

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 tel: 0191 4163583
 (Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12– 5pm)
 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 EPIPHANY OF THE LORD 4TH - 5TH JANUARY 2025, Year C

Saturday 4th January Vigil	St Joseph St Bede	5pm 5pm	Alec Proctor RIP People of the Parish
Sunday 5th January The Epiphany of the Lord	St John Boste Our Lady Queen of Peace Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	9:30am 10am 11am	Syd McElhenny RIP Anniversary Deceased Members of the Cosgrove Family Mary, Peggy, Jim & John Walker RIP

First Reading: The Glory of the Lord has risen upon you

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all round, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.

Response to the Psalm: All the nations of the earth shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

Second Reading: God's Special Secret

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Brothers and sisters: I assume that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship the Lord. Alleluia!

The Gospel: The Coming of the Magi

Matthew 2:1-12

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."' Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.' After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Fr Martin Morris	0191 649 8257	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 6th January 2025

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 6th January	St Bede	10am	Stella Wyatt RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Agnes Waister
Tuesday 7th January St Raymond of Penyafort	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Ray & John Lyons Anniversaries
	St Joseph	7pm	Jean Greenwood RIP
Wednesday 8th January	St Bede	10am	Blessed be God in His Angels & Saints (DH)
	St John Boste	7pm	Mary Stephenson & Deceased Family
Thursday 9th January	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Florence & Vincent Woodhouse
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Frank McEnaney RIP
Friday 10th January	St John Boste	10am	Ray Lyons Anniversary RIP
	St Joseph (At St Benet's School)	9.15am	People of the Parish
Saturday 11th January Vigil	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Dave Ranaghan
	St Joseph	5pm	Thomas & Paul Nolan RIP
	St Bede	5pm	Anne Carr RIP
Sunday 12th January The Baptism of the Lord	St John Boste	9:30am	Michael Farrell RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Jim Walker RIP

A Sermon of Pope St Leo the Great on the Epiphany

The loving providence of God determined that in the last days he would aid the world, set on its course to destruction. He decreed that all nations should be saved in Christ.

A promise had been made to the holy patriarch Abraham in regard to these nations. He was to have a countless progeny, born not from his body but from the seed of faith. His descendants are therefore compared with the array of the stars. The father of all nations was to hope not in an earthly progeny but in a progeny from above.

Let the full number of the nations now take their place in the family of the patriarchs. Let the children of the promise now receive the blessing in the seed of Abraham, the blessing renounced by the children of his flesh. In the persons of the Magi let all people adore the Creator of the universe; let God be known, not in Judaea only, but in the whole world, so that his name may be great in all Israel.

Dear friends, now that we have received instruction in this revelation of God's grace, let us celebrate with spiritual joy the day of our first harvesting, of the first calling of the Gentiles. Let us give thanks to the merciful God, who has made us worthy, in the words of the Apostle, to share the position of the saints in light, who has rescued us from the power of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. As Isaiah prophesied: *the people of the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and for those who dwelt in the region of the shadow of death a light has dawned. He spoke of them to the Lord: The Gentiles, who do not know you, will invoke you, and the peoples, who knew you not, will take refuge in you.*

This is the day that Abraham saw, and rejoiced to see, when he knew that the sons born of his faith would be blessed in his seed, that is, in Christ. Believing that he would be the father of the nations, he looked into the future, giving glory to God, in full awareness that God is able to do what he has promised.

This is the day that David prophesied in the psalms, when he said: *All the nations that you have brought into being will come and fall down in adoration in your presence, Lord, and glorify your name. Again, the Lord has made known his salvation; in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.*

This came to be fulfilled, as we know, from the time when the star beckoned the three wise men out of their distant country and led them to recognise and adore the King of heaven and earth. The obedience of the star calls us to imitate its humble service: to be servants, as best we can, of the grace that invites all men to find Christ.

Dear friends, you must have the same zeal to be of help to one another; then, in the kingdom of God, to which faith and good works are the way, you will shine as children of the light: through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

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: Saturday at 5pm.

To access live streaming from St Joseph's Birtley, please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/birtley>.

Happy New Year to all our readers What's On in the Parish

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Our Lady Queen of Peace each Friday 2-3pm;

St Bede's each Wednesday 9.15am - 9.50am;

St. Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm, held in the front room of the Presbytery (main door will be open, first room on left). I do encourage as many of you as possible to spend some time in quiet prayer with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning, after Mass and Saturday morning from 10am-11am.

St Joseph -Thursday after noon Mass.

St John Boste - Friday morning, after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning, after Mass.

