

# Parishes of St John XXIII & St Joseph, Birtley



Incorporating: **Our Blessed Lady Immaculate**, Washington;  
**Our Lady Queen of Peace**, Peshaw; **St Bede**, Usworth;  
**St John Boste**, Oxclose; **St Joseph**, Birtley  
 Fr Martin Morris, Parish Priest, Tel: 01916498257  
 Administrator: Audrey Huntley tel: 0191 4163583  
 (Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12– 5pm)  
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## In the Partnership of Benedict

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

### THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, 17TH - 18TH FEBRUARY 2024, Year B

Saturday 17th February Vigil	St Joseph  St Bede	5pm  5pm	<b>Austine Linson RIP</b>  <b>Celia &amp; Joseph Stephenson RIP</b>
Sunday 18th February 1st Sunday of Lent	St John Boste  Our Lady Queen of Peace  Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	9:30am  10am  11am	<b>In Thanksgiving for a Successful Operation</b>  <b>Michael Walker RIP</b>  <b>Joseph &amp; Ellen Jordan</b>

Today's Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent is sparse indeed.

Mark's verses have a brevity not found in the other Gospel accounts of Jesus' trials. There is no dramatic dialogue with Satan. We only hear of the protection of angels. The forty days and nights in the wilderness served as the foundation of the period of Lent for Christians. By 325 the Council of Nicea already confirmed a forty - day preparation for Easter, after this wilderness model. It falls in line with other 40 - day or 40 - year biblical models; Noah's flood and the subsequent Covenant with God's people, the 40 years of wandering of the people of Israel in the desert or the 40 days of fasting of Moses on Mount Sinai or Elijah on Mount Horeb. All these feats of endurance represent a pause in the everyday scurrying of humanity to focus on God and be tested. They are the precursors of a significant change in God's plan for humanity. There would be none greater than the preaching of Jesus from the villages of Galilee to the sacred city of Jerusalem.



The human weakness of Jesus is tested in the wilderness, just as we all experience in the trials of life, when we wonder: where is God? Why, then, does Mark seemingly gloss over this? Perhaps it is because it is what happens **after** that is crucially important to his Gospel. Jesus leaves the wilderness trial behind as John the Baptist, his courageous herald is arrested. It is **His** time. His three - year preaching ministry begins in Galilee which will lead to the humiliation of Calvary and the triumph of Easter.

"The time has come...and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."

Jesus' words gift us with the ultimate blueprint for living out our Lent. It is a time for self examination and growing closer to God. This demands not isolation on a mountaintop but a burning preoccupation with our fellow humanity. During Lent 2024 a suffering world cries out to us viscerally, not least in the Middle East, where the transforming power of the Good News first entered into human hearts,

Pope Francis catches the imperative of the wilderness period for us: "We need to pray always, even when everything seems in vain, when God appears to be deaf and mute and it seems as if we are wasting time. Even if heaven is overshadowed, the Christian does not stop praying."  
 Angela Nichols

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 19th February 2024

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 19th February	St Bede	10am	<b>Priest Intention (R. MC.)</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	<b>Richie Gordon RIP</b>
Tuesday 20th February	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	<b>Sick Person (AC)</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Lawrence &amp; Margaret Reid RIP</b>
Wednesday 21st February	St Bede	10am	<b>Agnes &amp; Peter Bungard RIP</b>
	<b>St Peter Damian</b> St John Boste	7pm	<b>Alban &amp; Wendy Morley RIP</b>
Thursday 22nd February	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Eddie Ashburner RIP</b>
	<b>The Chair of St Peter</b> St Joseph	12 noon	<b>Michael Ryder RIP</b>
Friday 23rd February	St John Boste	10am	<b>Bill &amp; Kathleen Burlinson RIP</b>
	<b>St Polycarp</b> St Joseph	10am	<b>Francis &amp; Elizabeth Dornan RIP</b>
Saturday 24th February	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	<b>Repose of the Soul of Gerard Fagan</b>
	<b>Vigil</b> St Joseph	5pm	<b>Brenda Weir RIP</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>Margaret Jones RIP</b>
Sunday 25th February <b>2nd Sunday of Lent</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Living and deceased members of the Metcalfe and Stephenson families</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Frank &amp; Karen McNay RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Pat Brennan RIP</b>

### First Reading: The Covenant with Noah

#### Genesis 9:8-15

God spoke to Noah and his sons, "See, I establish my Covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; also with every living creature to be found with you, birds, cattle and every wild beast with you: everything that came out of the ark, everything that lives on the earth. I establish my Covenant with you: no thing of flesh shall be swept away again by the waters of the flood. There shall be no flood to destroy the earth again." God said, "Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth. When I gather the clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the Covenant between myself and you and every living creature of every kind. And so the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all things of flesh."

