

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



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 12th – 13th September 2026 Year A

Saturday 12th Sept. Vigil	St Joseph	5pm	Catherine & Jim Tumelty, 60th Wedding
	St Bede	5pm	People of the Parish
Sunday 13th Sept. The 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste	9:30am	Joyce O'Brien
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	Carl Poulter
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am*	Welcome – Deborah, David, Nicole, Eleanor & Graham

First reading: Vengeance and Quarrelling

Sirach 27:30-28:7

Anger and wrath, these are abominations, and the sinful man will hold them fast. The one who seeks vengeance will be paid vengeance from the Lord, and he who keeps a record will have his own sins recorded. Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does one person harbour anger against another and yet seek for healing from the Lord? Does he have no mercy towards someone like himself and yet pray concerning his own sins? If he himself, being flesh, maintains wrath, who will make atonement for his sins? Remember the end of your life and cease from enmity, remember destruction and death and be true to the commandments. Remember the commandments and do not be angry with your neighbour; remember the covenant of the Most High and overlook error.

Response to the Psalm: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

Second Reading: Life as Christ's Community

Romans 14:7-9

Brothers and Sisters: None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Alleluia.

The Gospel: The Unforgiving Debtor

Matthew 18:21-35

At that time: Peter came up and said to Jesus, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. 'Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, "Pay what you owe." So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.'

Fr Martin Morris 0191 416 3583
 Fr Andrew Shaw 0191 649 8257
 Deacon Tony Joy 0779 989 3419

Fr Martin Wheaton 0770 996 1040
 Deacon Frank O'Neill 0779 115 5845

Mass Times & Intentions - Week Beginning Monday 14th September 2026 (Streamed Mass *)			
Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 14th September The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	St Bede	10am	Holy Souls
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Service of the Word and Holy Communion
Tuesday 15th September Our Lady of Sorrows	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Service of the Word and Holy Communion
	St Joseph	7pm	Edward Stourton RIP
Wednesday 16th September Ss Cornelius & Cyprian	St Bede	10am	Personal Intention George Fawcett
	St. John Boste	7pm	Service of the Word and Holy Communion
Thursday 17th September Ss Robert Bellarmine & Hildegard of Bingen	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am	No Mass
	St Joseph	12 Noon	Cathie Irwin RIP
Friday 18th September	St Joseph at St Benet's School	9.15am	Sheila Tweedy RIP
	St John Boste	10am	Service of the Word and Holy Communion
Saturday 19th September Ss Januarius & Theodore	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Bernard & Clare Simons
Vigil	St Joseph	5pm	Bro Tom Quinn M.H.M. RIP
	St Bede	5pm	Pat Belassie
Sunday 20th September The 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste	9:30am	Cathy & Ron Joy
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	People of the Parish
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	Gerard McCabe RIP

Recently Deceased: Sheila Tweedy, Jack Lawrie and Frank Casey.

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

“To err is human, to forgive, divine.” Alexander Pope: An Essay on Criticism 1711

In the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus is asking us to fully absorb the nature of God's forgiveness of our sins and how it is vital that we demonstrate the same mercy in our lives.

Peter, in his opening question to Jesus thinks he is being over generous in his estimation of seven times as a limit to forgiveness to an offending brother. After all, the rabbis of his time generally stopped at three. Jesus dumbfounds him with the enormity of his response; seventy times seven.

The parable deals in incredible numbers too. The immeasurable nature of God's forgiveness is seen in the King's largesse. His servant's debt of ten thousand talents is equivalent to the debt of a G7 country in 2026 and yet the King is moved to pity and releases him from the debt. Divine love sees our sins, our failings and raises us up, time after time. This servant, however, relieved of this massive burden, does not follow through. The hundred denarii debt owed to him by a fellow servant is miniscule. A single biblical talent is roughly equivalent to six thousand denarii. Cruelly throwing his fellow servant into prison will bring consequences. Unsurprisingly, the generous King is furious and the blinkered servant finds himself in prison – removed from God's love, in other words, with a debt beyond his power to pay. We are reminded that God's mercy is infinite but we as Christians are required to reflect that forgiveness. We are all held equally in God's love.

Forgiveness is hard but we must struggle to achieve it, if we are seriously trying to be the better selves God wants us to be. We are witnesses now to the terrible consequences of a lack of mercy on social media. Cruel judgements are lightly made and lives destroyed. On the other hand, we witness victims of incredible tragedy able to reach out the hand of forgiveness. We instinctively know in which direction God's love directs us.

