

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@diocesahn.org.uk
Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



In the Partnership of Benedict

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

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, 24TH - 25TH JANUARY 2026 Year A

Saturday 24th January	St Joseph	5pm	Dennis Welsh RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Vera Callaghan RIP
Sunday 25th January	St John Boste	9:30am	People of the Parish
The 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Linda Harrigan RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Mary Curtin RIP

First reading: Light in the Land of Darkness

Isaiah 9:1b-4

In the former time the Lord brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Response to the Psalm: *The Lord is my light and my salvation.*

Second Reading: A Divided Community

1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each one of you says, 'I follow Paul', or 'I follow Apollos', or 'I follow Cephas', or 'I follow Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? For Christ did not send me to baptise but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom and healed every affliction among the people. Alleluia.

The Gospel: The Call of the First Disciples

Matthew 4:12-23

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.' From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

Fr Martin Morris	0191 416 3583	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 26th January 2026 (* Streamed Mass)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 26th January Ss Timothy & Titus	St Bede	10am	Priests Intention
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	Lisa Taylor RIP
Tuesday 27th January St Angela Merici	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Sophia Willey Requiem
	St Joseph	7pm	Peter Lavery RIP
Wednesday 28th January St Thomas Aquinas	St Bede	9.45am	Sophia Willey RIP
	St John Boste	7pm	Margaret Hodgson & Deceased Hodgson & Stephenson Families
Thursday 29th January	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Canon Bob Spence RIP
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Veronica Farrer RIP (3rd Anniversary)
Friday 30th January	St John Boste	10am*	Priest's Intention
	St Joseph (St Benet's)	9.15am	Priest's Intention
Saturday 31st January St John Bosco Vigil	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	James & Elizabeth Beadle and George & Theresa Dawson
	St Joseph	5pm	Peggy and Tommy Finnigan R.I.P.
	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 1st February The Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste	9:30am	Veronica McLardie RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Greg Moorhouse RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Cilla & John Bevan RIP

Today's first reading from Isaiah ends with the words *'For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian'*. The mention of Midian recalls a remarkable story from the Old Testament book of Judges in which Gideon, a humble Israelite leader, is able to defeat the thousands-strong army of the Midianites with only 300 men. Following God's guidance, at night they used surprise tactics with trumpets, jars, and torches to cause panic and rout the enemy who had been oppressing Israel. God chose the unlikely Gideon, who felt weak and unsure, to deliver his people - the victory was clearly God's, not Israel's.

The Gospel this Sunday shows Jesus beginning His public ministry, calling ordinary people and inviting them to follow Him. Like Gideon, Simon, Andrew, James and John were not powerful or prepared by worldly standards - just simple fishermen casting a net into the lake and mending damaged nets with their father. Yet Jesus calls them, just as they are, to be his companions and learn from him how to *'proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom'*. God's mission does not wait for perfection; it begins with availability and trust.

It's the same for all of us. Whenever we feel uncertain or discouraged about things beyond our control, it is precisely in those moments that God speaks to encourage us and reassure us to leave fear behind and move forward in faith. As a Church, and as individual believers, we are sent from our own Midian into the world: to bring hope where there is despair, justice where there is injustice, and love where there is division. This is the heart of our Christian mission.

This Sunday encourages us to trust that God works through our weakness. Let's pray for the grace to respond generously when God calls.

Deacon Frank O'Neill

Masses are generally live-streamed daily at 10am every day, except Monday, streamed at 7pm, and alternate Sundays when Mass is live-streamed at either 10am or 11am. An * on the Mass table 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's 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.

Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confessions - The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in all of our Churches:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning after Mass.

St Joseph - Thursday after Mass.

St John Boste - Friday morning after Mass.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate - Saturday morning, after Mass.

St Bede's - Saturday after Vigil Mass.

Eucharistic Exposition.

This Sunday afternoon 25th January at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate church, 4-5pm. An opportunity for silent prayer and reflection. Why not come along and spend some time with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist?

OLOF (Our Lady's Over 50's club) - Please note, the club is on a Tuesday at 1pm in the Lindisfarne Room, at St Bede's! All most welcome!

