

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

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 9 - 10 DECEMBER 2023, Year B

Saturday	St Joseph	5pm	Dennis Duffy
9 December			
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Maggie Tullis & Edward Conley (deceased anniversaries)
Sunday	St John Boste	9:30am	Louise Tobin Davies
10 December	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Gerard McCabe
2nd Sunday of Advent	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Joseph, Ellen & Mary Jordon

We are entering our second week of Advent - Christmas is really on its way!

Most people have their most cherished memories made during the Christmastides of their lives. It's a time for families to forgive, forget past problems, and embrace each other in solidarity and hope. And in wider society too there's a festive atmosphere, a sense of goodwill and cheer to all men.

Our readings this week are preparing us for this by pointing to the underlying meaning of Christmas. They point to repentance. There can be no real encounter with God unless we realise the enormity and magnificence of him who gives us life itself. He who allows us to see our own brokenness and need for healing. There can be great pain in this, but it is the beginning of hope, the very meaning of Christmas.

It's in our broken and sinful state that we see the star shining brightly over that little stable in Bethlehem. We know what lies within. It is here that we cry out with John the Baptist, "I am not worthy!" (Mark 1:7). Yet unlike those baptised by John, when we were baptised we received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit arrives through baptism. But the precursor to baptism is repentance.

To know we need forgiveness is itself a blessing, perhaps the greatest blessing, it tells us we are close to God as he is, not how we would like him to be. We are not justifying or rationalising our sinfulness but crying out in truth, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." (Mark 1:3)

"If only every day could be Christmas", said the little boy. It can be. When we realise our need for his love and mercy every day. When we realise doing his will and not our own is why we are here. When we realise that through baptism we have been given the gifts we need. When we can submit to his will in grace and with reason, seeing him in the eyes of our brothers and sisters. When we can do this every day, then everyday will truly be Christmas Day.

Fr Martin Wheaton

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 11 December 2023

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 11 December	St Bede	10am	Priest's Intention
St Damasus I	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	The Holy Souls
Tuesday 12 December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Joseph, Rosa & Billy Bourke
Our Lady of Guadalupe	St Joseph	7pm	Ursula Jobson RIP
Wednesday 13 December	St Bede	10am	The Schoolchildren of the Parish
St Lucy	St John Boste	7pm	Priest's Intention
Thursday 14 December	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	The Sick of the Parish
St John of the Cross	St Joseph	12 noon	John & Harriet Hogan RIP
Friday 15 December	St John Boste	10am	To pray for positive results and new treatments
	St Joseph	10am	Zillah Richardson RIP
Saturday 16 December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Jim Walker
	St Joseph	5pm	Frank McEnaney RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	The People of the Parish
Sunday 17 December	St John Boste	9:30am	Teresa Cairns Deceased
3rd Sunday of Advent	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Cynthia & Hilda
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Clare Madden

First Reading: Console My People, Console Them.

Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low. Let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

Response to the Psalm: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

Second reading: The Lord Comes in the Night

2 Peter 3:8-14

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and

then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

The Gospel: Baptism for Conversion

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

Baptism for Conversion

Each Advent has two 'John the Baptist' Sundays: the first when we see John preparing a community for the Messiah, the second when he points out Jesus as the Lamb of God. Today is the first of these. John chose a point where the busy road from Jerusalem to the East crossed the Jordan River. There he button-holed all the busy financiers, merchants and other travellers and tourists, warning them to change their ways - and to change them now, before it was too late. 'I am too busy,' no doubt they said. 'I have other things to worry about; I have a wife and family to feed.' John was forming a community of repentance; but not so much a community which wept 'Boo-hoo!' about their sins, as a community of people determined to set their scale of values right. He meant them to stop going in one direction, to turn round and go in a different direction - towards God. **Do we give ourselves a moment to pause and ask whether we have our priorities right? Where on that list of priorities does the entry of Christ into our lives come? John expected Jesus to baptise with fire. Does that mean burning something away? Or warming something up? Or a shining light? What does your baptism mean to you?**

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.

Advent Kindness Calendars

Unfortunately the two kindness calendars given out in all of the churches last weekend were copies of last year's rather than the new one I designed for this year. Please accept my apologies for this error. Copies of the correct kindness calendars will be available at the back of each church this weekend. Chris O'Neill

Advent Rosary & Sacrament of anointing with prayers for healing this Sunday afternoon 10 December at OLQP. Rosary 4pm, Healing service 5pm. Refreshments afterwards. All welcome.

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](#).

"A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight." Could you be like John the Baptist and help prepare the way for the Lord in the lives of the people of our Diocese? Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or [email](#)

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 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.

Holy Island SVP Camp

Are you interested in your child having a holiday in 2024? Let them join us for a week on Holy Island. They'll stay in our Centre and be looked after by DBS checked and trained helpers who will ensure they have a safe, fun time. We do lots of interesting and enjoyable activities such as rock pooling, longball, football, rounders, walking, craft and art, table tennis, quizzes and competitions and marathons as well as laser tag, silly sports, sand castle building, swimming and scavenger hunts.

Girls and boys can be aged 9-12 and it is a great way for them to meet new people and make friends from all over the North East. A week's all-inclusive holiday costs a donation of £150 and can be paid in instalments. In some circumstances children may be able to receive partial or full funding to attend. If you're interested, or know of a child who could benefit from such a holiday, please visit our website for further [details](#).

Applications open from 5 December 2023

Ecumenical Carol Service

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

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 tel: 07981396544 or email mvleckenby@yahoo.com

Mass Intentions

Please be aware that there are a significant number of Mass Intentions already allocated and any request for a specific date may not be possible due to an Intention previously received and allocated to the Mass on that date. If the date requested is already filled, then the intention will be allocated to the first available Mass in the preferred church which could be a few weeks after the requested date.

Masses over Christmas

	St Bede	SJB	OLQP	OBLI	St Joseph
Christmas Eve am		9.30am	10am	11am	
Christmas Eve Vigil	5pm	7pm	7.30pm	5.30pm	6pm
Christmas Midnight Mass				11.30pm	
Christmas Day	9am	10.15am	9.30am		10am

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Other News

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 Concert at Little Sisters, Newcastle

The Newcastle Male Chorus and Gibside Singers will be performing a Christmas Concert in the Chapel at St Joseph's Home, Little Sisters of the Poor, Newcastle on Saturday 16 December 2023 at 7pm. The concert is in aid of the work of the Little Sisters of the Poor in St Joseph's Home. Tickets are £8 (interval drink included), available from St Joseph's Home.

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 9pm. 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!

Reflections

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

Examen - Please follow the links to go to Pray as You Go: [Saturday Examen](#)
[2nd 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](#)