

# Parishes of St John XXIII & St Joseph, Birtley



Incorporating: Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, Washington;  
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Peshaw; St Bede, Usworth;  
St John Boste, Oxclose; St Joseph, Birtley



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## In the Partnership of Benedict

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

### THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, 6 - 7 January 2024, Year B

|                       |                             |        |   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------|---|
| Saturday<br>6 January | St Joseph                   | 5pm    | <b>Paul Bramwell (Deceased)</b>                     |
| <b>Vigil</b>          | St Bede                     | 5pm    | <b>Frank Barrett (Well being)</b>                   |
| Sunday<br>7 January   | St John Boste               | 9:30am | <b>Syd &amp; Peter McElhenny</b>                    |
|                       | Our Lady Queen of Peace     | 10am   | <b>Ray &amp; John Lyons</b>                         |
| <b>The Epiphany</b>   | Our Blessed Lady Immaculate | 11am   | <b>Elizabeth &amp; John Hall &amp; Anne McVeigh</b> |

## The Epiphany

Today is the Epiphany of the Lord, where the three wise men arrived at the stable in Bethlehem to pay homage to the newly born Baby Jesus. As they were walking towards their destination, I wonder what they were expecting? Were they expecting a baby born in a manger surrounded by animals and dirt, or were they expecting a baby born as royalty?

Their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh are gifts fit for a worldly King, ones that give the impression of luxury and status. Yet, the reality they are met with is not a baby born in a palace, but born in a lowly manger. Their gifts are offered not to a worldly King, but to the heavenly King.

In the song 'Little Drummer Boy', the boy worries that he doesn't have any gifts to bring that are fit for a King, yet when faced with this, he simply plays his drum for him. There is a beauty in giving what we can – the little drummer boy could only give his talent as a gift, but that was more than enough for the baby Jesus.

What gifts can we bring? He wants our hearts, but also our trials and worries. He wants us to give ourselves in our entirety, because He gave Himself in His entirety. Just like the three wise men, this week, try to pay homage to Jesus, the servant King, born in a manger, by giving the only gift fit for our Heavenly King – ourselves.



Hannah Bartlett

|                   |               |                      |               |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Fr Martin Morris  | 0191 649 8257 | Deacon Frank O'Neill | 0779 115 5845 |
| Fr Martin Wheaton | 0770 996 1040 | Deacon Peter Lavery  | 0730 505 9297 |
| Fr Luke Wilkinson | 0191 649 8257 | Deacon Tony Joy      | 0779 989 3419 |

## Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 8 January 2024

| Day                  | Church   | Time    |   |
|----------------------|--|---------|---|
| Monday 8 January     | St Bede  | 10am    | <b>In Thanksgiving for the Sacred Heart</b>       |
|                      | <b>The Baptism of the Lord</b> Our Lady Queen of Peace     | 7pm     | <b>Our Parish Family</b>                          |
| Tuesday 9 January    | Our Blessed Lady Immaculate                                | 10am    | <b>Joseph Bourke &amp; Clare Madden</b>           |
|                      | St Joseph  | 7pm     | <b>Our Schoolchildren beginning a New Term</b>    |
| Wednesday 10 January | St Bede  | 10am    | <b>Victor Fonde (Wellbeing)</b>                   |
|                      | St John Boste  | 7pm     | <b>Ray Lyons Anniversary</b>                      |
| Thursday 11 January  | Our Lady Queen of Peace                                    | 10am    | <b>Cathy Lyons Birthday Blessings</b>             |
|                      | St Joseph  | 12 noon | <b>Chris, Bill &amp; Hilda Baggott (Deceased)</b> |
| Friday 12 January    | St John Boste  | 10am    | <b>Betty Duffy RIP</b>                            |
|                      | <b>St Aelred of Rievaulx</b> St Joseph                     | 10am    | <b>Holy Souls</b>                                 |
| Saturday 13 January  | Our Blessed Lady Immaculate                                | 10am    | <b>Bill Hudson RIP</b>                            |
|                      | St Joseph  | 5pm     | <b>Michael Kelly (Deceased)</b>                   |
|                      | <b>Vigil</b> St Bede                                       | 5pm     | <b>Patricia Walmslet (Deceased Anniversary)</b>   |
| Sunday 14 January    | St John Boste  | 9:30am  | <b>Hilary Cassidy RIP</b>                         |
|                      | <b>2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time</b> Our Lady Queen of Peace | 10am    | <b>John Smare RIP</b>                             |
|                      | Our Blessed Lady Immaculate                                | 11am    | <b>Jim Walker RIP</b>                             |

