

# St Osmund's Catholic Church, Gainford

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

**Parish Priest: Fr. Thomas Mason e-mail: [gainford.stosmund@rcdbn.org.uk](mailto:gainford.stosmund@rcdbn.org.uk)**

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## Hogarth Partnership

**FoodBanks: The Well:** 46 East Green, West Auckland. DL14 9HJ. Opening times: Wednesday-Friday 9am - 3pm

**Kings Food Bank:** King's Church, Prospect Place, Whesoe Rd., Darlington. DL3 0QT.

Opening times: Mon, Wed, Fri, 1pm -3pm

**St. Columba's:** St Columba's Church, Clifton Ave., Darlington DL1 5EE.

Opening time: Fri 1pm -3pm.

Items may be left at the Foodbanks during their opening times or placed in St. Osmund's Church porch. Please do not make any unnecessary journeys. **Stay Safe**

### Please Pray for:

**The sick of the Parish:** Pat Avison, Christopher Smith, Patrick Doherty, Joan Towers, and Toni Neville.

### Children's Liturgy

A Children's Liturgy that has been a very useful resource for parents and children throughout our Covid restrictions can be found by [Clicking here](#) It is delivered by a Primary School teacher from Dunkeld.

A Children's Liturgy from Cafod is available on: [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk) [Click here](#)

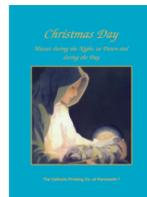


## Welcome to all

To regular worshippers, family, friends and especially if you are visiting St. Osmund's. May we be filled with the peace and graces of Christmas at this time and throughout the coming year



**Very best wishes for a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Healthy New Year**



**The Order of the Masses for Christmas along with the readings for Masses during the Night, at Dawn and during the Day can be found in the blue booklet at the back of church entitled 'Christmas Day.'**

## The Holy Family 26th December

**Theme:** *The Presentation*

*Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies.*

**St Osmund's will be open for Parish Mass on Sundays at 9.30am and Tuesdays at 10.00am.**

**It will no longer be necessary to book for the Sunday or Tuesday Masses.**

**However, the capacity limits to allow safe social distancing remain in place. Should the safe capacity of the church be reached there will, unfortunately, be no further admittance .**

**In considering attending Mass please particularly bear in mind your own health situation and that of others.**

**Following the Government announcement on December 7th it is now mandatory to wear a mask in Church unless medically exempt.**

**The Weekly Bulletin is available online at:**

**[www.stosmunds.co.uk](http://www.stosmunds.co.uk)**

**Readings and Reflections****The Holy Family****26th December****First reading 1 Samuel 1:20-22,24-28**

**This is the child I prayed for: he is made over to the Lord.** Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son, and called him Samuel 'since' she said 'I asked the Lord for him.' When a year had gone by, the husband Elkanah went up again with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfil his vow. Hannah, however, did not go up, having said to her husband, 'Not before the child is weaned. Then I will bring him and present him before the Lord and he shall stay there for ever.'

When she had weaned him, she took him up with her together with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh; and the child was with them. They slaughtered the bull and the child's mother came to Eli. She said, 'If you please, my lord. As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord. This is the child I prayed for, and the Lord granted me what I asked him. Now I make him over to the Lord for the whole of his life. He is made over to the Lord.'

**Responsorial Psalm 83(84):2-3,5-6,9-10**

**O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!**

O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!

By the labour of your hands you shall eat.  
You will be happy and prosper.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
in the heart of your house;  
your children like shoots of the olive,  
around your table.

Indeed thus shall be blessed  
the man who fears the Lord.  
May the Lord bless you from Zion  
all the days of your life!

**Second reading 1 John 3:1-2,21-24**

**We are called God's children, and that is what we are**  
Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us.

My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

My dear people,  
if we cannot be condemned by our own conscience, we need not be afraid in God's presence, and whatever we ask him, we shall receive, because we keep his commandments and live the kind of life that he wants. His commandments are these: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another as he told us to.

Whoever keeps his commandments lives in God and God lives in him.

