

# 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: 0191 4163583

Email: [StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk)

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

Parish Secretary: Anne Ridley 0191 4163583

Office Hours: Tuesday 9am - 2:30pm (Peshaw),

Wednesday & Thursday 9am - 2:30pm (Washington Village)

**In the Partnership of Benedict**

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



## FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, 02 - 03RD MAY 2026 Year A

Saturday 2nd May	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Alex Gilfillan R.I.P.</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	<b>Margaret Hodgson &amp; Deceased Hodgson &amp; Stephenson Families</b>
Sunday 3rd May	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Deceased Members Coulson family</b>
<b>5th Sunday of Easter</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Emma &amp; Eleceteio Torres RIP</b>

### First reading: The Appointment of Deacons

Acts 6:1-7

In those days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the Twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers and sisters, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the Apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

**Response to the Psalm: *May your merciful love be upon us, as we hope in you, O Lord.***

### Second Reading: A Royal Priesthood

1 Peter 2:4-9

Beloved: Come to the Lord, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious. You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: 'Behold, I am laying in Sion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' So the honour is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone', and 'A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.' They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

**Gospel Acclamation: : Alleluia, alleluia. I am the way, and the truth, and the life, says the Lord. No one comes to the Father except through me. Alleluia.**

### The Gospel: Jesus Warns of His Departure

John 14:1-12

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. 'Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.'

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 4th May 2026 (Streamed Mass \*)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 4th May <b>The English Martyrs</b>	St Bede	10am	<b>Fr. Dennis O' Mahony (RIP)</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>Intentions of SVP conference.</b>
Tuesday 5th May	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Bernadette Flannigan ( Wilkinson.)</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Margaret and Lawrence Reed R.I.P.</b>
Wednesday 6th May	St Bede	10am	<b>Mother Regina (recently deceased) - Minsteracres</b>
	St John Boste	7pm	<b>Cathy &amp; Ron Joy.</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	4pm	<b>Joy Wood. (Funeral Reception)</b>
Thursday 7th May <b>St John of Beverley</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Gordon Herrick (RIP)</b>
	St Joseph	12 Noon	<b>Elaine Murphy R.I.P. (SVP)</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	12.30pm	<b>Requiem Mass Joy Wood (RIP)</b>
Friday 8th May	St Joseph (St. Benet's School)	9.15am	<b>Alex Proctor R.I.P. (SVP)</b>
	St John Boste	10am*	<b>Johnny English</b>
Saturday 9th May <b>Vigil</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Mary Pickles (RIP)</b>
	St Joseph	5pm	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>Sydney Joseph McCluskey (RIP) 1st anniversary</b>
Sunday 10th May <b>6th Sunday of Easter</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Shaw &amp; Cherry Families.</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	<b>Maureen Elizabeth Hall (RIP) 1st Anniversary</b>

### I am the way, the truth, and the life

In our Gospel (John 14: 1-12) Jesus tells us that he is the way. When quizzed about this by his apostles he is more clear, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Philip is still unclear and pushes for more clarity from Jesus, by asking to see the Father, "...That will be enough for us." Becoming irritated with their ignorance, Jesus explains that to see him is to see the Father. Yet the apostles are still confused. Jesus explains further, to see him is to see the Father. Because the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. That is, the way is not separated from the destination.

Apparently still confused, Jesus points to the great miracles which he has performed, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves." This explanation from Jesus to his apostles about his Triune nature (Jesus is the second person of the blessed Trinity) is equally valid for us today. Jesus' powerful miracles could only come about by divine action. Showing that just as the Father is in the Son, so too are the works of the Son the works of the Father. Jesus concludes the discourse by stating that his followers will be able to do the works he did, and greater, once he has gone to the Father. (John 14: 11-12)

In the end it all becomes clear, we are, "A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." (1 Peter 2:8), to imitate Christ by the manner in which we live our lives is to follow the way. The supernatural power of God is at work within each of us, we truly have the power of the Holy Spirit in us. Jesus fed five thousand hungry people, we can use the same spirit, living in each of us, to transform the lives of those people we meet as we travel on our journey through life.

We must only remember we are spiritual warriors. The clash of swords against armour is our faith standing up to the assault of the enemy trying to bring doubt into our souls. The blasphemous worry of, "do my prayers matter, do they really change anything?", should be met with our spiritual shield pushing the enemy away as we recall our prayers have the power to move mountains. The enemy's assaults of doubt and insecurity will continue to crash against our armour, but we are called to stand firm on the battlefield of spiritual warfare, the battlefield of life. He is the way, the truth, and our life. The more we point the way to others using our spiritual sword, the more we become the way.

