

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: 01916498257
 Administrator: Audrey Huntley tel: 0191 4163583
 (Tuesday & Wednesday 8am—1pm, Thursday 11am—4pm & Friday 12– 5pm)
 Email: StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



In the Partnership of Benedict
 Birtley, Chester-le-Street, Penshaw, Sacriston, Washington

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD 11TH - 12TH JANUARY 2025, Year C

Saturday 11th January	St Joseph	5pm	Thomas & Paul Nolan RIP
Vigil	St Bede	5pm	Anne Carr RIP
Sunday 12th January	St John Boste	9:30am	Michael Farrell RIP
The Baptism of the Lord	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Jim Walker RIP

First Reading: Comfort my People, Comfort them

Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go on up to a high mountain, O Sion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!' Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Response to the Psalm: Bless the Lord, O my soul! My God, how great you are!

Second Reading: Reborn in the Cleansing Waters

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Beloved: The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! He who is mightier than I is coming, said John. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Alleluia!

The Gospel: - The Coming of the Spirit

Luke 3:15-16. 21-22

At that time: As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, 'I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.' Now when all the people were baptised by John the Baptist and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Fr Martin Morris	0191 649 8257	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 13th January 2025

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 13th January St Hilary	St Bede	10am	Paul Cockburn RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Intentions of Trevor Gaze
Tuesday 14th January	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Kathleen Monaghan (Deceased Anniversary)
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	1pm	Requiem Mass for John Madden
	St Joseph	7pm	Deceased Joyce Gibbons Family
Wednesday 15th January	St Bede	10am	Mary & Joseph Dragone
	St John Boste	7pm	Percy, Lillian & Brian Mills RIP
Thursday 16th January	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	John Lewis In Thanksgiving, 90th Birthday
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Jean Greenwood RIP
Friday 17th January St Anthony	St John Boste	10am	Intentions of the OLOF Family
	St Joseph	10am	Deceased Stafford & McClusky Family
Saturday 18th January Vigil	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Tony Madden RIP Birthday Memory
	St Joseph	5pm	Deceased Cleary & Fox Family
	St Bede	5pm	Victor Fonde 95th Birthday
Sunday 19th January The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste	9:30am	Fr Kevin Cummins RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Mary Maw RIP
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	People of the Parish

The Baptism of the Lord

I would like to begin by confessing that I'm not a Greek scholar, or even competent in basic koine Greek. And the memories of the few introductory Greek classes which I took in seminary, eons ago, have long left my feeble brain. However, I do recall a few certain Greek words and phrases, probably because I thought they sounded nice. One of them is Theophany. Theophany comes from the Greek, Theo, meaning God, and Phanein, to make visible. My preferred definition of Theophany is, "A vision of God which is accompanied by an extraordinary visual display."

Theophany is exactly what we see in the baptism of our Lord which is our Gospel reading this week (Luke 3:15-16). We see the Holy Spirit made visible in the form of a dove being sent down by the Father over his only son. This is more than a Theophany; it is a Trinitarian Theophany. God being made manifest at this moment tells us how important baptism is to our faith. Baptism is the beginning and key to our faith, and its importance is confirmed in this Trinitarian Theophany.

Perhaps the most important point to first note is that Jesus did not need to be baptised. The early Church fathers are unanimous and adamant on this point. Which begs the question, why was Jesus baptised? Jesus allowed himself to be baptised for more than one reason. First, he was the new Adam. As John St Chrysostom said, " Let not any one imagine that He received Him because He had Him not. The Holy Spirit descended also upon Christ as upon the Founder of our race [Adam], that He might be in Christ first of all who received Him not for Himself, but rather for us." Jesus is showing that the human race is being given another chance and the waters of baptism allow this by washing us clean of the sins of our first human father, Adam.

Jesus' baptism was not directly related to Jesus. Like everything Jesus did, he did it for us. He did it for our sake, for our salvation. He was showing us the way to the Father. Perhaps we should take a moment to reflect on this as we begin to stride into the new year of 2025 AD and ask ourselves what we do for him?

Fr Martin Wheaton

Masses are live-streamed daily at 10am everyday, except Monday when Mass is live-streamed at 7pm

Please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/penshaw> to view from one of our Churches.

In addition, we live-stream Mass from St Joseph's, Birtley on: Saturday at 5pm.

To access live streaming from St Joseph's Birtley, please click the link <https://www.churchservices.tv/birtley>.