St Bede's – Saturday after Vigil Mass.

OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's Club) -Tuesday at 1pm in the Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

Parish Fundraising Activities - Could I please remind all groups and individuals that, when conducting any fundraising efforts within the parish, all monies raised must be banked via the Parish current account. This is at the express request of Bishop Stephen and the Diocesan Trustees in accordance with the statutory regulations. Fr Martin.

Penshaw Catholic Women's Guild – The response to our Christmas Toy Appeal was amazing. A special thank you to everyone who made a donation. Hopefully we have made Christmas a little more magical for some poor families. A Mass of thanks will be said for you all in the near future. Members of the P.C.W.G.

First Friday devotions - Now that we are in a Holy Year, Pope Francis' suggestion of praying the First Friday devotion is one that we will be offering from February – October, beginning on Friday 7th February, with 7pm Mass at Our Lady Queen of Peace. The First Friday Masses will move to a different Church in our parish every second month. There will be Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 6.15pm – 6.50pm before each Mass. The twelve promises given by Jesus to St. Margaret Mary concerning this devotion are a great encouragement to the Christian life. Google "Twelve promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – EWTN."

NEW SONG! Join us on 12 January 4.00 pm for the first New Song event of 2025! Andy Drozdziak will share a message of HOPE with us at the start of this Jubilee year. Come and join us - all are welcome! **Where:** Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Parish Room NE38 7HS. **When:** 12 January @ 4.00 pm.

Email: newsongne@gmail.com **Instagram:** @newsongne

White Flower Appeal - The society for the protection of unborn children will hold their annual retiring collection after each Mass on the weekend of 19th January 2025. Thank you.

"Living Faith" Books now available from the back of Church. These excellent booklets are a great help to the spiritual life, which

includes various prayers for each day, along with a relevant reflection for each day of the week on the daily Gospel. Price: £1.50p.

OLQP SVP - Friendship meal (supported by SVP) Saturday 15th February 2025 1pm, at the Masonic Hall, Shiney Row. 2 course meal, entertainment and bar. SVP subsidised tickets £8.00 for 'the not so young', the housebound, the lonely, the bereaved, etc. Contact any member of the SVP for tickets or via the Parish Office. Preceding Healing Mass at OLQP, 12 noon.

The Parish is planning a Parish Lenten Mission 2025, 15 March - 19 March. The Mission will be led by Sr Briege McKenna (OSC) and Fr Pablo Escriba De Romani. Sr Briege and Fr Pablo have many years experience of worldwide retreats and missions, and this will be an ideal way in keeping the Lenten season special. See poster and leaflets at the back of church for more information.

Other News

The Year of Jubilee 2025 is a beacon of hope. We're all invited into an encounter with Jesus Christ, as his disciples of mercy, forgiveness, and social action, and to celebrate our communities. It's a chance to envision a better future, a future of hope and faith where mercy guides our actions. It's a time for forgiveness and reconciliation within our communities. We can take action to address injustices, support the vulnerable, and work towards a more equitable society. Let's embrace the spirit of the Jubilee, and unite to create a world of compassion and justice, where everyone and our whole community can grow and flourish. Please visit the Diocesan Year of Jubilee page by [clicking here](#).

CAFOD is also offering an online session on Saturday 18 January 2025 titled, '**A Year of Hope: An Introduction to the Jubilee Year**', to anyone wanting a general introduction to the Jubilee.

Date: Saturday 18 January 2025. **Time:** 10.30am – 12.00pm.

Location: Online. For more information please [click here](#).

Pilgrimage: Hearts in Search of God – Webinar - 15 January 2025, 7-8pm - All are welcome to join us for this online Year of Jubilee formation opportunity based on pilgrimage. We are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Dr Phil McCarthy, project lead for Hearts in Search of God: Pilgrim Ways, who will share his wisdom and experience based on the history, significance and spirituality of pilgrimage. The session will also explore and consider some of the options and practicalities for embarking on a local pilgrimage during the Year of Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope. Please [click here](#) to register your interest in this online session. **Booking deadline is Sunday 12 January 2025.**

Holocaust Memorial Day - '*For a Better Future*' is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2025. 2025 will mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau and the 30th anniversary of the Bosnian genocide. This annual event will be held on Wednesday 22 January 2025, from 7.00pm in St Mary's Catholic School, Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7PE. Booking is kindly requested to help plan the event. Please book your place by [clicking here](#) or call 0191 243 3316.. [Read more](#).