**First Reading: Camels, Gold and Incense**  
Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine out, Jerusalem, for your light has come, the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the peoples. Above you the Lord now rises and above you his glory appears. The nations come to your light and kings to your dawning brightness. Lift up your eyes and look round: all are assembling and coming towards you, your sons from far away and your daughters being tenderly carried. At this sight you will grow radiant, your heart throbbing and full; since the riches of the sea will flow to you, the wealth of the nations come to you; camels in throngs will cover you, and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of the Lord.

**Response to the Psalm: All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.**

**Second reading: Gods Special Secret**

**Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6**

You have probably heard how I have been entrusted by God with the grace he meant for you, and that it was by a revelation that I was given the knowledge of the mystery. This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to any men in past generations; it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them, in Jesus Christ, through the gospel.

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! We saw his star as it rose and have come to do the Lord homage. Alleluia!**

**The Gospel: Wise Men from the East**  
**Matthew 2:1-12**

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod, some wise men came to Jerusalem from the east. 'Where is the infant king of the Jews?' they asked. 'We saw his star as it rose and have come to do him homage.' When King Herod heard this he was perturbed, and so was the whole of Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, and enquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 'At Bethlehem in Judaea,' they told him 'for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means least among the leaders of Judah, for out of you will come a leader who will shepherd my people Israel.' Then Herod summoned the wise men to see him privately. He asked them the exact date on which the star had appeared, and sent them on to Bethlehem. 'Go and find out all about the child,' he said 'and when you have found him, let me know, so that I too may go and do him homage.' Having listened to what the king had to say, they set out. And there in front of them was the star they had seen rising; it went forward, and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, and returned to their own country by a different way.

## Wise Men from the East

The Wise Men, with their clever knowledge of astronomy and their lavish gifts, represent all that is best in worldly values. They also have a bit of magic about them, for frankincense and myrrh were used in spells, and the word for 'wise men' can also mean 'magicians'. In this case, the Wise Men have real wisdom and its reward, and all the respect and fame due to a 'magus' and yet they lay it all at Jesus' feet. It might be worth asking at this beginning of the year whether we submit all our skills and comforts to Jesus as the Wise Men did. The story also rests on the sharp contrast between King Herod and the Wise Men. Herod was a Jew, so he should have recognised and honoured the Jewish Messiah. Not at all! He tried to kill the Messiah. By contrast, the Wise Men, arriving from what for us would be the equivalent of outer space, carry on their search till they find Jesus and humbly bow before him. This poses a nasty question: we Christians have all the guidance and encouragement of the Church, but how often do we find those outside the Church, not even professed Christians, behaving in a more Christian way than we do ourselves! What skill, what gift may I place before Jesus today?

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**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: Tuesday at 7pm; Thursday at 12 Noon; Saturday at 5pm.**

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

## Happy New Year to all our Parishioners What's On in the Parish

**Second Collection – Next Week** - The White flower appeal for the pro-life charity SPUC. Will take place next weekend, with a retiring collection.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Our Lady Queen of Peace Church is open on Friday afternoons from 2pm - 3pm for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. All are welcome.

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available in all of our Churches after Mass as follows:

Our Lady Queen of Peace on Thursday morning.

St John Boste on Friday morning.

Our Blessed Lady Immaculate on Saturday morning.

St Bede's on Saturday evening.

