

# 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](mailto:StJohn23rd@diocesehn.org.uk)  
 Parish Website: <https://www.washingtoncatholic.org.uk>



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

## THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, GAUDETE SUNDAY 14TH - 15TH DECEMBER 2024, Year C

Saturday 14th December	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Harriett &amp; John Hogan RIP</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Bede	5pm	<b>Bill Duncan RIP</b>
Sunday 15th December	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Andrew Bell RIP</b>
<b>3rd Sunday of Advent</b>	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>People of the Parish</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>Clare Madden RIP (Birthday Memory)</b>

**First Reading: Rejoice, Daughter of Jerusalem!**

**Zephaniah 3:14-18a**

Sing aloud, O daughter of Sion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: 'Fear not, O Sion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.'

**Response to the Psalm: Shout aloud and sing praise, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.**

**Second Reading: Be Joyful in the Lord**

**Philippians 4:4-7**

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, Alleluia! The spirit of the Lord is upon me, he has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor. Alleluia!**

**The Gospel: John the Baptist's Counsels**

**Luke 3:10-18**

At that time: The crowds asked John, 'What, then, shall we do?' And he answered them, 'Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.' Tax collectors also came to be baptised and said to him, 'Teacher, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Collect no more than you are authorized to do.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.' 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. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.

<a href="#">Fr Martin Morris</a>	<a href="tel:01916498257">0191 649 8257</a>	<a href="#">Deacon Frank O'Neill</a>	<a href="tel:07791155845">0779 115 5845</a>
Fr Martin Wheaton	0770 996 1040	Deacon Tony Joy	0779 989 3419
<a href="#">Fr Luke Wilkinson</a>	<a href="tel:01916498257">0191 649 8257</a>		

## Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 16th December 2024

Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 16th December	St Bede	10am	<b>Andrew Bell RIP</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	<b>Carl Poulter (Sick)</b>
Tuesday 17th December	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	<b>Alan Peter Callaghan RIP</b>
	St Joseph	7pm	<b>Zillah Richardson RIP</b>
Wednesday 18th December	St Bede	10am	<b>St Bede's SVP</b>
	St John Boste	7pm	<b>John, Debbie &amp; Ada RIP</b>
Thursday 19th December	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Deceased Members of the Cosgrove Family</b>
	St Bede	10.30am	<b>Requiem Mass for Simone Philipson</b>
	St Joseph	12 Noon	<b>Priest's Intention</b>
Friday 20th December	St John Boste	10am	<b>George &amp; Elizabeth Donkin RIP</b>
	St Joseph	10am	<b>Michael Johnson RIP</b>
Saturday 21st December <b>St Peter Canisius</b>	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	<b>Alan, Sylvia &amp; John Barker</b>
<b>Vigil</b>	St Joseph	5pm	<b>Deacon Peter Lavery RIP</b>
	St Bede	5pm	<b>Martin Kerrigan</b>
Sunday 22nd December <b>4th Sunday of Advent</b>	St John Boste	9:30am	<b>Ada Bell RIP</b>
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	<b>Andrew Bell RIP</b>
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	<b>People of the Parish</b>

### Purification by the Fire of God

John declared before them all, "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. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Luke 3:16-17

Again, this Sunday, we are given the glorious witness of John the Baptist. In this sermon of John, he says that Jesus will come and baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire." The image of being baptized "with fire" is a good one to reflect upon. It especially reveals to us the deep purification Jesus desires for our souls.

What does it mean to be purified? For one thing, purification of our soul hurts. But it hurts in a sweet sort of way. Turning from sin and growing closer to God requires great sacrifice and surrender. And it requires that we allow God to do powerful things within us. And the most powerful thing God wants to do is purify us.

Our Catholic faith reveals to us the reality of Purgatory after we die. Purgatory is said to be a place of much spiritual pain, but again, in a sweet sort of way. It's painful in the sense that we are stripped of all that we hold on to that God wants us to let go of. It's painful in the sense that we endure a complete transformation of who we are and what we love. We learn to love God and God alone. And in the embrace of our love of God, we come to love all people.