What's On in the Parish

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Our Lady Queen of Peace each Friday 2-3pm;

St Bede's each Wednesday 9.15am - 9.50am;

St. Joseph's each Thursday evening 6.30pm - 7.30pm, held in the front room of the Presbytery (main door will be open, first room on left). I do encourage as many of you as possible to spend some time in quiet prayer with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Our Lady Queen of Peace - Thursday morning, after Mass and Saturday morning from 10am-11am.

St Joseph -Thursday after noon 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) -Tuesday at 1pm in the Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

Parish Fundraising Activities - Could I please remind all groups and individuals that, when conducting any fundraising efforts within the parish, all monies raised must be banked via the Parish current account. This is at the express request of Bishop Stephen and the Diocesan Trustees in accordance with the statutory regulations. Fr Martin.

Penshaw Catholic Women's Guild – The response to our Christmas Toy Appeal was amazing. A special thank you to everyone who made a donation. Hopefully we have made Christmas a little more magical for some poor families. A Mass of thanks will be said for you all in the near future. Members of the P.C.W.G.

First Friday devotions - Now that we are in a Holy Year, Pope Francis' suggestion of praying the First Friday devotion is one that we will be offering from February – October, beginning on Friday 7th February, with 7pm Mass at Our Lady Queen of Peace. The First Friday Masses will move to a different Church in our parish every second month. There will be Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 6.15pm – 6.50pm before each Mass. The twelve promises given by Jesus to St. Margaret Mary concerning this devotion are a great encouragement to the Christian life. Google "Twelve promises of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – EWTN."

NEW SONG! Join us on 12 January 4.00 pm for the first New Song event of 2025! Come and share a message of HOPE with us at the start of this Jubilee year. Come and join us - all are welcome!

Where: Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Parish Room NE38 7HS.

When: 12 January @ 4.00 pm. **Email:** newsongne@gmail.com

Instagram: @newsongne

White Flower Appeal - The society for the protection of unborn children will hold their annual retiring collection after each Mass on the weekend of 19th January 2025. Thank you.

"Living Faith" Books now available from the back of Church. These excellent booklets are a great help to the spiritual life, which includes various prayers for each day, along with a relevant reflection for each day of the week on the daily Gospel. Price: £1.50p.

OLQP SVP - Friendship meal (supported by SVP) This event and the Healing Mass on Saturday 15th February have been postponed to later in the year due to safeguarding issues. We cannot conform with the criteria for holding events due to the lack of SVP full members in attendance. Any donations can either be returned or held for later in the year.

St Bede's - We would like to thank everyone who supported us during the Christmas Season. Donations were received towards our beautiful flowers, raffle & Christmas Tree. An amount of £239.70 was raised for our Wateraid project. All raffle prizes have now been claimed.

The Parish is planning a Parish Lenten Mission 2025, 15 March - 19 March. The Mission will be led by Sr Brieghe McKenna (OSC) and Fr Pablo Escriva De Romani. Sr Brieghe and Fr Pablo have many years experience of worldwide retreats and missions, and this will be an ideal way in keeping the Lenten season special. See poster and leaflets at the back of church for more information.

Other News

The Year of Jubilee 2025 is a beacon of hope. We're all invited into an encounter with Jesus Christ, as his disciples of mercy, forgiveness, and social action, and to celebrate our communities. It's a chance to envision a better future, a future of hope and faith where mercy guides our actions. It's a time for forgiveness and reconciliation within our communities. We can take action to address injustices, support the vulnerable, and work towards a more equitable society. Let's embrace the spirit of the Jubilee, and unite to create a world of compassion and justice, where everyone and our whole community can grow and flourish. Please visit the Diocesan Year of Jubilee page by [clicking here](#).

CAFOD is also offering an online session on Saturday 18 January 2025 titled, '**A Year of Hope: An Introduction to the Jubilee Year**', to anyone wanting a general introduction to the Jubilee.

Date: Saturday 18 January 2025. **Time:** 10.30am – 12.00pm.

Location: Online. For more information please [click here](#).

Pilgrimage: Hearts in Search of God – Webinar - 15 January 2025, 7-8pm - All are welcome to join us for this online Year of Jubilee formation opportunity based on pilgrimage. We are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Dr Phil McCarthy, project lead for Hearts in Search of God: Pilgrim Ways, who will share his wisdom and experience based on the history, significance and spirituality of pilgrimage. The session will also explore and consider some of the options and practicalities for embarking on a local pilgrimage during the Year of Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope. Please [click here](#) to register your interest in this online session. **Booking deadline is Sunday 12 January 2025.**

Holocaust Memorial Day - '*For a Better Future*' is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2025. 2025 will mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau and the 30th anniversary of the Bosnian genocide. This annual event will be held on Wednesday 22 January 2025, from 7.00pm in St Mary's Catholic School, Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7PE. Booking is kindly requested to help plan the event. Please book your place by [clicking here](#) or call 0191 243 3316.. [Read more](#).