Safeguarding - Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is a priority in every parish and diocesan organisation. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle is fully committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults which is at the heart of the Church's mission. The Diocese operates a zero-tolerance approach. We adopt and implement fully the policies and procedures of the Catholic Church of England and Wales, which is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church. To discuss any safeguarding concerns please contact a safeguarding officer in any of our churches - their details are on the noticeboard in the porch, or follow the contact details on our Parish Website under '[Safeguarding](#)'. Details of our Diocesan policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

Baptisms - Please note that there is a new system for all Baptisms in the Parish. If you want to request a Baptism, please collect a form from the church where you want the Baptism to take place, complete the form and hand it in to any member of the clergy. For more information please call 07552 733540. You can also download the form by [clicking here](#).

SVP Sing And Chat.

Everyone is welcome to join us at The Black Bush, Washington Village, from 12:15 until 3 pm on Friday 30th January.

Craft and Chat

St John Boste- Mon 7-9pm

Our Lady's- Tues 9.30-11.30am

New members always welcome

Any queries ring **Kath Bengston** 07743667823/ **Chris O'Neill** 07815162153

Other News

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - 31st July – 7th August 2026.

Celebrating 100 years since the First Diocesan Pilgrimage.

Bookings are now open for the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

We travel on Friday 31st July and return on Friday 7th August. 2026 is the 100th anniversary since the first Diocesan Pilgrimage took place led by Bishop Joseph Thorman. If you would like to book, or for further information, please contact Tangney Tours, our Tour Operator by going to their website <https://www.tangney-tours.com/tours-and-pilgrimages/diocese-hexham-newcastle/> or by calling 01732 886 666.

Lourdes Pilgrimage – Youth Section Reminder - A reminder that bookings for the Youth Section of the Lourdes Pilgrimage will close on 31st January. If you, or you know any young people in your parish that are interested in joining us, please get in touch as soon as possible to secure a place. For more information or to register interest, please email: evie.rea@ymt.org

Appeal for Lourdes Medical team, 2026. The diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes marks its centenary in 2026. The pilgrimage relies on the generosity of nurses, student nurses, healthcare assistants, and other volunteers. If anyone would like further information on helping with the pilgrimage, please contact the lead nurse Michelle Hall via [e-mail](#).

Celebration of Marriage & Family Life 2026 - Bishop Stephen has kindly agreed to preside at the annual Celebration of Marriage and Family Life Mass in the Cathedral on Saturday 14 February 2026 at 12:00 noon. This open invitation will focus on couples celebrating significant anniversaries in 2026; we are sure there will be couples celebrating 25 or 50 or 60+ years anniversaries but is open also to engaged couples preparing for marriage, those who have been married since our last Mass in 2025 and all married couples. We include those widowed and bereaved during this time and all who were unable, perhaps, to visit wives and husbands in hospital and homes prior to their deaths. In these unprecedented times, we remember couples in crisis and individual adults and children experiencing difficulties and abuse in their family relationships. We wish all to know that no-one is forgotten and that the Sacramental life, despite the pressures of contemporary life and their experiences throughout the past year, is very much alive and prayed for. Anyone celebrating a special anniversary can request a certificate by completing a form with their details: <https://bit.ly/MarriageMass2026> or scan the QR code using a smart phone camera; this will take you directly to the form or contact marriage@diocesehn.org.uk or ring 0191 243 3316. Such certificates will be presented to couples by Bishop Stephen within our Mass.



Holy Island SVP Summer Camps 2026

Applications are now open for children in school Years 5-7 for Holy Island Summer Camps. The children spend a week in our centre on the island over the Summer holidays. Transport takes the children from Tyneside to our residential centre and all meals, accommodation and activities are included in the cost. For more information please visit our website: Holy Island SVP Vinnies Camp <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp>

Do you have some spare time on your hands and want a fulfilling volunteer role?

Our residential centre on Holy Island needs volunteers in 2026.

There are lots of roles:

Working with the children on our **Vinnies Summer Camps**, during the Summer holidays as a caretaker, kitchen assistants, cooks, and volunteering to work directly with the children. It's hard work, but so much fun and very worthwhile! No cost, just your time and patience for an interesting week on this beautiful island!