Lord, help your people every day to act in love with merciful hearts.

Angela Nichols

We aim to live-stream Mass daily at 10am, except Monday, streamed at 7pm, and alternate Sundays when Mass is live-streamed at either 10am or 11am. Please refer to the * on the Mass table which 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) is on each Tuesday at 1pm in the Lindisfarne Room at St Bede's. All most welcome!

Special Collection This Week: Catholic Education.

Eucharistic Adoration next Sunday 20th September 4pm-5pm at OBLI Church, followed by Rosary at 5pm. 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 3rd October for any parishioner who may wish to know more. All welcome.

'NEW SONG'! New Song is back after the summer break! Come and join us to reflect on and give thanks for all that God is doing in our lives. All are welcome! Where: Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Emmaus Room. NE38 7HS. When: 13 September 2026 @ 4.00 pm. Email: newsongne@gmail.com Instagram: @newsongne

Newsletter – Unfortunately we have had to temporarily suspend the circulation of the electronic version of this newsletter due to a change in the software we use. We are actively looking for ways to recommence the circulation as soon as possible. An electronic version can be found on our website or by following this link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xrQ4eFC1_bm3nlqV3DYjK0uMGeU3Y9i-/view?usp=drive_link

Blessed Lady Immaculate – Our next choir practice will be on Tuesday 15th September at 7pm in the church. New members welcome.

Family Fast Day – Harvest Family Fast Day will be on Friday 2nd October. Inspired by the Holy Spirit and on behalf of the Catholic community in England and Wales, CAFOD reaches out to people living in poverty with the practical help they need, but they can only do this thank to the support of parishes like ourselves. Put your faith into action by praying, fasting and giving support to your neighbours. You can donate by going to the CAFOD website (www.cafod.org.uk) and envelopes for donations will be available nearer the day.

The God who Speaks – Throughout the month of September, Creation Care invites us to take a closer look at our creation care responsibilities. The Jubilee Garden Project is an invitation to heal, transform and rebuild our relationship with God, with neighbours and with the earth. [More information here.](#)

Home Mission Sunday - On Sunday 20th September, we will celebrate Home Mission Sunday, a day for us as the Catholic community in England and Wales to celebrate our faith in these lands, and our shared commitment to communicate the beauty and the joy of knowing Jesus Christ. Celebrating the Holy Father's first encyclical, the theme for this year is "Magnifica Humanitas" as the heart of mission. We can celebrate together the call the Holy Father has placed before us to live out our authentic humanity which finds its fullness in Christ. More details about this can be found on the Bishops' Conference website - [Home Mission Sunday - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#). The Second Collection on this weekend is to support the work carried out by the Bishops' Conference Mission Directorate. Through the Mission Directorate, we support our Church in a wide field of service and mission here in England and Wales. Please hold this important work in your prayers and give as generously as you can. Thank you.

Bishop Stephen's Review. Thank you to all those parishioners who attended meetings over the last few months, both in our own parish, and those in Sunderland and Washington. Your contributions were appreciated. Following the wider partnership meetings at Sunderland and Houghton-le-Spring, a summary document has been produced outlining all responses received, this is called 'Combined Local Communities Return Form.' I emphasise this is a summary of responses received, and does not reflect any final decision on any matter. The next stage of the review is for these responses to be forwarded to Bishop Stephen and his representatives at Deanery level, for consideration. The Return Form and the Executive Summary can be viewed [here](#) and on the parish website, and some paper copies are also available at the back of each Church. Thank you, Fr Martin Morris.

Other News

Heritage Open Days– 11th to 20th September - England's largest community led festival of history and culture, involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations. Every year in September it brings people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history. Stories are told, traditions explored and histories brought to life. It's your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences – and it's all FREE. There are a number of venues across our Diocese taking part including:- St Cuthbert's Church, Durham [click here](#) See the stunning window by the world-famous Irish stained glass artist Harry Clarke or works by the late renowned local sculptor Fenwick Lawson. St Michael's Church, Elswick [click here](#) A magnificent Grade II listed building with a rich history, architectural beauty and an enduring place at the heart of the community. Sacred Heart Church, North Gosforth [click here](#) Experience one of the finest collections of William Morris & Co. stained glass, featuring designs by Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris and Ford Madox Brown. Ushaw Historic House, Chapels & Gardens [click here](#) Make the most of free entry to the House, Chapels, Gardens and Exhibitions on Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th September 2026, from 10:00 until 16:00. Find out more by [clicking here](#).