We know that he lives in us by the Spirit that he has given us.

**Gospel Acclamation cfAc16:14**

**Alleluia, alleluia!** Open our heart, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son. **Alleluia!**

**Gospel Luke 2:41-52**

**Mary stored up all these things in her heart**

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere.

Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied. 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant.

He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority.

His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

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**Mass on-line**

*St. Augustines Facebook - [Click here](#) Sun. 9.15*

*Other churches in the diocese [Click here](#)*

*Walsingham: [www.walsingham.org.uk](http://www.walsingham.org.uk) [Click here](#)*

*Other churches in the UK and Ireland [Click here](#)*

*Vatican - [Click here](#)*

*Mass by phone: 01642 130 120*

**Act of Spiritual Communion**

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my soul. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never let me be separated from you. Amen.*

**Reflection on the Readings****The Holy Family****26th December**

*In the Catholic tradition, a Homily, interprets the readings, shining a light on the present and asking each one of us what we must change in our lives, from today. The challenge is not so much about recounting the history or retelling the story, but living the gospel.*

**A family tried and tested**

*Even though we call them the Holy Family that does not mean they never had problems to face, as every family must. To put it another way, just as each follower of Jesus has a cross to carry, so also the holy family had to experience the cross in their shared life. To mention just a few examples, we can imagine how misunderstood both Mary and Joseph must have been about the conception of Jesus before they came to live together. Joseph was even planning to divorce Mary privately before being assured that it was the work of God. Nine months later, the birthplace of Jesus was an animal shelter, since no better lodgings could be found. Then the family had to flee as refugees to Egypt because the child Jesus' life was in danger from king Herod, in much the same way as refugees from war-torn countries have to flee to save their lives.*

*Later, when Jesus was twelve, they were shocked to lose him for three days and then had to deal with the unsatisfactory explanation that he "had to be about his Father's business." Still, he returned with them to Nazareth and was subject to them, in the quiet rhythm of family life in their village. We do not hear of Joseph any more after that so we presume that he had died before Jesus began his public ministry. Then too, the public life of Jesus must have taken its toll on Mary. In the Temple when he was an infant, old Simeon had predicted that a sword of sorrow would pierce Mary's soul. How she must have been pained to hear his enemies say that Jesus was a friend of tax-collectors and sinners, and at the end, when Mary watched her son die in public disgrace, on the cross.*

*What sustained the family of Nazareth through all of these trials and crosses? What holds families together in times of difficulty is love and trust. Whenever families are happy, it is because love and respect are valued by them. A major threat to family nowadays is if we don't spend enough time together. We are so busy working, meeting our friends, using our electronic gadgets or watching TV that we never seem to have time to listen to each other.*

*A wealthy, successful woman lived some distance from her old, widowed father. Months passed since she had seen him and when her father called to ask when his daughter might visit, she detailed lots of reasons that kept her too busy to see him, court schedules, meetings, new clients, research, etc. Her father then asked, 'When I die, do you mean to come to my funeral?' The daughter was indignant. "Dad, I can't believe you asked me that. Of course, I'll come!" He smiled and said, "Good. Then forget my funeral and come to see me now. I need you now more than I will then." She got the message and began to visit him regularly after that.*

**A prayer for family life**

*God of compassion,  
whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,  
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,  
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:  
strengthen us in our daily living  
that in joy and in sorrow  
we may know the power of your presence  
to bind together and to heal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

**Feast Days this week:****Monday 27th December: St. John the Evangelist****Tuesday 28th December: The Holy Innocents****Wednesday 29th December: St. Thomas Becket****Saturday 31st December: St. Sylvester I****The Cycle of Prayer****Peace on Earth****Background**

The World Day of Prayer for Peace is marked on 1 January. As this day is when the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God and it is the beginning of the new year in England and the day is transferred to 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

**Prayer**

*O God of peace, who are peace itself  
and whom a spirit of discord  
cannot grasp,  
nor a violent mind receive,  
grant that those who are one in heart  
may persevere in what is good  
and that those in conflict  
may forget evil and so be healed.*

Roman Missal



**DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle**  
**Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO Bishop of**  
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### **Protecting the Health of Our Clergy**

#### **and Congregations 17 December 2021 v2**

The emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID presents a very significant risk to our clergy and congregations. Whilst the UK Government has kick started an accelerated vaccination programme, the devolved administrations and many experts believe that this alone is insufficient to counteract the very rapid increase in COVID cases which is being driven by the much more transmissible Omicron variant.