Or perhaps you are retired or have flexible holidays and could give some time to help at our Term Time Camps.

These Camps allow hundreds of children from the Diocese and further afield have a great residential holiday in our centre.

Guaranteed hard work but fantastic memories too!

To join our fabulous team or find out more information about any of the roles and to volunteer, please visit our website: **Holy Island SVP Vinnies Camp** <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp> or contact BarbaraT@svp.org.uk

Parish Secretary Vacancy.

To support the parish of St. John 23rd, Washington, and the parish priest with general administration. P/T - 15hours per week., based at the office at our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington village. Complete the application form and supporting statement at <https://diocesehn.org/vacancy/parishsecretary-17>

Contact by telephone Bernadette Aquino, 0191 - 2433301. Closing date for applications **4th February, 2026.**

Diocese website link: <https://diocesehn.org.uk/vacancy/parish-secretary-17/>

Indeed link: <https://uk.indeed.com/job/parish-secretary-398c0d50cd1eccec>

Fundraising Wine Tasting Evening - The Friends of Ushaw committee are holding a fundraising wine tasting evening at Ushaw Historic House, Durham (former RC priest training of the North), on 12th February from 7pm - in case of interest to anyone in your parishes. £28pp for members of the Friends, £38pp standard ticket. There is B & B at Ushaw too. A nice Valentine's gift! Here's the link - <https://ushaw.org/whatson/wine-tasting/>

Email meet@ushaw.org

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor". Do you listen to the voice of truth, the voice of Jesus Christ? Maybe he is inviting you to discern a vocation to the Priesthood. For more information, speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or click [here](#)

The Catechism in a Year - Sign up for Ascension's [Catechism In A Year](#) podcast with Fr Mike Schmitz, and you can: Read the entire Catechism of the Catholic Church in 365 days; Understand the essentials of the Catholic Faith and why they matter; See how Church teaching is rooted in Sacred Scripture; Absorb over 2,000 years of Sacred Tradition; Encounter God's plan of sheer goodness; Transform their relationship with the Church that Christ founded.

The Bible in a Year - Ascension's [Bible in a Year](#) Podcast, hosted by Fr. Mike Schmitz and featuring Jeff Cavins, guides Catholics through the Bible in 365 daily episodes. Each 20-25 minute episode includes: Two to three scripture readings; A reflection from Fr. Mike Schmitz; A guided prayer to help you hear God's voice in his Word

Mass for the Holy Land – Saturday 25th April at 11.00am

St Joseph's Church, Birtley

All are warmly invited to attend Mass for the Holy Land on Saturday 25th April at 11.00am at St Joseph's Church, Birtley, celebrated with members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Northumbrian Section.

The Order supports the Christian presence in the Holy Land, assisting local Christian communities through pastoral, educational and charitable work. At a time of great challenge and uncertainty for many in the region, this mission remains especially important. This Mass offers an opportunity for the parish to pray together for peace and to stand in solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land.

Members of the Order will be present and will take part in the Mass, including a formal liturgical procession. This will also be an opportunity to find out more about the work of the Order and its mission. Parishioners, families and friends are very welcome, and all are encouraged to come along and join in prayer.

Diocesan Vacancy - Education Business Manager - Salary Scale from £35,000 to £37,323. Based within our Education Team at St Vincent's Diocesan Offices, Newcastle upon Tyne. Importantly you will be working in or have experience of education, ideally in a primary or secondary school setting. Similarly, knowledge and experience with Education Trusts will be distinctively advantageous. Moreover, you will need to show us how you have undertaken, reported upon and delivered professional evaluation processes, presenting findings for example to a committee, board or agency. You will lead on event planning, delivering no less than three annual conferences within the region liaising with our Communications Manager. If you are interested in being at the forefront of developing this role please get in touch with us to request an Applicant Pack by emailing Annie Leaver Head of Human Resources at annie.leaver@diocesehn.org.uk The closing date for applications is 12 noon Sunday 1st February 2026 although we reserve the right to close the post early.

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network - Each month the Holy Father will have a main prayer

Reflections

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

Examen - Please follow the links to go to [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 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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