It's also sweet because, as we are purified, we grow infinitely closer to God and grow in holiness. This lifts the burden of sin and frees us to love as we ought.

But our purification ought not start only in Purgatory. We are all called to enter into that process of purification here and now. We are called to heed the words of John the Baptist and repent of all that keeps us from holiness of life.

Think about the purification to which God may be calling you. What is it that you hold on to that He wants you free of? Commit yourself to the purifying fire of God's love and let that love cleanse you in this Advent season.

*Lord, I do long to have my soul purified by You. I do desire holiness of life. Help me to begin this process here and now so that I can begin to experience the joy and freedom You have in store for me. Jesus, I trust in You.*

The Newsletter Team

**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!

**Advent Rosary** - The Rosary will be prayed each Saturday morning at 9.35am at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, particularly for the Intention of World Peace. We will gather at the Lady Chapel. All welcome.

**Advent Holy Hours.** On the first three Sundays of Advent there will be a Holy Hour with Evening Prayer and Benediction, please come along and prepare for Christmas with prayer!

15 December at St John Boste, 4pm - 5pm.

**Advent Penitential Services** - Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December at St. Joseph's, starting at 7pm. An opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**St Robert's Carol Service:** St Robert's Community Carol Service takes place at OLQP at 6.30pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December. It will be a collaboration between St Robert's, the parish and OLQP primary school and our other primaries. All families and parishioners are welcome to join us for such a lovely celebration of music and readings to help us reflect and prepare for Christmas.

**St Robert's Christmas Coffee Morning:** On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December we have our annual Christmas Coffee Morning for parishioners from 9.15 - 11.00am. There will be music, seasonal refreshments, a raffle, bingo and Christmas related things to buy which will be made by students. The coffee morning has become a great success over the last few years and if you would like to come, please contact Anne Marie McKenna at St Robert's to book your place as spaces are limited. [amckenna@str.bwcet.com](mailto:amckenna@str.bwcet.com) or 01917161700. All proceeds go to our nominated house charities this year. Christmas jumpers and accessories are encouraged!

**Christmas Candlelight Vigil and Blue Christmas Service (from 6.30pm)** at Our Blessed Lady Immaculate; Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 6-9pm. All Welcome.

**Herrington Park Carols;** Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December , 2.30pm. All welcome with the Salvation Army Band.

**Shoebbox Appeal** - The Social Justice and Environment Group would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated toiletries, clothing, toys, books, sweets etc to the appeal. Your

response was incredible and you will have brightened Christmas for many who struggle at this time of year. We donated- 63 drawstring gift bags to the West End Refugee Service, Newcastle. 35 shoeboxes/large bags to St Vincents Refugee/Asylum Seeker Project, Newcastle. 30 shoeboxes/large bags to St Mary's Refugee/Asylum Seeker Drop In, Sunderland. 16 Shoeboxes/bags to a local women's refuge and 6 large bags to Love Amelia charity, Sunderland. All were gratefully received with many thanks sent to all who contributed.

**Missio Red Boxes - St John Boste.** It is some time since we have asked for your Red Boxes to be returned for counting. For those of you who have been Agents, collecting and counting boxes, Missio would prefer that we don't go to people's houses and empty them there. Instead, could you contact the people you collected from and ask them to bring the boxes to you or hand them in at church. If that is not practical, we would ask that you go and collect the boxes and bring them to church to be counted. Please make sure that each box has a label with the name and address on it. Could you please bring the boxes to church by 15<sup>th</sup> December. If you need any assistance, please contact Liz Joy Tel 07917 322890

**Missio Red Box Envelopes - Our Blessed Lady Immaculate.** As we are nearing the end of Missio's financial year please collect an A5 Missio envelope from the rear of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate for your Red Box contents/donation. Could you please return it to church by mid December. If you need any assistance please contact Winifred Waite Tel 07903565306.

