

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@diocesehn.org.uk
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>
 Parish Secretary: Anne Hedley 0191 4163583
 Office Hours: Tuesday 9am - 2:30pm (Penshaw),
 Wednesday & Thursday 9am - 2:30pm (Washington Village)
In the Partnership of Benedict
 Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Penshaw, Sacriston, Washington



THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT, 21 - 22 MARCH 2026 Year A

Saturday 21 March	St Joseph	5pm	Kathleen Burlinson RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Margaret Jobs
Sunday 22 March	St John Boste	9:30am	Kathleen Burlinson
The Fifth Sunday of Lent	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Thank you to OLQP Parishioners for the Christmas Gifts
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Mark Duggan RIP

First reading: The New Spirit. Ezekiel 37:12-14

Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.

Response to the Psalm: *With the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption.*

Second Reading: The Gift of the Spirit. Romans 8:8-11

Brothers and Sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Gospel Acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God. I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord. Everyone who believes in me shall never die. Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

The Gospel: The Raising of Lazarus. John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45 (Shorter Version)

At that time: The sisters of Lazarus sent to Jesus, saying, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it he said, 'This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.' Jesus was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, by this time there will be a smell, for he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.' Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

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 23 March 2026 (Streamed Mass *)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 23 March St Turibius of Mongrovejo	St Bede	10am	Eileen and William Harland RIP & Deceased Family
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	Carl Poulter RIP
Tuesday 24 March	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Mary & Patrick Connolly RIP
	St Joseph	7pm	Kathleen Fish RIP (SVP)
Wednesday 25 March The Annunciation of the Lord	St Bede	10am	Laurence McAdam RIP
	St John Boste		No Mass
Thursday 26 March	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Jennifer Grant RIP
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Eileen Middleton RIP (SVP)
Friday 27 March	St Joseph	10am	Joan Mason RIP (SVP)
	St John Boste	10am*	Joan Leader & John Styles
Saturday 28 March Vigil	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Kathleen Haig Private Intention & In Thanksgiving 90th Birthday (JW)
	St Joseph	5pm	People of the Parish
	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 29 March Palm (Passion) Sunday	St John Boste	9:30am	Kathleen & Bill Burlinson
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Brendan & Terry Ford & Jim McDevitte RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Catherine Beavers Anniversary

"I am going to awaken him"

"We no longer live for ourselves but for Christ who reigns in our heart." This is what came to mind when I first read this Sunday's readings. Reflecting on it, I thought, "Well, It sounds good, Martin. Perhaps even poetic, but what does it mean in everyday life?"

Our faith sets us free. We are set free from "wanting and wishing" for this and that. When we live in the freedom of God we no longer live for ourselves but for he who set us free. Thinking of the needs of others before yourself is the fullest way to be free in the Spirit. But this is not easy. We are imbued with the curse of the Ancient Sin, the remnant of darkness left over from our baptism. It is always pushing our own needs, wants, and desires before all else. Unless we truly stay awake and live in the Spirit we become consumed by chasing illusions which we believe will bring us happiness. But they never do. Perhaps occasionally they will bring momentary satisfaction, but this itself is soon consumed by the next want or desire, and on the cycle goes. We sleepwalk through life in this cycle that leads to death.

When we were baptised we were awoken to life in the Holy Spirit. This is why everything we experience, our joys, our sufferings, both physical and emotional, have meaning and purpose. For example, it has always been the case that our sufferings not only deepen our faith, they can also be offered back to God. Or even offered up on behalf of our loved ones or those who need God's love and guidance more than ourselves. What a wonderful blessing, what a wonderful gift!

Life is challenging, from bereavement to practical worries, but the joy, the freedom, comes from realising they have profound meaning to God. He is with us every step of the way. And he is with us in our joys too, the birth of a healthy grandchild, a wedding, the kiss and embrace of a loved one. These are not meant to make up for the sufferings in life, they are a reflection of what is to come. These joys are mere hors d'oeuvres to what God promises in the next life, for those who are willing to live in the Spirit in this life.

In our Gospel this week (John 11:1-45), Jesus woke Lazarus from the sleep of death. He is also calling us, his servants who were awoken in baptism, to stay awake and realise we no longer live for ourselves but for our master. This is to be awake in the Spirit. This is true Christian freedom.

Fr M Wheaton

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 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/Confession 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 – Saturday after Vigil Mass.

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

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](#).

Lenten Penitential service. An opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession, Wednesday 25 March 7pm at St John Boste (no Mass that evening).

We Dare to Ask - This year's Lenten resource 'We Dare to Ask' is inviting parishioners to prepare their hearts and minds to renew their Baptismal promises during the Easter celebrations. Through Baptism, we are united with Christ and given our mission to image him in our homes and communities. This resource aims to contextualise our vocation within God's plan of Salvation, Christ's self-gift and the Sacramental Life of the Church. The world tempts us in all manner of ways yet by God's grace, we can turn back to him with contrite hearts to ask his mercy and forgiveness. We stand to renew our Baptismal promises: to ask for his life, his grace and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to renew and restore our covenant relationship with Jesus, that we may live in an ever-deepening union with him as his baptised son or daughter. A Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle booklet, with a forward by Bishop Stephen, is available to view or download by [clicking here](#). It provides a resource for small group faith-sharing and for individual meditation, with five sessions on the theme of our Baptismal Vocation. Alternatively you can access each session's materials individually by [clicking here](#).