Marriage & Family Life Mass 2025 - Bishop Stephen will be presiding at the Mass to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage and the graces received in Family Life, which will take place on Saturday 8 February 2025, from 12.00pm at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle. All married couples will be invited with particular focus on those celebrating a significant anniversary together with bereaved spouses, separated individuals and families experiencing or have experienced domestic difficulties. Further details will be given in future newsletters and via the Diocesan website.

Life in the Spirit Seminars - The next delivery of Life in the Spirit seminars will be from 7.00pm – 8.30pm on Thursday evenings at St Aidan's, Benton. The seminars will start on 16 January 2025, with a talk from Andy Drozdziak on God's Love and testimony from Joseph Philips followed on **23 January 2025**, a talk on Salvation from Amy Cameron and a testimony from Kelechi Dibia. For more information contact our Secretary Deacon Alison Rebello on 07931 136243 or email me, John Wheeler, at charis@diocesehn.org.uk. Places can be booked by [clicking here](#) or by ringing 0191 243 3316.

Be a Zero-waste Hero - As part of our commitment to sustainable living the Justice and Peace Co-ordinating council suggests this for a 2025 New Year resolution: Cutting down on plastic means cutting down on carbon as well. Take reusable products with you wherever you go such as a reusable cup when you visit your local coffee shop. Choose products when shopping which are not wrapped in plastic, or take advantage of a local zero-waste shop. This tells companies that you will not accept products packed in plastic. Use your £ to vote for change.

Marriage Preparation Days - Saturday 1 February: The Sacred Heart, North Gosforth NE3 5EB. Saturday 22 February: St Robert of Newminster, Morpeth NE61 1QF. Engaged couples can find **more information** [by clicking here](#). To find and **book on a course**, [please click here](#).

"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.'" Might God be calling you to discern a life of service as a priest within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle? For more information, Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or [click here](#)

Evangelisation for the Terrified - '*Evangelising for the Terrified*', written and produced within the Diocese, is a practical, light-hearted resource for anyone wondering how to get started in sharing their faith. It is deliberately written to be a simple, non-threatening collection of ideas that give intention and purpose to normal everyday opportunities that arise. Download a copy [here](#).

The Justice and Peace Refugee Project - This year, 2025, is a Jubilee Year in the Catholic Church with the theme 'Pilgrims of Hope' and it seems that the virtue of Hope is very necessary in today's world. There are many challenges in life both at home and abroad. Famine, war, climate change, cost of living pressures and divisions in society, often fuelled by intolerance of others. Pope Francis has said: '*In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring.*' We are all invited to be pilgrims of true Hope and share it with others. The recent developments in Syria have meant that the Home Office has suspended making decisions on Syrian asylum seekers. This will result in a time of uncertainty for many of our Syrian clients. At the Refugee Project, we aim to provide a warm welcome and a listening ear to all our clients as they navigate their varied and difficult situations. This could not happen without the generous contributions of food and finance from parishes, individuals and schools and the support of our team of dedicated volunteers. Thank you to you all! We are incredibly grateful for all your support and encourage you to continue to support us this year. Items most urgently needed can be [found here](#). For more information please [click here](#)

Prayers for peace in Gaza and Israel are offered each Thursday at Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert RC Church, Crook from 7pm - 7.30pm, and each Saturday morning from 9.30am to 10.00am outside the Abbey in Hexham. All are welcome to join, even if just for a few minutes.

FLAME 2025 - takes place on **Saturday 15th March**. The theme is '**UNSTOPPABLE. FAN THE FLAME OF HOPE**'. It is open to anyone from school year 9 to university/young adult age. Under 18s must be part of an organised group. Please talk with your school chaplain, catechist or parish priest if you would like to come along. Two years ago, over 700 young people from our Diocese travelled to Wembley Arena for this national Catholic youth gathering. Once again YMT is hoping to take a large number of young people (up to 1,000 including accompanying adults). **COST: £45** per person (includes return rail travel, Wembley ticket and London travel card). The cost has been generously subsidised by Significance, the charity founded by Fr Dermott Donnelly. For further information [please click here](#).

National Catholic Leadership Programme (NCLP) testimonial - We are very proud that we are now in our third wave of delivering the National Catholic Leadership Programme to aspiring headteachers in our Diocese. We are fortunate to have several outstanding leaders who join us to deliver the sessions to delegates. The sessions cover vision, the development of the Catholic school, developing people, securing accountability and leading a Catholic community. [Click here](#) to read the testimonial of one of our aspiring headteachers, Anthony Kennedy.

Reflections

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

Examen - Please follow the links to go to Pray as You Go

[Saturday Examen](#) [The Epiphany](#)
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](#). To amend the information on the list [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.**

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