**St John Boste, Christmas Memorial Candles.** From this week envelopes will be available for your intentions for the Christmas candles. They need to be returned by Sunday 15 December.

**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.

## MASSES OVER CHRISTMAS

**The following shows the Mass times and venues for Christmas. Please note the changes from the usual Mass times.**

### TUESDAY 24th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS EVE

#### Christmas Vigil:

5.00pm St Bede, Washington

5.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington

6.00pm St Joseph, Birtley (Carols from 5.30pm)

7.00pm St John Boste, Washington (Carols from 6.30pm)\*

7.30pm Our Lady Queen of Peace (Carols from 7pm)

11.30pm Our Blessed Lady Immaculate (Carols from 11pm)\*

### WEDNESDAY 25th DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS DAY

9.30am St John Boste, Washington

10.00am Our Lady Queen of Peace\*

10.00am St Joseph Birtley

### THURSDAY 26th DECEMBER – BOXING DAY

10.00am Our Lady Queen of Peace\*

12 Noon St Joseph's, Birtley

\* Indicates streamed Masses.

**Food for Thought: Sustainable Living this Christmas** - With Christmas fast approaching, it's hard to avoid the constant stream of festive food adverts on TV, in newspapers, and magazines. While no-one is saying we shouldn't enjoy our favourite treats, we can still make more sustainable choices when it comes to what we eat. Agriculture accounts for around 30% of global emissions. This means we all have a role to play in reducing our environmental impact. Here are some simple ways you can eat more sustainably this festive season:

**Choose organic:** Buy organic food, including meat, whenever possible. **Avoid food waste:** Plan your meals ahead to reduce excess food. **Eat seasonally:** Try to buy foods that are in season and locally produced. **Reduce meat consumption:** Consider cutting down on meat, which has a higher environmental impact. Diocesan Justice and Peace Group.

**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](#). There will be two Holy Doors in our Diocese, one at St. Mary's Cathedral and one at St. Joseph's Church, Hartlepool. Bishop Stephen Wright (Hexham & Newcastle) is very grateful to Canon Paul Douthwaite for his welcome to pilgrims at St. Joseph's. The Holy Father has decreed that the **Holy Doors are opened on Sunday 29th December**, therefore Bishop Stephen will be celebrating Mass and opening the Holy Door at St. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle at 11.30am and at St. Joseph's Hartlepool at 4.00pm. Everyone is welcome. **The Holy Doors will be closed on 6th January 2026.** Pope Francis has written an Encyclical Letter on 'The Sacred Heart of Jesus' and suggested the traditional practice of the 'Nine First Friday' devotion throughout 2025. We will offer this devotional practice throughout next year, with an evening Mass on the First Friday of each month in one of our churches, from February to October. Do you have any further ideas how we can make the Holy Year special in our Parish? Please let us know! Fr Martin Morris.

## Other News

**Advent Reflections from the Diocese:** We hope that this year's edition of the Advent reflections will help guide us through the season of Advent, a time of preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus. The reflections have been produced by a great number of people to express the richness of our diocesan community. They are available to view and download [here](#).

**CAFOD Advent Reflections** - Advent is here, and we'd like to invite you to join us in reflection and prayer during this season of anticipation and expectation. Daily Bible reflections, stories of our global family, prayers and practical ideas for action, are now available. [Click here](#) for more information.

**"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](#).

**The Justice and Peace Refugee Project** - December marks the season of Advent, a time of preparation for Christmas in Christian religions. During this time of reflection, many Christians also try to bring some light into the world by offering love and hope, comfort and peace to those in their families, their friends and communities. In this Advent season, the Justice and Peace Refugee Project continues in its mission to provide a safe space for asylum seekers where those clients we support can receive a warm welcome and some of the basic things they need for their families to survive. Items most urgently needed can be [found here](#). For more information please [click here](#).

**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.

## Reflections

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

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

[Saturday Examen 3rd Sunday of Advent](#)

## 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!**



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 here](#)