

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 Ridley 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 ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, 15TH – 16TH AUGUST 2026 Year A

Saturday 15th August	St Joseph	5pm	John Taylor RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 16th August	St John Boste	9:30am	Keith & Ross Irwin RIP
The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Norman Smithson RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Teresa Madden RIP

First reading: The Woman Robed with the Sun

Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab

God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come.'

Response to the Psalm: On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Second Reading: Christ, First Born from the Dead

1 Corinthians 15:20-27

Brothers and Sisters: Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet.'

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. Mary has been taken up into heaven; the host of angels rejoice. Alleluia.

The Gospel: Mary's Visit to Elizabeth

Luke 1:39-56

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.' And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring for ever.' And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

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 17th August 2026 (Streamed Mass *)

Day	Church	Time	
Monday 17th August	St Bede	10am	Fr Leo Pyle RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm*	A Sick Person (BM)
Tuesday 18th August	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Margaret and Edward Clark
	St Joseph	7pm	25th Wedding Anniversary Kufre and Attah Okoji
Wednesday 19th August St John Eudes	St Bede	10am	Fr Philip Carroll RIP
	St John Boste	7pm	Paul Iley Birthday Anniversary
Thursday 20th August St Bernard	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Ann Howarth RIP
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Mary Ann Grieveson RIP (SVP)
Friday 21st August St Pius X	St Joseph	10am	Harry Daglish RIP (SVP)
	St John Boste	10am*	Holy Souls
Saturday 22nd August The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Teresa Laidler RIP
Vigil	St Joseph	5pm	People of the Parish
	St Bede	5pm	Antony Bark (Barky) RIP Recently Deceased
Sunday 23rd August 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste	9:30am	Vera and John Frazer RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Dorothy Sweeney RIP

LATELY DEAD: Sheila Tweedy and Joyce O'Brien.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY.

The Feast of the Assumption is a day of Joy. God has won. Love has won. It has won Life. Love has shown that it is stronger than death, that God possesses true strength, and that strength is goodness and love. Mary was taken body and soul up into heaven, at the end of her earthly life. There is room in God for the body. Heaven is no longer a very remote sphere unknown to us. We have a Mother in Heaven. And the Mother of God, the Mother of the Son of God, is our Mother too. He himself has said so. He made her our Mother when he said to St. John from the Cross, "Behold your Mother." We have a Mother in Heaven. Heaven is open, Heaven has a heart.

In the Gospel we heard the Magnificat, that great song of praise inspired by the Holy Spirit that came from Mary's lips, indeed from her heart. This marvellous hymn mirrors the entire soul of Our Lady, the entire personality of hers. "Magnificat". - 'My soul Magnifies the Lord.' Mary made God bigger in the world. Great in her life, and more present for us all. She was not afraid that God might be a rival in our Life. That with his greatness he might encroach our freedom, our space. She knew that if God is great, we too are great. He does not oppress our lives, but raises them and expands them. It is precisely then that life becomes great in the splendour of God. Let us be like Mary, and make God more present in life today. Starting in the Morning with prayers, and then dedicating time to God, giving Sundays to God. We do not waste our free time if we dedicate it to God. In fact God gives us more time, richer and roomier.

Happy Feast of the Assumption.

Pope Benedict XVI

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.

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

Fr Luke New Appointment - The Bishop has asked me to take up a new appointment in the diocese. I will be moving to St Dominic's Newcastle to join the City Centre Clergy and taking up the role of Chaplain to Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. The 22nd/23rd August will be my last weekend in the parish and I'd really like you to join me for Mass on the 22nd at 10am at OBLI to say goodbye with refreshments afterwards. Fr Luke.

Healing Mass - We will offer a Mass for the sick and housebound of our parish at 10am on Saturday 15th August at Our Lady's. The Sacrament of the sick will be celebrated during the Mass, along with prayers for healing. Refreshments afterwards in the Emmaus room. All 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 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](#).



The Parish of St John XXIII has a dedicated YouTube channel. Here you can watch live streams of Masses. These are indicated by an asterisk next to the Mass times on pages one and two. You can also see recordings of past Masses and Gospel Homilies. The channel can be accessed [here](#).

Special BBC Songs of Praise Christmas Concert to be

recorded at the spectacular Glasshouse International Centre for Music in Gateshead on Tuesday 6th October.

Join Aled Jones and some very special guests at the iconic Glasshouse for a spectacular Christmas concert. Bring your singing voice and Christmas jumper for an evening of classic carols and traditional hymns. For free tickets book [here](#) or [email](#) or telephone 020 8530 8154.

Welcome.

This Sunday we celebrate the Assumption of Our Lady. During the 11am Mass at Our Lady's we will receive into the Church, Eleanor, Benjamin, Graham, David, Deborah and Nicole. We congratulate them as they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and their First Holy Communion. We also thank their Catechists who have prepared them for this day.

Please contact your MP to oppose assisted suicide

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill is back in the House of Commons and seeks to legalise assisted suicide. It will have its Second Reading and vote on Friday, 11th September 2026. Please write to your MP to make your voice heard and oppose the Bill. "This bill is wrong in principle," says Archbishop Richard Moth, President of the Bishops' Conference, "It is also deeply flawed and, if passed, could lead to vulnerable people feeling pressured into ending their lives. The Bill has a serious lack of protection for health and social care staff and risks putting many wonderful hospices and care homes in the position of no longer being able to operate. I urge you to write to your Members of Parliament to petition them to vote against the Bill at Second Reading."