**OLoF** - The club is on a Tuesday at 1pm in the Emmaus Room, at Our Lady's in the Village! All most welcome!

**The Epiphany** *"The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage."* The Wise Men followed the star to fall on their knees and do Jesus homage. Might God be calling you to do Jesus homage by serving him as a priest? Speak to your Parish Priest or contact the Vocations Promoter: 01207 299 012 or [email](mailto:)

### Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible - A Bible Study Course

**Running for 9 Weeks** - Many Catholics want to read the Bible but get bogged down by the long stretches that seem not to make sense or get lost among the sea of Old Testament names and places. Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible, an eight-part Bible study, helps you uncover the story woven throughout Scripture, so

you can get the "big picture" of the Bible and understand what it's all about. Aided by a unique color-coded Bible Timeline Chart that arranges the key people, places, and events of the Bible in chronological order, Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible will help you pick up the Bible with confidence and understand how you fit into God's plan. Our Parish will begin the Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible study on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm in Our Lady Queen of Peace's Hall**. Participants will meet every week to view an engaging video presentation followed by a time of lively group discussion and fellowship. **Please bring a Catholic Bible!** For more information please ring 0191-4163583 or [click here](#).

**Tuesday Night Holy Rosary** - Prayers for the people of the Holy Land. Please join us at 6.40pm on Tuesdays at St Joseph's Birtley, to pray the great prayer of the rosary for all sides in the conflict in Palestine.

**Thank you** to all who donated to the Christmas Tree tags to remember loved ones at St Bede's this Christmas. We received £100. which will be paid to Water Aid/Ukraine/Gaza. Regards Pat McAdams.

**The RCIA Journey in Faith** group will resume their meetings on Wednesday 10th January 7pm at St John Boste Church for the next 10 weeks.

**Shoebox and Food Bank Appeals** - A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to the shoebox appeal in November. An enormous number of items were donated. We sent 79 shoebox gifts to the Newcastle West End Refugee Service. We also gave 25 large boxes, bags and shoeboxes of assorted goods to the St Vincent's refugee and asylum seeker project in Newcastle. This year we had so many donations we were also able to give an equivalent amount to FODI, a refugee and asylum seeker service in Sunderland. All of the recipients were truly grateful for your generosity. In December each church delivered generous donations to local food banks in Washington, Birtley and Penshaw which helped people in need in our area to have a more comfortable Christmas. Thank you once again. The Social Justice and Environment Group.

## Other News

**A Year of Prayer** - In preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope', 2024 has been designated a Year of Prayer by Pope Francis. Please visit our Diocesan Year of Prayer [webpage](#) for more information and regular updates.

**The Newman Association, Cleveland Circle, New Year Lunch** - Join the Cleveland Circle of the Newman Association for their New Year Lunch taking place on Sunday 28 January 2024.

**Venue:** Parkmore Hotel, Eaglescliffe TS16 0DH. **Time:** Meet at 12.30pm for 1.00pm start. Menu and details to follow, all welcome. For more information please call: 07947 526941 or [click here](#).

**YMT led Confirmation Retreat at the Emmaus Village - January 26 – 28 2024** - There are still places for your Confirmation group to join other Confirmation candidates across the Diocese in exploring our faith, the Church, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In this YMT led Confirmation Retreat, there will be time for fun, faith, and food during these days of retreat. If you are a catechist and want to book your group, please [click here](#) before January 19, 2024.

**Holocaust Commemoration 2024: 'Fragility of Freedom'** - The Interreligious Relations Team will be holding their annual Holocaust Commemoration on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 7.00pm. The venue is St Mary's Catholic School, Benton Park Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE7 7PE. The guest speaker is Mrs Deanna Van Der Velde from the United Hebrew Congregation. Booking for the Holocaust commemorations is essential, so please book your place by [clicking here](#) or call 0191 243 3316.

**Sick and Housebound in the Parish** - Fr Martin and Fr Luke are very happy to visit any sick or housebound parishioner with the Sacraments. The Sacrament of Holy Anointing and Confession can be a great help in such circumstances. Please contact the Priests if you know of anyone who would appreciate a visit. Clergy landline: 0191 6498257.