Once again I have taken both clergy and lay advice in reaching these decisions whilst also giving consideration to the latest guidance published by the Government.

The growth of Omicron cases in the UK is now mirroring the rapid increase that has been observed in South Africa with the doubling of case numbers every 2 to 3 days. On Thursday 16th December the UK recorded 88,376 confirmed cases of COVID in the previous 24 hour period. At the time, this was the highest number of cases recorded since the pandemic started. Scientists report that Omicron is the most rapidly spreading COVID variant seen so far. In London, Omicron has overtaken Delta to become the dominant variant. At this early stage of the emergence of Omicron in the UK it is difficult to predict how this will impact on the number of hospitalisations and deaths. It is believed that one person infected with the Omicron variant of COVID will spread the virus to between 3 and 5 other people.

COVID infection rates in the North East were at a seven day average of 380 cases per 100,000 on the 16th December. This rate has remained relatively consistent for the past few weeks. The Delta variant remains dominant in the North East but this is expected to change as Omicron sweeps across the country leading to a significant increase in the local infection rate.

The UK Government has adopted "Plan B" and is strongly advising the population to get a booster vaccination but has stopped short of introducing any further COVID controls, but in the same televised Government briefing on 15th December, Professor Chris Whitty, the UK Chief Medical Adviser, advised that we should "de-prioritise socialising".

On Tuesday 14th December the Scottish Government announced a series of further, more stringent, measures to reduce COVID spread. Amongst other things The First Minister said that "... if you do plan on socialising, either at home or in indoor public spaces, we are asking that you limit the number of households represented in

your group to a maximum of three ... and ask that you test before you go."

Two doses of vaccine have been shown to provide a poor level of protection against the Omicron variant so the UK Government is driving an accelerated booster vaccination programme. The North East is providing about 16,000 jabs per day and as of the 15th December had provided booster vaccinations to 42% of the adult population.

This is a serious situation, evidenced by the rise in daily COVID cases and the unprecedented drive to get the whole of the UK adult population vaccinated in 3 weeks. The enhanced vaccination programme is just starting to ramp up but it appears that its ability to control COVID infections is being outrun by the increased transmissibility of the new variant and hence the need for further control measures.

Church services take place in a well-controlled environment if our guidelines are followed and I would like to remind you that it is vitally important that we all do everything we can to keep everyone safe. I set out the most pertinent COVID guidelines in my last communication on 10th December but in addition I have now asked Parish Priests to be sensitive to the duration of church services and to encourage the congregation to disperse quickly at the end.

Whilst we are still able to safely gather in our churches the same is not true for our church halls and meeting spaces. Socialising and most other forms of group activity in our church halls and meeting spaces present a very serious risk of COVID transmission. We do have controls in place in our halls and meeting spaces but it is much more difficult to maintain social distancing; so the much more transmissible Omicron variant has an ideal environment in which to spread.

I recommend that we close our church halls and meeting spaces to all groups and activities at the end of Friday 17th December. They should remain closed until further notice.

There are some very limited exceptions to this recommendation; for example those halls that are used for essential Caritas activities or registered early years provision. These activities may be able to continue to operate a restricted service providing that they are fully assessed and suitable COVID controls put into place. Please contact the Diocesan Health and Safety Adviser Michael McElroy; telephone 0191 243 3319 or by email: michael.mcelroy@diocesehn.org.uk to discuss your activities before proceeding.

A further review of our COVID controls relating to church halls and meeting spaces will take place in January when the effects of the Omicron variant may be apparent.

**Best wishes for a safe happy and healthy week ahead**