Stations of the Cross During Lent

Our Lady Queen of Peace, Wednesday Noon, tea/ coffee afterwards
St John Boste, Wednesday 6.30pm
St Joseph, Thursday 11.30am before Mass
St Bede, Friday 6pm
Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Sunday 4pm

This Lent Children at St Bede's Catholic Primary School are supporting CAFOD and joining other schools around the country to help fight poverty around the world. To raise money, they are going to complete a Big Lent 'Walk-a-thon' where they spend a whole day, Tuesday 31 March, taking turns walking around the school fields. From the start of the day until the end there will always be a member of St Bede's walking, come rain or shine! We would love you to sponsor us. You can do so by dropping a donation off at the school office, passing on a donation to a member of school staff at Wednesday morning Mass or scanning the QR code/visiting our JustGiving page [here](#).



Scan to donate

Cafod Big Lent Walk. Please collect a leaflet after Mass and see how you can support CAFOD'S work by walking or praying this Lent. This Lent, CAFOD is telling the stories of how we accompany communities who are striving to grow food and care for their families in the face of increasingly severe droughts and floods in South Sudan, in Bangladesh and in Zimbabwe. You can donate [here](#).

Parish picnic in support of Cafod's Big Lent Walk. Everyone is invited to meet at Herrington Park Amphitheatre, 11am on Saturday 28 March for a short walk followed by a bring-your-own picnic.

Please put yourself forward. If you would like to participate in taking the offerings to the altar during Mass at any church, please speak to one of the helpers who are at the church door before and after Mass.

YOU DID IT!! The HCPT Ceilidh was a huge success. Thanks to the generosity of many people the target was exceeded and £1769 was raised. The very strict Safeguarding rules of HCPT do not allow me to give much detail. I have just been advised that your sponsorship is for a Tyneside girl with the beautiful name of Hope and, joy upon joy, she will be making her First Holy Communion with us at our Holy Mass in the Chapel at Hosanna House. Thank You, Thank You and may God Bless all of you. Grandad Len.

CAFOD Holy Island Pilgrimage. Saturday 20 June. Following last week's appeal asking for people who wish to travel on the coach to provide details on the list at the back of church. Could we ask you to complete this information this weekend as we need to arrange coach hire and availability is in great demand so we need to book this as soon as possible? Thank you.

Holy Week and Easter Services

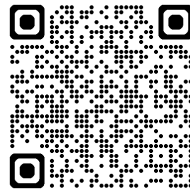
Maundy Thursday No morning Mass
Evening Mass 7pm St Josephs and Our Lady Queen of Peace
Good Friday No morning Mass
Solemn Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ
3pm St Joseph's, St John Boste and St Bede's
7pm Stations of the Cross Our Blessed Lady Immaculate
Holy Saturday No morning Mass
Easter Vigils
5pm St Joseph's 7:30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate
Easter Sunday Masses at the usual times.

One year ago this week we had a Parish Mission , led by Sr Briega McKenna and Fr Pablo. The talks are still available on YouTube. You may find it helpful as a Lenten exercise to watch them again. I would particularly recommend the talk given by Sister on the 18 March at Our Lady's titled, " Jesus the vine, and we the branches." An excellent reflection on ' Prayer in the Christian life.'

Songs of Peace and Praise 9 July at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church. "Peace begins with a Smile" (St Teresa of Calcutta).

Can you help put a smile on the faces of others and spread a little peace? This invitation is for everyone! Members of our Parish, our schools and other denominations or faiths, our local communities. Peace was given by Christ for everyone! We are looking for people, any age, to help lead our Parish in an evening of song and praise. You can sing solo or be part of a duet or larger group or choir. You may play an instrument, be a member of a band or orchestra, any number or size. School, college and community groups are most welcome. We are also looking for anyone who might like to create poetry or read on the evening, scriptures, prayers, poetry or prose. Please do not hide your talents! Share them and help us all to spread Christ's Peace. If you would like to participate, choose your piece of music, hymn or song about peace or praise and then start practicing. Contact details will be given at a later date. Many thanks.

Our parish schools are part of Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, a family of 47 schools based in Northumberland, Gateshead, Sunderland and Durham. To find out more about our Trust, and to access the latest newsletter, please use this QR code. Please also follow the Trust social media on our website [here](#), Facebook @ Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust and LinkedIn @ BWCET.



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Washington - Lunchtime Supervisor.

There is a vacancy at St Joseph's Primary School Washington for a lunchtime supervisor. Please contact the school office if you would like further information and an application form about this role. 0191 917 2484.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Washington - Gardener Volunteer.

There are two small gardens in school, one is our vegetable garden, with a greenhouse and the other is our prayer garden. We are looking for a volunteer (with knowledge of gardening and growing) who could come into school to help, plant, grow and harvest with our children in Year 5 'Gardening Gang.' The volunteer role would need a DBS which we can process. Please contact the school office if you are interested. 0191 917 2484.

Daily Reflections for Holy Week can be found [here](#). It is a beautiful compilation of reflections, written by members of our diocesan Writing Team, based on the daily Gospels as we travel through Holy Week: beginning on Passion Sunday and ending with an Easter Sunday reflection by Bishop Stephen.

Other News

"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](#)

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 in the church and operates a zero-tolerance approach. The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults is at the heart of the Church's mission. 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. Details of our Diocesan policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

Reflections

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

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