coffee morning, but any proceeds raised will go to CAFOD and the

Friday is the Feast of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception.

We have our usual Masses that day; the Mass on Saturday morning at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate will also be the Mass of the Feast. During this Mass the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Healing will also be available. Next Sunday 10 December at 4pm we have Advent Rosary, at Our Lady Queen of Peace, followed by the Sacrament of Holy Anointing, with special prayers for healing. All welcome.

Washington Community Food Project.

If you would like to join us for our coffee morning, please could you register your interest no later than Wednesday 13 December by emailing amckenna@str.bwcet.com or by ringing 0191 7161700 and ask to speak to the Chaplain, Anne Marie McKenna. We look forward to welcoming you at St Robert's.

St Robert's Carol Service

Thursday 14 December at St John Boste Church at 6.30pm, this will hopefully be a collaboration with the parish and the primary school after such a great success last year. All are welcome.

Advent Reflections

The dedicated Advent reflection page on the diocesan website can be found [here](#):

Last year's Advent booklet was very well received. As we prepare for Jesus' coming at Christmas, we hope that this year's edition will once again foster prayerful reflection on the Scriptures and a renewed sense of belonging amongst the people of the Diocese. The reflections have been written by a variety of people to express the richness of our diocesan community.

MONDAY MASS AT ST BEDE'S

As from Monday 4 December there will be a morning Mass each week at 10am at St Bede's

MASSES OVER CHRISTMAS

The following shows the Mass times and venues for Christmas. Please note the changes from the usual Mass times.

SUNDAY 24 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE

4th Sunday of Advent:

9.30am St John Boste, Washington

10am Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw

11am Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington

Christmas Vigil:

5pm St Bede, Washington (Carols from 4.30pm)

5.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington

6pm St Joseph, Birtley (Carols from 5.30pm)

7pm St John Boste, Washington (Carols from 6.30pm)

7.30pm Our Lady Queen of Peace (Carols from 7pm)

11.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate (Carols from 11pm)

MONDAY 25 DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY

9am St Bede Washington

9.30am Our Lady Queen of Peace

10am St Joseph Birtley

10.15am St John Boste, Washington

Mass Intentions most welcome for these Christmas Masses.

Sick and Housebound in the Parish

Fr Martin and Fr Luke are very happy to visit any sick or housebound parishioner with the Sacraments. The Sacrament of Holy Anointing and Confession can be a great help in such circumstances. Please contact the Priests if you know of anyone who would appreciate a visit. Clergy landline: 0191 6498257.

Advent Penitential Services

This year we have two Penitential services in our Partnership. On Wednesday 13 December at 7pm at St Cuthbert's, Chester-le-Street, and on Thursday 21 December at 7pm at St Bede's. Several Priests will be available to hear Confessions in our preparation for Christmas.

Advent Holy Hour at St. Joseph's Sunday 3 December, 3pm. All welcome.

Tuesday Night Holy Rosary prayers for the people of the Holy Land. Please join us at 6.40pm on Tuesdays at St Joseph's Birtley, to pray the great prayer of the rosary for all sides in the conflict in Palestine.

Advent Candlelit Vigil & Blue Christmas Service

You are warmly invited to share in a quiet time of prayer and reflection in preparation for Christmas. The candlelit vigil will take place on Friday 15 December from 6pm - 8.15 pm in Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church. The last half hour of the vigil will incorporate the annual Blue Christmas Service in which we remember our loved ones who have passed away and whom we miss especially at this time of year. There will be tea, coffee and mince pies in the Emmaus Room afterwards, so please come for all or part of this quiet time in the run up to Christmas.

SVP Coat Collection

Please continue to donate any coats you no longer need and we will pass them to local charities who are able to distribute them to those in need. Thank you.

St John Boste - Christmas Memorial Candles

Envelopes are available for the Christmas Memorial Candles. The envelopes need to be returned to church by 10 December.

Ecumenical Carol Service

Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, 14 December, 7pm. All welcome.

Olof Club

The OLOF Club will not meet on Tuesday 12 December. The Club will meet as usual in the Emmaus Room on 19 December.

Embells Christmas Lunch 11 December 2023

Members of the SVP will be involved with the free Embells Christmas lunch on Monday 11 December at Leam Lane Methodist Church from 12 midday. There are some available spaces so if there is anyone in the parish who would like to come up and join us they would be very welcome.

Christmas Eve Carol Services

St Bede, Washington, Mass at 5pm, Carols from 4.30pm

St Joseph, Birtley, Mass at 6pm, Carols from 5.30pm

St John Boste, Washington, Mass at 7pm, Carols from 6.30pm

Our Lady Queen of Peace, Penshaw, Mass at 7.30pm, Carols from 7pm

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington, Mass at 11.30pm, Carols from 11pm.

Exodus 90 - Programme of Prayer, Asceticism and Fraternity for Men

Exodus 90 is a programme of prayer, asceticism and fraternity for men built around the book of Exodus. Running over the 90 days leading up to Easter those involved will meet together regularly for social time, make commitments to daily prayer and do without some modern comforts as they attempt to convert their lives ever more deeply unto the Lord. The programme begins on 1 January 2024, if you're interested please come along to the information evening on Wednesday 13 December at OLQP at 8pm. Fr Luke will explain in greater details what is involved. More information is also available at exodus90.com and via the Exodus 90 app. While the programme isn't easy - those who've participated in the past speak to its effectiveness and to how much it's helped them connect to their faith on a deeper level. To hear something of their testimonies come along to the open evening and see if it could be for you!

CCA/CAFOD Climate Change March from Durham Cathedral to Durham Market Place and St Nicholas Church, where there will be stalls and Information. Saturday 9 December 10am start. This is a nationwide protest on that morning. Please support CAFOD to show that Catholics and all Christians want to see a change from investment in Fossil Fuels. If you are interested Please Contact Kevin Haigh 07947426154 or Michael Gallagher 07740872817 for details and meeting point.

Reflections

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

Examen - Please follow the links to go to Pray as You Go: [Saturday Examen](#)
[1st Sunday of Advent](#)

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](#).

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 here](#)