You can support the Archbishop's call and contact your MP now as a matter of urgency. Even if you have already done so in the past, please speak up and voice your opposition. The charity Right to Life UK has a simple online mechanism to do this. It takes little more than a few minutes to enter your postcode, make sure the suggested text suits your viewpoint and submit your message to ask your MP to stop this flawed Bill progressing through parliament. Thankyou, Fr. Martin Morris.

For more information and resources, visit:

cbcew.org.uk/opposing-assisted-suicide

righttolife.org.uk/Sept11vote

Welcome.

This week beginning 16th August we welcome Fr Stephen Foster a Priest of the Order of St Camillus, who will be helping with the celebration of Masses. Fr Stephen is originally from Penshaw, so it's nice to welcome him home for the holidays. We say goodbye to Fr Eric, who has been in the parish for the last month. We thank him for his warmth and beautiful singing. We hope to see you again Father.

Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary and Benediction - Sunday

16th August at Our Lady's, 4pm-5.30pm. Refreshments afterwards in the Emmaus room. All welcome.

Parish 'LIFE' Group. - We are hoping to begin a 'LIFE' Group in the Parish soon. The group will work closely with the project of The Guild of Our Lady of Good Counsel network, in supporting Mothers and Expectant Mothers with housing, feeding, and other practical difficulties. They will also promote the Annual day for Life, and the January 'white flower appeal'. A short meeting will be held in the office at Our Lady's after 10am Mass on Saturday 26th September for any parishioner who may wish to know more. All welcome.

CONFESSIONS	
Church	Time
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Thursday after 10am Mass
St Joseph	Thursday after Noon Mass
St John Boste	Friday after 10am Mass
Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	Saturday after 10am Mass
St Bede	Saturday after 5pm Mass

Pastoral Strategy - In our latest Pastoral Strategy video message, **Bishop Stephen** reminds us that "*we are all called to be the Lord's Missionary Disciples.*" Over the summer and into autumn, Bishop Stephen and others will be reflecting and responding to the discernments locally submitted. During this time we are asked to keep the process in our prayers and also to continue to witness what the Lord is calling us to be and do. To watch the video please [click here](#).

The 42nd St John Boste walk, with parishioners from Washington and Esh Winning, was a great success, helped by ideal weather conditions. The walkers were joined by additional parishioners to say the rosary in the Galilee Chapel, Durham Cathedral, before continuing the walk to St Leonard's School, the site where St John Boste was executed. Many thanks to those who walked and a warm invitation to join us in 2027 for our 43rd walk.

Stand with Palestinian families: Write to the Trade Secretary today.

The suffering in the Holy Land has gone on for far too long. One of the greatest obstacles to building peace is the ongoing expansion of illegal settlements across occupied Palestinian territory. As settlements expand, Palestinian families are driven from their homes, often amid repeated violent attacks, and are forced to watch while settlers take over. The result is widespread poverty and suffering. That is why we are calling on the trade secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, to ban trade with settlements, including ending the import of produce grown on illegally occupied land. Write to the Trade Secretary [here](#).

Other News

Special Collection Update - During Advent 2025 and Lent 2026, **St Cuthbert's Care** invited parishes across our Diocese to support their new service, **Fresh Start**, which aims to provide safe accommodation for women experiencing homelessness, many of whom have faced challenges linked to the justice system or substance misuse, supporting them to rebuild their lives with dignity and stability. Thanks to the generosity of parish communities, an incredible **£26,500** has been raised, which will go directly to supporting this vital service. Rooted firmly in Catholic values, the project responds to a clear gap in provision, offering hope where there is currently no statutory funding. Anticipated annual running costs are around £300,000, making the ongoing support of parish communities more important than ever. *Thank you for your support – together we can make a real difference.* More information [here](#).

Minsteracres - The Medjugorje Centre (North East) has organised a retreat from Friday 9th - Sunday 11th October. **Fr Martin Morris** will be leading the retreat. It is open to anyone from our diocese and beyond, who supports or is interested in Medjugorje. The cost is £205 per person. A £50 Deposit is required and booking forms are available from Marian Fletcher - Telephone 0191 4174413.

For information about Medjugorje see - <https://www.medjugorje.hr/en/>

The **God Who Speaks** project encourages us to deepen our love of the Bible and to find creative ways to encounter Christ in the Scriptures, that we may bear witness to the Word in the world. The August theme is: [Sunlight in Scripture](#) What does the Bible say about the sun? Why is the sun central to creation and our spiritual growth? Also [Rest and Recreation](#) Even God rests. What does Scripture say about the need for rest and recreation? There is also a celebration of the role [Our Lady](#) plays in Scripture and in our faith ahead of the Feast of the Assumption on 15th August. For more information please [click here](#).

Godly Play Core Training Course - Godly Play UK is a Christian movement centred on childhood spirituality. It recognises childhood spirituality as an instinctive and profound capacity that includes a natural sense of God's mystery and presence and offers training, advice and support for those who use the Godly Play method to transform thinking and practice for the whole of life. A three-day introductory and training session is taking place at St Gabriel's Church in Heaton this October. For more information please [click here](#).

Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. We are just over a month away from the first of our two SPUC Day Conferences, and I'm pleased to say we have four fantastic speakers confirmed (two at each Conference)! In London we will be joined by Bernadette Smyth and Sarah Morse. And in Glasgow, we will be joined by Sara Spencer and John Mason. To find out more about these speakers, and to book your place at one of the Conferences, click the link [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 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.**



[To post a notice on this Newsletter, please click stjoh23bulletin@gmail.com](#)