

# 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  
Administrator: Audrey Huntley tel: 0191 4163583  
(Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12—5pm)  
Email: [StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk)  
Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



## In the Partnership of Benedict

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

## SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS, 3RD - 4TH JANUARY 2026 Year A

Saturday 3rd January	St Joseph	5pm	People of the Parish
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 4th January	St John Boste	9:30am	Syd McElhenny
<b>Second Sunday of Christmas</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Margaret Logan RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Gerard Fagan & Deceased Family Members

### First reading **Sirach 24:1-2, 8-12**

Wisdom will praise herself and will boast in the midst of her people. In the assembly of the Most High she will open her mouth, and in the presence of his forces she will boast: 'Then the Creator of all things commanded me, and the one who created me gave my tent a resting place. And he said, "Make your dwelling in Jacob and in Israel receive your inheritance." From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall not cease to exist. In the holy tabernacle I ministered before him, and so I was established in Sion. In the beloved city likewise he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my dominion. So I took root in an honoured people, in the portion of the Lord, his inheritance.'

**Response to the Psalm:** *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*

### Second reading **Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O Christ, proclaimed among the nations. Glory to you, O Christ, believed in throughout the world. Alleluia.

### **Gospel John 1:1-18**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness about him, and cried out, 'This was he of whom I said, "He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me." ' For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only begotten God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

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 5th January 2026 (\* Streamed Mass)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 5th January	St Bede	10am	<b>In Thanksgiving to St Joseph</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>Tony Cosgrove RIP</b>
<b>Tuesday 6th January</b> <b>The Epiphany of the Lord</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	8am	<b>Wilkinson and Bowden Families RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Janet O'Neil</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Marrion &amp; Bob Slavin RIP</b>
<b>Wednesday 7th January</b> <b>St Raymond of Peñafort</b>	St Bede	10am	<b>Vera Callahan RIP</b>
	St John Boste	7pm	<b>Mary Stephenson &amp; Deceased Family</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>John &amp; Raymond Lyons RIP</b>
Thursday 8th January	St Joseph	12 Noon	<b>Paddy Brady RIP</b>
	St John Boste	10am*	<b>Stephen Joy RIP</b>
Friday 9th January	St Joseph	10am	<b>Jerry Nichol RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Jim Walker RIP</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Betty Lee RIP</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>Veronica Strumbec RIP</b>
<b>Saturday 10th January</b> <b>The Baptism of the Lord</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Raymond Lyons Anniversary RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Michael Farrell Anniversary RIP</b>

**“And the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us.”**

“In the beginning...” We start the first Sunday of a New Year with the delivery of John’s very clear message to us as Christians. The Prologue to St John’s Gospel places Christ with God from the very beginning. “The light of men” was always at the heart of the divine plan. Just as St Paul reminds the Ephesians in the Second Reading, that faith in the Lord is fundamental to this growing community, John exhorts us to be children of God, children of that Light, to be true receivers of divine revelation. Like John, we must witness. The whole Gospel then offers the template for belief.

A New Year involves looking back and looking forward. The darkest days are past and we anticipate a newness of tempo. Today’s Gospel underlines, in the simplicity of its form, the staggering miracle of our redemption. In the man-made darkness that curls over so many in the world today, let us place ourselves, with faith and hope, in that Light and pray for better, act for better.

As in “The Bright Field” by the Welsh poet RS Thomas, let us start a New Year with a flash of the divine:

“Life is not hurrying

on to a receding future, nor hankering after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush, to a brightness  
that seems as transitory as your youth  
once, but it is the eternity that awaits you.”

**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

## A very Happy and Holy New Year

**Fr's Martin, Martin & Luke** would like to thank all parishioners for their kindness during the Christmas season. May God Bless you all and we wish you every Blessing for the New Year, a Happy, Healthy 2026.

## What's On in the Parish

**Tuesday 6th January is the feast of the Epiphany.** It is also a Holyday of Obligation. Mass times are - Vigil Mass of the Epiphany, 7pm at Our Lady Queen of Peace on Monday evening; 10am Mass on Tuesday at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate; 7pm Mass at St. Joseph's; and an **Extra Mass at 8am** at Our Lady Queen of Peace.

**Change to Masses in January** - Please note there will be no 7pm Mass on Monday 12th January at Our Lady Queen of Peace, or 10am Mass on Tuesday 13th January at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate due to reduced Clergy availability.

### 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.

**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!

**Next Sunday** we celebrate The Feast of The Baptism of The Lord. There will be a retiring collection for 'The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child.' The annual White flower appeal helps the society promote The dignity of every unborn child. Thankyou.