Marriage & Family Life Mass 2025 - Bishop Stephen will be presiding at the Mass to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage and the graces received in Family Life, which will take place on Saturday 8 February 2025, from 12.00pm at St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle. All married couples will be invited with particular focus on those celebrating a significant anniversary together with bereaved spouses, separated individuals and families experiencing or have experienced domestic difficulties. Further details will be given in future newsletters and via the Diocesan website.

Life in the Spirit Seminars - The next delivery of Life in the Spirit seminars will be from 7.00pm – 8.30pm on Thursday evenings at St Aidan's, Benton. The seminars will start on 16 January 2025, with a talk from Andy Drozdziak on God's Love and testimony from Joseph Philips followed on **23 January 2025**, a talk on Salvation from Amy Cameron and a testimony from Kelechi Dibia. For more information contact our Secretary Deacon Alison Rebello on 07931 136243 or email me, John Wheeler, at charis@diocesehn.org.uk. Places can be booked by [clicking here](#) or by ringing 0191 243 3316.

Be a Zero-waste Hero - As part of our commitment to sustainable living the Justice and Peace Co-ordinating council suggests this for a 2025 New Year resolution: Cutting down on plastic means cutting down on carbon as well. Take reusable products with you wherever you go such as a reusable cup when you visit your local coffee shop. Choose products when shopping which are not wrapped in plastic, or take advantage of a local zero-waste shop. This tells companies that you will not accept products packed in plastic. Use your £ to vote for change.

Marriage Preparation Days - Saturday 1 February: The Sacred Heart, **North Gosforth** NE3 5EB. Saturday 22 February: St Robert of Newminster, **Morpeth** NE61 1QF. Engaged couples can find **more information** [by clicking here](#). To find and **book on a course**, [please click here](#).

"Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come.'" Might God be calling you to discern a life of service as a priest within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle? For more information, Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or [click 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. It is 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](#).

A Call for Volunteers with the Gift of Music - Music makes the world of difference to our lives, especially in our worship. Vatican II recognised '*the importance of singing*' in the celebration of the Mass and that it should be '*integral to worship*' with '*due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly*'. The Diocesan Church Music Association (DCMA) is a body of volunteer musicians within Hexham and Newcastle who aim to help parishes in their use of music for the Mass. We offer practical help and guidance to parish musicians, considering that each parish will have its own musical '*house-style*'. This may be a traditional choir-and-organ setup, an instrumental group, a praise & worship band, or perhaps unaccompanied singing. Previously we have put on singing days and workshops to highlight new Mass settings, simple Communion songs, music for the Triduum, as well as a '*keyboard-free*' workshop for those parishes who do not have a pianist or organist. For more information please click: [DCMA](#)

Prayers for peace in Gaza and Israel are offered each Thursday at Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert RC Church, Crook from 7pm - 7.30pm, and each Saturday morning from 9.30am to 10.00am outside the Abbey in Hexham. All are welcome to join, even if just for a few minutes.

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.

Sharing the Rosary – You are very welcome to join us at Holy Name Parish Hall on Towers Avenue, Jesmond for a 4-week course exploring the Rosary, its history and its significance in Catholic prayer traditions. Each one-hour session will include opportunities to learn about the Mysteries of the Rosary, pray a shared Decade, and even make your own set of Rosary beads. The course will run on Saturdays 25 January, 1 February, 8 February and 22 February 2025. Refreshments will be available from 2:00 pm, with sessions finishing at 3:30 pm. Whether you're new to the Rosary or have prayed it for years, all are welcome. Rosary beads will be available for anyone who needs them, but feel free to bring your own—especially if they hold a special story you'd like to share. To join the course, please either email welcome@holynamesjесmond.co.uk or telephone (0191) 2810940.

Charity Registration Number: 1143450

Reflections

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

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

[Saturday Examen](#) [The Baptism of the Lord](#)

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

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.

Sick and Recently Deceased -

To view the sick and recently deceased list [please click here](#). To amend the information on the list [click here](#).

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!



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