**Response to the Psalm: Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love for those who keep your covenant.**

### Second Reading: The Pledge of a Good Conscience

#### 1 Peter 3:18-22

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building

that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

**Gospel Acclamation: Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal Glory!**

#### The Gospel: (Mark 1:12-15): Jesus is Tested in the Desert

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him. After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. "The time has come," he said, "and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News."

**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 now available in all of our Churches:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning, after Mass.

St John Boste - Friday morning, after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning, after Mass.

St Bede's - Saturday after Vigil Mass.

**During Lent the Priests will be available after Mass for Reconciliation.**

### Stations of the Cross:

Thursday from 15/02/2024 **St Josephs** 11.30am - Last service 21/03/2024

Friday from 16/02/2024 **St Bede's** 18.00pm last service 22/03/2024

Sunday from 18/02/2024 **OBLI** 16.00pm last service 17/03/2024

Wednesday from 21/2/2024 **OLQP** 12 Noon and **SJB** 18.30pm - Last service 27/03/2024

**Stations of the Cross at Our Lady Queen of Peace**, will be followed by a simple lunch of soup and bread. All funds raised will be divided equally between, St Benedict's Hospice and Cancer Research at Sir Bobby Robson's Clinic. Everyone welcome.

**OLOF** - Please note, the club is on a Tuesday at 1pm in the Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

**Special Collection Next Week - Family Fast Day for CAFOD:**

Just imagine living on £1.00 a day! Millions of our sisters and brothers have to survive on less than the cost of a first-class stamp. A first-class stamp costs £1.25. So, if we send 1 birthday card we will spend as much as many families will have to live on. How scary is that? Please do what you can do.

**Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible** continues this week on Thursday at 7pm at **OLQP**.

**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.

**CAFOD family fast day** this year will be on Friday 23rd February 2024. Envelopes will be available for those who would like to take part in this Lenten act of solidarity with the poor and hungry of the world.

**"Pope Francis has declared a Holy Year of Jubilee for 2025**, when the **Holy door in Rome** will be opened. In preparation the Pope asks for 2024 to be a year of prayer. Please visit our Diocesan Year of Prayer [webpage](#) for more information and regular updates. Each Wednesday morning there will be silent Eucharistic Exposition at St. Bede's before Mass. From 9.15-9.50am. A time for quiet prayer with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist."

**World Day of Prayer Service, Friday, 1st March 2024, 2pm, St Joseph's, Birtley** - The 2024 WDP Service has been prepared by the Christian Women of Palestine. The same service will be celebrated in over 146 countries & islands throughout the world, with some 6,000 services taking place in the UK. "Birtley Churches Together" invites you to join them in this great network of prayer. Refreshments afterwards - everyone welcome!

**Our Partnership group of Parishes** are looking at the possibility of a pilgrimage to **Rome sometime in 2025** to celebrate the Jubilee year. Watch this space for further details.

**SVP 200 Draw for February** First Prize £50, No 17 ; Second Prize £25, No 198. Many thanks for your support.

**Thanks! On behalf of all parishioners at St Joseph's Birtley**, many thanks to those volunteers who have recently painted the internal walls of our church and freshened up the Stations of the Cross. You have made a tremendous difference, and your hard work is very much appreciated by everyone.

## Other News

**LOUDfence. St. Mary's Cathedral and Newcastle Cathedral 3rd -6th March. Welcome to All.** Together with the Diocese of Newcastle, our diocesan family is privileged to be hosting a LOUDfence at St. Marys' Cathedral and at Newcastle Cathedral. It will begin at the 11.30 Sunday Mass on the 3rd March at St. Mary's Cathedral and end with a Service of the Word at Newcastle Cathedral on the 6th March at 7pm. Everyone is welcome to these liturgies and to visit both Cathedrals during the days to offer their prayers and support for all who have suffered abuse within church communities and all contexts. We are invited to leave prayers and messages together with provided items like the prayer ribbons presented to Bishop Stephen at his Installation Mass, which are still tied to his Bishop's Chair. People can leave their prayers and messages within or outside of the Cathedrals, recognising some people would rather not enter a place of worship. There will be people available for pastoral accompaniment if that is requested. As a diocesan family we pray for all who have suffered abuse and recognise our shared duty to safeguard the vulnerable.

**CAFOD Big Lent Walk** - Walk 200Km in 40 days to help fight global poverty - Challenge yourself and take on The Big Lent Walk! Walk when and where you choose over 40 days, alone or with friends. Raise money to help people as they overcome poverty. [Sign up today!](#) CAFOD and SCIAF are teaming up to bring the Big Lent Walk to Great Britain! Read more about us and our decision to join forces. Thousands of walkers from England, Wales, Scotland and beyond, will be tying up their purple laces and walking an incredible 200km this Lent to fight global poverty. So, sign up to do the Big Lent Walk yourself, or join in with your school or parish. Then put your best foot forward with the biggest group of Big Lent Walkers yet.