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



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](#).

MINSTERACRES - The Medjugorje Centre (North East) has organised a retreat from Fri 9th - Sun 11th October. Fr. Martin Morris will be leading the retreat. The cost is £205 per person. A £50 Deposit is required. Although this is not a parish organised event, several people have shown interest but transport to Minsteracres is a problem. Some already going with cars have offered to car share. If there is enough interest a minibus could be booked but at an extra cost. For more information or booking forms please contact Marian Fletcher - Telephone 0191 4174413. For information about Medjugorje see - <https://www.medjugorje.hr/en/>

Pie and Pea Supper - The Little Sisters of the Poor are holding a Pie and Pea Supper on Wednesday 7 October at 7pm at St Joseph's Home. Tickets cost £8 and are available from St Joseph's on 0191 2731279.

Children and the Word - 17 October 2026 - Each Sunday, God's people gather together to celebrate in Word and Sacrament the mystery of Our Lord's death and resurrection. The celebration of the Mass includes everyone, both young and old. The key aim of Liturgy of the Word with Children is to proclaim a Gospel translation and facilitate interactive discussion appropriate to children. "Children and the Word" is a diocesan day of Refreshment and Reflection on Sunday Children's Liturgy and Godly Play and is prepared and led by the Liturgical Team. Date: Saturday, October 17th, Time: 10.00am-3.00pm. Cost: £15 (payable by parish or attendee as appropriate) Venue: St Hilda's Diocesan Resource Centre, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 7NL. Teas and coffees provided but participants will need to bring a packed lunch. Booking is essential – please register [here](#)

Church Action on Poverty - 18 October 2026 - This year's Church Action on Poverty Sunday will take place on Sunday 18th October, with a theme of "Food, faith and fellowship". A record number of churches took part last year, and interested churches are encouraged to register now. Resource packs will be sent out over the summer, containing bring & share lunch ideas, worship materials, prayer cards, Scriptural reflections, activity sheets, and inspirational stories of churches already doing great work through food. To sign up, visit church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

Life in the Spirit Seminar Series: Harlow Green - 24th September 2026—12th November 2026. Join us for this opportunity to experience the new life we are promised through baptism in the Holy Spirit. Life in the Spirit seminars are being run by the Diocesan CHARIS group and you will be very welcome to attend. Many who have attended previous seminars have spoken of how it has given their faith a real boost and helped them experience God's love in tangible ways. Venue: St Anne, Rokeby View, Harlow Green, Gateshead, NE9 7UD. Cost: Free. Time: 7pm to 8.30pm. Dates and Titles of Sessions: 24th September 2026: Introduction, 1st October 2026: God's Love – Andy Drozdziak, 8th October 2026: Salvation – Fr Anthony Ohaekwusi, 22nd October 2026: The New Life – Christine Dixon, 29th October 2026: Receiving God's Gifts – Fr Chris Warren, 5th November 2026: Baptism in the Holy Spirit – Fr Shaun O'Neill, 12th November 2026: Growth – Nikki Dickenson, 19th November 2026: Transformation in Christ – John Wheeler. Please book your place [here](#).

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome & Assisi - Bishop Stephen will lead a Diocesan Pilgrimage to Rome and the centre of the Eternal City before then moving onto Assisi in Umbria, the 'green heart' of Italy, and the centre of St Francis and St Clare's ministry. The Pilgrimage will take place **22nd – 29th October 2027** at a cost of £1,725 per person. Places are limited to 50 pilgrims and places are allocated on a first come first served basis with payment of the deposit securing your place. For information and how to book please [click here](#) or type in the link. <https://diocesehn.org.uk/news/diocesan-pilgrimage-to-rome-assisi/>

Newman Tyneside Circle invites you to come and hear Pat Devlin speak on World Week for Peace in Palestine & Israel, in the hall of Holy Name Church, Jesmond, Newcastle, NE2 3JX, on Monday 21 September 2026, at 7.30pm. The theme for this year highlights in particular the trauma experienced by children in Palestine & Israel. The talk will move from examining the tragedy unfolding in the current situation to the hope found in the joint Palestinian/Israeli groups committed to working together for a Just Peace for all, and will conclude with practical suggestions for how we in the UK can contribute to that work.

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 [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.



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