### Join us on our parish Alpha course

**Who is it for?** everyone and anyone who wants to learn more about our Christian faith and journey.

**What is it?** 10 weeks course to discuss life and our Christian faith in an informal friendly environment.

**When is it?** Wednesday 14th January 6.30pm at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church Penshaw

For further information contact Maria Ashburner 07752984178.

**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, or follow the contact details on our Parish Website under '[Safeguarding](#)'. Details of our Diocesan policy can be found by [clicking here](#).

**St Bede's Christmas Raffle** - Many thanks to everyone one who supported our Christmas raffle a total of £332 was raised, also a big thank you to everyone who donated for the Christmas flowers and Tree your kindness was very much appreciated. Happy new year to everyone.

**Defibrillator Training Course.** Ten Our Lady Queen Of Peace parishioners completed a Defibrillator Training Course on 27 November. This Training was funded by OLQP SVP, so a massive thank you goes to them for their generosity. Because of the success of this training, if others at OLQP would like to complete this Defibrillator Training give your name to any OLQP SVP member, photos of whom are in the foyer at the church. If there is enough interest shown another training course will be organised.

**New Date! A Biblical Walk Through the Mass.** Fr Luke will be leading a short video study course on the Mass beginning on **Thursday 8 January 2026 at 7pm** at OLQP and running for five weeks, each session will last about an hour If you have any questions please email Fr Luke at [luke.wilkinson@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:luke.wilkinson@diocesehn.org.uk)

## Other News

**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](#).

**Pilgrimage to Medjugorje, 7 - 14 June 2026.** Flying from Newcastle to Dubrovnik. Further info at '[Medjugorie North East](#)'. Led by Fr Martin Morris.

### Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - 31<sup>st</sup> July – 7<sup>th</sup> August 2026.

*Celebrating 100 years since the First Diocesan Pilgrimage.* Bookings are now open for the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. We travel on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July and return on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August. 2026 is the 100<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Closing our Holy Doors** - 6 January 2026. The Year of Jubilee in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle will officially end in January 2026. Bishop Stephen will close both Holy Doors on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – **The Feast of the Epiphany** at the Cathedral Church of St Mary, Newcastle: Mass at 12.05pm. *All are welcome.*

**Diocesan Holocaust Memorial** - 21 January 2026, 7pm. St Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7PE. The theme for this year's commemorations 'Bridging Generations', is a call-to-action. A reminder that the responsibility of remembrance doesn't end with the survivors – it lives on through their children, their grandchildren and through all of us. This theme encourages us all to engage actively with the past – to listen, to learn and to carry those lessons forward. The Interreligious Relations Team are delighted to welcome **Professor Yitka Graham** and **Mr Nicu Ion** as the guest speakers for 2026's Diocesan Holocaust Commemoration. To book [please click here](#).

**"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

**Safeguarding Administrator** - Supporting the Safeguarding team, the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle are looking for a consummate administrative professional who handles sensitive information with the utmost discretion and confidentiality. Similarly, you'll be a person who has an eye for detail recognising the need for accuracy and precision. Salary scale - £26,000 to £27,768. If you are interested in applying for this 12 month Fixed Term Contracted Safeguarding position, please get in touch to request an Applicant Pack by emailing Bernadette Aquino HR Business Partner at [Bernadette.aquino@diocesehn.org.uk](mailto:Bernadette.aquino@diocesehn.org.uk) Please note the Diocese cannot accept CV's and as such to be considered for the position you must request our Applicant Pack and then complete and return our Application Form. [The closing date for applications is 09:00am Friday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2026 although we reserve the right to close the position early.](#)

**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](#).

**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. 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 Eucharist: A Gift to be Nurtured.** As part of our aim to promote growth and knowledge of the Eucharist, the Association of the Eucharist offer The Eucharist: [A Gift to be Nurtured](#), which gives us words from Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis to guide time before the Blessed Sacrament. This resource can be used by both individuals and groups.

**Emmaus Bereavement Listening Service:** If you are struggling after the death of a loved one, or suffering any significant loss, and would like to share your story with someone outside your family, then a member of the Emmaus Team may be able to help. The members of the Emmaus team are trained in bereavement listening skills and are experienced in supporting those who are suffering loss. If you think we could help, please ring the Emmaus Bereavement Support Team on 07732 980740. Please leave your name and number and a member of the team will get in touch with you.

**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 Schmemann. You can access the 'We Dare to Say' resource 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](#)

**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.

**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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