Fr Martin 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 Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

**Gift Aid update.** A member of our Parish Finance team will give a brief update on the Gift Aid scheme. I am very grateful for all donations for the upkeep of our Parish, and would like to thank all parishioners for their continued generosity. A word of thanks also to our finance committee for all their hard work throughout the year.

Fr. Martin

**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](#).

**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.

### CAFOD - PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY ISLAND – Saturday 20 June 2026

If you signed up to go on the above, could you please pay for your seats reserved for you over the next couple of weeks? The cost is £15 per seat and would be grateful if you could put your money in an envelope showing your name on the envelope and mark it as **CAFOD COACH**. Just place the envelope on the weekly collection plate and this will be added to the Parish income details to cover the cost of the coach and recorded accordingly. Thank you.

### St. John Boste

Beginning on the 7th of May, The Rosary will be said in St John Boste Church each Thursday in May at 11.30, followed by refreshments. Everyone is welcome, so please join us.

### Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi Led by Bishop Stephen

22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2027 ... £1725 per person

Places are limited to 50 pilgrims and places are allocated on a first come first served basis with payment of the deposit securing your place. The itinerary and booking details can be found on the diocesan website ([www.diocesehn.org.uk](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk)) or alternatively via the parish office.

### Afternoon Tea

Please come and join us at St. John Boste Church on Saturday 16th May 2pm-4pm to celebrate our parish community and raise much needed funds. Tickets are £5 and will be available closer to

the event.

**Are you ready to help spread Christ's Peace?** Would you like to participate in our Parish celebration by playing music, singing or reading at our evening of **Songs of Peace and Praise, July 9<sup>th</sup> 2026?** If so please see either Maria Ashburner or Jane Everett or contact Jane by email, [ejeverettlane@gmail.com](mailto:ejeverettlane@gmail.com) or text / WhatsApp 07951632593 and leave a message. Please give your contact details and information about how you would like to participate, what you would like to sing/play or read etc. Please get in touch by **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026**. Many thanks

**Sponsored Walk On Friday May 8<sup>th</sup>** I will be doing a sponsored walk between the four churches in St John XXIII parish beginning with Our Lady Queen of Peace in Penshaw, then St John's, St Bede's and ending at Our Lady's. A total of almost seven miles. I have been visiting Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) in Southern Africa for the last 17 years as a trustee of a youth charity. All money raised will go out with me on June 2nd. Some of the money will go towards an outside play area for a preschool we renovated last year. The remainder will be used to help to put water into a rural community. I will be visiting each church over the next two weekends and would be grateful for any sponsorship. Many thanks.

### Chris O'Neill

### To all members of the SVP 200 Club through St Joseph's, Birtley

The SVP would like to thank you for all the help that you have given to Vinnies during 2025-2026 through your membership.

Subscriptions are now due for 2026-2027 from 1st June 2026 which will be £12 per number. To renew, please contact Peter Monaghan on 0191 4108103. Anyone wishing to join this worthwhile enterprise will be most welcome and can contact Peter for more information.

**National Day of Prayer** for survivors of abuse takes place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2026.

The theme for this year's day of prayer for survivors of abuse looks at the scourge of domestic abuse which causes pain and fear that prevents its victims from living the life Jesus came to bring. Some of our bidding prayers this weekend reflect this intention, and the awareness needed in our society and Church. Our Parishes have recently joined the campaign against domestic abuse, and this is reflected in the posters displayed in and around our church areas. Loudfence Mass at Holy Rosary Church, Durham road, Sunderland, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 7pm. Bishop Stephen will be the main celebrant.

## Other News

**Marriage Preparation Days** - Engaged couples can find **more information** [here](#). To find and **book on a course**, please visit our [website](#) or call the phone booking service on 0800 389 3801. (In person and online courses are available.)

### SVP Camp – Holy Island

Calling all young adults 18+. Do you have a week to spare to spend on Lindisfarne this Summer helping out at the Holy Island SVP Camp? Volunteers are needed to work alongside the children who stay in the SVP purpose-built centre on the island. Weeks, 3, 5 and 6 of the Summer have 60 children ready to have a great time rock pooling, walking, arts and crafting and enjoying outdoor activities but we need more helpers to ensure they have the best time!