**We Dare to Say: A resource for faith-sharing groups on the Lord's Prayer** - We Dare To Say is a resource for small group faith-sharing and for individual meditation, featuring five sessions each based on a line from the Lord's Prayer. Each session includes scripture, prayers and a reflection with questions. The connection of the Our Father with the sacraments and the devotional life is explored, and wisdom from the saints is offered for the spiritual growth of group participants and individuals alike. '*This single short prayer of Christ has everything that needs to be said about God, his kingdom, his life, about all of us*' - Fr Alexander Schmemmann. You can access the 'We Dare to Say' resource by [clicking here](#).

**Diocesan Lenten Reflection Booklets** - Last year's Lenten Reflection booklets were very well received. As we prepare to commemorate Jesus' salvific death and resurrection at Easter, we hope that this year's edition will once again foster prayerful reflection on the Scriptures and a renewed sense of purpose and hope amongst the people of the Diocese. The reflections have been produced by a great number of people to express the richness of our Diocesan community. The daily reflections will be available for viewing, downloading and printing from the Diocesan website by [clicking here](#).

**"God said, 'Here is the sign of the Covenant I make between myself and you and every living creature with you for all generations: I set my bow in the clouds and it shall be a sign of the Covenant between me and the earth.'"** In the Mass, the priest prays the Eucharistic Prayer, in which the Blood of Christ is the "new and eternal covenant". Might God be calling you to bring people to know Jesus in the Eucharist by discerning a vocation to priesthood? **Come and See!** We invite men aged 18+ who might be experiencing the call from God to discern priesthood to join the Vocations Team in finding out more. The next Discernment Evening is on **Tuesday March 9<sup>th</sup> at St Joseph's Church, Thorneyholme Terrace, Stanley, DH9 0BL between 6.00pm - 8.00pm** There will be a time of Prayer, talk/discussion, followed by a meal together if you would like to attend, or for more information, Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or [click here](#)

**Update from Justice and Peace Refugee Project** -The Justice and Peace Refugee Project reopened in early January after the Christmas break, following a very busy December. Over recent weeks, we have received many contributions of food, finance and clothing from supporters and parishes, for which we are most grateful. We were very happy to receive Christmas hampers from St Mary's Catholic School in Benton, thank you to all those who contributed so generously and showed such care for those in need in our community. Over 500 clients received support from the Project during December. We really do need your continued support over the coming months. Items most urgently needed can be [found here](#).

**Life in the Spirit Seminars**-As a team, we have been greatly encouraged by these particular words from Pope Francis, in his recent address on 4 November, about Life in the Spirit seminars: "...today I would ask you: are the Life in the Spirit Seminars being offered in a variety of ecclesial contexts, in small and remote places and among the poor and on the peripheries? One obstacle to this might be the idea that these Seminars can only be held in large venues and with well-known leaders, whereas in reality even small parish groups and local leaders can organize them and present them to people in their area." Plans are now in place, drawing on local leaders, as Pope Francis has encouraged, to deliver Life in the Spirit Seminars from 21 February 2024, 7.00pm to 8.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Sunderland. The themes and speakers for the first sessions are as follows: 21 February: Andy Drozdziak on the theme of God's love. 28 February: Amy Cameron on the theme of Salvation. 6 March: John Wheeler on the theme of The New Life. Details of how to book can be [found here](#).

**Lenten Day of Reflection - Led by Chris Smith** - £30 - Wednesday 6th March 2024 from 10am to 4pm. An opportunity to step aside, listen to God in Scripture and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. Please [click here](#) for more Information.

**Monastic Music Hours - Dominic McGonigal and Alison Hawes** - £250 - will take place at Minsteracres Retreat Centre, Friday 8 to Sunday 10 March 2024. Led by experienced musicians and liturgists, you will experience a weekend immersed in the beauty of the monastic office hours singing and learning about these musical traditions. [See here](#) for further information and booking details. Quick Links: [DCMA](#)

**Lenten Day of Reflection - Led by Sr Sheila McNamara RSCJ** - £30 - Wednesday 13th March 2024 from 10am to 4pm. An opportunity to step aside, listen to God in Scripture and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside. Please [click here](#) for more Information.

**Sycamore - Online Sessions for Lent 2024** - Take some time out with God during this Lenten season and join us online (via Zoom) for a series of Sycamore sessions as we explore how we can live out our 'Ministry of Love'. The sessions will take place on Thursdays throughout Lent from 7pm to 8.15pm. 15 February "The Existence of God" 22 February "Who is Jesus?" 29 February "The Holy Spirit and the Church" 7 March "The Gift of Faith" 14 March 21 March "Finding True Freedom" "The Meaning of Love" All are welcome! Each session can stand alone so there is no obligation to attend all if you can't commit to every week. Some of you may have had experience of Sycamore previously, so we'll be using an alternative set of questions which will give you more opportunities to reflect on your own experiences of faith. Please register your interest to receive the Zoom link. You can do this by completing the online [form](#) or by calling the admin team on 0191 243 3316.

## 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 Lent](#)

## 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](#)

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