**Vacancies – Opportunities to work at the Emmaus Village** - The Emmaus Village, home for the Youth Ministry Team, hosts all the residential retreats led by YMT for our Diocesan Primary and Secondary Schools. It also offers catering and hospitality to the biggest gathering of Catholic Schools, the YMT Summer Festivals, students named it “God Camp”. With this we are looking for an Assistant Catering Coordinator and Kitchen Technician, who will help our catering team deliver this valuable service to all the groups that come to the Emmaus Village. If you or someone you know, wants to be part of the YMT team, please contact [admin@ymt.org](mailto:admin@ymt.org) or click the link [www.ymt.org/vacancies](http://www.ymt.org/vacancies) for more information with regards to our vacancies.

**Diocesan Job Vacancies** - The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle has the following job vacancies: **HR Adviser**, Diocesan Offices, Newcastle/hybrid – part-time. Closing date: 16 January. **HR Administrator**, Diocesan Offices, Newcastle/hybrid – part-time. Closing date 16 January. **Cleaner**, St Anne, Darlington – part-time. Closing date 11 January. **Cleaner**, St Cuthbert, Durham – part-time. Closing date 18 January. Please visit [www.diocesehn.org.uk](http://www.diocesehn.org.uk) for full details or contact us on 0191 243 3301.

**Little Sisters of the Poor - Job Vacancies** - Exciting opportunities are now available at St Joseph's Care Home (Little Sisters of the Poor, Newcastle) for care assistants and nurses. Hours available: Care Assistant: Shifts are 8am-3pm, 3pm-9pm. Nurse: Shifts are 8am-4pm, 1pm-9pm. Excellent rates of pay. For more information please contact Lee-Marie Thornley on 07856256095 or [click here](#).

**Diocesan Courses – New Readers of the Word** - An introductory course which supports New Readers of the of the Liturgy of the Word in this ministry. Dates: Session 1: Monday 15 January 2024, 7.00-9.00pm. Session 2: Saturday 20 January 2024, 10.30am-3.00pm (to include a Commissioning Service)\* \*Participants to bring a packed lunch for the day event - tea and coffee provided. Location: St Mary, Dockendale Lane, Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE16 4EN. Cost: £12.50 per person. To book speak to one of our Parish Priests.

**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.

**Holy Hour** - The Association of the Eucharist will be holding their monthly Holy Hour on Sunday 7 January at St Andrew's, [9 Worswick Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6UW](#), from 2.30pm to 3.30pm followed by refreshments. Everyone welcome. No booking required.

**Prayer Vigil at Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre (DIRC)** - It will soon be two years since we started to hold in person prayer vigils at the Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre, Medomsley on the first Sunday of each month at 3.00pm. **Our next vigil will be on Sunday 7 January 2024 at 3.00pm at Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre, Medomsley DH8 6QY.** It would be wonderful if you could join us there, but if not, perhaps you would consider joining us in prayer from home. The revised prayer vigil booklet can be found [here](#). Please contact Liz Archibald by [clicking here](#) if you would like more information. For more information around the issues of refugees and asylum seekers, please look at our [webpage](#).

**Lepra Centenary Holy Mass at Westminster Cathedral, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024** - Lepra invites you to Westminster Cathedral for a Holy Mass to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the charity. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton Diocese and Chair of the Bishops' Conference Department for International Affairs. **Friday 26 January 2024 at 2.30pm.** Please join them as they give thanks for the centenary and the charity's international work in finding, diagnosing and treating people affected by leprosy. For more information please [click here](#)

**Youth Ministry & Practical Theology Conference:** Saturday 3 February, Cardinal Hume Catholic School, Old Durham Road, Gateshead NE9 6RZ. A day to reconnect and reignite as we “invest in the fearlessness of youth.” For more information and to book please [click here](#).

## Reflections

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

**Examen** - Please follow the links to go to Pray as You Go: [Saturday Examen](#) [Epiphany Sunday](#)

## 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](#).

**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](#)

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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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