- Week 3 Sat 1<sup>st</sup> August - 8<sup>th</sup> August
- Week 5 Sat 15<sup>th</sup> August - 22<sup>nd</sup> August
- Week 6 Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> August

If you are interested have a look at the website <https://svp.org.uk/microsite/ozanam-camp> or email Barbara Taws [barbarat@svp.org.uk](mailto:barbarat@svp.org.uk)

All helpers receive training and will need to be DBS checked.

**“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](#)

**John Bradburne Pilgrimage Climb 2026** - Dear Friends, we are delighted to invite you to take part in the John Bradburne Pilgrimage Climb 2026, taking place on Saturday 13 June in the beautiful landscape of Cumbria. This special day will begin with Mass at St John The Evangelist Church, Skirwith, celebrated by Bishop Paul Swarbrick, before we set off together on a memorable climb to High Cup Nick. What to expect: A 13km (approx. 8 miles) guided climb through stunning scenery; A day of prayer, reflection and fellowship; Refreshments in Skirwith Village Hall after the walk. Please note this climb is not for the faint hearted and requires a good level of fitness, to complete the pilgrimage. Whether you join us for the full day or simply for the Mass, you are warmly welcome. There is no fixed cost to take part, but a donation towards the Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre is greatly appreciated. To book your place email: [info@johnbradburne.com](mailto:info@johnbradburne.com) We look forward to seeing you on the day. With best wishes The John Bradburne Memorial Society.

**Mary's Meals** - Since our humble beginnings, Mary's Meals – named in honour of Mary, the mother of Jesus – has been built on a foundation of prayer and the many little acts of love offered by those who believe in our mission. During May, as we take time to honour and celebrate Our Lady in a special way, we invite your church to join us to [Pray In May](#) for the children who eat our life-changing school meals. To plan your participation, we've developed a range of easy-to-use [Pray In May resources](#). These include printable prayers for children and a bulletin notice with information to share with your parish. Please explore our resources and share them with parish groups or schools who may be interested. And remember, if you would like one of our wonderful volunteers to visit your church and share more about Mary's Meals and our work, we would be delighted to hear from you. You can contact us at [info@marysmeals.org](mailto:info@marysmeals.org), call 0800 698 1212 or [request a talk](#) via our website.

**Forming Catholic Student Leaders** - Two summer courses exploring faith, ethics and leadership for sixth form students, offered by the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst. Join us for 6 days in the beautiful Ribble Valley to explore themes linked to The Common Good (Year 12, 10-15 August) and to The Human Ecology (Year 13, 5-10 July). Meet new friends, discuss and share with peers, tutors and academics, learn new skills, develop your relationship with Christ, build your character. [www.christianleadershipformation.com](http://www.christianleadershipformation.com)

**The Joy of the Gospel** *“Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.”* Evangelii Gaudium, the Joy of the Gospel, looks at the new evangelisation for the transmission of the faith and has chapters on the following subjects: The Church's Missionary Transformation; The Crisis of Communal Commitment; The Proclamation of the Gospel; The Social Dimension of Evangelization; Spirit-Filled Evangelizers. The full text of Evangelii Gaudium can be downloaded [here](#).

**Mary, Cause of Our Joy - 16 March 2026-31 October 2026** - Back in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Walsingham was one of the four principal shrines in Christendom. It was as famous as Rome, Jerusalem, and Compostella, and so pilgrims flocked in their thousands here, so much so that it became the foremost Marian shrine in the world at that time. Here, in 1061, Our Lady appeared in a dream to Richeldis de Faverches, a devout Norman widow. In the dream Our Lady showed her the house where the Annunciation had taken place and where the Holy Family had lived. Richeldis was then requested to build a similar house at Walsingham and was promised: *“All who are in any way distressed, or in need, let them seek me there in that little house you have made at Walsingham. To all that seek me there shall be given succour. And there at Walsingham in this little house shall be held in remembrance the great joy of my salutation when St Gabriel told me I should through humility become the mother of God's Son.”* A [Programme of Events and Pilgrimages](#) (March 2026 – Oct 2026) is available to view and download. You can also read more on the [Walsingham website](#)

**Pentecost Retreat- 22—24 May 2026** - In this Pentecost retreat, led by Fr Chris Thomas, we will reflect on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel and pray for the gifts of the Spirit to flourish in our lives, that we may learn how to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God. There will be times of input, times of silence and times of prayer and praise to help us open ourselves more fully to God. Suggested Donation £230 To book please [click here](#) or visit the Minsteracres website.

## 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 wish to request an electronic version of 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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