

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



**In the Partnership of Benedict**

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

## THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, 21 – 22 FEBRUARY 2026 Year A

Saturday 21 February	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Michael Ryder RIP</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	<b>Phyllis &amp; Tommy Peart</b>
Sunday 22 February	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
<b>The First Sunday of Lent</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	<b>Margaret Logan RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Christopher Groark RIP Second Anniversary</b>

**First reading: The Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7**

The Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, "You shall not eat of any tree in the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

**Response to the Psalm: Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.**

**Second Reading: The Second Adam. Romans 5:12-19**

Brothers and Sisters: Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man; much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

**Gospel Acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ. One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

**The Gospel: The Testing of Jesus. Matthew 4:1-11**

At that time: Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."' Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the Temple and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you", and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test."' Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."' Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to 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 February 2026 (Streamed Mass \*)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 23 February <b>St Polycarp</b>	St Bede	10am	<b>Repose of the Soul of Shaun Ebblewhite RIP</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	<b>Margaret Hodgson &amp; Deceased Hodgson &amp; Stephenson Families</b>
Tuesday 24 February	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>John &amp; Margaret Barrett</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Betty Gilfillin RIP</b>
Wednesday 25 February	St Bede	10am	<b>Gerard Cushlow RIP Anniversary</b>
	St John Boste	7pm	<b>Kathleen &amp; Bill Burlinson</b>
Thursday 26 February	Our Lady Queen of Peace	11am*	<b>Requiem Mass for Ann Duffy</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	1:15pm	<b>Requiem Mass for Patricia Steel</b>
	St Joseph	12 Noon	<b>Kathleen &amp; Bill Burlinson</b>
Friday 27 February <b>St Gregory of Narek</b>	St John Boste	10am*	<b>David Slater RIP &amp; Marie, Lesley &amp; Stewart</b>
	St Joseph	10am	<b>Vera McAvoy RIP</b>
Saturday 28 February <b>Vigil</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	<b>Private Intention</b>
	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Pat McAdam RIP</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>Anthony John Thompson</b>
Sunday 1 March <b>Second Sunday of Lent</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Margaret Hodgson &amp; Deceased Hodgson &amp; Stephenson Families</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Vera &amp; Tony Gosgrove RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	<b>Mrs Eileen Shannon</b>

### Bulletin Reflection – First Sunday of Lent

In this first week of Lent all the readings are centred on temptation and sin. This is very appropriate as we enter our period of preparation for the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. During the season of Lent, we need to acknowledge that we all submit to our own temptations. So, we then need to work towards reconciliation and a commitment to doing better in the future.

We hear of two occasions of evil (the devil) engaging with Eve and Adam in the first reading from Genesis, then in the Gospel of Matthew with Jesus. The devil understands our weaknesses, and he exploits these to drag us into sin. Adam and Eve submit to the temptation of greed and envy by eating the forbidden fruit and their life is changed for the worse. Jesus is hungry, vulnerable and tired when the devil tempts him, but he has an answer for the devil to rebuke each of the three temptations.

In his time in the desert Jesus was preparing for his ministry. Self-denial, prayer and time away from the distractions of the world, all intended to come closer to God and listen to what his Father wants of Him. Those forty days were important to Jesus, and we can use these next forty days of Lent to prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

What are the things we can deny ourselves to be closer to our Father in heaven, and to be attentive to what he wants of us? What extra time can we dedicate to prayer? A challenge I have heard of is, could you dedicate half of one percent of each day to prayer? That would amount to 7.2 minutes per day – not very much time at all! It does not even need to be in one session; it could be 3.6 minutes in the morning and again in the evening. A half of one percent sounds, and is, a tiny part of our day, yet 7.2 minutes of extra prayer each day could be transformational.

**Deacon Tony Joy**

**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 [www.diocesehn.org.uk](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk) 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](#).

**Family Fast Day** is Friday 27 February, offering envelopes are at the back of each church. There will be a special collection at all Masses next weekend..

**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

St Bede, Wednesday 6pm

St John Boste, Wednesday 6.30pm

St Joseph, Thursday 11.30am before Mass

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Sunday 4pm

**Lent, "My day by day"** daily prayers. These excellent little prayer books are an ideal accompaniment to the Lenten season. Available from the back of church, price £1.50 each.

**Let us keep in our prayers** those members of our parish who are preparing for reception into full communion with the Church at Easter. They will attend the 'rite of election' at St Mary's Cathedral on the this Sunday, when Bishop Stephen will enrol them as Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**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.

**Group 735 HCPT The Pilgrimage Trust** are holding a fundraising Ceilidh on Friday 13 March 7pm to 11 pm at North Biddick Club, Fatfield. Music by *The Whole Shebang*. Our Group Target is £1390 to sponsor a Special Needs Child for a life changing Pilgrimage/Holiday in Lourdes at Easter. Price, which includes a finger buffet, is £8. Under 16s free if accompanied by a ticket bearing parent or guardian. Tickets available after each Mass at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate. Donations of raffle prizes will be much appreciated. Do please join us for this joyful event.

### 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.

**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.

**Pastoral Strategy.** In Bishop Stephen's Pastoral Letter, read at all this weekend's Masses, we hear about God's calling for our Diocese. The hopes and challenges we all face in the coming years. All parishes are asked to reflect and discern on their mission as we continue our journey to live as a flourishing Diocese alive in the Holy Spirit. More information is available [here](#) including details of an online session on Tuesday 3 March at 7pm.

## Other News

### Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes - 31 July – 7 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 July and return on Friday 7 August. 2026 is the 100th anniversary of the first Diocesan Pilgrimage. To book, or for further information, please contact Tangney Tours on their website [here](#) or by calling 01732 886 666.

## 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, as a kitchen assistant, as a cook, 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 [here](#) or contact [BarbaraT@svp.org.uk](mailto:BarbaraT@svp.org.uk)

**Night Falls – a new passion play by Paul Birch** - 26 February 2026. Middlesbrough's St Mary's Cathedral is to host a powerful new passion play. The Riding Lights Theatre Company presents 'Night Falls' – a new passion play by Paul Birch. Set over the four days leading up to the crucifixion, 'Night Falls' retells the Easter story through two strangers sheltering in Bethany, in the house of Lazarus – where hope, faith, doubt and grief collide, and where the impossible has already occurred. Blending music with powerful drama, this fresh and vivid production explores themes of courage, belief, loss, fear and hope that resonate widely. The performance is suitable for ages 12 plus, as some mature themes are explored. Cost: Tickets are £15 (concessions £10), with a 10% discount for groups of 10 or more. [Book 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](#)

## Mass for the Holy Land – Saturday 25 April at 11am St Joseph's Church, Birtley

All are warmly invited to attend Mass for the Holy Land on Saturday 25 April at 11am 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.

**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](#).

**Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network** - Each month the Holy Father will have a main prayer intention for people to use as part of their daily prayer, and he will also announce an "urgent intention" for people's prayer. A short video based on the main intention published each month and known as 'The Pope Video'. These videos can be viewed through the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#) visit now and watch this month's intention.

## Diocesan Vacancy.

Role: Parish Finance Officer

Salary Scale: £43,000 to £45,000

Location: St Vincent's Diocesan Offices, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 7PY

Applicant Pack from Annie Leaver, Head of HR [here](#)

Closing Date Wednesday 4 March 2026 (we reserve the right to close the post early)

Shortlisting Wednesday 11 March 2026. Interviews scheduled Tuesday 17 March 2026.

The full advert can be viewed [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.



[To post a notice on this Newsletter, please click stjohn23bulletin@gmail.com](#)