

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



25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 19th – 20th September 2026 Year A

Saturday 19th Sept. Vigil	St Joseph St Bede	5pm 5pm	Bro Tom Quinn M.H.M. RIP Pat Belassie
Sunday 20th Sept. The 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste Our Lady Queen of Peace Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	9:30am 10am* 11am	Cathy & Ron Joy People of the Parish Gerard McCabe RIP

First reading: Our God: Rich in Forgiving

Isaiah 55:6-9

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Response to the Psalm: The Lord is close to all who call him.

Second Reading: Life to me is Christ

Philippians 1:20c-24, 27a

Brothers and Sisters: Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia. Open our hearts, O Lord, that we may pay attention to the words of your Son. Alleluia.

The Gospel: The Generosity of God

Matthew 20:1-16

At that time: Jesus told his disciples this parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market-place, and to them he said, "You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, "Why do you stand here idle all day?" They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You go into the vineyard too." And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first." And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" So the last will be first, and the first last.'

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 21st September 2026 (Streamed Mass *)			
Day	Church	Time	Intention
Monday 21st September St Matthew	St Bede	10am	Priest's Intention
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	7pm	Audrey McNay
Tuesday 22nd September	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am*	Andrea Kane
	St Joseph	7pm	Fr Desmond Preston - Intention
Wednesday 23rd September St Pio of Pietrelcina	St Bede	10am	Holy Souls
	St. John Boste	7pm	Priest's Intention
Thursday 24th September Our Lady of Walsingham	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	Sick Person (EP)
	St Joseph	12 Noon	James Scott RIP
Friday 25th September	St Joseph	10am	John Littlewood RIP
	St John Boste	10am	Keith John Shannon (Memorial)
Saturday 26th September Ss Cosmas & Damian	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	10am	Gerard McCabe RIP
Vigil	St Joseph	5pm	Peter Lavery RIP
	St Bede	5pm	John Graham RIP
Sunday 27th September The 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time	St John Boste	9:30am	Tina & Ted Dickinson RIP
	Our Lady Queen of Peace	10am*	A Sick Person (S)
	Our Blessed Lady Immaculate	11am	People of the Parish

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.

The Bible often challenges us in many ways – and so it should! Both Isaiah and Matthew challenge a similar theme. Situations which conventional wisdom would say are right and fair are turned on their head in Matthew's Gospel, the prophet Isaiah explains why, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 'God's thoughts and ways are not the same as conventional wisdom, and indeed on what most of us might consider correct.

In the Gospel all of the workers on the fields were paid the same wage for their work, one Denarius. One Roman Denarius was, in the first century, seen as a normal wage for a day of work in the fields or for a soldier. So, all the workers received the standard pay for a day's work. So they would all be able to eat that day. The master of the vineyard responds to the complaints of those who worked all day by saying, 'Or do you begrudge my generosity.' If all the workers were employed at the start of the day and all received one Denarius, no one would have thought of complaining and they would have gone home contented. However, because some did not start work until later, the others, who had worked all day, were not content.

God is extravagantly generous, extravagantly merciful, because he is extravagantly loving towards us. A popular phrase, (used by Pope Francis among others) 'The mercy of God will always be greater than any sin' is easy to forget when we are thinking about our own sinfulness, or when we are told of terrible sins committed by others. We do not earn God's forgiveness; it is a gift given freely by an extravagant God.

Tony Joy

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: Evangelii Gaudium Sunday (formerly Mission Sunday).

Eucharistic Adoration this 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.

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/1c2SZaRXcs35oZNslqW3J1wjNgZbfDh2V/view?usp=drive_link

Family Fast Day – Harvest Family Fast Day will be on Friday 2 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. Use the CAFOD envelope in Church, donate on line at cafod.org.uk/envelope call 0303 303 3030.

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.](#)

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

Home Mission Sunday – This Sunday, 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 it's 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.

Other News

Season of Creation began on 1st September and will run until 4th October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. This year's theme is Living Water with the Biblical text drawn from Ezekiel 47: 1-12, which portrays God's life-giving water flowing from the temple of God. The Diocese is sharing daily reflections via their [Facebook page](#) and invite you to share your own Celebrations of Nature from across our Diocese.

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](#)

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](#).



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](#).

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: 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/>

For Our Lady! For Our Faith! On the Vigil of All Saints — Pray the Rosary Through the Heart of Newcastle Sat 31 Oct 2026. The world needs our prayers. If not you, who? If not now, when? Key times: 10:00 a.m. Mass — Lady Chapel, St Dominic's, 11:00 a.m. Procession to Grey Street, 11:30 a.m. Rosary & Chaplet of Divine Mercy 12:45 p.m. Shared table — bring food to share. The event is being organised jointly by the Men of St Joseph and the Bairs of Wor Lass. Please contact Peter if you are attending (for numbers) or if you have any questions. Email: the.real.pete.forbes@gmail.com or text 0772 931 8686.

Grow as One Diocesan Family - Across the Diocese, we want to encourage a greater understanding of Gift Aid and increase the number of eligible parishioners who choose to Gift Aid their donations. Every Gift Aid Declaration generates additional income for our parishes at no extra cost to the donor, helping to support mission, ministry and pastoral life within our communities. You can sign up to Gift Aid online via our website, read about the difference the additional funding has made to a number of our churches and view our frequently asked questions. Every tick makes a difference!

Stamps, Coins & Watches - Donations can still be made to support fundraising for Little Sisters of the Poor. Used stamps, foreign or withdrawn currency and old or broken jewellery can be left at St Joseph's Home on Westmorland Road or at St Mary's Cathedral. Nearly £30,000 has been raised through the collection of seemingly worthless items so please check drawers for any hidden gems!

Marriage Preparation Days - Engaged couples can find more information [here](#). To find and book on a course, please visit our [website](#) or call the phone booking service on 0800 389 3801. (In person and online courses are available.)

Minsteracres Retreats - We offer a varied programme of day, weekend and week-long events throughout the year. Please see the programme details by [clicking 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 stjohn23bulletin@gmail.com